

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A MULTICULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION
COURSE: CRITICALLY ANALYZING PRESERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS
AND ACTIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A MULTICULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE: CRITICALLY ANALYZING PRESERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS AND ACTIONS

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This qualitative case study explored four early childhood preservice teachers' experiences and reflections pertaining to a required critical multicultural teacher education course and sought to understand how they navigated student teaching the following academic year. Inquiring into teaching and learning in a critical multicultural education course and seeking to examine possible connections between the course and subsequent enactments of pedagogical practices in student teaching, this study was guided by the questions: How did preservice teachers construct their experiences in a multicultural education course? How did preservice teachers who had previously taken a

multicultural education course make sense of and navigate their student teaching experiences?

The dataset was comprised of three in-depth individual interviews with four early childhood preservice teachers—two White preservice teachers and two preservice teachers of color; field notes from observations of each preservice teacher's student teaching placement; three individual assignments written in the multicultural education course; and reflective journals and lesson plans submitted during student teaching. These data were analyzed through a critical pedagogy lens via axial coding.

Findings demonstrated that the required multicultural education course influenced preservice teachers in different ways, conveying the complexity of learning to teach and the intertwined nature of personal and professional identities. Preservice teachers' experiences in the multicultural education course were deeply informed by their identities, dis/privileges, and representation in the course (in readings, videos of teaching practices, and the identity of the teacher educator).

Preservice teachers' navigations of student teaching in the following academic year were complex, being informed by a variety of factors, including their racial identity development, their life experiences and prior knowledge about race and difference, the racial identity of their mentor teacher in relation to theirs, and the demographics of their placements. Findings complicate simplistic notions of teaching and learning within the context of initial teacher education, pointing toward the need to recognize and account for the deeply entwined nature of racial identity development and the development of teachers committed to fostering equity and justice. Implications point toward needed transformations in early childhood teacher education.

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사랑하는 가족과 친구들에게 감사의 마음을 전합니다. 참 쉽지 않은 여정이었는데 끝까지 마칠 수 있도록 사랑으로 보듬어 주시고, 함께 고민해 주시고, 인내할 수 있도록 응원해 주신 덕분에 이렇게 무사히 마치게 되었습니다.

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PREFACE

My interest in multicultural education stemmed from my personal experience of difficulties and what I felt to be unfair as an international student attending college in the U.S. In the beginning years of college, I intentionally chose to attend huge lecture courses and avoided small classes because I knew I was not going to be able to participate in discussion. Growing up speaking Korean and moving to the U.S. for the first time in college, it was a big challenge for me to understand what was being said in class. I recorded lectures so that I could listen to them again in my dorm room. In my senior year, I attended a business course that had about fifty students in class. The professor was White and spoke English as his native language. A big chunk of the course grade was allotted to discussion points. My brain felt fried coming out of class every week because I had to focus very hard during class in order to understand what was being discussed. I felt extremely stressed about having to participate in discussion because many times I was not sure if I was understanding the conversation correctly and I also feared that I would not be able to express my thoughts in English once I was given the chance to speak. The struggle was very real in every class. Unfortunately, more than half a semester passed without me being able to raise my hand in class.

One day, the professor called me to his office after class. He told me that I was going to get a grade of C if I continued not participating in class discussions. He told me that I looked bored and aloof. He mentioned that I never had anything to say in class and that I didn't seem to care about what was being discussed. I cried. I had been trying so

hard the whole time to understand what was going on in class and yet the professor had been thinking all along that I did not care. Had he understood the challenges of having to navigate education using a language that was not my own, he would have not jumped to the conclusion that I did not care. Had he thought about how to better support students with different needs so that they could engage in more meaningful learning, he would have given me different ways to participate in the course. These were the kinds of experiences I continued to have during my college years.

If I, as a college student, experienced such obstacles, young children who speak languages other than those dominant in schools and schooling and whose families espouse cultural values different from those centered in classrooms are likely to experience even greater obstacles. They are likely to feel excluded and experience emotional and psychological harm in classrooms and schools that employ a monolithic, Eurocentric approach. This is why I believe strongly that early childhood teachers need to engage in extensive critical and equity-oriented multicultural teacher education before they go into early childhood classrooms. As such, this is the focus of my study.

My study employed a critical lens to highlight the historical and sociopolitical aspects of injustices that have persisted in U.S. society. My hope is that this study will help us continue to ask questions and think about how to support all children to have meaningful learning experiences. From my own exploration of multicultural education in the United States, I came to realize that scholars and educators have different opinions about how to best approach multicultural education. Some people support multicultural education that does not incorporate a critical perspective. In other words, although educators and schools claim “doing” multicultural education by celebrating differences,

substantive changes to teaching philosophy and practice are not made because they do not question their own perspectives regarding the nature of difference, privilege, and power (Nieto, 2010b). I believe that multicultural education has a greater possibility of positively influencing students' learning experiences when it is approached from a critical perspective—this belief is supported by a number of scholars (e.g., Gorski, 2009; Souto-Manning, 2013). But, if we teach a critical multicultural perspective, do preservice teachers enact such perspectives in their own teaching? Do they conceptualize multicultural education accordingly? These questions are at the heart of my study.

During my doctoral studies at Teachers College, I had the opportunity to assist in teaching an early childhood multicultural education course that aimed to prepare preservice teachers to engage in critical multicultural teaching with young children. Although this course had an explicit critical approach to multicultural education whereby preservice teachers engaged in critical reflection of their own beliefs about themselves, others, and society, and created transformative action plans to utilize as future teachers, being asked to reflect on the multiple components that constituted their own cultural identity and consider how their past experiences have influenced the ways they understood teaching and learning, I was not sure if the course informed their own conceptualization of multicultural education and their subsequent teaching practice. That is, preservice teachers had multiple opportunities to examine and discuss examples of multicultural teaching in action (through readings, videos, interviews, etc.) and rethink the ways in which curriculum and pedagogy could be formulated and enacted, and I wanted to know the ways in which these experiences led them to see their identities and priorities as teachers differently from before. I wondered whether and in what ways

preservice teachers' course experiences in critiquing, adapting, and reinventing lessons helped them become prepared and committed to fostering a critical multicultural approach in their own teaching.

While to me, the above mentioned approaches seemed to be helpful for preservice teachers for preparing them as critical multicultural educators, I did not want to draw a hasty conclusion that the course benefitted everyone. Indeed during class discussion, there were times that preservice teachers expressed doubts and hesitations about why they had to think and talk so extensively about multicultural education when they believed they should be focusing more on learning about the methods and skills for teaching the alphabet and numbers to young children. Therefore, I decided to critically analyze the reflections and actions of those who were part of the multicultural education course.

In my study, I focused on understanding preservice teachers' experiences in the required multicultural education course, which espoused a critical approach to multicultural education, in order to make sense of the reflections they had around negotiating critical multicultural teaching. Then, I explored how preservice teachers made sense of and navigated their student teaching experiences, aiming to understand the ways in which the multicultural education course informed their teaching practices in the context of student teaching. Although the multicultural education course took place first and then preservice teachers engaged in student teaching afterwards, I purposefully investigated their student teaching experiences first so that they did not get prompted to perform in a certain way during their interviews and student teaching knowing that I was researching whether and in what ways the multicultural education course informed their student teaching experience.

It was not until the third and final interview that preservice teachers were asked to reflect on the multicultural education course. In this dissertation, however, preservice teachers' reflections pertaining to the multicultural education course are presented first (in Chapter IV) and then their student teaching experiences (in Chapter V). This is so that readers are able to clearly see the (possible) relationship between their experiences in a multicultural education course and their navigations of student teaching afterwards.

I hope this study will contribute to the ongoing discourse about the ways in which teacher education programs can prepare preservice teachers to become advocates of critical multicultural education.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The increasing cultural diversity of U.S. schools and schoolchildren demands that every teacher, whether new or experienced, thoughtfully examine the local meanings of disparities between home and school, community and school system, and teacher and student and then take responsible action to improve the educational choices and life chances of their own students. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992, p. 113)

If we truly desire to “improve the educational choices and life chances” of all students, I believe that there are two very important phrases that all educators must closely attend to from the statement above made by Cochran-Smith and Lytle close to three decades ago. Those are “thoughtfully examine” and “take responsible action.”

Taking responsible action requires moving beyond a narrow conceptualization of multicultural education. There are multiple ways educators define and engage in multicultural education. In many cases, teachers and schools when they claim that they “do” multicultural education, they simply include a segment of curriculum on some aspect of diversity in quite a shallow way (Gorski, 2009; Nieto, 2010b). Drawing on James Banks’ (2003) four approaches to curricular integration, I argue that to “take responsible action” means to go beyond a contributions or additive approach and instead employ a transformative and social action approach.

Banks’ (2003) four approaches to curricular integration serve as an important tool to understand conceptualizations and operationalizations of multicultural education. First is the contributions approach in which the focus is on celebrating s/heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements only instead of discussing issues of power and

disenfranchisement. The second approach is the additive approach in which teachers add ethnic content, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without fundamentally changing its basic structure. The third is the transformative approach in which teachers help students learn about how knowledge is constructed. In this approach, the structure of the curriculum is altered so that students view concepts, issues, events, and themes from various ethnic and cultural perspectives.

In this dissertation, I define multicultural education in alignment with Banks' (2003) fourth approach to multicultural education: the social action approach. This approach goes further from the third approach in that it entails an in-depth examination of social inequities in society, delving into a careful problematization of the historical roots of social issues, and taking action to change unjust realities. I contend that to "take responsible action" as educators means to actively problematize and transform policies and practices in education that perpetuate inequities. Hence, throughout my study, I define "multicultural education" as curricular, pedagogical, and structural approaches that are transformative and social action-oriented, necessarily entailing anti-racist aims. I conceptualize multicultural education as anti-racist education (Miner, 2014) "with an emphasis on deconstructing and acting against oppression" (Gorski, 2009, p. 313) emanating racism and entangled forms of bigotry. Defined this way, multicultural education regards "teaching as resistance and counter-hegemonic practice" (Gorski, 2009, p. 313).

Racism in the U.S. refers to the systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power (Blacks, Latinxs, Native Americans, and Asians) by members of the racial group who have relatively more social power

(Whites) (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997). Racism continues to persist through individual actions and institutional structures, and these acts and policies can occur with or without racist intentions. Hence, I recognize the need for all educators to consciously engage in dismantling “a tremendous array of aggressive negative beliefs, behaviors, and strategies” (Hilliard III, 2014, p. 33) that are practiced both consciously and unconsciously in classrooms, schools, and society. Not doing so would condone a status quo of White supremacy.

There is overwhelming evidence of the “fallacy of cultural neutrality and [of] the homogeneity syndrome in teaching and learning” (Gay, 2018, p. 29). Despite the knowledge that “how we teach, what we teach, how we relate to children and to each other, what our goals are...are rooted in the norms of our culture,” “our society’s predominant worldview and cultural norms are so deeply ingrained” (Pai et al., 2006, p. 233) in how young children are educated. Early childhood educators, who are predominantly White women, “very seldom think about the possibility that there may be other different but equally legitimate and effective approaches to teaching and learning” (p. 233). This, as Pai and colleagues underscore, “often results in unequal education and social injustice” (p. 233). As such, it is important to understand that culture is intricately related to teaching and learning.

As Geneva Gay (2018) explains:

culture refers to a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). Even without our being consciously aware of it, culture strongly influences how we think, believe, communicate, and behave, and these, in turn, affect how we teach and learn. Because teaching and learning are always mediated or shaped by cultural influences, they can never be culturally neutral (Ginsberg, 2015; Kuykendall, 2004; Ortiz, 2013). (p. 8)

This is the definition of culture and its role in teaching and learning that guided this dissertation study.

The normalization of Whiteness makes it possible for White people to give little consideration to their own racial group membership in classroom and schools (Crowley & Smith, 2015; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Consequently, research shows that White preservice teachers, who make up the majority of the teaching force, often “Other” diversity and cultural and linguistic plurality (Delpit, 1995; Haddix, 2008; McIntosh, 1989; Sleeter, 2001). Landsman (2011) contends that in order for White people to truly understand the advantages they reap for being White, they must consciously and consistently engage themselves in exposing layers of their White privilege.

While it is imperative to recognize the importance of engaging White preservice teachers in multicultural teacher education, it is also equally important to highlight the education of preservice teachers of color. Whereas it has been well-established that White preservice teachers need to engage in multicultural teacher education before going into classrooms and while there is much literature that discusses the need to prepare White preservice teachers as culturally relevant and responsive educators, little attention has been given to preservice teachers of color. As research in teacher education (Cheruvu et al., 2015; Haddix, 2010; Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016) underscores, preservice teachers of color need time and space to negotiate their multiple and complex racial and linguistic identities in teacher education programs especially as many of them are situated in teacher education contexts that privilege the experiences and needs of White preservice teachers. Teachers are not “monolithic entities” and as such, we cannot and should not

ignore “the complexities of teachers’ identities” in teacher education (Haddix, 2010, p. 121).

A key component of teachers’ identity development is their racial identity development. According to Helms (1990), “racial identity development theory concerns the psychological implications of racial-group membership, that is belief systems that evolve in reaction to perceived differential racial-group membership” (p. 3). As Tatum (1992) notes, although racial identity development differs for Whites and for people of color, it is important to understand that

the development of positive identity is a lifelong process that often requires unlearning the misinformation and stereotypes we have internalized not only about others, but also about ourselves. (Tatum, 2001, p. 53)

As such, it is important to acknowledge the centrality of racial identity development to the development of teachers. This means recognizing that preservice teachers are likely to be at different stages of racial identity development and are likely to experience different progressions of racial identity development (Tatum, 1992, 1997/1999, 2001, 2017). That is, Black preservice teachers are likely to have engaged in a process of “understanding Blackness in a White context” from their earliest years (Tatum, 1997/1999, p. 31); White preservice teachers too often grow up thinking “I’m not ethnic, I’m just normal” (p. 93); and “Latinx, Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern/North African” preservice teachers have presumably experienced “racial and cultural oppression...[as] part of their lived experiences” (Tatum, 2017, p. 244). Preservice teachers’ process of becoming teachers is necessarily entangled with their racial identity development. Nevertheless, a focus on preservice teachers’ racial identity development is often missing from teacher education programs.

By engaging preservice teachers in coursework and field experience that focus on race, ethnicity, power, and privilege, teacher education programs can create spaces for preservice teachers to explore their cultural identities and acknowledge racial inequities (Mensah, 2019; Mensah & Jackson, 2018; Souto-Manning, 2011). Teacher education programs can serve to sensitize preservice teachers to the impact of racial and cultural variables on their and their future students' education process (Tatum, 2001).

While it is crucial that preservice teachers constantly examine their beliefs and attitudes about themselves, others, and society so that they recognize their privileges and biases, it is equally important to create ample opportunities for preservice teachers to explore examples of multicultural curriculum and pedagogy and practice teaching based on their critical cultural awareness so that they develop the “knowledge, skills, and dispositions” necessary to teach as critical multicultural educators (Villegas, 2007, p. 373). Nieto (2013) states that “it is one thing to articulate certain values but quite another to enact those values in the classroom” (p. 138). As Milner (2010) contends, “even when teachers build and broaden their conceptual repertoires of diversity, their teaching practices will ultimately need to be expanded and interrogated” (p. 125). He points out that preservice teachers should be exposed to examples and experiences related to diversity and teaching culturally diverse students. Reflecting on racial privileges and inequities, and even coming to an understanding of the negative effects they bring to society may not be enough for preservice teachers to take transformative actions (Souto-Manning, 2011). Just as it requires work and patience for guiding preservice teachers to understand their cultural locations and their socially constructed assumptions, teacher education programs must put intentionality and effort into engaging preservice teachers

in transformative and social action-oriented multicultural teaching approaches so that they have opportunities to learn about and negotiate contextualized curriculum and pedagogy that are meaningful for all children and representative of multiple diversities.

This is especially true as the current educational context attempts to dictate a specific curriculum and pedagogy upon teachers (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Nieto, 2014). Educators nowadays work in an environment that pushes for “standardization, high-stakes testing, the chartering of public schools, privatization, [and] rigid accountability for teachers, students, and administrators” (Nieto, 2014, p. 12). In such environments, children’s learning is rigidly configured using standardized benchmarks. Adults working with children find little space to see children as “unique persons who follow their own interests and learn at their own tempo in diverse ways” (Genishi & Dyson, 2009, p. 8). Under such neoliberal educational context, multicultural education is frequently considered as lacking academic rigor and not being worthwhile for students to engage in (Au, 2014; Nieto, 2010b). Teachers may fear that deviating from the prescribed curriculum will take away from instructional time (Young, 2010). Therefore, even if teachers are critically aware of their cultural locations and the exclusion of multiple perspectives in the curriculum they use, they may think it is impossible to make their teaching practice transformative.

Paradoxically, ample literature (Au, 2014; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Nieto, 2013; Souto-Manning, 2013; Souto-Manning & Martell, 2016) introduces exemplary cases of critical multicultural teaching in action within today’s educational context. Various stories of the situated practices of educators who are dedicated to critical multicultural teaching may become resources, serve as encouragement and offer insights

for teachers and future-teachers, who can work to examine, adapt, and enact equity-oriented multicultural practices in their own classroom context.

In this study, I focused on understanding preservice teachers' experiences in a multicultural education course that used a critical approach (Gorski, 2009). Jennifer, the course instructor, continuously invited preservice teachers to examine their social positionings based on their cultural identities and discuss educational inequities that perpetuate domination and oppression, taking an emancipatory approach. She shared examples of her own teaching in hopes that preservice teachers would develop the ability to contextualize their reflections and think about ways to engage critical multicultural curriculum and pedagogy.

This study also investigated preservice teachers' student teaching experiences to understand how they experienced the required multicultural education course. By inquiring into their student teaching experiences after the completion of the multicultural education course, I sought to understand their dispositions for and possible enactments of equity-oriented multicultural teaching. Dispositions are "tendencies for individuals to act in a particular manner under particular circumstances, based on their beliefs" (Villegas, 2007, p. 373), and they include "attitudes, values, interests, self-concept, and motivation" (Stiggins, 2001, p. 101). Recognizing the struggles and limitations student teachers experience in enacting curriculum and pedagogy that they would like to employ in classrooms, I not only inquired into preservice teachers' actions but also their attitudes and values toward honoring children's different identities and diversities in their student teaching contexts.

When learning about preservice teachers' reflections and actions, I was mindful that preservice teacher education serves as a starting point, and not the end of teacher development; preservice teachers' minds should not be treated as storage devices that can produce a certain teaching output after engaging in teacher education. For preservice teachers, teacher education programs serve as "initial" teacher preparation institutions where they get to develop "the habits of mind and capacity for analysis and informed, scholarly judgement" (Ellis et al., 2017, p. 30) in order to be able to continue in their development as professionals over their careers. As they continue in their profession with a cultivated mind for critical analysis, they get to interpret complex social situations and respond flexibly with new ideas and solutions. This conceptualization is different from perceiving teaching as a "delivery of standardized procedures" (Ellis, 2011, p. 182).

By learning about preservice teachers' experiences in multicultural education coursework and student teaching, I gained understandings of preservice teachers' reflections and actions in a situated teacher education context, drawing implications for the ways in which teacher education programs can support preservice teachers in strengthening their dispositions and enactments of equity-oriented multicultural education.

Background

In recent years, the demographics of classrooms in the U.S. have been changing rapidly. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), from 2000 through 2017, the percentage of U.S. school-age White children decreased from 62% to 51%. In contrast, Latinx children increased from 16% to 25%, Asian children 3% to 5%,

and children of two or more races, from 2% to 4%. The number of children who are labeled as English language learners in schools have also increased significantly; one in nine students in kindergarten to grade 12 have an English language learner label.

Paradoxically, as the population of students of color in U.S. public preschools and schools continues to grow, the teaching force remains predominantly White. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018), 80.1% of K-12 teachers in public elementary and secondary schools were White in 2015-16. Preschool teachers are also predominantly White. According to U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), 15.7% of preschool teachers are Black, 14.9% are Latinx, and 5.2% are Asian. Trends in U.S. student demographics underscore the need for preparing teachers to educate students of color.

Problematically, very “few teachers have adequate knowledge about how conventional teaching practices reflect European American cultural values” (Gay, 2018, p. 28). This means that students of color are routinely deprived from access to educational opportunities relevant to their life experiences (Nieto, 2010a). Researchers have documented how some teachers perceive students’ cultures as deficits to overcome and hold low expectations because they see students of color as biologically and/or culturally inferior (Carter & Goodwin, 2004; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2013; Sleeter, 2017; Valenzuela, 2002), not being “sufficiently informed about the cultures of different ethnic groups” (Gay, 2018, p. 28).

A dominant perspective that has persisted in U.S. society is that White people, their beliefs, experiences, performances, and language are viewed as the norm to which others are compared, measured, and evaluated (Crowley & Smith, 2015; Goodwin et al.,

2008; Haddix, 2008; Sleeter, 2001, 2017). This is reflected by how while “most teachers want to do the best for all their students...they mistakenly believe that to treat students differently because of their cultural orientations is racial discrimination” (Gay, 2018, pp. 28-29). Further, the predominantly White teaching force overwhelmingly believes “that education is an effective doorway of assimilation into mainstream society for people from diverse cultural heritages, ethnic groups, social classes, and points of origin” (p. 29).

Recognizing the importance of preparing preservice teachers to be able to teach students in their racially and ethnically diverse classrooms, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) added multicultural education and teaching for diversity to its standards in 1976, requiring that institutions of higher education seeking accreditation show evidence that they incorporate such content in their programs (Banks et al., 2005). These standards required all member teacher education institutions in the U.S. to implement components, courses, and programs in multicultural education (Banks, 2004). Later, NCATE predicated teacher education program accreditation on preservice teachers’ preparation for supporting the learning of all students (Villegas, 2007). Although NCATE no longer exists, it established and reified the inclusion of multicultural education courses in teacher education programs.

In light of mandates for multicultural education in teacher education programs, Banks and colleagues (2005) encouraged the development of a coherent vision for the infusion of multicultural education across teacher preparation programs. They suggested that programs ensure that “diversity, equity, and social justice [are] centrally important so that all courses and field experiences for prospective teachers are conducted with these important goals in mind” (p. 274). It is questionable, however, whether all teacher

education programs place issues of diversity, equity, and social justice as a central focus in teacher preparation (Souto-Manning & Emdin, in press).

Although currently, virtually every teacher education program in the U.S. includes coursework related to racial, cultural, and/or language diversity (Sleeter, 2017), in most programs, only one or two separate courses focus on diversity while the rest of the courses give minimal attention to race, ethnicity, and culture (Gorski, 2009; King & Butler, 2015). Sleeter (2017) contends that this is partly due to fact that the majority of teacher education faculty is White and White faculty members continue to center White interests when designing and teaching teacher education courses. She argues that not only White faculty members should situate themselves within an analysis of race, but also that teacher education programs must collaborate with local communities of color to broaden the range of voices heard in teacher education programs.

Statement of Problem

Despite the need to highlight issues of diversity, equity, and social justice throughout preservice teachers' teacher education, very few studies examine preservice teachers' student teaching experiences in light of multicultural education (Grant & Gibson, 2011). In fact, most studies are conducted on understanding the ways in which teacher education programs have been engaging preservice teachers in multicultural education coursework (Adams et al., 2005; Andrews, 2009; Christian & Zippay, 2012; Goodwin & Genor, 2008; Guillory, 2012; Leonard & Leonard, 2006; Pewewardy, 2005; Souto-Manning, 2011, 2019; Szecsi et al.; 2010; Zygmunt-Filwalk, 2005). Although these studies claim that preservice teachers develop critical cultural awareness when they

engage in continuous self-analysis of their privileges and prejudices, we also continue to encounter reports on how graduates of teacher education programs struggle from not being able to teach effectively in urban classrooms serving diverse groups of students (Ng, 2006; Nieto, 2013; Siwatu, 2011).

A survey of over 600 first-year teachers found that 40% felt underprepared for working with students from diverse backgrounds even though they deemed their coursework on diversity to be comprehensive and useful (Rochkind et al., 2008). Another national survey revealed that while more than 54% of teachers taught racially and culturally minoritized students and students labeled “English language learners,” only 20% of these teachers felt they were very well prepared to meet the needs of their students (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001).

Within this context, it is imperative that we expand from the overwhelming focus on investigating preservice teachers’ reflections during multicultural education coursework to the examination of preservice teachers’ subsequent field experiences (Grant & Gibson, 2011). We need to learn not only about the ways in which preservice teachers experience multicultural education coursework but also how such experiences inform (if at all) their approaches and practices in student teaching. As such, seeking to address this disconnect between knowledge and practice, this study was conducted to learn about whether and in what ways early childhood preservice teachers drew on multicultural education coursework experiences, learnings, and orientation in their subsequent student teaching practice.

Rationale

By creating opportunities for preservice teachers to enroll in courses that specifically approach multicultural teaching from a critical perspective, teacher education programs aim to provide a space for preservice teachers to critically think about their privileges and prejudices (Gorski, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). While these teacher education courses intend to challenge preservice teachers' existing perspectives on power, privilege, and diversity in relation to teaching and learning, without looking into preservice teachers' teaching actions and dispositions in their situated teaching contexts, it is hard to know whether and in what ways preservice teachers' engagement in multicultural education coursework connects to their teaching practices and approaches.

There are a number of studies (e.g., Adams et al., 2005; Andrews, 2009; Christian & Zippay, 2012; Goodwin & Genor, 2008; Guillory, 2012; Leonard & Leonard, 2006; Pewewardy, 2005; Souto-Manning, 2011; Szecsi et al., 2010; Zygmunt-Filwalk, 2005) that discuss the ways in which teacher education programs intend to challenge preservice teachers' cultural assumptions, biases, and prejudices through multicultural education coursework, but more research is in need to understand the ways in which preservice teachers' teaching actions and dispositions are negotiated in their field experiences (Grant & Gibson, 2011). Thus, I conducted a case study that aimed to understand both the reflections of early childhood preservice teachers previously enrolled in a required multicultural education course that espoused a critical orientation (Gorski, 2009) and their actions and dispositions for negotiating critical multicultural teaching during their student teaching.

Specifically, I focused on learning about how preservice teachers constructed their experiences in a required multicultural education course and how preservice teachers who had previously taken the multicultural education course made sense of and navigated their student teaching experiences. In doing so, this study intends to provide insights into ways in which teacher education programs can provide transformative learning experiences for those who will become future teachers.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

This study sought to understand the reflections of early childhood preservice teachers previously enrolled in a required multicultural education course and their teaching and dispositions in their student teaching after the multicultural education course. The following questions guided this study:

1. How did preservice teachers (across racial and ethnic identifications) construct their experiences in a required multicultural education course?
 - a. How did they construct their experiences in writing (as they experienced the course via multicultural education course assignments)?
 - b. How did they construct their experiences orally (as they recalled their experiences in the course via recall interviews)?
2. How did preservice teachers (across racial and ethnic identifications) who had previously taken the multicultural education course make sense of and navigate their student teaching experiences?
 - a. How do they make meaning of being a teacher?

- i. In what ways, if any, were such meanings related to the content and orientation of the multicultural education course they took?
- b. How did they navigate their student teaching experiences?
 - i. In what ways, if any, were their student teaching experiences related to learnings from the multicultural education course?

Theoretical Framework

Many have said that education does not promote transformation or that it has failed to do so. Freire, however, believed that education was a means, a tool for transformation. (Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 7)

Regarding education as a means for transformation, I engaged Freire's critical pedagogy as my theoretical framework. Freire (1970) identifies people who become victims of economic, social, and political domination as "the oppressed" and claims that the education system is one major instrument for the maintenance of the culture of silence for the oppressed. Freire contends that those who are oppressed must participate in developing a critical pedagogy that would liberate them from the oppressors. He states that no one should become an object in society but "be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his [sic] world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (p. 13).

Whereas many of the multicultural programs and guides published in the 1970s and 1980s focused on celebrating cultural differences (e.g., foods, costumes) and fostering intergroup connections, critical pedagogy has become the centerpiece of a number of critical multicultural education approaches and programs (Ramsey, 2006). To

be sure, Gay (1995) asserts that multicultural education and critical pedagogy are “mirror images” in that they are both philosophies and approaches to education that are driven by

critical analysis, multiple perspectives, cultural pluralism, social activism, counterhegemony, and sociocultural contextualism in instructional processes and expected learning outcomes. (p. 158)

By employing critical pedagogy as the theoretical framework of my study, I assert a critical multicultural education stance in conducting my research.

As the first step of critical multicultural education, I am asserting that all educators must expose and reflect on their conscious and unconscious beliefs and attitudes regarding the legitimacy of the dominant social order and unequal power relations (Mills, 1997). Without critically reflecting on these issues, educators cannot engage in critical multicultural education and they may even unknowingly perpetuate the dominant ideology that promotes racial hierarchies and societal inequalities. As such, I see my beliefs, experiences, and values as influencing the research process and outcome.

More specifically, because critical pedagogy accounts for unequal distributions of power and serves as a lens to understand the oppression and exclusion of subjugated groups, a goal of my research study was to empower preservice teachers to transform the status quo of monocultural teaching in the early childhood classroom and emancipate themselves from oppression, engaging in liberatory teaching and learning (Freire, 1970). Critical pedagogy also expects teachers and students to engage in mutual learning. Freire (1970) states that the opposite of critical pedagogy is “banking education” where teachers take the role of depositing their knowledge to students and students learn to passively accept the knowledge they are given. In banking education, students are treated as if they know nothing while teachers are considered the ultimate knowledge-holders.

Critical pedagogy begins with a thematic investigation (reading the world) and posing problems. Then, through dialogue, teachers and students co-investigate issues of oppression relating to themselves and the world, aiming to transform reality. Rejecting fatalistic perceptions, students develop an eye to see the present as a historical reality susceptible of transformation. They develop a critical perspective about what they hear, read, and see. In other words, students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking, problematization, and dialogue.

Critical pedagogy also implies praxis, that is, developing and enacting social actions that help alter patterns of oppression. Praxis is essential for a democratic society. According to Freire (1970), praxis consists of critical reflection and action that lead to transformation. This is mediated by authentic dialogue based on mutual trust among the dialoguers. Freire (1970) contends that if there is reflection with no action, it constitutes “verbalism,” while action absent of reflection constitutes “activism” (p. 75). However, praxis does not imply a linear process from knowledge to reflection to action. Rather than being a technical process, praxis is about developing dispositions that advocate the idea of altering patterns of domination and oppression by engaging in constant critical thinking, teaching, and learning. Praxis also entails reading one’s positioning in society in terms of power, privilege, oppression, and disprivilege. In this study, I utilized critical pedagogy as a lens to understand preservice teachers’ experiences and actions around notions of difference, power, and privilege in relation to teaching and learning.

Significance of the Study

Not enough attention has been given to examining whether and in what ways preservice teachers' experiences and reflections during a multicultural education course that espouses a critical approach informs their student teaching experiences. Hence, this research contributes to the scholarship on multicultural teacher education as it sought to understand (possible) connections between a critical multicultural teacher education course and preservice teachers' commitments, dispositions, and actions in a situated student teaching context.

There were several unique aspects about the multicultural education course that added significance to the context of my study. Whereas literature shows that multicultural education courses are often times facilitated by university professors, or at least those whose primary professional identity is affiliated to the teacher education program (Amos, 2010; Andrews, 2009; Delano-Oriaran, 2012; Guillory, 2012; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; Sailes, 2013), this course was different in that Jennifer, the course instructor, was a teacher educator of color whose primary professional identity is a full-time school teacher who constantly grapples with learning and negotiating critical multicultural education. While Gay (1997) problematizes that there are very few professors of education "who have the prerequisite skills in multicultural education needed to translate the theory of infusion into the practice of curriculum development and classroom instruction" (Gay, 1997, p. 158), I noticed that the course instructor, Jennifer, constantly invited preservice teachers to reflect based on her situated teaching practices. It must be noted that while I deemed Jennifer's teaching approach to be critical, praxis-oriented, and helpful for engaging preservice teachers in critical reflection, findings showed that multiple tensions

and pushbacks occurred during and after the conclusion of the multicultural education course. This will be closely analyzed in the findings (i.e., Chapter IV and Chapter V).

Besides, in order to engage preservice teachers in a critical approach to multicultural education, the course had preservice teachers read about and discuss situated multicultural pedagogies that are enacted by teachers in the U.S. The two required texts—*Multicultural Teaching in the Early Childhood Classroom: Approaches, Strategies, and Tools (Preschool-2nd grade)* (Souto-Manning, 2013) and *Rethinking Multicultural Education: Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice* (2nd ed.) (Au, 2014)—contained multiple examples of critical multicultural teaching in action throughout the U.S.

Course assignments were designed in a way that allowed preservice teachers to both engage in critical analysis of their beliefs and assumptions and dissect and analyze various multicultural approaches in practice. Their learnings were culminated by adapting lesson plans, seeking to make them more critically multicultural and by developing concrete plans for teaching multiculturally. That is, preservice teachers in this multicultural education course were afforded a space to think about and discuss what constitutes authentic multicultural teaching. They were provided with a pedagogical scaffold of examples and myriad opportunities to apply their knowledge and engage their commitments into teaching plans and practices. In my study, I learned not only about how four preservice teachers experienced the multicultural education course they were required to take, but also about how they negotiated their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their student teaching after taking the course.

My study adds to what is known, being of particular significance as it learned from preservice teachers' student teaching after they completed a required multicultural education course in their initial teacher education program. Almost all empirical studies that investigate the impact of a stand-alone multicultural education course examine preservice teachers' change of beliefs and attitudes during and right after the multicultural education course by analyzing course assignments, interviews, or surveys. Such approach assumes that preservice teachers' written and spoken responses fully reflect their beliefs and attitudes around issues of diversity and equity. However, preservice teachers do not always share their genuine reflections when they are under the influence of grades because they fear that they will be graded negatively when their reflections do not align with what the course teaches. To account for this tension, in my study, I attempted to further learn about preservice teachers' reflections around notions of diversity, power and privilege by interviewing preservice teachers about their multicultural education course experiences one semester after the course was over, and also by looking into preservice teachers' student teaching experiences.

Lastly, given how most empirical studies on multicultural teacher education courses are self-studies conducted by the course instructor, this study adds to the field in that the researcher was not the course instructor. This is important because, as Sleeter (2001) explains, when course instructors conduct case studies and narratives, they "may have a bias toward discussing successes of her or his work" (p. 99). She suggests that "unless one is critically examining one's own experience, researchers studying the impact of a particular course should take steps to gain some distance from the course itself, by studying another instructor's course for example" (p. 99). Indeed, findings from my study

unearthed multiple critiques and pushbacks by preservice teachers as they reflected on their experiences in the multicultural education course. Based on the findings of this study, I offer implications pertaining to the ways in which teacher education programs can further support preservice teachers in strengthening their multicultural dispositions for engaging in critical multicultural education.

In the following chapter (Chapter II), I provide an overview of multicultural education and the ways in which multicultural teacher education is conceptualized and operationalized in the U.S. The review of literature will serve as backdrop for situating my study in multicultural teacher education research.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I review the literature to contextualize my study. I organized my literature review into three sections. First, I provide an overview of multicultural education and how I interpret multicultural education in this study. In the second section, I discuss in what ways multicultural education is conceptualized and implemented in teacher education programs in the U.S. In the third section, I specifically analyze recent empirical studies conducted on courses that discuss multicultural education, social justice, and culturally relevant pedagogy in teacher education programs and explain in what ways my study adds uniquely to current research.

Contextualizing and Defining Multicultural Education

In this section, I seek to contextualize and define multicultural education. I do so within the context of the U.S., a country that has subscribed to a racial hierarchy throughout its history (Howard, 2003). As Ladson-Billings (2000) explains:

The creation of a racial hierarchy with White and Black as polar opposites has positioned all people in American society (King, 1994) and reified “Whiteness” in ways that suggest that the closer one is able to align oneself to Whiteness, the more socially and culturally acceptable one is perceived to be. (p. 207)

As such, Whiteness is not a biological marker, but can be understood as a set of power relations and values that poses as a natural baseline, while continuing to sponsor the subjugation of minoritized communities—e.g., people of color, immigrants (Mills, 1997).

Whiteness derives much of its power from its normalizing function (Crowley & Smith, 2015). A racialized social system in the U.S. has continued to award systemic power and privileges to Whites over non-Whites (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

Reviewing the history of racist ideas in the U.S., Kendi (2016) states that historically, there have been three different groups that have engaged in a polarizing debate over racial disparities: Segregationists who blame Black people, antiracists who point to racial discrimination, and assimilationists who argue for both, saying that Black people and racial discrimination were to blame for racial disparities. Segregationists and assimilationists have long held deficit perspectives towards people of color, and these perspectives of White superiority continue to perpetuate racial hierarchies and inequities in society.

As Goodwin, Cheruvu, and Genishi (2008) document, those who adhered to the inferiority paradigm in the U.S. (i.e., segregationists) designed and delivered school curriculum based on the assumption that

poor and immigrant children, as well as children of color, lacked moral judgment, appropriate home environment, and teachers (primarily mothers) to develop the values and skills needed to become good American/productive citizens. (p. 4)

Segregationists believed that White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants were superior to others. Those who supported the culturally deprived paradigm (i.e., assimilationists) forwarded the idea that certain homes negatively affected children's intellectual development and cognitive ability. They claimed that the cultural and linguistic practices present in diverse and poor homes should be fixed to mirror the standards of the dominant, White, middle-class culture (Goodwin et al., 2008). While the segregationist idea of Black biological inferiority is easier to identify as racist nowadays, the assimilationist thinking of Black

cultural inferiority is more covert and harder to identify as racist (Kendi, 2016). When analyzing racism, it is important to examine the ways in which people subscribe to an ideology that ultimately perpetuates racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). This history helps us contextualize multicultural education.

While I believe that most teachers have good intentions in and through teaching, some teachers employ a deficit lens to understand students of color. This is visible, for example, in my experience conveyed in the Preface of this dissertation. In PreK-12 settings, Sleeter (2017) surveyed teachers in two large urban school districts in the U.S. Southwest where about 40% of the teachers and about 80% of the students were of color. While 95% of the teachers responded that they were familiar with the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, when asked about how they interpreted low achievement of their students, most teachers selected factors related to the students or their homes: attendance and participation (81%), poverty (79%), student motivation (66%), families and communities (52%), and students' home language (30%). This illustrates how a dominant ideological belief that persists in our society is that Blacks and Latinxs are responsible for their own disadvantages (Farley, 2000; Sleeter, 2017). This ideology reflects the idea of White superiority and perpetuates a racial hierarchy. It is against this racial hierarchy that I define multicultural education.

Defining Multicultural Education

In this study, I embrace the definition of multicultural education as “a political movement and process that attempts to secure social justice underserved and disenfranchised students” with the goal of eliminating educational inequities; as such “multicultural education is good education for all students” (Gorski, 2009, p. 310). My

own definition of multicultural education is aligned with a critical approach, which acknowledges the need for teaching that engages sociopolitical contexts via critical pedagogy and regards teaching as counter-hegemonic practice. This definition requires the engagement of “teachers in a critical examination of the systemic influences of power, oppression, dominance, inequity, and injustice on schooling” and aims to prepare teachers as change agents (p. 313).

Such a critical conceptualization of multicultural education means that teachers must first acknowledge, expose, problematize, and critically reflect on their conscious and unconscious beliefs and attitudes regarding the legitimacy of the dominant social order and of the resulting unequal power relations among different cultural groups to then act against oppressive forces and structures. To be sure, while employing a critical stance in multicultural education is essential in disrupting inequities, Jenks, Lee, and Kanpol (2001) and Gorski (2009) both state that multicultural education has been frequently approached using conservative and liberal views. Educators who define multiculturalism using a conservative approach focus on teaching the “other” with aims of assimilating minoritized students into the mainstream culture. They believe that the teacher’s job is to teach students of color to learn and conform to the White schooling norm. Educators who support liberal multiculturalism emphasize the need to accept and celebrate difference without problematizing fundamental power constructs. Those who support liberal multiculturalism fail to acknowledge hegemonic power that perpetuates inequity and superficially promote harmonious relationships. Critical multiculturalism, on the other hand, problematizes the fact that the dominant culture has continued to exert unequal power on individual and structural relationships. When teachers take a critical approach

to multicultural education, they trouble the dominant ideology that perpetuates social inequalities and demand that the histories and narratives of the oppressed cultural groups be part of the school curriculum. Teachers “enter into a democratic dialogue with each other to develop programs that promote critical reflection and inclusionary knowledge” (Jenks et al., 2001, p. 94).

Nieto (2010b) expands the boundaries of multicultural education by suggesting that it is not only about a personal awakening and call to action, but also about teachers learning to work together in a mutually supportive manner, challenging conventional school policies and practices so that all students are given access to quality education and resources to engage in meaningful learning, and working for change beyond the classroom. In other words, Nieto’s (2010a) definition of multicultural education is embedded in a sociopolitical context. A significant aspect of the sociopolitical context concerns the unexamined ideologies that form commonly accepted ideas and values in a society. That is, multicultural education challenges not only individual level racism but also institutionalized racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and welcomes discussion around different ideas and values that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Nieto (2010a) contends that because it

uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice. (p. 68)

Employing a social justice perspective as an educator means challenging and disrupting misconceptions and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, social class, gender, and other social and human differences. It means rejecting the deficit perspective that has characterized much of the education of historically

marginalized students. It also means providing all students with the material and emotional resources necessary to learn to their full potential. Lastly, being social justice-oriented as an educator involves creating a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and supports agency for social change (Nieto, 2010a). Nevertheless, Nieto (2010b) cautions:

Although multicultural education began as a reform movement with a powerful commitment to educational equity and an unequivocal stance against racism, in most places it is implemented as curriculum and practices that are little more than ethnic additives or cultural celebrations...schools, in their enthusiasm to provide students with positive role models, to boost self-esteem, and to diversify the curriculum (all sorely needed, no question about it), [are] neglecting their fundamental role: to promote student learning. (Nieto, 2010b, p. 24)

History of Multicultural Education

In this subsection, I identify two important antecedents to what we now call multicultural education, locating these within the ancestral line of multicultural education. I do so because it helps us understand the critical and emancipatory aims of multicultural education historically. There were two distinct movements in history identified as the antecedents of multicultural education (Banks, 2004). First was the ethnic studies movement. African American scholars such as G. W. Williams (1882-83), Woodson and Wesley (1922), and Du Bois (1935, 1973) were the first ones to engage in ethnic studies research and the development of teaching materials. Whereas prior curricula reflected only White perspectives and experiences, African American scholars integrated content about African Americans in school and teacher education curricula. These endeavors continued with publications, research, and teaching to the 1960s, when the new ethnic studies movement arose (Banks, 2004). Second is the intergroup education movement. After World War II, the demands of the war created job opportunities in the

North and the West of the U.S. As a result, many African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Whites living in rural areas migrated to find jobs in war-related industries, and racial and ethnic tension arose in the nation. Intergroup education emerged during this time mainly by White liberal educators and social scientists who worked in colleges and universities to resolve the problem of prejudice and create interracial understanding (Cook & Cook, 1954; Taba & Wilson, 1946).

The aims and goals of the two groups were quite different in that while the focus of ethnic studies movement was on ethnic attachment, pride, empowerment, and action to change society, the intergroup education movement emphasized intercultural interactions within a shared culture. In other words, whereas ethnic studies scholars and educators had a pluralistic view and mainly problematized institutional racism, power, and structural inequality, intergroup scholars and educators supported an assimilation approach to the mainstream culture (Banks, 2004).

The early goal of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s was racial desegregation (e.g., passage of the 1964 Civil Right and the 1965 Voting Rights Acts). The concept of intergroup education had emerged as an effort to create a desegregated society in which all people were treated fairly and lived in harmony. However, these efforts were unsuccessful in transforming the fundamental structure of economic and political inequality particularly in urban areas across the U.S. Issues of inadequate housing and health care, unemployment, crowded and run-down schools remained unchanged (Ladson-Billings & Brown, 2008).

As a result, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, as African Americans continued to experience inequality, they demanded Black separatism in the form of Black

community control of schools and curriculum (Ladson-Billings & Brown, 2008). Two leading Civil Rights organizations, the Congress of Racial Equality and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, changed from holding an interracial stance to espousing Black Nationalism (Ravitch, 1983). Gay (1983) contends that “the ideological and strategic focus of the [Civil Rights] movement shifted from passivity and perseverance in the face of adversity to aggression, self-determination, cultural consciousness, and political power” (p. 560). During this time, many educators expressed their concern over cultural deficit theories to explain the difficulties Black students experienced in urban school settings, and at the same time, community activists, researchers, and others demanded that school systems hire more African American teachers and administrators, as well as infuse more Black history into the curriculum through separate courses and programs at both the high school and college and/or university levels (Ford, 1973; Gay, 1983; Ladson-Billings & Brown, 2008; Sleeter, 1989). “Ethnic distortions, stereotypes, omissions, and misinformation” in textbooks were also problematized (Gay, 1983).

The 1970s was an era of growth and expansion of multiethnic education (Gay, 1983). “A wide variety of ethnic books, films and filmstrips, recordings, audio-visual packets, course outlines, and study guides” were created during this time (Gay, 1983, p. 562), and “conferences, workshops, and policies such as the ethnic Heritage Act and the NCATE standards for accreditation” (Sleeter, 1989, p. 60) supported the movement. During this period, while “theory was advancing, emerging, and evolving with apparent continuity, multiethnic practice remained largely fragmentary, sporadic, unarticulated, and unsystematic” (Gay, 1983, p. 562).

Multicultural education's emphasis on cultural pluralism was an articulation of the vision of equality in power and rights among racial groups without resorting to separatism (Sleeter, 1989). Banks (2004) notes that the demand for infusion of ethnic content into the core or mainstream curriculum did not emerge until the 1980s and 1990s. Educators who initiated individual and institutional actions to incorporate the concepts and theories of ethnic studies into the school and teacher education curricula were the first ones to contribute to formulating and developing multicultural education in the United States.

Engaging in Multicultural Education

Educators engage in multicultural education in different ways. In order to increase educational equity for all students, teachers must engage in multicultural education that goes beyond superficial cultural celebrations (Gorski, 2009; Nieto, 2010b; Souto-Manning, 2013). Banks (2004) proposes five dimensions of multicultural education that can be practically utilized by teachers in classrooms and schools in order to employ multicultural teaching. The five dimensions are 1) integrating content that represents diverse cultures, 2) challenging the notion of knowledge construction, 3) creating activities that will reduce prejudice amongst different racial groups, 4) employing pedagogy that accommodates all learners, and 5) empowering school culture and social structure. These five practices will not be implemented in classrooms and schools unless teachers realize how crucial it is to engage in critical multicultural education. Thus, a careful and critical reflection of teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences will have to precede and continue in order for them to put into practice these five dimensions.

Much of the literature on multicultural education discusses the importance of teachers adopting a curriculum and pedagogy that is culturally responsive (Gay, 2010), culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and/or culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012). The core message these terms convey is that if teachers are to be effective with all students, “they must be knowledgeable about, and attuned to, their students’ backgrounds, cultures, and experiences” (Nieto, 2013, p. 137). Ladson-Billings (1995) contends that teachers must aim to foster students’ academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness as they incorporate students’ cultures and experiences in their everyday teaching practices. As a concrete example of successful culturally relevant teaching, she writes about the common traits of eight exemplary teachers who chose to work in a low-income, largely African American school district. These teachers saw themselves as part of the community and they believed teaching to be artistry, not a technical task. They believed that all of their students could and must succeed. Therefore, the students who seemed furthest behind received plenty of extra support. The teachers kept fluid relationships with their students, often acting as learners in the classroom and these fluid relationships extended into the community. They attended community functions (e.g., churches, students’ sports events) and used community services (e.g., beauty parlors, stores). They insisted in creating a community of learners rather than making individual connections. They encouraged collaboration, teaching students to be responsible for each other’s learning. These teachers were also not dependent on state curriculum frameworks or textbooks when deciding what and how to teach. They examined conventional interpretations and introduced alternate ones. They invited students to develop a habit of critically analyzing the content of the curriculum.

Paris (2012) offers culturally sustaining pedagogy as an alternative for culturally responsive or relevant pedagogy as he argues that relevance and responsiveness

do not guarantee in stance or meaning that one goal of an educational program is to maintain heritage ways and to value cultural and linguistic sharing across difference, to sustain and support bi- and multilingualism and bi- and multiculturalism. (p. 95)

Paris and Alim (2014) point out that culturally sustaining pedagogy is needed not only to honor diverse communities but also to ensure access and opportunity for students as different linguistic and cultural skills are increasingly required in our ever more globalized world. They point out that previous frameworks for asset pedagogies have too often been enacted in static ways that focus mainly on the ways racial and ethnic difference were enacted in the past without attending to the dynamic nature of culture. They also argue that while it is important to support the practices of communities of color, it is also important to critique regressive cultural practices (e.g., rap battles that reify hegemonic discourses about gender, race, sexuality, and citizenship) and raise critical consciousness.

In terms of the need for teachers to possess cultural competency in interacting with students' parents, families, and communities (Goodwin, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), Gay (1993) suggests that teachers should be "cultural brokers" who thoroughly understand multiple cultural systems, mediate cultural in/compatibilities, and know how to build linkages across cultures that facilitate the instructional process. Although Gay (1993) suggests that teachers must thoroughly understand different cultural systems, it also unveils how this is not easy or simple to accomplish as culture is complex, dynamic, and ever-changing.

Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) suggest that teachers engage in household research to develop more sophisticated understanding of children and their families' rich funds of knowledge. Teacher can assume the role of the learner as they enter into students' households and establish a more symmetrical relationship with students' families (Moll et al., 1992). As an example of such approach, the early childhood teacher education program, referred to as CREATE (Communities as Resources in Early Childhood Teacher Education), in the College of Education in University of Arizona, suggests that early childhood educators incorporate cultural knowledge and skills that come from students' communities and actively involve families in literacy education for children. As guiding principles, CREATE espouses to value the funds of knowledge within diverse cultural communities, encourage story as a meaning-making process to understand self and the world, celebrate the significance of family and community literacies in literacy learning, and provide professional learning opportunities for educators across community, school, and university settings (DaSilva Iddings, 2017).

In short, to engage in multicultural education from a critical approach is to value students' personal and cultural knowledge and incorporate it in teacher's everyday curriculum and pedagogy with the intention of acting against oppression and expanding equity. When approaching multicultural education with a critical stance, systemic oppressions (e.g., racism, xenophobia, linguisticism) are considered, acknowledging that these oppressions structurally contribute to inequities and injustices in education and society. A critical approach to multicultural education is predicated not only on the critical deconstruction of hegemonies, but on acting against oppression in and through teaching.

Multicultural Teacher Education

In this section, I review the literature on multicultural teacher education (MTE), organizing it in two categories: critical reflection and action. To be sure, in his extensive review of literature, Paul Gorski (2009) grouped the literature in multicultural teacher education into four categories:

- scholarship that critically analyzes MTE practice from a theoretical or philosophical position
- scholarship in which teacher educators measure the impact of a class or workshop, usually by analyzing data collected from their students
- scholarship that describes challenges associated with raising multicultural consciousness in teacher education students
- scholarship that critically analyzes the body of literature on some aspect of MTE (p. 310)

My study significantly departs from these established categories.

As a framing to this review, it is important to understand that liberal approaches to multicultural education, which seek to foster cultural sensitivity, tolerance, and multicultural competence often lack attention to systemic educational inequities and do not undertake a critical institutional analysis. Critical pedagogy can serve as a guiding path in fostering the kind of multicultural education that is emancipatory, being characterized by teaching as resistance and counter-hegemonic practice (Gorski, 2009).

Critical Reflection

Literature on multicultural teacher education puts special emphasis on engaging preservice teachers in critical reflection of their own privileges and prejudices as well as the problematization systemic and structured dis/advantages (Banks, 1994; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Fine, 1997; Goodwin & Genor, 2008; Gorski, 2009; Jordan-Irvine, 2003; Picower, 2009; Souto-Manning, 2013). That is because preservice teachers' unexamined beliefs, especially those that are contradicted by new ideas about teaching introduced in teacher education courses, tend to remain latent throughout teacher education, and they resurface once preservice teachers are placed in a classroom as teachers (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Research has shown that preservice teachers tend to uncritically hold beliefs about the existing social order that reflect dominant ideologies, and they tend to see the social order as a fair and just one (Bartolomé, 2004; Picower, 2009). Without developing awareness of the dominant ideology that perpetuate Whiteness, preservice teachers, even when they approach multicultural education, may enact "culturally relevant teaching styles in a colonizing fashion" (Crowley & Smith, 2015, p. 162).

Milner (2010) argues that all teacher education programs must engage preservice teachers to critically reflect on five important diversity conceptions. These reflections are helpful for disrupting racial superiority and inferiority ideologies that permeate the teaching and learning space. First, preservice teachers must problematize the color-evasive approach and recognize their own and students' racial identities and how race can affect learning opportunities. The color-evasive approach promotes curricular and instructional decisions that are grounded in a White norm. As Banks (2001) explains, the

color-evasive approach “reveals a privileged position that refuses to legitimize racial identifications that are very important to people of color and that are often used to justify inaction and perpetuation of the status quo” (p. 12).

Second, preservice teachers must recognize that they have their own subjective cultural references and ways of knowing and experiencing the world, and that they should not operate solely from such perspective. Otherwise, cultural conflicts can arise between teachers and students. More specifically, students of color who do not share in the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1995) can be positioned in opposition to White teachers and White teachers can end up penalizing students of color for not conforming to their subjective cultural references.

Third, the myth of meritocracy must be questioned. Preservice teachers can believe that their own success has been earned by hard work and that other people’s failure is due to lack of effort. Milner (2010) argues that preservice teachers should realize the unearned consequences, privileges, and benefits based on Whiteness. Preservice teachers must recognize the hegemonic forces, systemic barriers, and institutional structures that prevent the success of people of color.

Fourth, preservice teachers should interrupt damaging deficit conceptions. Students of color, students from low-/no-income families, and students whose first language is not English are often seen as deficient and inadequate compared to their White peers and/or peers who are members of the dominant group. A dominant perspective that reflects the ideology of racial hierarchy is that White people’s beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies should be the norm to which others should be compared, measured, and evaluated (Sheurich & Young, 1997).

Lastly, preservice teachers should reject low expectations for students of color. This conception relates to the fourth conception in that teachers may lower their expectations when they see their students of color to be deficient. Preservice teachers should critically reflect on whether they set high expectations for all students regardless of their backgrounds, recognizing that all students are capable of excelling in school and providing the necessary supports in order to ensure their success.

As an example of engaging preservice teachers in critical reflection, one of the multicultural education course syllabi analyzed by Gorski (2009) stated:

This course takes an in-depth critical reflection and discovery of self and of the ways in which personal values develop from the integration of...multiple dimensions that shape adult identity. Students will confront their own assumptions, bias, and value (both positive and negative) and see how these factors influence interpersonal relationships. After self-reflection, students will use this knowledge to begin a journey of cultural understanding. (p. 314)

Cochran-Smith (1995) also contends that preservice teachers must first become self-aware and reflective, acknowledging the impact of their own racial and cultural identities on themselves, others, and society in order to become multicultural educators.

In order to learn to teach in a society that is increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, prospective teacher, as well as experienced teachers and teacher educators, need opportunities to examine much of what is usually unexamined in the tightly braided relationships of language, culture and power in school and schooling. This kind of examination inevitably begins with our own histories as human beings and as educators; our own experiences as members of particular races, classes, and genders; and as children, parents and teachers in the world. It also includes a close look at the tacit assumptions we make about the motivations and behaviors of other children, other parents, and other teachers. (p. 500)

Conceptually, Freire (1970) points out why critical reflection is a crucial component of transformation in education.

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men [sic] pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (p. 58)

To put it in another way, through the process of “conscientization” (Freire, 1970, p. 19), teacher education programs can challenge many preservice teachers’ knowledge about themselves, their deficit conception of students of color and their tendency to regard White people’s beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies as the norm. Without preservice teachers engaging in critical reflection, many of them are unable or unwilling to incorporate “new ideas and new habits of thought and action” into their teaching, preferring to teach based on their original beliefs (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 3).

When preservice teachers are given temporal, pedagogical, and spatial conditions to explore their own cultures and see themselves as cultural beings, they can realize that students who come from different cultures are also cultural beings whose beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies should be equally respected. This process can encourage preservice teachers to acquire positive attitudes toward students whose cultural backgrounds differ from theirs (Irvine, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Gay and Howard (2000) refer to this idea as “critical cultural consciousness,” and Villegas and Lucas (2002) as “sociocultural consciousness.”

Although scholarship on multicultural teacher education continues to discuss the importance of contextualizing what is taught for preservice teachers by engaging them in critical reflection, some teacher education programs still have preservice teachers mainly “read and discuss discrimination based on race, class, gender, and other social oppressions through a professor-assigned text” (Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 96). Combining readings with critical reflection is essential in developing preservice teachers as

multicultural educators because literature can broaden and deepen preservice teachers' historical, political, social, and cultural understandings of multiculturalism and multicultural education. However, readings that are not contextualized may end up being perceived as just another assignment to be completed for the course. Ellerbrock and Cruz (2014) argue that readings should not only inform, but also challenge students to self-reflect and respond in thoughtful ways.

Freire (1970) warns against “the ‘banking’ concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (p. 58). Freire (1970) argues that educators are not effective when they expound

on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students.... [Their] task is to ‘fill’ the students with the contents of [their]...narration—contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity. (p. 57)

Freire’s (1970) warning against the banking concept of education offers immediate implications for teacher education. Teacher educators must engage preservice teachers in critical self-reflection based on their realities rather than seeing them as empty depositories who will store knowledge given by the teacher educator.

In my study, I sought to learn from the reflections of preservice teachers who had enrolled in a required multicultural teacher education course that encouraged students to engage in critical cultural reflections of themselves, others, and society. Further, I sought to learn how such reflections informed their attitudes and practice in student teaching within the context of an initial teacher education program during the subsequent academic year.

Practice

While the rise of the cultural difference paradigm has shifted many educators' beliefs and attitudes toward various cultures (Goodwin et al., 2008; Valdés, 1996), Gay (2010) points out that it is not enough to be simply aware of cultural differences that exist in classrooms, but “goodwill must be accompanied by pedagogical knowledge and skills as well as the courage to dismantle the status quo” (p. 14). Teacher education programs have approached preservice teachers' development of pedagogical knowledge and skills in different ways (Zeichner, 2014). While some programs perceive preservice teachers as technicians who should learn to implement scripted teaching strategies and curriculum through extensive experience in schools, Zeichner (2014) argues that preservice teachers must prepare to become

well-educated professionals who, in addition to their technical expertise, have also acquired adaptive expertise so that they are able to exercise their discretion and judgement in the classroom. (p. 559)

Similarly, Britzman (2003) argues that teaching is a “struggle for voice and discursive practices amid cacophony of past and present voices, lived experiences, and available practices” (p. 31). In other words, learning to engage in critical multicultural teaching is not about simply copying decontextualized skills or mirroring predetermined images. Preservice teachers must be able to reconstruct what they learn and reconfigure their practices as they move across the different social worlds of classrooms and schools.

Zeichner (2010) suggests different types of hybrid spaces that can bring together practitioner and university-based knowledge in less hierarchical ways to create new learning opportunities for preservice teachers. First, P-12 educators can be invited to teach portions of required courses, supervise students, and participate in ongoing program

renewal and evaluation. Second, without inviting P-12 educators, teacher education programs can still create opportunities to represent teachers' practices in university courses so that preservice teachers examine both academic and practitioner-generated knowledge related to particular aspects of teaching. Ellerbrock and Cruz (2014) similarly argue that providing readings based on genuine experiences during multicultural education coursework can be powerful in developing diversity awareness. When preservice teachers engage with case studies, personal stories, and experiential learning opportunities in which they have to make vicarious decision-making, their awareness of diversity can be heightened and their attitude towards engaging in multicultural education can be influenced positively (Ellerbrock & Cruz, 2014). Third, university-based teacher educators can also hold courses in schools to strategically connect their methods courses to the practices and expertise of teachers in schools. Lastly, university-based teacher educators can establish clinical faculty positions and work in both university and school sites so that they are intimately familiar with both coursework and preservice teachers' field experiences.

Providing field experience for preservice teachers has been identified as one of the effective ways preservice teachers can contextualize their academic work (Brown, 2005; Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Grant & Secada, 1990; Lin et al., 2008; Ukpokodu, 2003; Vaughan, 2002). Darling-Hammond (2006) contends that preservice teachers see and understand theory and practice differently if they are taking coursework concurrently with fieldwork. Vavrus (2002) also argues that multicultural coursework should be interwoven with field experience to foster the aims of culturally responsive teaching. However, as Gallego (2001) notes, many teacher education programs that provide field

experiences for preservice teachers in fact do not provide the kind of contact with communities needed to overcome preservice teachers' negative attitudes toward students of color, their families and communities. Without connections between the classroom, school, and local communities, field experiences may actually strengthen preservice teachers' stereotypes of children of color, rather than stimulate their examination (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Haberman & Post, 1992).

When providing preservice teachers with field experiences, Villegas (2007) claims that teacher education programs must examine preservice teachers' dispositions towards social justice by inquiring into their patterns of actions that include

setting high performance goals for all students and holding them accountable; planning and implementing an enriched curriculum that challenges every learner to develop critical thinking skills; helping students examine text from multiple perspectives; ensuring that learning activities offer appropriate adaptations for English language learners and for students with special needs; helping students see connections between what they are asked to learn in school and their everyday lives outside school; selecting and using materials that are relevant to students' individual and cultural experiences; using examples and analogies from students' lives to clarify new concepts; using varied instructional strategies to accommodate differences in approaches to learning; ensuring that all students are actively engaged in learning activities; providing encouragement for all learners to excel, and creating an inclusive classroom culture. (p. 375)

In sum, it is not just the availability of field experience that enables preservice teachers to engage in what they are learning from their teacher education courses. While placing preservice teachers in culturally diverse classrooms is necessary, this will not automatically guarantee that preservice teachers adopt a disposition for critical multicultural teaching. Teacher education programs must encourage preservice teachers to inquire collaboratively during coursework about their teaching practices so that they can make sense of the social world and reconfigure their teaching.

Reviewing Empirical Research on Multicultural Teacher Education Courses

In this section, I review the empirical literature on multicultural teacher education courses to further establish what is known and situate the contributions my dissertation research makes. Below, after establishing the parameters of the literature review, I identify key categories which serve to organize and analyze the studies reviewed.

Parameters of the Literature Review

I performed a review of empirical literature on teacher education courses that were situated within a critical perspective. In my review, I specifically investigated the ways in which these courses had influence on preservice teachers' development of critical cultural awareness and their dispositions towards engaging in critical multicultural education. This literature review points to new directions for research that is necessary in the field.

The databases searched for this review were ERIC, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. The search terms for the databases were "multicultural education course," "multicultural education class," combined with "preservice (or pre-service) teacher education," or "social justice," "culturally relevant," combined with "preservice (or pre-service) teacher education" and "multicultural education." Additionally, I further located pertinent research from the reference lists of articles and book chapters. In order to understand recent practices in multicultural teacher education, I limited the literature review to empirical studies published from 2005 to 2015, the year of my proposal hearing. From the search results, I excluded studies that were out of my scope of review. Since my study sought to understand preservice teachers' experiences in a multicultural

education course, I excluded studies that were not about preservice teachers and studies that did not focus on teacher education courses addressing issues around diversity and social justice. In order to better understand the landscape of multicultural teacher education in the U.S., I excluded studies that were conducted outside of the U.S.

In reviewing empirical literature on courses that focus on multicultural education, I identified the following salient themes: critical reflection of self-identity and beliefs, resistance, and teaching practices. Besides, since my study is contextualized in an early childhood multicultural education course, I additionally examined studies that focused on early childhood multicultural teacher education.

Critical reflection of self-identity and beliefs. The first theme that I identified in my empirical literature review was the focus on engaging preservice teachers in critical reflection of their cultural identities and beliefs (Andrews, 2009; Adams et al., 2005; Christian & Zippay, 2012; Goodwin & Genor, 2008; Guillory, 2012; Leonard & Leonard, 2006; Pewewardy, 2005; Souto-Manning, 2011; Szecsi et al., 2010; Zygmunt-Filwalk, 2005). Gorski (2010) suggests that the overarching goal of multicultural education is to effect social change. He argues that the process of social change requires transformation of self, teaching, and society. All three components are indispensable in bringing social change and they are intricately related to one another, but in the following studies, the primary area of focus is the transformation of self. To be a multicultural educator, preservice teachers must first self-identify as a cultural being and examine how their perceptions and beliefs may be positioning students' cultural backgrounds as advantages or disadvantages (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2013). My review of empirical studies showed that cultural autobiographies, creative and non-threatening

approaches, and field experiences have been used to deepen preservice teachers' critical self-reflections.

Two studies uncovered that having preservice teachers write cultural autobiographies helped them reflect on how their past experiences have impacted their beliefs about themselves, others, and society (Goodwin & Genor, 2008; Leonard & Leonard, 2006). In Leonard and Leonard's (2006) study, the instructor facilitated preservice teachers' participation in autobiographical writing for examining values, biases, and assumptions pertaining to socially constructed categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, exceptionality, language, and social status. They found that overall preservice teachers' "cultural consciousness, intercultural sensitivity, and commitment to social justice" (p. 34) increased. Cultural consciousness, according to Leonard and Leonard (2006), means being aware that diversity of ideas and practices is found in human society (Bennett, 2003). Many of the preservice teachers in the study demonstrated cultural consciousness to different degrees. While there were White preservice teachers who conveyed critical awareness of the privileges typically associated with their racial identity, there were also White preservice teachers who discussed their cultural selves in terms of family and family values but not in terms of race or ethnicity. They found that preservice teachers who were members of minoritized groups were more likely to describe themselves in terms of race and ethnicity and address issues of discrimination, bias, and prejudice related to their group identities. Having intercultural sensitivity means to be able to "take on the views of others" (p. 50). The study suggested that those who had experienced some degree of marginalization and discrimination themselves were better able to view a position from an empathetic standpoint. In terms of

demonstrating commitment to social justice, Leonard and Leonard (2006) found that overall, preservice teachers talked about their responsibility to address the inequities in society, but that they could not find evidence of preservice teachers actively working towards social justice and of going beyond recognizing the plight of disadvantaged groups.

Goodwin and Genor (2008) utilized autobiographical analysis as a “disruptive strategy” to have preservice teachers critically examine their biases and assumptions. Goodwin and Genor (2008) realized from their study that autobiographical analysis should be utilized in a way that helps preservice teachers go beyond providing a cathartic or therapeutic outlet. Otherwise, although preservice teachers might have an opportunity to reflect on their cultural beliefs and experiences, they might not be pushed to the point in which they have to wrestle with their assumptions about privileges and prejudices that would ultimately affect their instructional decisions and interactions with students. Goodwin and Genor (2008) found that when preservice teachers realized their cultural locations from engaging in autobiographical analysis, they were able to recognize their assumptions, articulate their intentions to resist those assumptions and prior experiences that might perpetuate inequity, and come up with action plans to ensure that the children they teach experience an education different from theirs.

The multicultural education course in my study also invited preservice teachers to write cultural autobiographies. Similar to Leonard and Leonard’s (2006) study, preservice teachers’ cultural consciousness increased through their cultural autobiographies. My study unveils the differing reflections of preservice teachers when they were prompted to more deeply examine power and privilege attached to their cultural identities.

Creating spaces for preservice teachers to critically examine inequity and oppression and how they have been beneficiaries of injustices may result in preservice teachers denying or silencing the existence and impact of White privilege and structural discriminations toward people of color (Amos, 2010; Chan & Treacy, 1996; Chizhik, 2003; LaDuke, 2009; Locke, 2005; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; Pewewardy, 2005; Picower, 2009; Rhone, 2002). My review of empirical literature unveiled that teacher educators have been utilizing various approaches such as play, shared journaling, online reflective writing, and multicultural literature in order to engage preservice teachers in a non-threatening way in raising their cultural awareness (Christian & Zippay, 2012; Pewewardy, 2005; Souto-Manning, 2011; Szecsi, Spillman, Vazquez-Montilla, & Mayberry, 2010). Below, I more fully explore these studies.

The first study presented the utilization of play as a tool for helping preservice teachers recognize their power and privilege. Souto-Manning (2011) used Boalian theatre games as tools for engaging preservice teachers in close examination of their racial perspectives and privileges. 80% of the preservice teachers were White. For the first game (i.e., Columbian Hypnosis), she had preservice teachers paired up; one being the hypnotist and the other the hypnotized. The hypnotist used one hand, placed a few inches away from the hypnotized person's face, to control movements and choice of the hypnotized. For the second game (i.e., Power Shuffle), she asked preservice teachers to cross to the other side of the room when they were able to identify with the statement Souto-Manning (2011) made about a specific socially privileged positioning (e.g., being White, growing up in an economically comfortable household, parents have received higher education). She argues based on her analysis of qualitative and quantitative data

that playing with power and privilege, when combined with dialogue, helped preservice teachers understand their racial privileges and deconstruct the idea of meritocracy.

The second study explored shared journaling as a way to engage White preservice teachers in critical multicultural education discourse. Pewewardy (2005) had preservice teachers reflect and share journals with their partners rather than discuss in class or with the teacher educator about their life experiences regarding racial issues. They journaled about their prior experiences with other ethnic, socioeconomic, religious groups, and what they had previously heard about regarding these people. They were also encouraged to critically think and write about the race-evasive perspective. Pewewardy (2005) found that shared journaling circumvented some of the resistance preservice teachers showed during open discussion and helped them gain a growing cultural awareness and understanding of their racial identities.

The third study was similar to the second study in that teacher educators in a predominantly White teacher education program provided opportunities for preservice teachers to write rather than speak about issues surrounding race and culture. Christian and Zippay (2012) found that when preservice teachers were given time and space to deliberately and systematically reflect and write about their conceptions regarding race and culture online, over time, they were able to more profoundly think about themselves as racial beings personally and in relation to others. Christian and Zippay (2012) noted that reflective writing helped preservice teachers “[question] the hegemonic discourse of the dominant culture, of mandated curricula and of American society in general” (p. 35).

The fourth study used multicultural literature to transform preservice teachers’ attitudes and approaches toward teaching children of color. In Szecsi, Spillman, Vazquez-

Montilla, and Mayberry's (2010) study, preservice teachers in a predominantly White teacher education program were asked to explore multicultural literature at three different levels (i.e., young children, teenagers, and adults) and engage in critical reflection and discussion. Researchers in the study concluded that when preservice teachers had opportunities to examine their own values and understandings through multicultural literature that employed a different cultural lens, preservice teachers were able to realize themselves as cultural beings and clarify their misconceptions toward other cultures.

These four studies revealed that teacher educators have been seeking unique approaches to support preservice teachers' critical reflection around race, privilege, and prejudices. The multicultural education course in my study also had a unique approach in that the teacher educator whose primary professional identity is an early childhood teacher invited preservice teachers to contextualize their reflections by providing multiple examples of her own teaching practices. My study sought to learn about the ways in which preservice teachers reflected on notions of race, power, and privilege in a critical multicultural teacher education course and whether they carried such learnings onto their student teaching.

Teacher educators have also been providing field experiences for preservice teachers, aiming to promote their critically reflection around self, others, and society (Andrews, 2009; Adams et al., 2005; Guillory, 2012; Zygmunt-Filwalk, 2005). I reviewed four studies that discussed preservice teachers' reflections based on their field experiences in urban schools primarily comprised of children of color. In Zygmunt-Filwalk's (2005) study, preservice teachers who were mostly White (i.e., 19 out of 22) participated in a semester of immersive field experience in elementary schools

predominantly comprised of African-American children. The study showed that the semester-long cultural immersion instigated a sense of disequilibrium in (the mostly White) preservice teachers, spurring critical self-reflection that led them to amend their foundational beliefs. Through the process of relationship building and reflection, preservice teachers' fears, prejudices, apprehensions, and expectations of African American students were named, troubled, and interrupted.

Similarly, Andrews (2009) engaged preservice teachers in various field experiences aiming to develop their dispositions and skills pertaining to the successful teaching of students of color. Andrews (2009) studied a teacher education class primarily comprised of African American preservice teachers. Preservice teachers tutored in local urban elementary and high schools, conducted observations and interviews, and worked in a community center. Andrews (2009) claims that the service-learning experience facilitated the reflection process for preservice teachers in that they increased their understanding and examination of the sociocultural and sociopolitical context in which students of color in urban settings learn and how they might serve as change agents in schools in their future role as teachers.

Whereas Zygmunt-Filwalk (2005) and Andrews (2009) reported that field experiences promoted preservice teachers' critical self-reflections, Guillory (2012) and Adams, Bondy, and Kuhel (2005) documented mixed findings. Guillory (2012), in her predominantly White multicultural education course, created opportunities for preservice teachers to engage in critical interrogations of their privileges and assumptions about children from minoritized racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diverse backgrounds by having them participate as tutors for students labeled "English Language Learners" for

one semester. She found that some preservice teachers who superficially wrote their reflections based on course readings while others engaged in substantive thinking about their teaching in a sociopolitical context. Adams, Bondy, and Kuhel (2005) found that preservice teachers' reflections varied. In general, preservice teachers with prior experiences with communities and individuals whose race, ethnicity, culture, and languaging practices did not reflect their own showed more cultural responsiveness and openness to examining and working to interrupt oppression after field experiences mentoring African American children and getting to know their families and communities. Generally, preservice teachers who lacked such experiences did not engage in such critical reflections.

Although Guillory (2012) and Adams, Bondy, and Kuhel (2005) reported preservice teachers' differing degrees of self-reflection, in general, all four studies claimed that preservice teachers developed in their cultural consciousness through field experiences. The multicultural education course in my study was not linked with field experience. Although the teacher education program required that preservice teachers engaged in mandatory student teaching practica, these field experiences were separate from the multicultural education course. Preservice teachers were not prompted to engage in critical self-reflection that would develop their cultural consciousness during their student teaching. My study analyzed preservice teachers' reflections about themselves, others, and society in such a teacher education context.

In sum, the above empirical studies showed that teacher education programs have been using autobiographies to foster preservice teachers' critical reflection of their identities, creative approaches to promote preservice teachers' deep and honest self-

examination, and field experiences to help preservice teachers interrogate their assumptions and prejudices. The multicultural education course in my study had similar and different approaches from the empirical studies described above. That is, the teacher educator had preservice teachers write cultural autobiographies. She discussed her own teaching practices to help preservice teachers contextualize reflection. Field experience was not required in the multicultural education course, but preservice teachers were engaged in a field experience that did not employ the same philosophical and epistemological lens with the multicultural education course the subsequent academic year. My study aimed to learn about preservice teachers' reflections and ensuing actions in such a teacher education context.

Resistance. While there were studies that contended that courses that focused on diversity, privilege, and social justice helped preservice teachers develop critical cultural awareness, other studies concluded that one course hardly altered the beliefs and attitudes of White preservice teachers (Amos, 2010; Cao, 2011; Crowley & Smith, 2015; Dixon & Dingus, 2007; Evans-Winter & Hoff, 2011; LaDuke, 2009; Locke, 2005; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; Picower, 2009). Below, I present studies that reported White preservice teachers' resistance when discussing power and privilege. I further review studies that unveiled White preservice teachers' heightened resistance, or actions that reflect their intention of protecting Whiteness, in courses led by teacher educators of color. This is pertinent because the critical multicultural teacher education course in which my participants were enrolled was predominantly comprised of White students and was taught by an instructor of color.

Four studies documented White preservice teachers' resistance in acknowledging White privilege that perpetuates inequities. In Mueller and O'Connor's (2007) study, the multicultural education course took place in a predominantly White teacher education program. The course aimed to have preservice teachers reflect on the ways their own social positioning and identities informed their frames of reference and influenced their capacities to practice equitable education. After preservice teachers engaged in a series of discussions and written reflections regarding assigned readings on institutionalized racism and the consequences we see nowadays, they were required to interview someone who was from a different racial and socioeconomic background to compare and interpret their academic outcomes in contrast to the interviewee. Mueller and O'Connor (2007) found that most preservice teachers maintained the logic of their original assumptions about why they succeeded in school at the end of the semester, and all of the preservice teachers marginalized structural explanations for different educational outcomes by arguing in their final narratives that their own story and that of the other were more alike than different.

In Picower's (2009) study, the contradictions exposed between the course materials and White preservice teachers' previous understandings caused them a great deal of confusion and discomfort. She argued that preservice teachers relied on three types of "tools of Whiteness" in an effort to maintain their prior hegemonic understandings. First, preservice teachers' various emotional responses (i.e., emotional tools of Whiteness) such as anger, defensiveness, and guilt served to obfuscate the concepts being introduced. Second, preservice teachers' beliefs (i.e., ideological tools of Whiteness), for example, negating the existence of racism, stating that racism is personal

not political, and claiming that societal issues are out of individual control, hindered them from adopting an active anti-racist stance. Third, based on their feelings and beliefs, preservice teachers behaved according to their hegemonic understandings (i.e., performative tools of Whiteness). Picower (2009) claims that due to the fact that most White preservice teachers remain in environments that reinforce their preconceived understandings even after enrolling in a multicultural education course, there are minimal lasting results.

Similarly, in Locke's (2005) study, White preservice teachers expressed skepticism both inside and outside of class and they disassociated their personal identities from the issues discussed in the course. For example, preservice teachers responded positively to McIntosh's White privilege (1998) but did so only on a superficial level, refusing to acknowledge that they were beneficiaries of special privileges. Many preservice teachers expressed that any special privileges in the form of educational opportunities they received were due to their hard work, being good students, and making the right choices. Locke (2005) concluded that the multicultural education course did little to help White preservice teachers interrogate the institutional structures of in/equality and in/equity. He argues that multicultural perspectives should be infused throughout teacher education programs to influence preservice teachers' perspectives and beliefs.

Lastly, in Crowley and Smith's (2015) study, situated in a social studies methods course, White preservice teachers resisted identifying White privilege as a form of structural racism. Instead, they individualized racism. They used personal biographies to accept or reject aspects of race privilege. Crowley and Smith (2015) suggest that teacher

educators must recognize the unfamiliar nature of structural thinking, understand the limitations of personal experience, and acknowledge the challenges of structural considerations within individual classrooms when they engage preservice teachers in discussions around race and Whiteness.

Besides showing resistance to the notion of White privilege, there were four studies that further discussed White preservice teachers' resistance to teacher educators of color (Amos, 2010; Cao, 2011; Evans-Winter & Hoff, 2011; LaDuke, 2009). These studies revealed how White preservice teachers engaged in visible protection of their Whiteness, deliberately and actively exercising their racial power against the content discussed in class and the teacher educator of color.

In LaDuke's (2009) study, a Latinx teacher educator taught the course. He tried to engage preservice teachers in reflection rather than merely learning about decontextualized knowledge by involving preservice teachers in activities that challenged them to consider their own multiple identities, the lived realities of others, and the role of education as a system of social reproduction. LaDuke (2009) observed that White preservice teachers in the course deliberately remained silent or engaged in debates as a form of resistance and when they were presented with course content that intended to challenge their views on racism, sexism, and homophobia that affect students of color's educational opportunities. He suggests in his study that a teacher educator of color instructing the course might have been a "possible root of resistance" (p. 39) toward the course content. Similarly, Amos (2010), an Asian female teacher educator, had preservice teachers reflect on the pervasive nature of White privilege in the United States by engaging them to think and talk about their personal stories and other people's stories.

She states that White preservice teachers' reaction in class clearly demonstrated their awareness of White privilege but that they did not want to admit it to the teacher educator of color. Her study focused on four students of color in class who remained silent throughout the course in the predominantly White class due to their frustration, despair, and fear caused by the White peers' insensitivity and naïveté to issues of race and ethnicity. She argued, "Witnessing the White students' hostility towards the minority instructor and the process of being preyed upon, [the students of color] were fearful for their own safety" (p. 35).

Due to the fact that preservice teachers are students of a course in which they eventually receive a course grade, they may not always directly demonstrate their resentment or hostility toward the teacher educator during the course (Cao, 2011). Dixon and Dingus (2007) argue that teacher educators of color experience the "tyranny of the majority" (p. 640) through anonymous comments when they teach about equity, diversity, and/or multicultural education in predominantly White institutions. Two studies showed how White preservice teachers expressed their discontent about the teacher educator of color in the course evaluation form (Cao, 2011; Evans-Winter & Hoff, 2011).

In Evans-Winter and Hoff's (2011) study, a White preservice teacher commented in the evaluation form about an African-American teacher educator:

Our instructor was VERY VERY BIASED!!! She is very rude. I really wish that I would have taken this class with another professor because I feel that she is racist toward her Caucasian students. (p. 468)

Cao (2011), an Asian female teacher educator, also writes about preservice teachers' resentment and anger expressed in course evaluations in the "social foundations of education," "multicultural education," and "contemporary issues in educational policy"

courses in which preservice teachers were given time and space to systematically and critically examine their values, worldviews, and prejudices, and understand racialized inequities in society and schools.

These four studies show that when teacher educators of color try to have preservice teachers engage in critical reflection of their privileges and prejudices, there are heightened tensions. These studies unveiled that White preservice teacher held the belief that teacher educators of color were being biased in suggesting that structural inequalities still existed in our society. They believed that teacher educators of color were pushing their own agenda by raising social justice concerns and enacting what some call “reverse racism.”

Findings from these studies reflect the pervasive presence of racist ideas that have long persisted in our society (Kendi, 2016). White racial superiority is revealed when teacher educators of color attempt to challenge White preservice teachers of their existing ideologies. The overt and covert tools deployed by White preservice teachers to protect their power and privilege reflect how racism permeates the structures, processes, and discourse in teacher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

While conducting my study, I was mindful of these research findings. My study took place in a racialized learning context in that the early childhood multicultural education course was facilitated by a Latina teacher educator in a predominantly White institution of higher education. I critically examined in what ways the instructor’s racial and ethnic identity influenced the learning experiences of White preservice teachers and preservice teachers of color. I now turn to the third theme, teaching practices, explored in empirical studies within multicultural teacher education literature.

Teaching practices. Whereas there were many studies that had an explicit focus on challenging preservice teachers to engage in critical reflection of their privileges and prejudices, not as many studies elaborated on the ways in which preservice teachers explored and negotiated multicultural curriculum and pedagogy to strengthen their disposition for engaging in multicultural education. Pedagogy should not be considered “delivery of standardized procedure” (Ellis, 2011, p. 182). Preservice teachers must rather continue to develop in their capacity to interpret the complexities of social situations and respond flexibly with new ideas and solutions (Zeichner, 2014). With this in mind, I paid close attention to examining studies that elaborated on various ways preservice teachers had opportunities to explore, develop, and engage with multicultural pedagogy to strengthen their dispositions for multicultural teaching.

A number of studies (Andrews, 2009; Bodur, 2012; Christian & Zippay, 2012; Cho & DeCastro-Amrosetti, 2006; Delano-Oriaran, 2012; Fitchett et al., 2012; Guillory, 2012; Lonquist et al., 2009; Pewewardy, 2005; Sailes, 2013; Williams et al., 2012; Wong, 2008) noted that the teacher education course aimed to engage preservice teachers in both critical reflection of their privileges and prejudices and exploration of multicultural practices. In Christian and Zippay’s (2012) study, besides having preservice teachers critically reflect upon their personal beliefs, biases, and prejudices, the course helped preservice teachers “[identify] strategies for increasing and improving learning opportunities and environments for diverse students” (p. 35). Pewewardy (2005) provided preservice teachers an opportunity to think about “strategies they can use in their future classrooms to respond to the needs of all their students” (p. 42) so that they can “identify deliberate steps that actively contribute to developing culturally responsive pedagogy and

social justice education” (p. 43). Cho and DeCastro-Amrosetti (2006) also state that the multicultural education course they examined explored instructional strategies for teaching culturally linguistically diverse students, including the roles of families and communities. Cho and DeCastro-Amrosetti (2006) note in their study that although many preservice teachers experienced an increased awareness, understanding and appreciation of other cultures, some expressed that they still felt ill-equipped for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students due to their limited cultural knowledge, teaching experience and exposure to issues of diversity. They suggest that multicultural education courses must be accompanied by field experiences with diverse student populations before preservice teachers engage in their student teaching assignments. These studies showed that teacher educators created spaces for preservice teachers to go further from engaging in critical reflection of their privileges and prejudices by having them explore various ways in which they negotiate critical multicultural pedagogy that is beneficial for all students. The multicultural education course in my study resonated with this approach in that the teacher educator attempted to engage preservice teachers in both critical reflection and critical multicultural pedagogy.

Whereas Christian and Zippay (2012), Pewewardy (2005), and Cho and DeCastro-Amrosetti (2006) do not elaborate on the specific ways the teacher education course encouraged preservice teachers to explore multicultural pedagogy, a number of other studies specifically illustrated different approaches teacher educators used to provide practice opportunities for preservice teachers (Fitchett et al., 2012; Sailes, 2013; Williams et al., 2012). These studies are explored more closely below to understand the similarities and differences in pedagogical approaches compared to the multicultural

education course in my study. Since the multicultural education course in my study differed in a number of ways in its pedagogical approach to inviting preservice teachers to explore multicultural teaching practices, my study adds uniquely to the multicultural teacher education literature.

Sailes (2013) argues for the importance of experiential learning as curriculum makers and teachers. Preservice teachers read a case study and placed themselves in the role of an educational consultant and restructured the classroom by differentiating instructional and classroom practices. They had to consider students' different learning styles and conditions. The multicultural education course in my study took a similar approach in that the teacher educator invited preservice teachers to explore various case studies including the teacher educator's own teaching practices. However, different from the multicultural education course central to my study, preservice teachers in Sailes' (2013) study also took on teaching; they participated in a field experience in an urban school predominantly comprised of students of color, where they worked with small groups and/or individual students under the guidance of a mentor teacher. Sailes (2013) argues that these experiential learning opportunities prompted preservice teachers to critically reflect on issues of equity and diversity. Further, preservice teachers witnessed their mentor teachers engaged in culturally relevant pedagogy.

Preservice teachers in Williams, May, and Williams' (2012) study were required to write an original children's book as a means of engaging children in discussion or activities related to pluralism, equity, power, and privilege. This assignment was intended to challenge preservice teachers to consider the ways they might incorporate multicultural education into their work with children. Preservice teachers were expected to utilize the

book they created in their student teaching later on. From analyzing preservice teachers' books, researchers found that preservice teachers made important moves toward engaging with difficult topics they had previously learned to avoid. The "abstract Disney-fication...ended up allowing for considerable risk-taking as the students who used these more abstract contexts engaged with more difficult topics" (p. 32). However, researchers also noted based on preservice teachers' lack of utilization of the book they created in student teaching placements that a single course that discusses topics around power, privilege, and inequity cannot easily change preservice teachers' ideological perspectives and decision-making.

Considering that most studies do not follow up to learn about the ways in which preservice teachers think about and negotiate multicultural teaching during their student teaching after completing a teacher education course focused on diversity and equity, my study contributes to multicultural teacher education literature in that I followed up to examine the ways in which the course informed preservice teachers' student teaching experiences. Whereas preservice teachers in Williams, May, and Williams' (2012) study were situated in a teacher education program that only had one course focused on diversity, equity, and social justice, the participants of my study articulated that many of the courses in the teacher education program had a clear focus on social justice. My study explored the ways in which a required multicultural education course had influence on preservice teachers' reflections and actions in such situated learning context.

Whereas I looked into the ways in which a multicultural education course informed preservice teachers' student teaching experiences the academic year after completing the multicultural education course, in Fitchett, Starker, and Salyers' (2012)

study, preservice teachers were required to engage in student teaching simultaneously with a social studies methods course that focused on culturally responsive teaching. In the first phase of the course, preservice teachers were encouraged to ask critical questions of who is and is not participating in the standard curriculum. In the second phase, preservice teachers interviewed students in their student teaching classroom and wrote field notes and critical reflections on how their cooperating teachers' instruction recognized or dismissed the various learners in class. In the third phase, preservice teachers devised culturally relevant lesson plans and taught them to students. Based on utilizing the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2007), researchers found that preservice teachers' confidence to use culturally responsive teaching practices increased significantly based on the pedagogical scaffold. Since preservice teachers in this study had to design and teach culturally relevant lessons during their student teaching as a requirement of a social studies methods course, it cannot be known whether their increased confidence in culturally responsive teaching led them to continue in their reflection and action in critical multicultural teaching in the following academic year. My study adds uniquely in that I followed up with preservice teachers after the completion of a multicultural education course to understand their teaching dispositions in a student teaching context that did not have requirements for teaching culturally relevant lessons.

There were also studies that identified field experience as a useful component for providing pedagogical experiences and raising awareness for preservice teachers to strengthen their disposition for engaging multicultural education (Bodur, 2012; Delano-Oriaran, 2012; Wong, 2008). Bodur (2012) asserts:

It appears that, while academic coursework develops awareness, academic coursework combined with field learning that is geared toward working with

diverse students adds valuable knowledge of what to do and self-reflective awareness to do it. (p. 52)

Delano-Oriaran (2012) also contends that service-learning not only develops preservice teachers' self-awareness, but also increases their cultural competency. The multicultural education course in this study did not only focus on whether preservice teachers were able to shift their beliefs and attitudes, but it was also interested in finding out whether preservice teachers were able to develop multicultural competence. Similarly, Wong (2008) states that her multicultural education course focused on both having preservice teachers understand their own racial identity and developing strategies and philosophies that are culturally responsive through engaging them in service-learning experiences of tutoring a student labeled as an "English Language Learner." In her analysis, she identified different ways preservice teachers responded to multicultural teaching in their field experiences. The multicultural education course in my study did not have field experience as a component of the course. While the above mentioned studies examined the ways in which field experiences raised preservice teachers self-awareness toward the need for multicultural teaching, my study oppositely sought to learn about the ways in which preservice teachers' reflections around the need to engage in multicultural teaching influenced their ensuing student teaching practices.

In sum, teacher education programs have been engaging preservice teachers not only in critical reflection of their privileges and prejudice but also in exploration of multicultural pedagogy such as participating in experiential learning, creating multicultural children's books, developing and teaching culturally responsive lessons, and providing field experiences. The multicultural education course in my study was unique in its pedagogical approach in that the course instructor continued to invite

preservice teachers to learn about and reflect based on her examples of situated critical multicultural pedagogy. Preservice teachers also had multiple opportunities to adapt and reinvent unit plans to contextualize their reflections. I sought to learn about the ways in which the multicultural education course informed preservice teachers' reflections and actions in such situated learning context.

Until now, I reviewed three themes (i.e., critical reflection of self-identity and beliefs, resistance, and teaching practices) that I identified in the multicultural teacher education empirical literature. Since my study is contextualized in an early childhood teacher education program, I now review studies on early childhood multicultural teacher education.

Early childhood multicultural teacher education. While a record number of preschools and early primary classrooms in the U.S. are comprised of students from minoritized racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the preservice teacher population in early childhood education remains predominantly White. Research has revealed evidence of racial bias in the behavior of early childhood teachers (e.g., Barbarin & Crawford, 2006; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Mednick & Ramsey, 2008). For example, Barbarin and Crawford (2006) found that both Black and White teachers were stigmatizing African American boys by isolating and excluding children, expressing hostility, and giving racially disparate punishment and rewards. Mednick and Ramsey (2008) observed a consistent pattern of teachers favoring White students in a second-grade classroom, punishing children of color based solely on the White children's reports of "misbehaviors."

Research also suggests that early childhood teachers often do not incorporate curricula and practices that are inclusive of students and their families (Ryan & Lobman, 2008). Many early childhood teachers think that multicultural education is too political for young children or beyond children's understandings and experiences (Souto-Manning, 2013). These discriminatory practices enacted by early childhood teachers reflect the overwhelming presence of Whiteness (Sleeter, 2001) in early childhood education. Hence, one of the challenges early childhood teacher education faces is to raise teachers who are committed to fostering equity in and through their teaching (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2013). My study sought to uncover the ways in which early childhood preservice teachers' reflections and actions aligned with or diverged from the White dominant ideology when experiencing a required multicultural education course that espoused a critical approach to multicultural education (Gorski, 2009).

My review of empirical studies indicated that early childhood teacher education programs have been utilizing approaches such as critical literacy, critical media literacy, and home and family engagement to challenge and reshape preservice teachers' beliefs around diversity and equity (Howrey & Whelan-Kim, 2009; Long et al., 2014; Norris et al., 2012; Souto-Manning & Price-Dennis, 2012). White preservice teachers in Norris, Lucas, and Prudhoe's (2012) study analyzed the authors' and illustrators' points of view in children's books while at the same time discussing how the story could differ if told from someone else's perspective. Preservice teachers discussed how they could encourage students to question, disagree, and examine power relations. They created critical literacy lessons and presented them to class. Norris, Lucas, and Prudhoe (2012)

state that while White preservice teachers recognized the benefits of utilizing critical literacy (i.e., enhancing children's critical thinking and understanding of different perspectives), they also expressed their discomfort in addressing "touchy subjects," concerns about potential parental opposition, and hesitation due to practical issues such as school district curricula, resources, and time. Howrey and Whelan-Kim's (2009) study also utilized children's literature as a means for engaging preservice teachers in critical literacy. It found that many of the White early childhood preservice teachers became more committed to creating an equitable classroom community when they were given opportunities to build their knowledge through specific examples of multicultural literature. In Howrey and Whelan-Kim's (2009) study, the reading of multicultural children's books enabled preservice teachers to identify more closely with people whose identities, values, beliefs and practices did not reflect their own; further, it supported their development of knowledge, empathy, and commitment to improving the well-being of their future students.

The teacher educator in my study also introduced preservice teachers to children's literature that reflect diverse racial identities, cultural practices, and linguistic repertoires, favoring books by and about people of color. She read a children's book in the beginning of every class to invite preservice teachers to develop multiple perspectives and recognize the strengths in utilizing multicultural literature in early childhood classrooms. This practice is supported by research findings, which state that when preservice teachers are exposed to literature of different groups, they gain access to the rich texture of people's lives (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In my study, I explored preservice teachers' reflections to such pedagogical approach.

Critical media literacy was identified as another avenue for challenging early childhood preservice teachers' perspectives and strengthening their multicultural dispositions. Souto-Manning and Price-Dennis (2012) suggest that popular culture media texts be repositioned to the center of teacher education classrooms so that they provide entryways for preservice teachers to discuss issues of inequity and help them translate their critical understandings into curriculum and pedagogy that are socially just. In their study, Souto-Manning engaged preservice teachers to examine the texts of children's popular culture to generate conversations regarding issues of inequity. The class focused on the issue of language differences and addressed misconceptions preservice teachers held toward languages other than White, middle-class, mainstream American English, especially African American Language, using media texts children are familiar with. Souto-Manning and Price-Dennis (2012) found that

in addition to questioning inequities at large, children's popular culture media texts also served to question preservice teacher beliefs, naming and problematizing inequities in a nonthreatening way. (p. 313)

Although the multicultural education course in my study did not utilize media text as a pedagogical tool, the course took a similar orientation in that the teacher educator encouraged preservice teachers to question not only societal inequities but also their personal beliefs and perspectives around power and privilege. My study sought to understand the reflections and actions of preservice teachers in this situated learning context.

The third approach that was identified in my review of literature on early childhood multicultural teacher education was home and family engagement. Long, Volk, Lopez-Robertson, and Haney (2014) had early childhood preservice teachers engage in

activities that required them to learn about family literacy practices and their funds of knowledge. More specifically, they required preservice teachers to spend time with students who were typically profiled because of race, language, family structure and class so that they find out what students can do in school, in their homes, and in community context. Preservice teachers were also asked to get to know students' families by conducting home visits. They concluded that these activities provided opportunities for preservice teachers to reflect on their previously unexamined beliefs about children and families. Some of the preservice teachers began to understand different ways families provide support for their children. Some began to see languages other than English as resources rather than deficits. Some were able to identify funds of knowledge, and some began challenging their practice of profiling. Preservice teachers in the multicultural education course of my study were not required to work with children and families directly, but they had multiple opportunities to learn about and reflect based on case studies and the course instructor's examples that elaborated on family and community engagement. My study explored the ways in which preservice teachers responded to and reflected on such teachings.

In sum, my review of literature on early childhood teacher education showed that teacher educators have been challenging early childhood preservice teachers to engage in critical reflection of the perspectives that normalize White people's beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies using different approaches. Preservice teachers in my study were also situated in a learning context in which the teacher educator constantly invited preservice teachers to critically reflect on notions of power, privilege, and oppression. My study aimed to learn about preservice teachers' experiences in a required multicultural

education course and the ways in which their reflections informed their following student teaching practices.

Summary

I began this chapter with an examination of how multicultural education is defined. In my study, I approach multicultural education as an ideology that supports transformative and social action-oriented learning experiences (Banks, 2003). I discussed five dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 2004) that can be used to create multicultural teaching and learning. As a foundational element of negotiating multicultural education, I addressed how teachers must adopt culturally responsive (Gay, 2010), culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) pedagogy and develop cultural competency (Goodwin, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) in order to foster all students' academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In a critical multiculturalist framework, I noted that teacher education programs start from engaging preservice teachers in critical reflection of their privileges, prejudices, and biases so that preservice teachers are provided with spaces to question their beliefs and attitudes about themselves, others, and society. Through the process of "conscientization" (Freire, 1970, p. 19), teacher education programs can challenge preservice teachers' deficit conception of students of color and their tendency to regard White people's beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies as the norm. Going further, I noted that practice has also been an important topic explored in multicultural teacher education. As Goodman (2000) states, the goals of multicultural teacher education should

“go beyond just eliciting feelings or enhancing awareness to encouraging action toward social justice” (p. 23). However, the importance of engaging preservice teachers in the development of action for social justice does not imply that they should learn prescribed techniques during their teacher education to superficially employ multicultural teaching. Many scholars argue that field experience should be interwoven with multicultural education coursework in order to foster culturally responsive, relevant, and/or sustaining teaching (Brown, 2005; Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Grant & Secada, 1990; Kidd et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2008; Ukpokodu, 2003; Vaughan, 2002; Vavrus, 2002).

Then, I conducted a review of empirical literature on teacher education courses centered on multicultural education, social justice, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Literature revealed the importance of engaging preservice teachers in critical reflection of their own cultural identities and examining their beliefs about others and society. Many teacher educators have been utilizing cultural autobiographies to help preservice teachers reflect on how their past experiences have impacted their beliefs about themselves, others, and society. To reduce preservice teachers’ resistance, teacher educators have utilized various approaches to create a non-threatening environment for preservice teachers to reflect on their unexamined assumptions and prejudices. Nevertheless, ample literature exists regarding preservice teachers’ resistance to fully acknowledging and troubling their privileges and biases.

Further, my review of literature showed that when courses were taught by teacher educators of color, White preservice teachers displayed heightened resistance toward the course content regarding White privilege and structural inequality students of color experience in their daily lives. Empirical literature addressing different approaches

teacher educators have been utilizing to foster preservice teachers' negotiations of multicultural practices writ large was reviewed. Then, honing in on early childhood multicultural teacher education, I identified three approaches in empirical research: engaging preservice teachers in critical literacy, critical media literacy, and home and community engagement. These were identified as helpful approaches to challenging preservice teachers' perspectives and strengthening their multicultural dispositions.

In my study, I sought to build on current literature by investigating the ways in which an early childhood multicultural education course influenced preservice teachers' dispositions for engaging in critical multicultural teaching during their student teaching. While a number of empirical studies document preservice teachers' reflections and attitudes in teacher education courses that focus on multicultural education and social justice, not as many studies are situated in early childhood teacher education. Hence, my study contributes uniquely to the literature base in early childhood multicultural teacher education.

This study also adds to literature in that there were a number of aspects that made the multicultural education course critical, according to the typology developed by Gorski (2009). The multicultural education course engaged preservice teachers in critical reflection of their cultural identities, their unexamined assumptions about others and society, and provided opportunities for preservice teachers to examine various multicultural pedagogies that are in action. Whereas most studies in literature show that a university professor is the instructor of the course, the course instructor of the multicultural education course in my study was an educator whose primary professional identity is a full-time school teacher. Gay (1997) points out that there are very few

professors of education “who have the prerequisite skills in multicultural education needed to translate the theory of infusion into the practice of curriculum development and classroom instruction” (p. 158).

My study sought to learn about the ways in which preservice teachers responded to critical multicultural practices enacted by the course instructor and course assignments designed to engage preservice teachers in critically analyzing existing multicultural approaches. In the course, preservice teachers were provided with multiple opportunities to adapt curriculum, revise lesson plans, critically analyze children’s literature, and design their own unit plans aligned with the aims of the course. It was within this context that I sought to understand the ways in which the praxis approach of the course influenced preservice teachers’ dispositions for engaging in critical multicultural teaching the following academic year during their student teaching.

Lastly, this study adds to early childhood multicultural teacher education literature in that it explored the ways in which the racial dynamics between the course instructor and preservice teachers influenced preservice teachers’ reflections in a required multicultural education course and their subsequent actions and dispositions in student teaching practicum.

This chapter explored literature on multicultural education and multicultural teacher education that contextualize my study. In the following chapter, I discuss the process in which I developed and implemented my qualitative case study.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) examined how preservice teachers' cultural beliefs and dispositions for engaging in critical multicultural teaching were negotiated after taking a required early childhood multicultural education course that adopted a critical approach (Gorski, 2009). The questions that guided this study were:

1. How did preservice teachers construct their experiences in a multicultural education course?
2. How did preservice teachers who had previously taken a multicultural education course make sense of and navigate their student teaching experiences?

Data collected sought to account for “all of their richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded or transcribed” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 5) to obtain a nuanced understanding of the experiences of four preservice teachers.

In this chapter, I describe the design of my study, introduce the participants, discuss lessons learned from my exploratory study and pilot work, describe processes for data collection, explain data analysis methods, and consider issues of trustworthiness and positionality.

Overview of Design

A retrospective case study design (Street & Ward, 2010) was used for this research as data were collected from four preservice teachers who were previously part of a multicultural education course. The multicultural education course took place the academic year prior to data collection. In this study, I mainly focused on understanding the reflections and actions (what Freire called “praxis”) of early childhood education preservice teachers during their student teaching experiences and how they were (if at all) informed by experiences in a required early childhood multicultural education course. In order to gain a nuanced understanding of the context in which preservice teachers’ learnings and reflections took place, I also interviewed the course instructor of the multicultural education course.

Seeking to understand preservice teachers’ reflections and actions, I conducted three interviews with each preservice teacher, examined three individual written assignments from the multicultural education course and the lesson plans and journals written for their student teaching practicum, and observed their student teaching. In the first interview, I sought to understand their schooling experiences growing up, what led them to pursue teaching as a profession, and their teaching philosophy. In the second interview, I asked about their student teaching experiences, mainly aiming to understand their physical, relational, and pedagogical student teaching context. In the third interview, I asked preservice teachers to share about their experiences in the multicultural education course and the ways in which they were negotiating their student teaching experiences in light of their multicultural education course learnings. When asking about the ways in which they were negotiating their student teaching experiences in light of their

multicultural education course learnings, I also asked about other course learnings that had influenced the ways they made sense of culture and negotiating multicultural teaching in early childhood classrooms. The multicultural education course had five written assignments in total but I excluded the two group assignments and analyzed the three individual assignments to understand each preservice teacher's reflection as I found through my pilot study that it would be difficult to understand individual participant's reflections in group assignments.

When analyzing student teaching lesson plans, journals, and observational field notes, I employed a critical lens to understand preservice teachers' reflections and actions related to culture, race, ethnicity, power, and privilege. When looking into preservice teachers' actions, I had to be mindful of the teaching and learning context in which they were situated. Interviews and observations made it evident that preservice teachers felt pressured to adhere to the academic demands of the school. Three out of four preservice teachers also mentioned that they did not have agency in their teaching due to their cooperating teacher's specific guidance that they had to follow. Recognizing that the student teaching practicum seminar and the university supervisor's guidance also influence preservice teachers' reflections and actions directly and indirectly, I also looked into the student teaching seminar course syllabi and journal prompts to see whether preservice teachers were encouraged to reflect on issues related to culture, race, power, and privilege. Two out of four preservice teachers also expressed that they were planning to obtain teacher certification and needed to complete the edTPA. edTPA is a performance-based assessment that requires preservice teachers to prepare a portfolio of materials during their student teaching. Preservice teachers have to submit lesson plans,

video recordings of themselves teaching, and extensive analysis of students' learning and their reflections. Not only the rigid nature of the way teaching performance is scored but also its lack of consideration of preservice teachers' values and beliefs around diversity, power, and privilege would influence the way preservice teachers prepare their materials for submission. Considering the limitations of preservice teachers' student teaching context, I used lesson plans and journals as a complementary data source and used interview data as the primary source for understanding preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes on diversity, equity, and social justice.

The Research Site

The graduate-level early childhood multicultural education course preservice teachers took in my study was a degree requirement and a required course for state certification. It was offered in the spring semester of 2015 at a predominantly White teacher education program located in an institution of higher education in New York City. It met once a week in the evening for approximately two hours over the course of a semester (January-May). The majority of students who enrolled in this course aimed to obtain initial certification in early childhood education.

In the spring semester of 2015, there were twenty students enrolled in the early childhood multicultural education course. Fourteen identified as White and six as persons of color. Monica, the teacher educator who had been teaching this course for a number of years informed me that this has not been the usual makeup of the class in that more White preservice teachers enrolled in the course during the spring semester of 2015. She mentioned that perhaps they had purposefully avoided taking the course with a professor

(Monica) who usually teaches the course given her well-known focus on issues of racial justice and her high academic expectations. Monica shared that her courses (including the course Jennifer was teaching) had been mostly comprised of students of color for the previous eight semesters. This was Jennifer's first semester teaching the course on her own; she had previously co-taught it with Monica.

All of the students enrolled in Jennifer's course in the spring semester of 2015 identified as women. Among the 16 White students, there were three who had spent a significant amount of time outside of the U.S. Within the six students of color, two identified as Black, two as Asian, and two as Latinx. Jennifer, a Latinx of color, had been teaching in schools predominantly serving students of color in urban communities for almost two decades. She considered equity and justice to be pillars of her teaching. Despite her extensive experience teaching young children, she was a novice university-based teacher educator.

Participant Selection

The focal participants of this study were four preservice teachers. I decided to reach out to those who were enrolled in both the multicultural education course in the spring semester of 2015 and student teaching in the spring semester of 2016. I found that five preservice teachers satisfied my selection criteria, but since one of them had already participated in my pilot study, I decided to reach out to the other four. Two were White preservice teachers and two were Asian (one self-identified as Asian American and one self-identified as Brown).

For recruitment, I sent an email explaining that I would like to conduct three individual interviews with them. I also mentioned that if they agreed to participate in my study, I would visit their student teaching practicum site one to three times to observe their classroom and request course assignments from the multicultural education course and lesson plans and journals written for their student teaching practicum (Appendix A). The email also discussed issues of privacy and rights. I asked preservice teachers to email me back if they had any questions and/or wished to participate in the study. All four preservice teachers agreed to participate. Interviews started after receiving preservice teachers' consent to participate (Appendix B).

Participants

In this section, I describe my four participants: Ellen, Judy, Kate, and Shazia.

Ellen

Ellen is a White female in her twenties who went to a private Jewish school from kindergarten to twelfth grade. She mentioned that she gained an appreciation, understanding, and love of Jewish and Israeli culture through her school. All of her classmates were Jewish and her school had a very strong sense of community. She remembered that she had wonderful teachers who were friendly and supportive. Ellen became interested in teaching by running children's programs at her synagogue when she was in high school. During summers, she also worked as an assistant teacher at a local preschool day camp. She also had a passion for theatre, so she pursued both education and theatre during college. Ellen mentioned that she did not learn much about other

religions or other cultures until she went to college. She recalled having a culture shock in the beginning of college because she was exposed to many different cultures once she entered college. While serving as the president of the Jewish student club at her college, she had the opportunity to learn more about other cultures while also strengthening the Jewish community. After graduating from college, she worked in different education departments for theater companies. She realized along the way that instead of supporting other people administratively so that they could teach in classrooms, she wanted to teach in the classroom herself. Hence, she applied to a teacher education program for graduate school.

Judy

Judy is a self-identified Asian American in her twenties who was born in South Korea. She lived in South Korea until she was six years old. After her family immigrated to the U.S., Judy entered U.S. public schooling in third grade; she was placed in an ESL (English as a Second Language) class right away because she had not learned any English before coming to the U.S. Although her third-grade teacher was not Korean, she felt that he opened up a space for her culture to be highlighted and made important in class. She recalled that her third-grade teacher valued her identity and encouraged her in many ways. Judy was able to not only adjust more smoothly to the new learning environment thanks to her teacher but also gain a desire to see children “from heart to heart and really help them grow individually.” Judy graduated with an English Language Arts degree in college. While she was exploring various opportunities after college, she found that she was very interested in children’s books and publication in general. After realizing that she

could not fully engage in the work of authoring children's books without actually being part of children's lives, she decided to pursue a degree in early childhood education.

Kate

Kate is a White female in her twenties who grew up in a wealthy suburban area of Connecticut. She described her town as White upper-middle class conservative Catholic and that there was very little difference in terms of socioeconomic, racial, educational, and linguistic aspects. She had good memories of her early childhood, especially from kindergarten to third grade. She described those years as her favorite years. She still remembered the names of her teachers and experiences she had in their classes. Kate went to a mid-size university after graduating from high school. When Kate first went to the university, she felt overwhelmed because she did not have any hometown friends while many others seemed to have friends from their own high school. Kate recalled that although her university was still predominantly White upper-middle class, the university was much more diverse than what she was used to. She recalled that her college experience gave her new perspectives. After graduating from college, Kate worked at a school and very much enjoyed her experience working with kindergarten and first grade children. She mentioned that she was able to connect with many of the kids and that she found that to be empowering, as she often doubted herself. After assisting teachers at her first early childhood education teaching job, she decided to apply to a teacher education program.

Shazia

Shazia is a self-identified Brown female in her twenties who grew up in the U.A.E. as an immigrant from Pakistan. She went to a school mostly comprised of immigrant children and teachers from Pakistan and the school used a Pakistani curriculum until second grade. Starting from third grade, her school started to use a British curriculum, and there were more teachers and students from different countries. Shazia's first exposure to early childhood education was through her voluntary work at an early learning center. That year, one of the U.S. teacher education programs opened up a satellite campus in the city she lived in so she decided to transfer to the teacher education program to pursue early childhood education for her bachelor's degree. However, the U.S. teacher education program in her city had to close down due to financial constraints not long after Shazia transferred to the school. Shazia was given the opportunity to continue her studies at the main campus in the U.S. as a junior. Shazia shared that she experienced cultural mismatches being a student teacher in the U.S. She shared that her early childhood placement was predominantly White and that she was the only Brown person. She recalled that her cooperating teacher would pull her out of the classroom and point out to her what she did not do. Shazia ended up not completing her student teaching requirements because she felt unappreciated in her placement. After obtaining her bachelor's degree in Family and Childhood Development, she worked in the Department of Education for half a year and then returned to Dubai. She then started working as a kindergarten teacher at an American school where there were children from many different nationalities. She worked there for a year and then applied for and was admitted to an early childhood teacher education program in New York City.

Exploratory Study and Pilot Work

Prior to finalizing the design of this study, I conducted an exploratory study that sought to understand the situated experiences of preservice teachers who had previously taken a multicultural education course. Through the exploratory study, I realized the need to fully understand participants' teaching context when trying to make sense of the ways in which they translated their reflections into actions. The exploratory study also revealed that I needed to change the interview questions so that they did not lead participants to answer in a certain way. After reshaping the research study based on what I had learned from conducting the exploratory study, I piloted the interview protocol created for preservice teachers. The pilot study revealed once again that I needed to refine some of the interview questions as I found that they were not conducive to preservice teachers' reflection and meaning-making of their teacher education experiences. Below, I describe the exploratory study and pilot interviews and the lessons I learned in the process.

Exploratory Study

A qualitative research methods course I took in the fall semester of 2014 required that students perform a mini qualitative research study. As I had been pondering about the ways in which teacher education programs could develop preservice teachers' critical multicultural dispositions and actions, I decided to focus on learning about the experiences of two preservice teachers who had previously taken an early childhood multicultural education course and the ways in which the course influenced their teaching practices. Having had experience in previously taking the early childhood multicultural education course taught by the same professor, I was familiar with the epistemological

approach of the multicultural education course. The multicultural education course aligned with Freire's (1970) philosophy of praxis. That is, the course constantly encouraged students to engage in critical reflection and action that lead to transformation, which was mediated by continued dialogue. For example, students in the course had opportunities to examine their own privileges and discuss educational inequities experienced by minoritized children. Students were invited to dialogue with early childhood educators who had been actively negotiating their teaching practices to honor young children's cultures and identities.

Recognizing that a number of studies in early childhood multicultural teacher education literature focus on preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes during a teacher education course (Howrey & Whelan-Kim, 2009; Long et al., 2014; Norris et al., 2012; Souto-Manning & Price-Dennis, 2012) but do not follow up on the ways they negotiate their teaching after the course, I decided to learn about the reflections and teaching practices of two preservice teachers who had previously taken an early childhood multicultural education. The focal research question that guided the mini study was: How do two preservice teachers who have previously taken a multicultural education course translate into practice what they have gained from the course?

I conducted a qualitative case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to understand how Kate and Damaris (pseudonyms) extended their reflections and learnings from an early childhood multicultural education course into their teaching practices. I chose Kate and Damaris as a purposeful convenience sample (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) as they were two educators whom I worked with in a first-grade afterschool program in a public school in New York. Kate and Damaris were hired to be teachers in the afterschool program for

immigrant children because they displayed clear commitments to issues of justice and beliefs in the brilliance of children of color.

Kate, a White female who identified herself as a White ally who advocates for racial justice, took the early childhood multicultural education course in the spring semester of 2013 and started teaching in the afterschool program starting from September 2013. Damaris, a Latina who had a well-developed racial and linguistic identity, took the course in the spring semester of 2014 and started teaching in the afterschool program from September 2014. I conducted participant observations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) in both the afterschool programs taught by Kate and Damaris as a researcher, and I conducted a 45-minute semi-structured, in-depth interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) with each of them separately.

The interviews made me realize that I had to be more careful about how to formulate interview questions. I thought that I was fully conscious about refraining from asking leading questions, but while conducting interviews, I sensed that some of the questions I asked led Kate and Damaris to respond in a certain way. For example, as I was trying to understand the ways in which the course had influence on their beliefs, I provided them with specific conceptions they could think and talk about (e.g., issues of power, privilege, biases, values, and social justice). This might have led them to discuss their experiences in a particular way. For my dissertation study, I formulated the interview questions to be more subtle and indirect. Instead of giving them specific conceptions to discuss, I made the questions more open-ended so that they could use their own language in making meaning of their previous experiences.

My research findings indicated that Kate and Damaris were both striving to engage in critical multicultural teaching as teachers. For example, Kate mentioned that she utilized books as “entry points” (November 13, 2014) for engaging children in conversations about respecting different cultures. She noted that she utilized some of the books introduced previously from the multicultural education course. She remembered reading *Rene Has Two Last Names* (Lainez, 2009) and *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits, 2003). In one of the afterschool classes I observed, Kate read *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down* (Pinkney, 2010), a book that describes what four Black college students accomplished on February 1, 1960, by sitting down at a Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, NC. This book was not introduced from the multicultural education course, but Kate chose it as a read aloud material for children to start a conversation around racial privileges and conflicts that exist in our society.

From conducting the mini study, however, I realized that being a teacher in an afterschool program could be quite different from being a student teacher. Whereas the participants in my dissertation study were student teachers, Kate and Damaris were lead teachers in an afterschool program for immigrant children. Therefore, Kate and Damaris had the freedom and support to develop their own practices. They were able to put their beliefs into action and create multiple opportunities for children to engage in social justice-related learning experiences. On the contrary, student teachers often face pressure to adhere to the curriculum and pedagogy employed by the cooperating teacher and they are also graded by the university supervisor on their teaching performances. In such environment, preservice teachers’ teaching is highly influenced by external constraints and their beliefs and values on diversity, equity, and social justice cannot be easily

understood. Hence, in my dissertation study, I decided to fully explore the constraints and contextual factors my participants experienced when learning about whether and in what ways the multicultural education course informed their student teaching experiences.

Pilot Work

During the spring semester of 2015, I had an opportunity to be a teaching assistant of an early childhood multicultural education course. After the course finished, I was able to pilot the preservice teacher interview protocol with two White female preservice teachers—Cathy and Sarah (pseudonyms)—who had taken the course (see Appendix C for sample interview transcript). Before conducting interviews with Cathy and Sarah, I asked them separately if they would feel comfortable sending their written assignments to me via email so that I could formulate interview questions based on their written work. With their agreement, after receiving their written assignments, I carefully read their work, adding analytical notes, and added individual interview questions to the general semi-structured interview protocol quoting what they had written. For example, I asked, “You mentioned in your Cultural Memoir how you fear that your privileges can be oppressive to others without you realizing it. Can you tell me more?” This process helped Cathy and Sarah expand their thoughts and provide real life examples of their reflections and actions as they elaborated on what they had written. I mentioned to both of them that if there were any parts of the writings that they wanted to add to or change, they should feel free to express their ideas during the interviews.

Through the interviews, I realized that the group assignments (i.e., Critical Curriculum Review and Expert Project) did not provide much insight into each participant’s reflections as they mentioned that group members divided up the assignment

into different parts and each person took charge of independently writing one section. Hence, I decided to analyze only the three individual written assignments (i.e., Cultural Memoir, Interview Reflection, and Reflection-to-Action) in my dissertation study.

I also realized that I had to refine some of the interview questions. For example, I asked: “Can you see yourself implementing this unit plan as a teacher in the future? For the sake of contextualizing, let’s say you were the head teacher at your student teaching placement from this semester. What would work well and what wouldn’t work so well?” I realized that since the unit plan was designed with a specific grade level in mind, having preservice teachers imagine based on their student teaching context would not be suitable. For example, Sarah mentioned that when she has her own classroom as a head teacher, she could see herself implementing a lesson she developed on immigration to teach children that there are people who come to the U.S. from different countries and that they come with different cultures and languages, but she also said that if she were the head teacher at her student teaching placement, she would not have found it feasible to teach a second grade lesson to PreK children. I realized that a better approach for understanding preservice teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward diversity, equity, and social justice would be listening to their reflections from the multicultural education course and student teaching practicum rather than having them think based on an imaginary scenario. Hence, I refined my interview questions accordingly.

Lastly, I realized that I should be patient when listening to the participants. From listening to the recordings, I noticed that sometimes I unnecessarily jumped in during their responses or expressed too much affirmation. I thought I was trying to be an empathetic interviewer (Fontana & Frey, 2005) during the interviews, but I noticed that

this way of interviewing might hinder participants from engaging in deep reflection or recalling their memories. The lessons I gained from conducting an exploratory study and piloting my interview protocols informed the design of my dissertation research study.

Data Collection Methods

A variety of data collection methods were used during this study. Appendix D is a table that shows the alignment between methods and research questions. To answer research question one (i.e., How did preservice teachers construct their experiences in a multicultural education course?), I conducted document analyses of preservice teachers' individual course assignments from the multicultural education course in the spring semester of 2015 and engaged in the third interview that focused on learning about preservice teachers' reflections from the multicultural education course. To answer research question two (i.e., How did preservice teachers who had previously taken a multicultural education course make sense of and navigate their student teaching experiences?), I first conducted one individual interview with preservice teachers about their prior schooling experiences and their teaching philosophies, and then conducted another individual interview focusing on their student teaching experiences. I also analyzed preservice teachers' lesson plans and journals from their student teaching practicum in the spring semester of 2016 and visited their student teaching placement once for an observation in order to examine how notions of diversity, equity, and social justice were being positioned—if at all—in their reflections and student teaching experiences.

Data collection began in January 2016 and continued until May 2016.

Recognizing that I might not be able to communicate feasibly with preservice teachers once the summer break started, I planned so that data collection finished by the end of the spring semester. I started the first interview with preservice teachers in the end of January. Then, I conducted the second interview in the end of February. I made classroom observations, collected the multicultural education course assignments, and conducted the third interview during March and early April. Then, I collected preservice teachers' lesson plans and journals from their student teaching at the end of their student teaching practicum in May.

Document Analysis

I analyzed individual written assignments (i.e., Cultural Memoir, Interview Reflection, Reflection-to-Action) from the multicultural education course in the spring semester of 2015 in order to answer research question one (i.e., How did preservice teachers construct their experiences in a multicultural education course?). The Cultural Memoir was an assignment that intended to have preservice teachers identify and critically reflect on their own cultural identities so that they realize that their teaching philosophies and practices are influenced by their own cultural frame of reference. Interview Reflection was an assignment that aimed to help preservice teachers develop multiple perspectives. This assignment encouraged preservice teachers to recognize that everyone has different cultures and cultural beliefs—even people they might assume to share the same culture—and that they can learn a lot about others by engaging in interviews. Reflection-to-Action was an assignment that had preservice teachers reflect on what they had discussed in the course and write about the ways in which they envision

enacting critical multicultural teaching. I analyzed these three assignments to understand preservice teachers' reflections from the multicultural education course.

I analyzed preservice teachers' lesson plans and journals they wrote for their student teaching practicum in the spring semester of 2016 as a complementary data source to the interview data in order to answer research question two (i.e., How did preservice teachers who had previously taken a multicultural education course make sense of and navigate their student teaching experiences?). Through analyzing preservice teachers' lesson plans and journals using a critical lens, I aimed to gain further understanding about the ways in which preservice teachers' student teaching experiences related to the content and orientation of the multicultural education course they previously took. I requested that they send all of the lesson plans and the weekly journals at the end of their student teaching practicum.

I had to be mindful that preservice teachers' lesson plans and journals were heavily influenced by the epistemology of the student teaching practicum seminar. In order to understand the philosophical orientation of the student teaching practicum seminars, I looked into course syllabi and journal prompts used in the seminars. Since I did not talk with the student teaching practicum seminar instructors, I had to make speculations about the epistemology based on weekly seminar topics and reading lists—It must be noted that what was actually discussed in the course might have been different from the topics listed in the syllabus. Three out of four preservice teachers had the same course syllabus and one preservice teacher had a different course syllabus so I analyzed two course syllabi. All three seminar instructors of my participants (who were also the university supervisors) identified as White women.

Analyses of the course syllabi showed that these course instructors' epistemologies were quite different from that of the multicultural education course. The course syllabus that was used by one of the preservice teachers in my study stated "Cultures and Languages: Bilingual and Multicultural Education" as a topic to be discussed in one week while topics such as the Common Core State Standards, lesson planning, differentiation, and assessment were topics to be discussed throughout the rest of the semester. An analysis of the reading list helped me understand that these topics were most likely being explored without incorporating a critical perspective on race (See Appendix E for reading list). The reading list from the other course syllabus that was used by three of the preservice teachers in my study indicated that none of the readings centrally discussed notions of race, ethnicity, equity, and social justice. Readings rather focused on exploring various curricular and pedagogical strategies that can be used in early childhood classrooms. Whether they promoted preservice teachers' reflection and problematization in issues of racial injustices and societal inequalities remained questionable (See Appendix F for reading list).

Journal prompts also did not seem to employ a critical multicultural orientation. One of the seminars expected preservice teachers to freely write about their reflections during their student teaching. The other seminar had journal prompts such as:

- "Description of classroom responsibilities for past week, including specific lessons taught;"
- "Description of successes and challenges in the classroom this past week;"
- "Description of planned classroom responsibilities for upcoming week;"

- “In a few sentences, briefly describe a lesson you did this past week and state the objectives, then answer the following: How did I link prior learning? How did I provide opportunities for different children to participate (i.e. thumbs up/down, choral responses, exploration of materials, etc.)? How did I both support and challenge the children and/or my Focus Learner? How did I maintain children’s engagement related to the objectives? How did I promote a positive learning environment (i.e. specific strategies, ways of engaging children, listening & responding to children, etc.)?”

When analyzing preservice teachers’ lesson plans and journals, I was able to examine whether preservice teachers were mindful of issues of culture, race, and equity on their own without being prompted through their seminar content.

Besides considering preservice teachers’ student teaching practicum seminar context when analyzing preservice teachers’ lesson plans and journals, I was also mindful that preservice teachers’ reflections and teaching practices were heavily influenced by the demands of the cooperating teacher and school environment. I also had to take into consideration that two of the four preservice teachers were planning on obtaining teacher certification (i.e., they had to complete the edTPA) and that they had to adhere to the certification standards when developing lesson plans and engaging in teaching. When analyzing their lesson plans, I was mindful that edTPA does not position race and inequity as a major aspect to be explored by preservice teachers. Recognizing the multiple constraints preservice teachers experience in negotiating their teaching, I used preservice teachers’ lesson plans and journals as a complementary data source for understanding preservice teachers’ perspectives on diversity, equity, and social justice.

Observations

I visited each preservice teacher's student teaching practicum site once for half a day in the end of March and early April of 2016. I initially planned to make full-day visits but I faced a number of challenges in adhering to this time frame. When I asked, either a preservice teacher (i.e., Ellen) expressed that I should visit for half a day instead or the cooperating teachers (i.e., Kate and Judy's cooperating teachers) gave me a limited time frame I could visit. Judy's cooperating teacher even asked me during my observation why I was not leaving. Despite initial awkwardness, I found observations to be very helpful as I sought making sense of each preservice teacher's student teaching context and approaches.

The process of gaining permission looked different for each participant. For Ellen, I had to communicate via email with the principal and cooperating teacher about the purpose of my research. I mentioned that I was researching the ways in which preservice teachers made sense of and translated their academic coursework into student teaching practices. For Kate, she preferred that she directly asked her cooperating teacher for permission. For Shazia and Judy, I wrote an email directly to the cooperating teacher asking whether I could make a visit, explaining that I was researching preservice teachers' student teaching experiences.

During observations, I did not use video-recording or audio-recording devices in order to reduce the pressure preservice teachers and cooperating teachers experienced in having a researcher observe their teaching. I instead wrote descriptive field notes. Rather than summarizing or evaluating, I tried to capture details of what I observed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I attempted to avoid abstract words and tried to be specific. In addition to

the descriptive field notes, I also wrote down “speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 122) to facilitate the process of reflection.

I noticed through observations that each preservice teacher was situated in a unique student teaching context. I was able to make better sense of what they previously shared during the second interview about their student teaching experiences. For example, Ellen had shared that she found it difficult to follow her cooperating teacher’s teaching in having to use a scripted curriculum. During my visit, I noticed that the cooperating teacher indeed held a script in her hand and taught children using a script. Kate had shared that she was very respectful of her cooperating teacher’s teaching and that she took more of a passive role in teaching children. During my visit, I observed that Kate only hovered around tables to give individual support to children. Shazia had shared that she did not get much opportunity to teach big groups although she wanted to. During my visit, I noticed that Shazia sat with children on the rug while the cooperating teacher and paraprofessional engaged in parallel teaching. Judy had shared that the teacher and children were under much pressure in her classroom because children had to reach expected standards in both Korean and English. During my visit, I saw that during free time, children who needed extra support with Korean continued to work with Judy’s cooperating teacher instead of engaging in play. In Chapter V as I engage in data analysis, I write about each preservice teacher’s perception of her practicum site first so that readers can better contextualize preservice teachers’ student teaching experiences.

Interviews

I used interviews to gather descriptive data using participants' own words so that I could develop insights into how participants interpreted their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Interviews were used as the primary data source in my study. Through interviewing about participants' experiences in a situated teacher education program, I was able to learn about participants' individual beliefs, positions, and notions of diversity, equity, and social justice.

Interviews were very helpful in understanding the ways in which participants made sense of the world. Yet, as interviews took place in a social context, "the social forces of class, ethnicity, race, and gender, as well as other social identities" (Seidman, 2006, p. 95) most likely influenced the interviewing process and data. I conducted a series of three individual interviews in this study in order to more fully explore the unique context in which participants' teacher education took place before learning about their multicultural education course experiences. I engaged my observations and artifacts (course assignments and journal entries) to build trustworthy findings via triangulation.

The focus of my study lies on understanding the ways in which preservice teachers' critical multicultural dispositions and actions are negotiated in student teaching after being part of a required multicultural education course. I conducted three interviews with four preservice teachers who satisfied my recruitment criteria (i.e., preservice teachers who were enrolled in the multicultural education course taught by Jennifer in the spring semester of 2015 and who also enrolled in student teaching practicum in the spring semester of 2016).

In the first interview, I asked about preservice teachers' past educational experiences and their teaching philosophies. Getting to know their life histories was helpful in understanding the ways in which each preservice teacher made sense of education and defined "good" teaching. Through the second interview, I learned about their student teaching experiences. I learned that each of the preservice teachers experienced tensions and constraints as student teachers in planning and implementing their own curriculum and pedagogy. Three out of four preservice teachers reported having to or feeling pressured to adhere to the teaching approach of their cooperating teachers. When learning about their student teaching experiences, I had to be mindful that preservice teachers were influenced by the philosophical orientation and epistemology of the student teaching practicum seminar as they wrote lesson plans and authored reflective journal entries based on the expectations and guidance of their student teaching practicum seminar instructors (who also served as student teaching supervisors). At the same time, I had to remember that those who planned to obtain teacher certification also had to follow the teacher certification standards as they prepared a portfolio assessment—i.e. the edTPA. Hence, it was crucial for me to understand preservice teachers' student teaching context and the ways in which they were navigating their student teaching during the second interview. In the third interview, I learned about preservice teachers' reflections pertaining to the multicultural education course. Since more than half a year had passed since preservice teachers took the multicultural education course, I had the syllabus available for them during the interview so that they could take a look when recalling their previous experiences. Then, I asked about the ways they were negotiating their student teaching experiences in light of the learnings from the multicultural education course. I

also asked about their experiences in other courses to understand the ways in which the greater teacher education context influenced their dispositions and teaching practices. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) lasted about an hour each. After transcribing the interviews, transcripts were sent to participants via email so that they could check for accuracy. I invited them to add or restate any responses they thought were inaccurate depictions of their positions. Appendices G, H, and I include interview prompts and questions that served as a guide for each interview. Given that these were semi-structured interviews, specific questions and follow-up prompts were added when necessary. That is, I asked further questions to probe more deeply into their experiences when their responses were rather vague or needed clarification. For example, when I asked about Kate's experience in having Jennifer as the course instructor, she initially shared about her positive experience but as she continued to explain, she said: "Would I do it? Probably not." In order to probe deeper, I asked her to explain more about why she did not see herself employing multicultural resources like Jennifer did in her teaching. During interviews, I did not take notes because I did not want to create any distractions. Hence, I was not able to write down my immediate hunches and questions. Instead, I asked participants to sign a consent form and recorded interviews based on their permission and wrote initial interpretations and questions afterwards.

Data Analysis

Merriam (2001) warns that data can become "unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed" (pp. 162-163) when the researcher waits for data analysis until the very end of data collection. Hence, I

conducted data analysis simultaneously as I collected data.

In order to answer my two research questions, I created data packets (Rogers & Mosley, 2006) for each participant. Each data packet contained individual preservice teacher's written assignments from the multicultural education course, their lesson plans and journals from student teaching practicum, field notes generated from observations of their student teaching, three interview transcripts, the multicultural education course and student teaching practicum seminar syllabi, and my reflective memos.

When analyzing each preservice teacher's data packet, I separated data into two sub-packets. The first sub-packet, which was used for Chapter IV, contained preservice teachers' written assignments during the multicultural education course, the first and third interview, the multicultural education course syllabus, and my reflective notes. Within this sub-packet, I engaged in open coding and then axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) in order to create conceptual categories that represented preservice teachers' stance regarding multicultural teaching and their reflections, learnings, and tensions during the multicultural education course. After analyzing each preservice teacher's first sub-packet, engaging in axial coding to identify categories, I compared the conceptual categories among the four preservice teachers' first sub-packets to see if there were convergences and divergences in preservice teachers' reflections.

In the second sub-packet, which was used for Chapter V, I had the second and third interview, lesson plans, journals, field notes generated during student teaching observations, their student teaching practicum seminar syllabus, and my reflective notes. By engaging in open coding and then axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2007), I was able to generate conceptual categories that reflected the ways in which preservice teachers

made sense of teaching and learning in their situated student teaching context. After analyzing each preservice teacher's second sub-packet, I compared the conceptual categories among the four preservice teachers' second sub-packets to see if there were convergences and divergences in preservice teachers' negotiations of their student teaching experiences in light of the multicultural education coursework.

As I engaged in data analysis, I took Marshall and Rossman's (2011) advice about writing memos. "Writing notes, reflective memos, thoughts, and insights is invaluable for generating the unusual insights that move the analysis from the mundane and obvious to the creative" (p. 213). By writing reflective memos, I was able to identify gaps and questions in the data that needed to be further explored.

Positionality

I acknowledge that I cannot exorcise my subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988). Peshkin points out that when researchers remain unconscious of their subjectivity, they "insinuate rather than knowingly clarify their personal stakes" (p. 17). As I engaged in the iterative process of collecting and analyzing my data, I continuously monitored myself of my subjectivity. By doing so, I hoped to create an "illuminating, empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are intertwined" (p. 20).

I was aware that my past experiences pertaining to the multicultural education course my study's participants were taking—as a student, course assistant, and later, instructor—had already shaped a subjectivity in me about the experiences one might gain from taking the course. As someone who is searching for understanding the ways in which preservice teachers develop as critical multicultural educators, my attention was

perhaps heavily drawn to incidences that indicated preservice teachers' critical reflections and associated actions. While this subjectivity enabled me to engage deeply with the research topic, I was also aware that this could influence the way I interviewed preservice teachers. I had to make sure not to anticipate certain responses during interviews, and I was careful about staying away from asking leading questions.

As an Asian woman who grew up in Korea, I was aware that it may have been easier for those who identified as persons of color to feel more comfortable during the interviews. Conversely, it may have made it difficult for White preservice teachers to express their perspectives on race and power during the interviews. Nevertheless, I found that White preservice teachers in my study openly expressed resistance to Jennifer's multicultural teaching approaches during their interviews. The reasons they shared to me (e.g., different teaching contexts, the need to learn about teaching skills first, etc.) might not have reflected their deeper thoughts about race and power in relation to teaching and learning. My racial identity might have influenced the relationships that were formed in that the two Asian preservice teachers might have felt more of an affinity to me compared to the two White preservice teachers. Perhaps the two Asian preservice teachers felt more comfortable about sharing their inner thoughts. Besides, the comfort level could have been higher for one participant who shared the same first language and ethnicity with me; but I am not sure.

Lastly, I saw the need to "name and examine [my] own assumptions and biases" about preservice teachers (Lazar, 2004, p. 148). From immersing myself in the literature of multicultural teacher education, I found that the majority of scholarship homogenizes preservice teachers as White middle-class females who are culturally insensitive

(Lowenstein, 2009). As I analyzed preservice teachers' written work and engaged in observations and interviews, I was self-critical so that I could stay away from generalizing or simplifying White preservice teachers' past experiences, knowledge, and reflections. In trying to understand preservice teachers' dispositions for multicultural teaching, I tried my best to analyze within preservice teachers' verbal and written reflections only.

Trustworthiness

As mentioned above, I acknowledge that my interest, background, and past experiences influence the way I collect and analyze my data. Triangulation was utilized in my study to overcome the deficiencies that occur from utilizing only one method (Denzin, 2003). Instead of only listening to preservice teachers' student teaching experiences, I conducted observations in addition to analyzing preservice teachers' lesson plans and journals in order to more fully understand the student teaching context and their negotiations in teaching. Similarly, for understanding preservice teachers' reflections pertaining to the multicultural education course, I analyzed their multicultural education course assignments and conducted interviews. These processes helped me gain a more nuanced understanding of how they made sense of engaging with critical multicultural education in their early childhood student teaching placements.

Member checking is considered "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). I sent interview transcripts to participants so that they review whether the interview was transcribed accurately. I also asked that they add or edit what they had said earlier during the interview in order to clarify what they

meant. I attempted to establish further validity by continuously reflecting on my own assumptions and subjectivities throughout the research process. I hope this study will serve as an informative and insightful research that can contribute to early childhood multicultural teacher education.

This chapter discussed the design of my qualitative case study. In the following two chapters, I analyze the findings of this study. In Chapter IV, I focus on exploring preservice teachers' reflections pertaining to a required multicultural education course. Then, in Chapter V, I analyze preservice teachers' student teaching experiences in light of the multicultural education course experience.

Chapter IV
PRESERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS
ON THE REQUIRED MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION COURSE

This study sought to understand how four early childhood preservice teachers made sense of their experiences in a required multicultural education course—as they reflected on it and made connections between their student teaching and the perceived aims and lived experiences they had in the course. That is, it sought to understand how they negotiated their student teaching practices the following academic year, in light of their previous multicultural education course experience, seeking to understand how—if at all—the required multicultural education course they had taken as part of their preservice teacher education program had informed their developing identities, beliefs, and teaching approaches and practices in student teaching.

In this chapter, I analyze preservice teachers' reflections pertaining to their perceptions and lived experiences in a required multicultural education course. Procedurally, as described in Chapter III, I first analyzed written artifacts produced in the multicultural education course (i.e., written assignments, the course syllabus and agendas) and then interviewed preservice teachers and Jennifer (the course instructor, an early childhood public school teacher of color). I purposefully timed interviews after the course was over and preservice teachers had had time to engage in teaching. After analyzing preservice teachers' reflections and artifacts individually, I read across to identify collective themes. To protect their identities, pseudonyms were used throughout

the study. For those who had an English name, I assigned an English-language name common within the context of the U.S. For the participant whose name was in Urdu, I assigned a commonly used name in the Urdu language in the U.S.

Contextualizing the Multicultural Education Course: Identity and Power

The course taken by these four preservice teachers was grounded on three layers of interrelated transformation: the transformation of self, the transformation of teaching, and the transformation of society. That is, it was built on the belief that early childhood preservice teachers must first self-identify as cultural beings, examine their privileges and disprivileges, and then examine how their perceptions, positionalities, and beliefs may position children's cultural backgrounds as advantages and/or disadvantages. The rationale behind it, according to the instructor, was that without recognizing their cultural identities, teachers could easily normalize their own cultural backgrounds and practices—or those which are dominant in society—in their classrooms. Without such an examination, teachers may either foster or discourage children's learning, depending on how their cultures, values, and identities mirror (or not) those of the teacher. At the same time, preservice teachers must critically reflect on notions of privilege and power attached to cultural identity in order to be able to make substantive changes in their overall teaching philosophy. That is, when preservice teachers are able to confront inequities that stem from power relations based on cultural and racial hierarchies in society, they can actively make changes to curriculum and pedagogy in ways that interrupt the longstanding privilege of the dominant group.

To be sure, the early childhood multicultural education course facilitated by Jennifer was intentional about inviting preservice teachers to recognize that everyone is a cultural being. The course also probed preservice teachers to reflect on issues of power and privilege. In analyzing the data collected, I engaged in deductive and inductive coding. I identified preservice teachers' conceptualizations of multicultural education and their willingness to engage in multicultural teaching. Although I referred to categories of multicultural education defined by Banks to deductively code the data, I also identified new understandings I had as I read and reread their coursework, interview transcripts, the course syllabus, and the interviews I conducted with the course instructor—putting these in dialogue with each other. As such, axial coding was key for the construction of my findings.

Data analyses revealed that all four preservice teachers engaged in reflecting on their cultural identities and understood that everyone is a cultural being. However, data analyses also indicated that tensions and resistance arose when preservice teachers were invited to critically reflect on differing power and privileges attached to respective cultural identities. Below, I present my findings organized according to their reflections pertaining to cultural identities and tensions pertaining to racial inequities.

Reflecting on Cultural Identity

One of the main goals Jennifer had when teaching the multicultural education course was to invite preservice teachers to reflect on their cultural identities. Jennifer shared: “One of the things we talked a lot about in [the multicultural education course] was seeing ourselves as cultural beings.” Jennifer kept the Cultural Memoir assignment that was previously developed by Monica, the professor who designed the course and had

been teaching it for a number of years, so that preservice teachers realized that their teaching philosophies and practices were influenced by their own cultural frame of reference. Data analyses revealed that all four preservice teachers in this study were able to recognize themselves as cultural beings.

Kate, a White female who grew up in a racially homogeneous upper-middle-class neighborhood in Connecticut, wrote in her Reflection-to-Action assignment (a final assignment for the course where students were asked to reflect on course learnings) that she had lacked the understanding that everyone is a cultural being until she took the multicultural education course.

One of the most important issues that was presented was that we are *all* cultural beings. This translates into our work as teachers and how we invite our children to see themselves. Throughout my life, I never really thought of myself as “cultural.” I simply saw myself as a “normal girl” ...Everyone is diverse in his or her own way and *everyone* is a cultural being, including myself. Also, it is important to note that there is not one definition for “normal” which is also why no one should be labeled in this way.

Culture is the customs and beliefs of a particular group of people and there is no one who does not have a culture. However, Kate must have previously defined culture to be something owned by people who are not White. She mentioned that she never saw herself to be “cultural” until she took the multicultural education course. Because she was used to normalizing her ways of being, she used to see herself as “normal,” and people who had different customs and beliefs from hers as the ones who were “cultural.”

Kate shared how her teacher education program made her realize that her schooling experience did not represent the actual world or the U.S. in terms of the materials used. She shared:

Honestly, coming to [this teacher education program] and being introduced to books with African American people, I don’t remember that at all. I definitely do

not think that we had any mixed-race books or anything like that. Like the books, I remember just had nothing to do with that.

Kate shared about her unfamiliarity in books that featured characters of color. She specifically mentioned that she did not remember seeing any books featuring “African American people,” and then she also noted that she did not see “mixed-race books.” Her response reflected that her experience of school was absent of materials and discussions that fostered an understanding of White people not being the norm. Kate added that she was able to confirm her realization that her schooling experience was “skewed” by going to a bookstore and seeing books that featured characters of color.

Kate realized that her schooling experience lacked exposure to and discussion of cultural or racial diversity. She thought: “This is not what I am used to at all.” Kate’s schooling experience showed the reality that Whiteness has long been normalized in many classrooms and schools through the kinds of materials used and represented. By taking the required multicultural education course, Kate was able to reflect on her cultural heritage and recognize that she is a cultural being.

I mean [the course] made me...like I am Italian and Irish. And like I draw upon those things. There is definitely like an Italian food influence in my house. My mom is very Italian. So instead of just looking myself as just White, there is more to that. And I think it’s important to let people know. Caucasians kids should know that they also have a culture.

Whereas she used to see herself just as a “normal girl,” Kate realized from reflecting on her own cultural heritage that she had a unique cultural identity different from others—and that there is diversity in White communities (what she labeled Caucasian). Extending from her realization that she is a cultural being herself, Kate also reflected that White children should also learn about the fact that they are cultural beings.

Different from Kate who did not think previously that she is a cultural being, Ellen, also a White female preservice teacher, was already cognizant of the fact that everyone is a cultural being and that people's different cultures should be respected. Ellen's sense of cultural identity stemmed from her strong Jewish background. Ellen mentioned that she was able to recognize that not everyone shared the same culture with her when she went to college. Until Ellen went to college, she was heavily immersed in a close-knit Jewish community. She went to a private Jewish school from kindergarten to twelfth grade. All her classmates were Jewish, and her school had a very strong sense of cultural identity. However, from going to college and making friends from diverse cultural backgrounds, she realized that the Jewish culture she grew up with was just one culture out of many different cultures. She shared that by serving as the president of a Jewish student club, she had the opportunity to learn about other cultures while representing her own.

We would support the Muslim student association and then we also would go to Caribbean student association and the Latin American student association. We would go to each other's events and talk to each other and build like professional relationships so that we could support each other. They would always have cultural fairs. It was food-based. It was called "Taste of the World," I think. Any of the clubs that thought they have any food to offer that was part of the culture would bring it and share it so that people can taste different things. So that was a lot of fun. So, we would try to do things to support each other.

Ellen shared about how her college encouraged students to exchange cultural relationships and experience different cultural dishes as a way to get to know one another's culture. Different from Kate who did not have many opportunities to experience cultural diversity, Ellen's experience in college prior to coming to the teacher education program seemed to have helped Ellen recognize that all people have different cultural heritages and practices.

Research shows that when preservice teachers are able to see themselves as cultural beings, they can also see students who come from different cultures as cultural beings whose different beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies should be equally respected. This process can encourage preservice teachers to acquire positive attitudes toward students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own (Irvine, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In her Reflection-to-Action assignment, Ellen problematized the deficit perspective people have towards certain cultures. She referred to one of the examples given in the multicultural education course about a teacher rejecting a student's home culture. "What is troubling is the thought that any culture being seen as a disadvantage, when everyone has a culture and each cultural background should be treated equally." She reflected that teachers should not value one student's culture over another but rather embrace all cultures equally in the classroom.

Despite the ways Ellen brought a more actualized version of culture, there were still issues of power that needed attention. Her university's approach to cultural exchange and tasting other people's food focused on promoting surface-level cultural diversity and harmony without examining cultural power dynamics manifested on-and off-campus. I will explore these tensions and notions of power as I present Shazia's reflections.

Different from Kate and Ellen who were born and raised in the U.S., Shazia had an international background. Self-identified as a Brown female, Shazia grew up in the U.A.E. as an immigrant from Pakistan. She first came to the U.S. to complete her bachelor's degree in early childhood education. Shazia continued to emphasize that she grew up in Dubai where diversity was the norm. Here is an excerpt that demonstrates

Shazia's pride in experiencing a diverse student group while being a kindergarten teacher at an American school in Dubai.

That's the norm in Dubai now. You will find a lot of nationalities...English was the first language for maybe five of my students? And I had twenty-one students. Everybody else was different. We had Urdu, Hindi, French, Japanese, Korean, Peshitta, and children from Afghanistan, the Netherlands, Jordan, Palestine, and Syria.

Based on her personal experience of being immersed in an international community, Shazia demonstrated firm awareness of the fact that everyone had different cultural backgrounds—she still framed English as not being “different” as everyone else was.

Going beyond recognizing children's different cultural backgrounds, Shazia started to critically reflect through the multicultural education course about what school curriculum should look like in order to strengthen children's cultural identities. Shazia shared that she realized from the multicultural education course that mere physical presence of children from different cultures was not what constituted multicultural education. She wrote in her Reflection-to-Action assignment:

having children of different races and ethnic backgrounds is not enough...Despite the different nationalities represented both by the students and the faculties at our school, the curriculum followed was still very American. It was not until I started my degree [here] did I begin to understand that multicultural education has several layers.

Shazia learned for the first time in the multicultural education course about the power of reflecting children's cultural identities and practices in the curriculum. Shazia was able to reexamine her past teaching experience and understand that her school, despite the presence of diverse cultural identities, did not engage in multicultural education that was transformative. She had learned that educators cannot solve many of the fundamental

inequity issues by approaching multicultural education as adding diverse bodies to the classroom or school.

Similar to how Ellen's university approached diversity and culture without a focus on questioning issues of power and equity, Shazia's teaching experience in Dubai lacked a critical perspective on whose voices and experiences were being honored and dishonored, centered and marginalized, by using a "very American" curriculum. After engaging in critical reflection in the multicultural education course, Shazia wrote that educators needed to dig deeper and understand the unique and lived experiences of each child so that they could incorporate children's experiences in the curriculum and make learning more contextual. She was starting to understand how racialized systems of oppression work in and through curriculum and teaching, moving beyond an understanding of race as simply biological and toward an understanding of racialized systems of oppression and privilege in society (what she referred to as layers).

Judy, an Asian female preservice teacher, was also born outside of the U.S. While Shazia came to the U.S. by herself after she became an adult, Judy's whole family immigrated to the U.S. from South Korea when she was six years old. Judy demonstrated through her written assignments and interviews that she held a strong cultural identity as Korean American. Judy believed that teachers must encourage children who come from non-dominant cultural backgrounds to maintain and develop their cultural identity, and one of the ways to accomplish this was through valuing children's home language. In her Reflection-to-Action assignment, she wrote:

When we, teachers, value one language over another, we are valuing one culture over another... Bilingual education strengthens children's cultural bonds with their language while promoting multiple language skills. Studies also prove that almost all students enrolled in bilingual classrooms "do as well or better on standardized

tests than students in comparison groups of English-learners in English-only programs” (Salas, 2014, p. 184).

Judy made a connection between language and culture. She believed that when teachers dishonored children’s home language, they were dishonoring children’s home cultures. Judy supported bilingual education because she believed that children could strengthen their cultural identities by becoming proficient in their home language. She also believed that being able to speak multiple languages was a practical skill that could benefit children. She defended bilingualism by quoting a study that showed that students who had the opportunity to learn both in their home language and English demonstrated similar or higher academic performance compared to English language learners who did not have opportunities to study in their home language.

Judy also shared about how she felt empowered in her third-grade classroom when she first came to the U.S. because her teacher created a safe environment for her to engage in learning. Her teacher paired her with one of the Korean students who could speak both Korean and English so that Judy could participate in class even when she could not speak or understand English. Judy shared that her teacher never stopped her from communicating in Korean with her friends. Similarly, Judy planned to engage in teaching that could maintain and strengthen children’s cultural identities and language practices. As an example, Judy talked about the importance of publishing bilingual children’s books.

Although there are like so many Korean Americans here, we don’t have access to these books. And because it’s like that, I feel like children grow up with more favor to English than Korean. So, if we are able to kind of bring out more books that they are more familiar with, like bilingual books, it just helps them to get a stronger sense of their cultural identity and really help them grow as a bilingual person.

Judy conveyed that Korean American children should be given opportunities to develop a unique cultural identity by becoming proficient in both Korean and English. She expressed her concern that many Koreans tended to focus on becoming proficient in English and not Korean. Judy added that she eventually wanted to publish Korean-English bilingual children's books so that both languages could be promoted and learned.

If we can find ways to promote both of them and kind of show it through publications that it is possible, then I think parents will actually acknowledge it a lot more and utilize it a lot more.

In short, preservice teachers' written assignments and interviews showed that through the multicultural education course, all four of them came to understand that people are all cultural beings. Their realization that they themselves have their own cultural frame of reference is crucial for preparing as early childhood teachers because then they can be more careful about normalizing their own beliefs and values and penalizing children for not conforming to their own perspectives.

The four preservice teachers' realizations that they are all cultural identities, however, led to varying degrees of recognition about the presence of unequal power and privilege linked to cultural identities. In the following section, I focus on the issues that led to two White preservice teachers' tensions and resistance in the multicultural education course.

Tensions Around Racial Inequities

After having preservice teachers engage in the work of recognizing their own cultures and other people's cultures, Jennifer had preservice teachers reflect on notions of differing power and privilege and how they contributed to racialized educational

inequities. Data analyses revealed that the two White preservice teachers demonstrated discomfort and tension when discussing these issues.

Naming the various privileges preservice teachers had, Jennifer invited preservice teachers to participate in an activity called the Power Shuffle (for full description, see Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). After clearing the physical space of the classroom from furniture, preservice teachers were asked to line up along one of the classroom walls. They were then asked to walk across the room every time they identified with the statement reflecting a category of privilege read aloud by Jennifer. For example, statements included, “Cross the room if you are White,” “Cross the room if both your parents went to college.” After each category was called and students physically sorted themselves in categories of privilege and disprivilege, Jennifer engaged preservice teachers at each end of the room in reflecting on how they felt, what it meant, and how such crossings and categories allowed them to better understand their and other people’s privileges as well as implications for teaching young children.

During the third interview, Kate talked about the discomfort in having to participate in the Power Shuffle as a White person.

I hated the Power Shuffle. I wanted to walk out. I really didn’t want to be there... It made me and my friends who weren’t African American or Hispanic or Asian like bad people. That we have this White privilege. Like we have a better life because like that’s who we are. That’s literally how it made me feel the whole entire time.

Many of the White preservice teachers ended up frequently walking across the room during the Power Shuffle because of the privileges they have had in their lives (e.g., family’s income or wealth, language practices). This reflected the deeply entangled Whiteness as a system of privilege and power in society. Kate felt a high level of

discomfort during this activity. She felt that the activity was meant for White people to feel guilty. Kate continued to share how she felt singled out.

I just felt like kind of very targeted. The way I got it was like, “You have White privilege. You get treated differently. You should do something to change all of this or you should feel bad about getting all that. You should relinquish.” That’s like what I got out from it...I feel like sometimes White people are left out of it. Some people will completely disregard that I get yelled at by some people too. And I find that a lot in these kinds of courses. They will talk about everything else, but they won’t talk about like the backlash you get from being a White privileged citizen, you know?

While the purpose of the Power Shuffle was to have all preservice teachers become self-aware and reflective of the impact their own racial and cultural identities had on themselves, others, and society, interviews with Kate revealed that she had a hard time confronting her racial privilege and developing an understanding of multicultural education as anti-racist education in the pursuit of justice. Kate acknowledged that she was a racially privileged person. However, she resented how she and her other White friends had to be publicly “targeted” as having privileges. When interpreted from Picower’s (2009) framework, Kate deployed an emotional tool to protect the privilege and power associated with Whiteness, using her feelings and emotional response to obfuscate the role of White privilege in society being introduced by Jennifer via the Power Shuffle and associated discussion. Instead of being prompted to reflect on the long history of racial privilege in the U.S., she took it as a personal attack onto her and her White peers.

Furthermore, Kate pushed back and argued that while White people did have privileges, they also got backlashes for being privileged. Her argument was that White people did not always have all the power. Rather than noticing and reflecting on the

structural oppression people of color experience, Kate thought about her personal experience of feeling disempowered as a White person.

Kate's reaction aligned with what was found from White preservice teachers in Crowley and Smith's (2015) study. In Crowley and Smith's (2015) study, situated in a social studies methods course, White preservice teachers resisted identifying White privilege as a form of structural racism. Instead, they individualized racism. They used personal biographies to accept or reject aspects of race privilege. Similarly, Kate found it difficult to engage in structural thinking regarding White privilege in this situation. The activity made her feel "targeted," and she seemed to shut down from possibilities of further reflection. Kate noted that she did not walk away from the activity feeling that she could be an agent of change. "I didn't get that at all. I just left with a sour taste in my mouth."

Besides pushing back against notions of White privilege, Kate also believed that anyone could gain privileges through hard work, embracing the myth of meritocracy. For the Interview Reflection assignment, Kate interviewed her father and wrote reflections on how he became successful. Kate's reflection demonstrated her firm belief that her father achieved success solely due to his hard work. She focused on his disadvantages (e.g., SES, family unit) and evaded any acknowledgement of his racial privilege.

He had a moderate SES, and not a strong and stable family unit. He did not enjoy this, so in turn he worked as hard as he could to make life better for himself and our family now. He was driven to create a strong family culture because he lacked one growing up... He graduated top of his high school class, attended undergraduate and graduate school, was an Olympic trials qualifying runner, a TA in college, and proceeded to go to medical school. He has given me the drive that I have to succeed and makes me feel like everything is possible with hard work and determination.

Kate pointed out that her father did not start from a wealthy family nor did he have a stable family that could help him succeed in life. In leveling her father's experience with those of oppressed groups in society, Kate dismissed structural inequality and explained that through his hard work was he able to reach his dreams. Looking at her father's success, Kate developed a belief that everything could be done through hard work and determination. She did not consider her father's privileged positioning in social, economic, historical, political, and educational opportunities that came from his racial identity and how his identity had power in society. Kate's father highlighted to Kate that his skin color did not have any influence on his life. Kate's father said, "Being White has been a neutral in [my] life. [I] enjoyed no privilege on that basis nor was [I] discriminated against." Kate's father was used to seeing his racial identity as "neutral." Kate and her father both had not identified privileges they reaped from having a White racial identity. Kate's belief in meritocracy became even stronger after interviewing her father.

While claiming that her father's success came purely from his hard work, Kate also believed that people who did not experience success in life did not do so because they did not work hard enough. The following excerpt reveals Kate's belief about people who do not have successful lives. She shared:

I understand there are some inequities, but I also believe that many people feel entitled to things and think that high levels of success come with zero effort and work. Ultimately, I believe our society, in general, is very lazy and people like to take the easy way out.

Kate stated that people should work harder without being "lazy" or taking "the easy way out" if they wanted to experience high levels of success. Although she acknowledged that there were some inequities in society, she believed more strongly that many people tried to enjoy privileges without putting enough effort into their work. Kate did not

acknowledge how the current setup of society and its longstanding systems of subjugation make it disproportionately more challenging for racial and ethnic minorities to succeed given that the same amount of effort is put into hard work. Kate did not recognize that White people reaped many unearned benefits and privileges. Kate rather upheld the dominant framing of individuals and communities of color being at fault.

Kate's responses demonstrated that she did not recognize the systemic and institutionalized racial hierarchies that impacted people's success. Kate's written assignments and interview responses resonated with multicultural teacher education research that shows that White preservice teachers oftentimes deny that White people are beneficiaries of special privileges due to their Whiteness (Crowley & Smith, 2015; Milner, 2010; Picower, 2009). While Kate had come to realize through the multicultural education course that she is a cultural being, she did not go further and engage in critical reflection of the power and privilege attached to her racial identity. She deployed meritocracy as an explanation and did not recognize racial hierarchies in society.

As introduced in the earlier section, Ellen, the other White preservice teacher in my study, problematized deficit perspectives people had towards certain cultures and shared her belief that every culture should be respected equally. However, when it came to issues of racial inequities and how educators should prioritize disrupting racial injustices through their teaching, Ellen demonstrated resistance. In Ellen's Reflection-to-Action assignment, she wrote as she reflected on Au's (2014) book, *Rethinking*

Multicultural Education: Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice:

I personally value an education that does not promote racism and believe that it is important to establish a classroom culture that is anti-racism. I do, however, take slight issue with using "multicultural education" and "anti-racist education" interchangeably. In effect, what this means is that any classroom that does not

promote multiculturalism is a racist classroom. I think that is a strong opinion to hold considering that there is no simple or single definition for what a multicultural education is.

Ellen was referring to Au's (2014) first chapter, Barbara Miner's interview with Enid Lee. Lee actually clarifies in the interview that she prefers using the term "anti-racist education" over "multicultural education" because "multicultural education often has come to mean something that is quite superficial: the dances, the dress, the dialect, the dinners" (p. 10). Ellen's argument was that multicultural education could be defined in many ways and that it should not be defined with a "single definition." While her claim that multicultural education can be defined in multiple ways is a reasonable one, further digging was necessary in order to more clearly understand where her tensions were stemming from. Ellen said during her interview with me:

If a teacher doesn't do what, whoever it was, said, then they are racist? That to me, you know, maybe they were following one definition but not to that extreme you know. I don't know. To me, I don't need to be reading a book and told I am racist. I don't know...I just remember the book...So basically you are saying that if people don't do what you want them to do, then they are racist. I didn't like that.

Ellen did not like Lee's argument that educators were "promoting a monocultural or racist education" unless they "[took] multicultural education or anti-racist education seriously" (p.10). She felt that the book was telling her that she was "racist" because she did not follow anti-racist-oriented multicultural education. Ellen did not define multicultural education "to that extreme."

Prior to the multicultural education course, Ellen's exposure to multiculturalism came through cultural exchanges and tastings of food in her university. Lee defined such an approach to be "superficial" in her interview. Ellen's conceptualization of multicultural education, as will be explored in the next section, aligned closer to her

previous experience of diversity than what Lee was arguing for. Paradoxically, the course adopted a critical approach to multicultural education; as such, it centered the perspective Lee forwarded. Ellen experienced tension as a result.

Ellen shared that some of the chapters in Au's (2014) book seemed to "create a problem where there [was] no problem," Lee argues in the book that the current educational context is a racially discriminatory one because the curriculum privileges Western civilization. She proposes that educators engage in anti-racist education by diversifying perspectives in the curriculum and ultimately bring about social change in order to disrupt the perpetuation of unequal power relationships (Miner, 2014, p. 10). Ellen thought that such an approach was too "extreme" as she thought there was "no problem" in the curriculum used in the current educational context. So then what Ellen meant when she mentioned that she believed "that it [was] important to establish a classroom culture that is anti-racism" involved something different from what Lee was arguing for—Ellen's idea of establishing an anti-racist classroom will be analyzed in the next chapter when looking into Ellen's student teaching experience. Ultimately, Ellen recognized her cultural identity and advocated for respecting all cultures equally. However, because she did not see how people lived in a society that privileged the dominant race and its values, histories, and perspective, she thought it was too much for educators to focus on multicultural education that aimed for expanding racial justice.

When I asked Judy about her experience of the course, one of the things Judy mentioned were the tensions she felt in class because of the ways White preservice teachers reacted to the readings and to Jennifer (a person of color). The following excerpt

shows how Judy felt about White preservice teachers' reactions to the course's critical orientation on power and privilege.

They kind of took it more personally as a personal attack. So I felt like in that sense, it was just upsetting. And the tensions that were rising in the classroom was kind of...they took it too offensively when it wasn't meant to be like that. If they were able to take it in as a teacher mentality and be like, "Okay. This is how my kids might feel. I need to use this. Know this feeling so that I can really go out to help." Because if I don't feel like, how am I going to really feel what they are feeling? But I think this class was trying to do that for those that are not a minority in this country but they kind of felt discomfort.

Judy noticed White preservice teachers' "discomfort" when the course tried to make preservice teachers experience the feeling of being a minority. Judy felt upset that White preservice teachers could not take on a teacher perspective and think about how children might feel when they were minoritized in early childhood classrooms. Similar to how Kate and Ellen mentioned during their interviews that they felt "targeted" and accused as "racist" when discussing issues of racial inequity, Judy sensed that White preservice teachers took it as a "personal attack" when they were given opportunities to critically reflect on issues of power.

In short, Kate and Ellen, both White preservice teachers in my study, experienced tensions when they were invited to reflect on racial inequity as it pertained to their own identities and privileged positionings in society as well as how educators could participate in making social changes through their teaching. Kate resisted being identified as privileged based on her race; she believed in meritocracy. Ellen did not directly talk about her stance on White privilege, but the idea of teachers prioritizing anti-racist work through their teaching in order to disrupt White privilege created discomfort in her. While both preservice teachers recognized their cultural identities, these recognitions did not extend to critical cultural reflections on unequal power relationships in schools and

society. Their experiences in the multicultural education course did not seem to help them reconstruct their purposes and directions in teaching in early childhood classrooms.

Kate's and Ellen's experiences and reflections may be better understood through the stages of White racial identity development: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy (Helms, 1995). Helms (2013) notes that "[t]he development of White identity in the U.S. is closely intertwined with the development and progress of racism in this country" (p. 207). Whereas Kate identified being in the contact phase (as she had not been aware of race—e.g., lack of awareness of books featuring characters of color, minimal experiences with people of color), Ellen appeared to be in the stage of pseudo-independence, engaging in intellectual and conceptual considerations of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences while not fully apprehending experiential and affective domains of race. As such, after one semester of engaging in multicultural education, they were unlikely to continue to explore the entanglements between their racial identities and systems of power and privilege in U.S. society.

Judy, on the other hand, seemed to have a more developed sense of her racial identity development (Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2001). Her Asian American identity development was no doubt impacted by her experiences as an immigrant in U.S. schools. She had long been aware of her ethnic heritage and displayed sociopolitical consciousness—e.g., the importance of bilingual education. As such, their experiences and reflections offer insights into the racial identity development of teachers if they are to engage in critical multicultural teaching (Gorski, 2009).

In the following section, I specifically describe the ways in which the four preservice teachers in my study made sense of and conceptualized multicultural education after their multicultural education course experience.

Conceptualizing Multicultural Education

While Jennifer and the course syllabus subscribed to a critical stance in multicultural education as essential to disrupting inequities, it is important to recognize that multicultural education has been frequently approached using conservative and liberal perspectives, rather than a critical emancipatory perspective. Educational inequities cannot be disrupted if teachers believe that students from minoritized backgrounds should rather assimilate into the mainstream culture (what is called the conservative approach). At the same time, educational inequities will persist if teachers only emphasize accepting and celebrating different cultures without problematizing fundamental power constructs (subscribing to a liberal approach to multicultural education). Teachers who approach multicultural education using a critical perspective problematize the fact that the dominant culture has continued to exert unequal power on individual and structural relationships. They engage students in critical conversations that allow them to question social inequities.

Interviews with Jennifer, the course instructor, made it clear that she approached multicultural education using a critical perspective. As she elaborated on her teaching philosophy, she explained using a hypothetical situation:

If I had all children who were American born, I will still talk about immigration. What's going on? What's Donald Trump saying about what he is going to do to

immigrants? What does it mean for us as human beings? It's something that affects us regardless of whether or not our battle to fight.

She explained that children, regardless of their nationalities or immigration status, should be aware of critical social issues that happen beyond the classroom boundary. She believed that issues such as the change of immigration policies should be discussed in early childhood classrooms and children should have space to engage in critical dialogue about how social policies impact the lives of all human beings. Jennifer also shared that when Eric Garner died due to police brutality, her second-grade class discussed this case and problematized social injustices. Although the short excerpt below does not fully explore the nuances of her teaching, I provide it to demonstrate Jennifer's teaching orientation.

We had started the year kind of having conversations about current events and things happening in the world and it was in the midst of protests and marches. So, these were kids who were being exposed to this world in that way. So outside of their windows, they could hear their marches. They would bring it into class.

As reflected in the excerpt above, Jennifer provided a safe space for her children to bring in critical social issues so that they could become aware of and problematize unequal power relations and social injustices through conversations in the classroom. She aimed to develop students' sociopolitical consciousness, a disposition to "critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162). Jennifer further shared that these conversations led her second-grade class to discuss ways they could be agents of change to make the world a better place for all. Jennifer's teaching philosophy entailed a combination of naming, problematizing, and acting against injustices and inequities associated with systems of oppression (racism and intertwined forms of bigotry) in schools, schooling, and society.

As such, she shared that she conceptualized her role as someone committed to preparing “early childhood teachers to undertake a critical examination of the politics of inequity in their classrooms, so that they can do right by their students; so that they can interrupt injustices and fight for justice.”

Shazia, different from Kate and Ellen introduced in the previous section, was open to reflecting on the privileges she had experienced in her life. In her interview, she recounted the privileges she had living in Dubai, comparing her experiences to those of family members who lived in Pakistan. She also acknowledged biases that she needed to work on in order to become a teacher who did not perpetuate social injustices. Yet, she did not seem to link social injustices to racial identity. Shazia’s racial identity development as someone who came from South Asia as an adult had not entailed conformity to hegemonic understandings, such as White supremacy; she lived the reality of cultural differences. Defining herself as “Brown,” she saw her racial identity as descriptive and not as a marker of systemic exclusion and oppression. She did not think she experienced so much of the dissonance between her identity and the privileged racial identity in America. Although Shazia had written in her Reflection-to-Action assignment that she had previously misunderstood multicultural education to be celebrating different holidays and that she realized through the course that multicultural education should go beyond the “superficial level,” her views on ways children should be exposed to multicultural education seemed to remain in the conceptual realm. That is, as she translated her beliefs into possible pedagogical practices, she described:

I think more field trips...But I am not sure if they have a place in New York. For example, there is a global village for a month in Dubai. They have all these countries and you can find vendors selling different cultural stuff. Goods and clothes. I think Dubai is very international that way. I miss that.

As a pathway to engage in multicultural education, Shazia suggested that children should go on more field trips to learn about other people's cultures. She conceptualized culture as something neutral, being represented by "stuff" being sold instead of seeing it as "a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others" (Gay, 2018, p. 8). She recalled the global village children in her old school in Dubai were able to visit to learn about "different cultural stuff" such as "goods and clothes." As such, she defined culture apart from systems of exclusion and privilege; she did not seem to be consciously aware of how "teaching and learning are always mediated by cultural influences" (p. 8), being political endeavors.

Shazia seemed to be navigating tensions between her prior experiences in Dubai and her racialization in the U.S. While her discussions of practice conveyed a focus on teaching "the culture" of "Others" (Gorski, 2009, p. 312), she also discussed her belief that people of color in the U.S. probably experienced more discrimination.

I think here, there's a lot more, "If this is not White, this is not good enough." I think there is a lot more people...even people sitting in the subway will show you that. I'm not used to it. This is all new to me. I am more used to, "Doesn't matter what the color is." It's more like, "They are speaking another language. I want to find out what that language is." I do think there is a difference in education system. I think they are being exposed to it but not in a good way.

Shazia acknowledged that hegemonic ideologies of White supremacy within the context of the U.S. were still new to her. However, she noted how she often felt that people in the U.S. perceived not being White as being "not good enough." She explained that in Dubai, however, people did not care about skin color but were instead open to learning about cultural differences. Shazia still conceptualized biases as personal attributes and not as

systemic and ingrained in the fabric of the U.S. This is visible, for example, in how she attributed the presence of racism in the U.S. to people being exposed to cultural diversity “not in a good way” in the education system. She added:

I just think it’s never celebrated. Like differences are never celebrated. It’s just all I hear about is, probably most of my adult life is, racism, discrimination. Everything is so negative.

In doing so, Shazia did not acknowledge race as a sociopolitical category nor Whiteness as a system of advantages and privileges. As such, Shazia believed that the education system should focus more on celebrating cultural diversity rather than problematizing “racism” and “discrimination.” According to Shazia’s view, it was because the U.S. education system focused so much on inequality issues that people in the country engaged more in racially discriminatory practices.

The following excerpt further reveals Shazia’s impression of the “negative” approach to multiculturalism in the U.S. education system.

So when we talked about multiculturalism [back at my school], you know we were sitting with people of different colors and people coming in from different parts of the world, even like neighboring countries, but they would have totally different cultures, and we would be like, “Yeah, we have different cultures,” but over here, I think they make such a big deal out of it...But I grew up in a country where you were to get to know the person and you ask questions like, “Where do you go for vacations? What kind of food do you eat? What kind of sauce do you make?” Things like that. Here, people have very strong opinions. I think people are more aware that there are different cultures from where I come from. So you could be living in the same building, and you could tell: “Those are the Arabs. They are probably like this, this.” You know you can smell this particular perfume. Or you can know the Indians like to cook their food with coconut oil. Like it’s just...You are so aware of it that it’s not an issue. Over here, it’s made into an issue.

Shazia’s exposure to multicultural education in her teacher education program left her with the impression that the U.S. made “such a big deal” out of cultural differences. She interpreted the struggles to fight for racial and cultural justice as having “strong opinions”

and making cultural differences a negative “issue.” Shazia conceptualized multicultural education as being comprised of group-specific studies whereby students should “focus on learning about ‘the’ culture, value system, lifestyle, and worldview of a particular group” (Gorski, 2009, p. 312), without visibly attending to issues of power and privilege. This conceptualization seemed to be informed by her nascent process of racial identity development in the U.S.

Kate demonstrated overt resistance to the idea of engaging in equity-oriented, critical multicultural education. She rather supported the idea of taking a celebratory approach to multicultural teaching.

I also feel like it’s very important if a parent comes in and like kids are interested in something like Indian culture, we can do a celebration about it. Yes, completely. For example, this girl, she’s going to a doctoral student...and she’s from India. So when it was an Indian Holiday like the lights whatever it was, she was doing all these activities with the kids and it was great and it was fun and they really...I am thinking the two-year-olds probably don’t get it right now but it was fun to bring it in that way. I think I would try in that way but like I said, I think it has to be relatable to the kids...People say that’s not it but at this age, what are you going to do? You can’t bring in everything like [the multicultural education] class would say. The first graders, they are going to be more engaged with stuff that is more fun. And kids should be able to participate. Maybe if it’s like a certain tradition. Or like birthday celebrations that are not traditional. Like celebrating different culture. But I don’t think they are going to care that much if it’s not related to them. Especially with this age group. If it’s not going to benefit them, it’s not even worth it.

As Kate gave an example of an Indian teacher celebrating Diwali with children, she explained it as “the lights whatever it was.” Although she could have forgotten the name of the Indian Holiday, the way she put it into words seemed to indicate her lack of interest or even dismissiveness towards other people’s cultures. This signaled the lack of importance she saw in multicultural education. Further, by saying that “the two-year-olds probably don’t get it right now,” she revealed her belief that young children did not have

the capacity to learn about or have not experienced cultural and/or racialized hierarchies in society, contrary to well-established and extensive research findings proving otherwise (e.g., Souto-Manning, 2013; Tatum, 2001). She argued that young children must be exposed to culture in a “fun” way rather than problematizing racialized hierarchies and injustices. By saying that “it has to be relatable to kids,” she assumed that young children could not relate to critical social issues in meaningful ways.

Returning to Banks’ (2003) approaches to curricular integration, if we consider a continuum of conceptualizations of multicultural teaching and related preservice teachers’ willingness to engage in it, Ellen’s willingness to engage in multicultural teaching was perhaps in between that of Kate’s and Shazia’s. Ellen’s, Kate’s, and Shazia’s conceptualizations of multicultural education more closely aligned with what have been called contributions and additive approaches, centering adding Other’s cultures as curricular accessories; they did not approach teaching as transformation or as social action. Shazia’s responses reflected her belief in the importance of cultural diversity in early childhood classrooms. Kate’s responses indicated that she would consider celebrating different cultures on special occasions, when necessary. Ellen welcomed the idea of actively engaging family members in the classroom to introduce children’s home cultures. She had witnessed children’s excitement when her student teaching school invited families to share about their home cultures during an assembly. She wrote that she would like to tweak this idea and expand it further to fit into her vision of a multicultural classroom. “I feel like this could be an ongoing idea where every week, on a Friday, another child’s family could share their culture how they see fit.” She also added, “Whether that means having parents come in for the presentation or if they are not

comfortable with being in the room, the child can present something on his/her own.”

Being mindful of the different parenting styles depending on children’s cultural backgrounds, Ellen shared that families should be given flexibility in ways they engaged in their children’s education. While Ellen still regarded multicultural education as an add-on (on Fridays) and did not regard it as a central facet of her curriculum and teaching, she communicated her willingness to engage in multicultural teaching on an ongoing basis (weekly).

In the multicultural education course Jennifer taught, there was an interview assignment which sought to introduce preservice teachers to interviews as a tool to teach multiculturally. That is, the multicultural education course invited preservice teachers to think about ways to use interviews to challenge children’s biases and trouble stereotypical ideas pertaining to gender, race, citizenship, and other social identifiers which are imbued with power and privilege in U.S. society. Reflecting on the Interview Reflection assignment, Ellen noted that interviews could be used with young children to learn more about their home lives, backgrounds, and interests, but questions that involved discussing “privileges or how they have been stereotyped” were not age-appropriate. Similar to Kate, Ellen believed that young children were not ready to engage in critical dialogue that problematized unequal power relations.

Although Jennifer continued to encourage preservice teachers to consider adopting a critical multicultural stance in the multicultural education course, interviews with the four preservice teachers revealed complexities in the education of teachers and the development of teacher identities. Whereas all four preservice teachers had been assigned the same readings and assignments, they made sense of them differently

depending on their life experiences (specifically, being excluded and/or marginalized) and racial identity development. Kate and Ellen were both comfortable with a descriptive approach to multicultural education—including the description of multiple cultures in the classroom. Kate seemed to be comfortable with a contributions approach to multicultural education, whereby culture is deemed static and teaching is specific to particular groups; she conceptualized multicultural education as teaching “the Other” (Gorski, 2009). This can be better understood in the context of her White racial identity development; she had just recently become aware of her own racial identity (Helms, 1995). Ellen conceptualized multicultural education as teaching with “cultural sensitivity and tolerance” (Gorski, 2009, p. 312). That is, she prioritized cultural awareness (which she had developed in her undergraduate years). In defining culture as personal she did not define racism as a system of advantages and privileges based on race, permeating every aspect of U.S. society. This is coherent with her racial identity development. Although I did not initially set out to find the role of racial identity and racial identity development in the four teachers’ conceptualizations, reflections on, and pedagogical enactments of multicultural education, this emerged as an important finding of this study. The unexamined Whiteness of Kate’s and Ellen’s educational experiences led to the maintenance of dominant racial ideologies. And, as it will be discussed in the following chapter, their student teaching placements, which were predominantly White, afforded them a reintegration into the comforts of hegemonic beliefs and performances.

Kate, Ellen, and Shazia were in the beginning stages of their racial identity development journeys. They all regarded culture as static and monolithic, focusing their multicultural approaches on “learning about ‘the’ culture” of the “Other” (Gorski, 2009,

p. 312). In sum, despite the critical and equity-oriented approach the multicultural education course sponsored, Shazia, Kate, and Ellen continued to believe that early childhood teachers should accept and celebrate different cultures without problematizing fundamental power constructs or acting against systemic oppressions.

Out of the four preservice teachers focal to this study, Judy was the one who was farther along her racial identity development journey; she had immigrated to the U.S. in third grade, been Othered, and (perhaps) had a more developed understanding of teaching in a sociopolitical context. Nevertheless, she focused on particular dimensions of systemic oppression and how they contributed “structurally to an unjust and inequitable educational system” (Gorski, 2009, p. 313)—those deemed more acceptable and less complicated: socioeconomics and language—while displaying hesitance about engaging in race conversations (as shown in Chapter V).

As explained in her Cultural Memoir assignment, Judy had been aware of her ethnicity as a child and moved beyond attempts to assimilate to hegemonic cultural ideologies. She appeared to be sociopolitically and consciously aware of her advocacy toward Korean Americans; this was exemplified in her choice to pursue a bilingual teaching certification and her student teaching in a predominantly-Korean/Korean American setting.

Whereas Judy was still developing her racial identity, her development had taken place for a longer period of time than the three other participants of this study. This process influenced her view of culture and her conceptualization of multicultural education. For example, in her Reflection-to-Action assignment, Judy referred to the

concept of the “culture of poverty” to illustrate the centrality of dominant racial ideologies to teaching and learning in U.S. schools. She wrote:

“Culture of poverty” basically worked with premises that valued middle class’s views of education as mainstream. As a result, when other non-mainstream failed to abide by it, it blamed the people living in the “culture of poverty” for their failures instead of looking at the institutionalized and systematic structures that hinder children.

Judy’s reflections signaled her awareness of the institutional and systemic inequities; although she did not label Whiteness, she pointed out how the normalization of “middle class’s views of education” was the reason “non-mainstream” students experienced educational failures—they were measured and rated against middle-class’ ways of being and communicating. Although employing terms that may be seen as signaling deficits (such as “non-mainstream”), she was aware of hierarchies of power in terms of “views” and practices. Judy communicated her awareness of the consequences of differing power and privilege that influenced children’s educational experiences.

Drawing on her own racial identity and life experiences, Judy shared her belief that teachers could impact children’s lives by constantly working to create equitable classrooms. She demonstrated her commitment to equity-oriented teaching by sharing her plans for engaging in bilingual education as an early childhood teacher, suggesting contrastive analysis as a powerful way to learn about and through language(s).

When reading bilingual texts, I would assign a native speaker with a non-native speaker to read the book together. In groups of two or three, children can take a creative approach in learning how different languages are used and grammatically constructed. These types of group work are particularly helpful for those “silent” bilingual students. The silent students can have opportunities to share their native language skills with their friends without shying away for not being good at English. For native English speakers, they come to value the complexity in learning different languages. In a sense, they are exposed to the difficulties that their classmates may face in learning English.

Judy was sensitive about providing extra avenues for children whose native language is not English to engage in meaningful learning. Judy's writing demonstrated that she had been thinking about how to realistically attend to, honor, and operationalize bilingualism in her teaching in order to include children who were linguistically marginalized in her teaching. During her first interview, Judy had shared that her third-grade teacher paired her with a partner who was bilingual so that she could also engage in meaningful learning when she just moved to the U.S. from South Korea. Perhaps based on her positive firsthand experience of successfully working with a bilingual partner, Judy came up with the idea that "silent bilingual students" could be paired up with "native English speakers" so that they could help each other. Judy's concrete action plans indicated her commitment as a teacher to interrupt deficit perceptions of bilingual students (for whom English is not the first language) and counter their exclusion in and through her teaching.

When asked about what she wanted her future teaching to look like, Judy said:

I think I kind of told you before. Like doing student activism. Doing like work in the classroom along with the actual curriculum that really focuses on social justice issues. So, this is something that I recently thought about. But, you know, there are so much of classroom materials that are not being used by the end of the semester. We have boxes of crayons and markers left. So for like a persuasive unit that I am doing right now, I thought about, so we are beginning to do letter writing, so I felt like why don't we, you know it's almost the end of the year, we are not going to use this. So why can't we encourage the kids to write a letter to peers somewhere far away. Somewhere who doesn't have all these stuff and really pack it with the letter and send it. Because stuff like this is either going to be left there or like... I felt like children in my classroom, they are always so abundant with supplies that they don't take good cares of it. And so even if their pencils are like full, they just garbage it and get new pencils because they want erasers and stuff. And stuff like that really just bothers me. Because there are children that don't get supplies, so I want to really help them in that sense to be more critically aware about how it's not just about you. Whatever you don't use, let's learn to give. So, if I was a teacher, I want to do a lot of stuff like that.

Judy shared how she wanted to support children to engage in “student activism” focused “on social justice issues.” Judy noticed that children in her student teaching placement were not aware of the socioeconomic privileges they had in terms of school supplies. Judy was actively thinking within her student teaching context about what could be done by the teacher and children to contribute to expanding equity and social justice beyond children’s immediate community.

Whereas Ellen mentioned that it was age-inappropriate for young children to talk about their privileges, Judy had a different view in that children should be probed to think about “social justice issues,” or their privileges, starting from a young age. She discussed her actions to mitigate exclusion based on language proficiency; further, she saw students as activists, helping others. Different from the other three preservice teachers who limited their conceptualization of multicultural education to celebrating cultural diversity, Judy demonstrated her belief that early childhood teachers should engage in multicultural teaching. While Judy was able to articulate her vision in teaching multiculturally, she also experienced tensions when engaging in multicultural education. This will be explored in the next chapter.

In this section, I offered insights into four preservice teachers’ conceptualizations of multicultural education. It is important to understand that these approaches, like cultures and cultural identities, are not static. Further, they are entwined with preservice teachers’ understandings of culture, racial identities, and stage(s) of racial identity development. Further, I considered their willingness to engage in multicultural teaching in their own (future) early childhood classrooms. The entwined nature of preservice teachers’ racial identity development and teacher development point toward the need for

teacher education programs to more centrally and intentionally engage preservice teachers in racial identity development. I discuss this further in Chapter VI.

In the following section, I discuss the ways in which these four preservice teachers reflected on and made sense of Jennifer's situated teaching practices within the context of a required multicultural education course that espoused a critical perspective. In the following section, I first introduce Jennifer's pedagogical stance in the multicultural education course and then analyze the different reflections and sense-making these preservice teachers had regarding Jennifer's situated teaching practices. While they are certainly not representative of every preservice teacher in the course, they shed light on preservice teacher learning within the context of a required multicultural education course where preservice teachers were expected to examine their own privileges and power in schooling and society.

Theorizing from Practice

The current U.S. educational context attempts to dictate specific curricula and pedagogies focused on the production of measurable results. In this "either/or thinking" sociopolitical educational context, multicultural education is frequently constructed as lacking in academic rigor and/or as not being worthwhile, being positioned at odds with high academic expectations (Au, 2014; Nieto, 2010b; Okun, 2020). While a number of scholars have introduced counter-stories to this majoritarian story of multicultural education through cases of teachers engaging in critical and equity-oriented multicultural teaching so that teachers and future-teachers gain confidence and insight to examine, adapt, and reinvent critical multicultural practices in their own classroom context (Au,

2014; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Nieto, 2013; Souto-Manning, 2013; Souto-Manning & Martell, 2016), dominant racial ideologies persist in and through teaching. As conveyed in findings presented earlier in this chapter, such resistance continues to permeate preservice teachers' willingness to engage in critical multicultural education. This resistance is partly justified by the illusion of one-size-fits-all approaches to education being fair and the failure to recognize that equality many times leads to injustice. Other times, multicultural education is justified as being developmentally inappropriate in ways that ignore decades of research (e.g., Clark & Clark, 1947) pertaining to young children's racial identity development (e.g., Kinzler & Spelke, 2011).

Multicultural education courses are known as sites of resistance (Oakes et al., 1997), even as most of them take superficial approaches (Gorski, 2009). Monica (the professor who had designed the course) knew that. She had communicated it to Jennifer. Jennifer recounted Monica saying:

If you do your job well, interrupting well-known myths and engaging preservice students in unlearning, they will not be happy.... This is hard work. Much needed work, but hard work.

It was with this understanding that Jennifer was invited by Monica, a professor from an early childhood teacher education program, to first co-teach and gradually teach the multicultural education course Monica had been teaching for a number of years on her own. Monica believed that Jennifer could offer a window into how critical multicultural education was being negotiated in a public-school classroom by a practicing teacher within the current context of hyper-standardization, allowing preservice teachers to

theorize from practice and shift from thinking that multicultural teaching could not be done.

During the second interview, Jennifer recalled how preservice teachers seemed to appreciate when she shared specific examples of her own teaching practices.

I felt that whenever I would talk about my own practices, that's when they seemed to be taking notes or really like taking better attention. Like this is useful to me...I felt that that's what they wanted to get out of it.

Jennifer felt that preservice teachers paid closer attention when she introduced her own situated teaching examples. However, Jennifer wanted to also make it clear that multicultural education was not a subject to be taught. "You don't teach multicultural education in your classroom. You teach multiculturally." She wanted preservice teachers to understand that there was no set formula for engaging in multicultural education.

Jennifer had hoped that preservice teachers learned to constantly reflect on their teaching and considered ways of teaching to make the curriculum and teaching more situated, relevant, and equitable for all students. Jennifer explained that multicultural education should look different in every classroom, even within the same school.

It could be similar but there is so much difference because of the knowledge each person brings and the experiences each person brings are different. So I didn't mind sharing my stories and I knew they really appreciated having a visual, like "Oh, okay, this is not just all theory. There is practice attached to this." But I also didn't want them to, you know, who else can bring in a basketball player to their school, you know? But you can think of other people in your community that you could interview. So that's what I really wanted to get at.

Jennifer wanted to make sure preservice teachers did not regard her situated teaching practices as formulas; as something to be learned and applied directly to their teaching. She wanted preservice teachers to learn to contextualize teaching based on the members of their own classroom communities, honoring their identities, practices, and legacies.

Jennifer also incorporated read-alouds at the beginning of each class. “That was something that I really wanted to add in.” She mentioned that one of her professors during her teacher preparation started class with read-alouds in a reading course and she appreciated it very much. She wanted to make sure preservice teachers knew that there were children’s books that reflected who they taught. These were books that she was using in her own teaching. She not only read one book at the beginning of every class, but she continued to bring many other books she considered to be helpful for preservice teachers and displayed them on one side of the classroom. She shared that she wanted to provide resources for preservice teachers to use. “I really wanted them to have them in their classroom libraries and display for children to read.” Jennifer’s commitment to introducing literature by and about people of color to preservice teachers sought to encourage preservice teachers to incorporate diverse books to engage in multicultural teaching. By engaging with books, Jennifer was inviting preservice teachers not only to consider moving away from normalizing Whiteness in terms of classroom materials but also to engage in assets pedagogies rife with moments for problematization and transformation.

It is within this context—a required multicultural education course taught by a part-time adjunct teacher educator, a teacher of color with nearly two decades of experience teaching in New York City public schools—that I discuss different ways in which the four preservice teachers perceived and responded to Jennifer’s situated teaching practices. While all four preservice teachers experienced certain tensions when thinking about critical multicultural teaching, their experiences of having Jennifer introduce her situated teaching seemed to either widen or narrow their imagination of

possibilities towards multicultural teaching. Findings shed light on the importance of instructor-student positionality in teacher education (Mensah, 2019; Mensah & Jackson, 2018).

Learning from Jennifer's Situated Teaching

Data analyses revealed that Judy and Shazia were able to imagine their own teaching as they learned from Jennifer's examples of her situated teaching practices. Although it is hard to pinpoint *exactly* why Judy and Shazia were responsive to Jennifer's teaching, it is important to note that all three of them were women of color who spoke languages other than English as young children and who have been otherized in and by U.S. society, not fitting neatly into the normative and racialized definition of Americanness.

During her third interview, Judy reflected that the course instructor being an experienced teacher who have been practicing equity-oriented multicultural teaching for many years in early childhood classrooms helped her gain more assurance that diversity, equity, and social justice could be effectively taught by teachers. She said:

I think having Jennifer in the [multicultural education] classroom gave us reassurance that it can actually happen. She actually made it very practical and she was really doing what we were talking about in her class. She showed us the examples and results. So I really thought it was good. It seemed like it would work if you were to do it effectively like her. Yeah, so it really was encouraging and reassuring to know that it can actually happen once I am experienced and confident in what I am doing too.

Judy reflected that Jennifer's teaching examples that were shared in the course helped her gain "reassurance" that teaching that centered on children's identities and cultures could indeed happen in early childhood classrooms. While Judy expressed how she was encouraged to know that what she was learning in the multicultural education course

“would work,” she also added a condition by saying, “once I am experienced and confident in what I am doing too.” Despite her agreement with the idea of multicultural education, Judy constructed multicultural teaching as something to be done by experienced and confident teachers. She had not yet conceptualized teaching as political; at least not all teaching.

Judy had shared earlier that she felt that “multicultural education felt so unreachable” when she thought about the challenges she might face as a first-time teacher engaging in multicultural work. Locating multicultural teaching and academics at odds, Judy exposed tensions:

It’s hard to connect what I believe in and what parents believe in and put that together and that’s a lot of work. So, if conflicts arise, I’m going to be in a lot of trouble under the principal because the principal might say like, “How come you are trying to enforce these stuff when it’s not curriculum-based?” Stuff like that. So, in terms of the risk that are involved for first-time teachers, I feel like it’s difficult and unreachable.

Judy recognized the “risks” involved in engaging in teaching that she believed in. She thought about the pushback she would get from parents and the school leadership when engaging in teaching that was “not curriculum-based.” As a preservice teacher who had a strong desire to engage in equity-oriented teaching but was also well-aware of the obstacles and challenges teachers routinely experienced in early childhood classrooms, Judy was encouraged to learn that Jennifer had been engaging in critical multicultural teaching in her daily teaching practice. Judy realized that she could also engage in equity-oriented teaching once she became “experienced and confident.”

Judy also recalled anecdotes of Jennifer’s teaching practices that were shared during the multicultural education course. She remembered Jennifer’s teaching around birthdays; how she doesn’t do goodie bags and birthday parties, but she asks parents to

come in and tell a story of their children's birth day. Judy said, "That's something that really stood out." Jennifer shared during the course that her class celebrated every child's birthday in a particular and personal way. Recognizing that every child had an important story, Jennifer had been inviting children's families into her class so that they could tell an oral story of the day their child was born. Judy found this example to be enlightening as she pondered upon different ways children's cultural identities could be acknowledged in the classroom.

Judy found the video clips of Jennifer's pedagogical practices to be particularly helpful. During the multicultural education course, Jennifer offered videos portraying learning experiences in her own early childhood classroom as windows into her practice. Judy shared that she was able to see how multicultural education could be put into practice in a feasible way.

And the videos of what she did in the classroom was also like, yeah, she kind of made it really easy. What she was doing, obviously it was working, and she made it so easy. So, I felt like it was more approachable.

Whereas Judy initially felt that multicultural education was "unreachable," she regarded it as "more approachable" after being exposed to Jennifer's video examples.

Judy also found the picture books introduced by Jennifer to be very useful. She had mentioned in her Interview Reflection assignment that she was reflecting on the importance of developing multiple perspectives as a teacher, and during the third interview, she shared once again that the books introduced by Jennifer made her think deeper about valuing multiple perspectives.

I felt like the book selections were really all good in that it really offered multiple perspectives and how we can use books in our own classrooms and implement them in the classroom. So, the books were really helpful, and I felt like it was child-friendly.

Judy remembered *Hey, Little Ant* (Hoose et al., 1998) as a book that reminded her of the importance of considering multiple perspectives. She also recalled being introduced to *Those Shoes* (Boelts, 2007) and *Rene Has Two Last Names* (Lainez, 2009). Judy shared that in the following semester when she was placed as a student teacher in a bilingual classroom, she found herself gravitating to the books in the classroom to see what books were available for children.

Referring to an idea forwarded by Rudine Sims Bishop (1990), which had been introduced in the course (as visible on the syllabus), Judy explained:

Books should be a window but also a mirror. That's very important. So, when I went into the classroom, I realized I was looking through a lot of the Korean books to see what kind of books were there and what kind of books they were reading. So that's what I did the first thing I went into the classroom.

Judy drew on lessons offered by Jennifer, thus regarding books as being important tools for multicultural teaching and learning. She had taken it upon herself to engage in an informal "audit" of her student teaching classroom's books in regard to the students' identities, attending to issues of representation.

Similar to Judy, Shazia explained that she found Jennifer's situated teaching practices to be beneficial for her education as a teacher. Shazia shared during the third interview that she appreciated how Jennifer shared examples from her classroom because she was able to connect on a more personal level. Jennifer's shared experiences shed light on possibilities for Shazia.

I really appreciated how she brought in her personal experiences. I remember this video. How she was able to tap into the resource that he had. And he saw his mom differently. I think a teacher teaching in a school and bringing in experience helped us connect in different ways...I liked the anecdotes. Those helped us connect. Because I was like, "Yeah, something similar happened in my classroom and this is why it is happening."

Similar to Judy's reflection, Shazia found it helpful to see video clips. Whereas Judy found video clips to be helpful because she was able to confirm that multicultural education could "work" when done "effectively," Shazia appreciated them because they "helped [preservice teachers] connect." Shazia was able to remember "something similar [that] happened" in her class and connect her realities to Jennifer's teaching examples. Shazia was able to make sense of issues she had previously observed in her classroom by reflecting on them through the lens of Jennifer's teaching practices, thereby positioning Jennifer's videos as situated representations from which she could develop new understandings.

Shazia also expressed how much she appreciated being exposed to various multicultural books. She said that learning about various multicultural books was "the whole good thing that came out" of her teacher education program. Shazia validated Jennifer's choice to read children's books aloud as a way of framing each of the class meetings. When discussing why she believed that using multicultural books was important, she once again drew connections to her personal experience. When asked about which book was most memorable from the course, she said:

The Name Jar [(Choi, 2013)] because [people might think I am] calling the swear word [when I say my name]. But my name is not an English language name. It comes from a different language. We don't even have [the swear] word in our language. So the first day at my student teaching...I said my name and some people got it and some people didn't get it. But this boy comes up to me afterwards and he is like, "What is your name?" and I [said my name] and he is like "It's a bad word," and I was like oh my god, and I never had a four-year-old tell me that. And I completely had a poker face. And I was like, "Are you hearing it correctly?" and he did it two days in a row...So *The Name Jar* story, how we all have different names. I think that is a good one especially if we are using our first names. And I think especially for me because my name is harder.

Shazia shared about her experience of dehumanization that came from having a name that was not normalized within the context of the U.S. Even though her name was a common name in her country of origin, it was perceived to be problematic by a child who normalized traditional English names in her student teaching placement. From personally experiencing children's misconceptions about names in languages other than English and realizing through her teacher education that there were children's books that addressed different identities and diversities, such as *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2013), Shazia came to an understanding that multicultural books could serve as important avenues for teaching young children. She believed that children should be able to read books that reflected their own experiences and also learn about other people's cultures. This reflection, similar to Judy's, resonated with Bishop's (1990) argument that multicultural literature could serve as a mirror for children to reflect on who they were and also serve as a window into worlds they were not close to. Shazia additionally shared that she wanted to write a children's book one day about where she grew up because she had not seen books that really portrayed and honored her culture. Shazia showed potential to be a curriculum-maker committed to incorporating multicultural tools and strategies for expanding children's perspectives.

Judy and Shazia both communicated how they valued, connected with, and appreciated learning about Jennifer's situated teaching practices. They were each able to gain confidence, connect in more personal ways, and theorize from Jennifer's teaching practices. They were reflective and appreciative of Jennifer's critical and equity-oriented teaching approach. Their reflections about the role of children's books to highlight their

identities and experiences signaled their potential to develop as teachers who would not limit their teaching to cultural celebrations.

Jennifer's Situated Teaching as Other People's Work

Contrary to the intention the multicultural education course had when inviting Jennifer, whose primary professional identity was a school teacher, to teach the course, Kate and Ellen's interviews revealed that Jennifer's situated teaching practices hardly helped them widen but rather narrowed their imagination around possibilities of engaging in critical multicultural teaching as early childhood teachers. That is, they did not see themselves in Jennifer and came to see multicultural teaching as other people's work.

Although Kate previously acknowledged that she herself is a cultural being and that White children should also learn, from a young age, that they had a culture just like everyone else, Kate displayed hesitance about the idea of engaging in multicultural teaching when thinking in light of Jennifer's situated teaching practices. She confessed:

I just don't think that that's really my sort of teaching. I don't think I will be very genuine about it. I think it has to do a lot with the background that you come from. So, she's Latina. And everyone who does that is typically not White. Not everybody but I think it's easier when you actually...and it's not like White isn't a culture or anything but you come from a different country, like it is different. It is different.

Kate explained that multicultural teaching was not her "sort of teaching." Rather than perceiving culture and children's identities as something that should be highlighted and valued in all early childhood classrooms, Kate perceived multicultural teaching to be one "sort" of teaching out of many. Instead of centering children's right to an education where they are represented, Kate centered herself as a teacher and the kind of teaching she was comfortable with.

Kate did not see herself being genuine by engaging in multicultural education. She put the burden on people of color to talk about issues relating to culture by saying that most people who engaged in multicultural teaching were “typically not White.” While acknowledging her realization that White people also had a culture, Kate still located multicultural teaching with teachers who “[came] from a different country.” Kate’s comment revealed her perception of people who were not White—or at least people who were Latina like Jennifer. Although Jennifer had shared a number of times during the multicultural education course that she was born and raised in New York, to Kate, Jennifer was like a person who “[came] from a different country.” Having been born to Puerto Rican parents, Jennifer was constructed as being from another country, and this made it “easier” for Jennifer to be more “genuine” about discussing other people’s cultures. Kate shared, “I think that some of the things [Jennifer] did were really really good. Would I do it? Probably not.” By demarcating multicultural teaching as people of color’s practice, Kate excused herself from engaging in multicultural teaching.

Kate continued to clarify her stance by saying:

And it’s hard for me to speak about other cultures when I am not part of it. Like I said before, I don’t want to offend anyone. I would rather just not cross that [line]. I think a lot should be done by the parents.

As analyzed in the previous section, Kate mentioned earlier that what Jennifer had shared in the multicultural education course was not age-appropriate and that maybe she could go as far as engaging in cultural celebrations with children when occasions arose. In the interview excerpt above, she expressed her belief that “a lot should be done by the parents,” and that she would rather not “cross” her cultural boundary and speak about other people’s cultures. To Kate, conversations about culture should be had with people

who were part of that culture rather than being something that can be done by all teachers. This view connected with her previous comment that people like Jennifer should carry the weight of cultural conversations.

By saying that she did not want to “offend” people, Kate reasoned that it was to protect others or to protect the teacher-student relationships. To understand the possible tensions Kate was experiencing, it is important to consider Kate’s concern and stance as representing her (possible) fear of engaging in cultural appropriation, expressed by her concern that she would not be genuine.

In a way, Kate came to regard Jennifer as the model multicultural education teacher—or as embodying the requisite identity for multicultural work, stating that it would not be authentic for a White teacher to engage in this kind of teaching. As Kate distanced her identity from Jennifer’s, accentuating their differences, she dismissed multicultural teaching, coming to regard it as something she did not have to consider in her future teaching.

Similar to Kate, Ellen’s interview made it apparent that she had a hard time imagining possibilities of critical multicultural teaching through her exposure to Jennifer’s situated teaching practices. While Ellen welcomed the idea of incorporating children’s home cultures in her future teaching practice, her willingness to do so was based on witnessing children’s excitement in her student teaching placement when they had opportunities to invite their families into the classroom. When asked about Ellen’s experience with the multicultural education course, Ellen shared, “There was very much an agenda within that class.” Ellen’s comment reflects the tension she experienced as Jennifer had communicated an urgency to have preservice teachers adopt the disposition

towards social justice as the racial and ethnic diversity of the PK-12 student population continues to grow.

Ellen shared her feeling that there was a political agenda supporting a specific cultural group. During the third interview, she said:

There were some kids in our class who were upset because they felt like some minorities were talked about and appreciated and some were not as much...like it was very focused in one way and it just didn't feel like a true multicultural class.

Ellen felt that the multicultural education course did not adequately represent and discuss cultures equally but gave more value to certain "minorities." As such, perhaps understanding equality (of representation in the course) as a requisite, she perceived the course as not being "a true multicultural class."

The following excerpt clarifies what she meant by how the course "focused in one way." Ellen said:

One of the books we read in [the multicultural education course] was all about Mexican children...and yes, we will definitely encounter Mexican children but we are in New York City. There are children from everywhere. In my classroom, we don't have any kids from Mexico. We have kids from Japan, Ireland. We have kids from everywhere. So, it was a lot of frustration because it was very one-sided.

Ellen expressed her frustration in having to take the required multicultural education course taught by Jennifer. She thought the course prioritized some cultural backgrounds and identities (e.g., Mexico) over others (e.g., Japan, Ireland). In doing so, Ellen did not fully consider the power hierarchies typically associated with specific cultural backgrounds and identities.

In teaching the multicultural education course, Jennifer was intentional about discussing minoritized populations in early childhood classrooms so that preservice teachers could develop an understanding of power (privileges, disprivileges) in schooling

and see the purpose and value of engaging in critical multicultural education.

Nevertheless, Ellen did not recognize the importance of focusing on people in the intersection of racial and economic systems of disadvantages who experienced many more obstacles in schooling, society, and life. As such, Ellen perceived Jennifer's teaching to be "agenda"-driven and "one-sided."

Ellen further explained that Jennifer's teaching examples were too context-specific and did not apply to the settings where she had student taught.

I do remember that she did give some examples. But it also was very specific. On the one hand, yes, that is real life examples, but it's also not always going to be the case. Context specific. Because as it turned out, all three of my classrooms were like... my first one was in East Village, my second one Upper East Side, and then my toddler placement was at a [university]-affiliated school. Those were middle upper-class schools. So, it's just a different environment.

As mentioned earlier, Jennifer had hoped that providing examples of her situated teaching would allow preservice teachers to see an example of critical multicultural education in practice and, as Jennifer explained, preservice teachers would "flexibly develop their own practices based on their situational teaching context." However, Ellen's response indicated that she had a hard time seeing the connection between what she was learning in Jennifer's course and what she was experiencing in her student teaching placements. Because Ellen was seeking lessons that she could apply in her student teaching context, she found Jennifer's teaching practice to be too "context-specific" and perhaps not pertinent to her own teaching context, which, as she explained was "just a different environment."

Ellen listed the schools where she had been student teaching and explained that she had been student teaching at a different educational environment from that of Jennifer's classroom and school, and therefore Jennifer's teaching practice was not

pertinent or applicable to her at that point in time. It is important to note that although Shazia and Judy were both placed in very different student teaching contexts from Jennifer's classroom, they both welcomed imagining possibilities of engaging in equity-oriented multicultural teaching in light of Jennifer's situated teaching practices. Ellen, however, claimed otherwise. Ellen noted that she had been placed in "middle upper-class schools" and that Jennifer's teaching examples came from "a different environment" that made it irrelevant for her to apply.

Summary

As I returned to the data I analyzed and revisited the themes I identified, reflecting on them, it became apparent that the four preservice teachers conceptualized multicultural education differently and that they responded to Jennifer's situated teaching practices in particular ways. Their responses to Jennifer's approach to teaching (e.g., her focus, the examples she provided, the books she read) were related to their willingness to engage in multicultural education in their future teaching. While each of the four preservice teachers experienced the course differently, they all experienced tensions as they learned within the context of the course.

Whereas Judy and Shazia experienced tensions when thinking about how to approach critical multicultural teaching, they found it helpful that Jennifer gave situated teaching examples because they could theorize multicultural teaching and imagine new possibilities in their own teaching. Kate and Ellen, on the other hand, seemed to distance themselves from critical multicultural teaching by reflecting on Jennifer's teaching approaches, which they regarded as something they could not genuinely enact in their

practice, as political, and not reflective of their student teaching placements. All in all, these preservice teachers' development as multicultural educators was connected to how they defined culture, to how they had experienced racialized inequities, and to their racial identity development.

In this chapter, I analyzed four preservice teachers' reflections pertaining to their perceptions and lived experiences in a required multicultural education course. I primarily analyzed interviews conducted after the course had concluded, at a time in which they were engaged in student teaching. After analyzing each preservice teacher's reflections and artifacts individually, I read across to identify collective themes. In the following chapter, I draw on interviews, artifacts, and observations to understand how these four preservice teachers negotiated student teaching after taking the required multicultural education course taught by Jennifer. In doing so, I seek to contextualize their individual experiences within the context of growing standardization and entangled pressures experienced by teachers.

Chapter V

PRESERVICE TEACHERS' NEGOTIATIONS IN STUDENT TEACHING AFTER TAKING A REQUIRED MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION COURSE

This study sought to learn from four early childhood preservice teachers as they reflected on their experiences in a required multicultural education course that sponsored a critical multicultural perspective visible in its organization according to three interrelated levels of transformation: the transformation of self, the transformation of teaching, and the transformation of society. Additionally, it sought to gain insights into how these preservice teachers negotiated their student teaching the academic year after their multicultural education course experience. Whereas in Chapter IV, I focused on their reflections pertaining to their perceptions and lived experiences in the multicultural education course, in this chapter, I focus on understanding how these preservice teachers negotiated student teaching in light of the previous multicultural education course experience.

I engaged axial coding (Allen, 2017), reading and rereading across the data collected. That is, I drew connections across data and participants to reveal categories and subcategories, ensuring that these were rooted in participants' voices and perspectives. I identified three categories—constraints, multicultural perspectives, and negotiations in multicultural teaching—as I read and reread interviews, my observational notes from preservice teachers' student teaching, and their student teaching lesson plans and journals (written for their student teaching practicum course). While I sought to learn from each

participant and understand how they individually negotiated student teaching, in this chapter, I draw convergences and divergences among participants' reported and observed experiences. I do so not as a way to essentialize them, but as a way to offer insights into preservice teachers' learning related to one required multicultural education course. I use the aforementioned categories to organize this chapter, but before turning to findings, below I provide a brief contextualization that serves as a much-needed background against which to understand the situated findings presented here. I do so in hopes of better situating the importance and significance of my study's findings.

Contextualizing Findings

In order to contextualize the findings presented in this chapter, I offer a brief overview of two key contextual realities framing the findings presented herein: what we are currently teaching in multicultural education courses in teacher education programs nationally and the movement towards standardization in early education. I offer brief insights from the literature in hopes of better situating the experiences and understanding the tensions navigated by preservice teachers. These insights situate my findings, contextualize their importance, and acknowledge larger sociopolitical trends and factors informing these four preservice teachers' experiences and perspectives.

Multicultural Teacher Education Courses

What are we teaching teachers in terms of multicultural education? As documented by Gorski (2009), most teacher education programs only have an isolated course in multicultural education, which is not necessarily aligned with the aims of the

program to which it belongs. While the problematics of having one sole required course in multicultural education is well known, more recently there have been conjectures that the orientation of the course informs learning differently. In Gorski's (2009) analysis of teacher education syllabi pertaining to multicultural education, he found that

most of the courses were designed to prepare teachers with pragmatic skills and personal awareness, but not to prepare them in accordance with the key principles of multicultural education, such as critical consciousness and a commitment to educational equity. (p. 309)

He developed a typology of teacher education courses, which included conservative, liberal, and critical approaches to multicultural education. He explained that while conservative approaches were mostly focused on teaching the "other" and liberal approaches entailed teaching that aimed to foster cultural sensitivity and tolerance or developing multicultural competence, a critical approach was purposefully sociopolitical and counterhegemonic.

While Gorski's (2009) typology is helpful for understanding the overall aims and design of multicultural education courses in teacher education programs, it does not necessarily undertake (possible) learning outcomes. That is, whereas critical multicultural education courses are often deemed by equity-focused teacher educators to be more adequate than courses that take a conservative or liberal approach, studies exploring learning in such courses and the influence of such learning in student teaching are scarce. It is with the aim of shedding light on the influence of learning in student teaching that this chapter offers insights into the perspectives and experiences of four preservice teachers who took a critical multicultural education course. Specifically, I aim to learn from their navigations in student teaching within the context of early childhood classrooms. In the following subsection, I explore the stronghold of standardization

trends in early childhood classrooms, which enact pressures on teachers and influence what happens in early childhood classrooms.

The Standardization of Early Childhood Education

In early childhood education and beyond, there is a move toward standardization in schools and schooling (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). This standardization is illustrated by high stakes testing and rigid accountability measures for teachers and students alike (Nieto, 2014). Under this educational context, multicultural education is frequently regarded as something extra, not being necessarily foundational to good teaching. Many times, it is constructed as lacking or being antithetical to academics (Au, 2014; Nieto, 2010b). Given the pressures related to academic achievement in the early years (enacted via benchmark testing, levels, and other measures), teachers may fear that deviating from the prescribed curriculum (many times accompanied by restrictive pacing guides) will take away from instructional time (Young, 2010), therefore detracting from academics. Such pressures are likely to inform the expectations mentor teachers (cooperating teachers, CT) have for student teachers. Further, they are likely to shape the classroom contexts where preservice students are placed to learn how to teach.

In addition to navigating narrowing curriculum demands, early childhood preservice teachers also experience struggles as a result of a lack of agency, a common phenomenon in the power-laden context of student teaching writ large (Britzman, 2003). That is, their choices and power in the classroom where they learn how to teach are limited; their positions are often tenuous as they negotiate the expectations of their school placements and mentor teacher expectations against the requirements and focus of their

teacher education programs. It is within this sociopolitical context that preservice teachers engage in learning how to teach.

The Organization of This Chapter

This chapter is organized according to my findings and its three main categories, which captured four preservice teachers' navigations of student teaching the academic year after taking a required multicultural education course: constraints experienced, perspectives developed, and teaching negotiations. In order to provide more nuanced and situational analyses regarding preservice teachers' negotiations in student teaching after taking a required preservice multicultural education course, the first theme articulates the commonly declared constraints preservice teachers experienced in their student teaching contexts.

Constraints

Aligning with literature, all preservice teachers echoed that they experienced pressures associated with strict curriculum demands. Three out of four preservice teachers also claimed lack of student teacher agency. I further explicate and complicate these constraints in the subsections below.

Navigating Curriculum Demands

All four preservice teachers expressed that they were placed in an early childhood classroom that followed a strict curriculum. Kate shared that the teachers and the administration in her school were constantly anxious about progressing through the curriculum. "[My cooperating teacher] is very strict on getting things done when they

need to be done and documentation, everything.” Due to the heavy emphasis on progressing through the curriculum, coupled with the continued surveillance by the administration, Kate’s cooperating teacher seemed to be under a lot of pressure. Kate shared during the second interview:

Oh my god. She has a lot of anxiety. Even though she knows that she is a great teacher, I think she puts herself down more than like...She is a really good teacher. The principal talks about her all the time. “You are a great teacher. Stop worrying. I have to do these observations but you have nothing to worry about.” She does feel a lot of pressure to get the kids where they need to be, and has certain assessments. We had this math assessment and she had to get it done. So, she feels pressure on that day and she feels a lot of pressure because of the observations. She gets just as nervous as student teachers.

While Kate’s cooperating teacher was repeatedly assured by the school principal that she was a “great teacher,” she seemed to experience constant performance anxiety due to assessments and observations. Kate’s cooperating teacher had to make sure she “[got] the kids where they [needed] to be,” and this seemed to give her “a lot of pressure.” Such pressured environments and the priorities they conveyed (often related to keeping students on track) informed Kate’s student teaching experience and likely constrained the possibilities she had for teaching.

Located in a different school setting, but experiencing similar pressures, Ellen shared that the teachers in her student teaching placement used a scripted curriculum when teaching young children. Ellen shared during the second interview:

They just have a lot of requirements and they don’t always make sense sometimes. And it’s much scripted and I find it so...I have taught a number of lessons with the script that I had adapted from the curriculum and I have it printed out and I have it in front of me and I just can’t. Like it messes me up so much to read from a script when I am teaching because I will look at the script and I will look at the kids and then it’s like I can’t find my place again, and like I forgot to say things, and I just feel like it’s so awkward because I have to stick with [the] script and make sure like I say all the things that need to be said.

Informed by her cooperating teacher's "scripted" teaching, an artifact of school-level decisions and associated pressures, Ellen felt that she had to use scripts for her own lessons. The sociopolitical context of the school informed expectations for her teaching. Although Ellen communicated difficulty navigating teaching according to a written script, she did not have the agency to deviate from school-wide pressures, which informed her cooperating teacher's pedagogical choices (or lack thereof). This meant that she had to make sure she said what had been written out in advance. In such a context, Ellen experienced confusion and frustration. She found it unnatural and disorienting to have to follow a script when teaching young children.

Shazia was also placed in a student teaching context that used a prescribed curriculum. She shared her frustration in not being able to learn about children's interests because the school required teachers to follow a specific theme and have children engage in planned play.

My problem with this, which I am learning right now, is the play is not free choice. It's part of the curriculum. So, you know you have to know the interest of each child. So, if you were to ask me what this child's interests are, I can maybe give you four or five out of the eighteen because I haven't been able to see [them].

Shazia unveiled how the mandated curriculum created obstacles for teachers to learn from and about the children they taught. She explained how within her student teaching placement, teachers did not have opportunities to get to know children, to listen and learn from them. Here, Shazia hinted at a fragmentation or at least a misalignment between what she was experiencing in her student teaching placement and what she had learned from her teacher education program—namely, that teachers must know children's interests in order to teach them. She found it problematic that she was unable to learn

about children's interests because they had to engage in play that was "part of the curriculum." That is, the prescribed curriculum seemed to constrain teacher agency and student choice.

Judy, who was placed in a Korean-English bilingual classroom in a public school, also shared about how compressed and restrictive the bilingual curriculum was. She shared how tight the schedule was. She perceived that this was due to the teacher and the children having to do everything in two languages. She explained:

Because they are constantly working on both languages, they are kind of... I don't know. They don't get as much free time or relax time because they are working on one language and they move on to the other language. So constantly they are doing writing, or constantly they are doing academic work...Already they are spending twice as much time writing in both languages [than the other Kindergarten classes in the school] that they are not having enough playtime or not having enough time to do other subjects because they are constantly focused on getting double the work done.

Judy noticed that both her cooperating teacher and children were under high pressure to fulfill academic requirements in two languages, explaining that children were "constantly" doing academic work, spending much more time on academics than other (monolingual) Kindergarten classes in the school. Her cooperating teacher was under significant pressure to cover the curriculum in both languages, Korean and English. She emphasized that children were very busy getting "double the work done" from having to learn content and complete tasks and assignments in two languages. Although she focused on the pressures experienced by children, it is reasonable to expect that her teacher experienced such pressures and that her student teaching experience was impacted by time pressures. As she explained, play, as central as it is to young children's learning and development, was not a priority. There was a pushdown of academics.

Further, languages were treated as separate entities within the context of her student teaching classroom.

In short, all four preservice teachers experienced significant pressures and perceived associated restrictions in their student teaching placements as a result of sociopolitical pressures associated with standardizing trends and the pushdown of academics to the early years. They were all placed in student teaching contexts that required teachers to progress through tight curricular schedules and guides, perform in assessments and observations, and adhere to curricular mandates. In such settings, they witnessed a very different reality from the one illustrated by Jennifer in the required multicultural education course they had previously taken. It was within these settings that they experienced a lack of agency as student teachers. This is discussed in the following subsection.

Agency as a Student Teacher

Besides encountering strict curriculum demands, three out of four preservice teachers (i.e., Ellen, Shazia, and Judy) communicated that they had experienced added restrictions in their student teaching placement due to their positioning as student teachers learning how to teach. Kate seemed to benefit from similar reassurances to the ones her cooperating teacher had received from her principal and as such felt agency within the context of her student teaching placement. Further, because there was a close alignment between Kate's vision of teaching and her cooperating teacher's practice, she did not communicate that she lacked agency within the context of her student teaching placement. Below, I focus on Ellen, Shazia, and Judy, all of whom expressed that they

felt that they lacked agency in their student teaching placements. Then, I turn to Kate's experience, which was notably different from the others'.

Ellen experienced tensions with her cooperating teacher and felt that there were times that she was treated unfairly. However, she felt that she did not have the power to push back because she was a student teacher. During the third interview (towards the end of the semester in which she was student teaching), Ellen noted that her relationship with her cooperating teacher became smoother, but she had shared earlier (during the second interview) that she was struggling to find her place as a student teacher.

I can't tell if she doesn't like me or if she's just kind of a cold person. Kind of unfriendly a little bit. I was saying yesterday [during a student teaching seminar], sometimes I feel like I can't win. I'm always wrong a little bit?... She has been doing a lot of things lately where I am to blame for a lot of things, and I just sort of take it because I am a student teacher like whatever. But it's gotten to the point where I kind of feel like I need to stick out for myself because I am tired of her pushing me down...I am never allowed to be right.

Ellen felt tension in the relationship between herself and her cooperating teacher. She wondered whether it was due to her cooperating teacher's personal hostility towards her or her cooperating teacher's character that she was treated "unfriendly." Ellen felt that she was "[blamed] for a lot of things" that happened in class, and that she could not "win" even when she thought it was unfair, because as a student teacher she was under her cooperating teacher hierarchically. While she tried to "take it" for a while being aware of her position as a student teacher, she came to a point where she felt that she needed to "stick out for [herself]" because she did not want to be "[pushed] down" anymore. When asked about how much agency she had as a teacher in her student teaching placement, she replied, "None, basically. I'm really at the mercy of [my cooperating teacher]." Perhaps Ellen's cooperating teacher discharged curricular and

pedagogical pressures she experienced as a teacher on Ellen, blaming her in turn for issues that were happening in class.

Shazia shared that she felt little agency in terms of teaching in her student teaching placement. She expressed her frustration in not being part of lesson planning.

Right now, I don't know what is coming next, ever. So I'm always like, what are we doing now? What are we doing next week? What's the next step? I'm always trying to figure out so I can start to think about things. If I have an idea, I can share it, but I never get to know until too late.

Shazia shared about the continued experience of exclusion in her student teaching placement. She thought that she should know what would come next in terms of curricular scope and sequence and actively inquired into future plans. However, she shared that she “never [got] to know until too late.” Shazia expressed her belief that she could contribute more to children's learning if her cooperating teacher would share more information with her about what was going to happen in class.

When asked whether she had opportunities to discuss some of her thoughts and opinions with her cooperating teacher, she said, “I keep it in me for now because it is her classroom.” From being a guest in the classroom, Shazia felt that she should respect and follow her cooperating teacher's decisions. My observations reaffirmed Shazia's positioning as a guest in the classroom; someone who was positioned as a learner, peripherally positioned in the physical and pedagogical space of the classroom. Perceiving Shaiza as a guest, Shazia's cooperating teacher relied more on the paraprofessional for instructional support. It seemed that she did not take the time to learn about Shazia's needs nor fully honor the expertise and experiences Shazia brought with her.

From being a headteacher for a couple of years in Dubai, Shazia felt ready to take on considerable teaching responsibilities even as a student teacher. Besides, as this was her last semester of student teaching—she had engaged in student teaching in prior semesters—she expected that she would be teaching a lot more than her previous student teaching. She shared during the second interview:

There are days where I feel like, “Well, what did I teach today?” Because I know I am expected to be teaching every day, but I don’t get to. It’s mostly just assisting in, “Oh, make sure they are sitting on the rug during morning meeting.” Or, “Make sure they quickly transition from one area to another.”...But I feel she can give me a lot more responsibilities...But I am more interested in doing those activities right after playtime...Let me handle. Let me do this. I feel like because I am in school for this.

This conveyed a fracture between school and university expectations pertaining to her role in student teaching, although Shazia attributed such positioning to the teacher. Shazia communicated her frustration pertaining to not being allowed to take on more of an active teaching role in her student teaching placement. While she wanted to take on more responsibilities such as leading “activities right after playtime,” she felt that her cooperating teacher only gave her “assisting” tasks in regulating children’s behaviors. Pressured to cover the curriculum in place, Shazia’s cooperating teacher was not able to afford the time needed for Shazia to learn to teach.

When Shazia finally had the opportunity to teach a whole group lesson because her university-based supervisor was coming to conduct student teaching observation, she once again felt restricted in many ways. When asked about how much freedom she was given when planning for her lessons, she said:

When it comes to teaching, she does want a particular way. I have an observation next week. And I am struggling how to do it because she has been telling me, “They are used to this so do this, do this. They are not used to this.” I guess she doesn’t want me to venture too far away from what we actually do

because, I get it, like if it's too out of the ordinary, then...So when it comes to teaching, I don't think I have much freedom. The only thing I get to do is a read-aloud. But the read-aloud is also... the cards are given to you.

Shazia found it difficult to approach teaching differently from the ways her cooperating teacher was teaching because her cooperating teacher gave her very specific directions to follow. She felt restricted and felt that she did not have much freedom—she was told what she should do and even with leading read-alouds, she was given books to choose from.

Judy described her cooperating teacher as “traditional, strict, and very authoritative.” She often found it difficult to navigate her role as a student teacher in the classroom. When asked about the relationship with her cooperating teacher, Judy said, “I would say overall it's good except I feel pressure sometimes or discomfort when I don't really agree with all aspects of her teaching. So certain times I feel uncomfortable.”

When asked to elaborate further on her experience with her cooperating teacher, Judy shared:

In terms of lesson planning [for my formal, observed lessons], I feel like there is some disagreement at times...But she really wanted me to tailor exactly to what she wanted. So, I felt like I didn't have much freedom in planning the lesson in the way I want to really implement it. She just told me basically what she wanted in a lesson. And she wanted me to do it exactly the way she wanted. I think it's very difficult because I try to tell her this is how I planned my lesson, but if this is not what she had in mind, then she will be like, “No, no, no. I want you to not do this.” Or “Put it this way.” So, I don't know. I just don't have much room or freedom to really try what I really want to try. And I have to just try my best with the flexibility that I have within her boundaries that she set for me.

Similar to Shazia's experience, Judy was told to adhere to her cooperating teacher's directions and Judy expressed that she did not have the freedom to try to develop her own teaching identity and practice. She acknowledged the boundaries set for her within the context of her student teaching placement. Even when Judy had a different teaching

approach in mind from her cooperating teacher's, Judy felt that she had to adhere to her cooperating teacher's priorities and implement lessons the way her cooperating teacher wanted her to teach. Judy felt restricted in trying out her own teaching. Judy's cooperating teacher seemed to lack space or flexibility to allow Judy to experiment; her first responsibility was to her students and she felt pressured to keep them on track with the learning in other Kindergarten classrooms in the school.

Different from Ellen, Shazia, and Judy, Kate shared that she felt very comfortable being a student teacher in her cooperating teacher's classroom. Kate shared during the second interview:

Oh, I love her. She is so helpful. She is such a good mentor. She tells me everything which is good because it's hard to feel completely engaged unless you know what is going on or why something is happening or why kids are acting a certain way. If she doesn't tell me, she will forward me the emails. She invites me to any of the meetings if I want to go. If not, I don't have to go. So, I already went to the Reading and Writing PD. She is just very open and I can do as much as I want. Or I can do as little as I want. And she always encourages me to do more. Like she was like I will give you the whole entire day if you want.

While Ellen felt tension and hostility from her cooperating teacher, Kate found her cooperating teacher to be very "helpful" and she even saw her cooperating teacher as her "mentor." While Shazia hardly felt included in her cooperating teacher's planning and implementation process, Kate was kept in the loop about what was happening in the classroom and was regarded as a teacher who could participate in professional development sessions the school sponsored for its teaching staff.

Kate expressed that her cooperating teacher told her "everything" about what was going on and even what her cooperating teacher perceived as reasons behind things that were happening. Kate's cooperating teacher also forwarded emails to Kate and invited her to professional development meetings. Kate felt well taken care of by her cooperating

teacher. Different from Shazia who felt that she was only given miscellaneous tasks as a student teacher, Kate was given the opportunity to even teach “the whole entire day” if she wanted. Kate's cooperating teacher gave Kate the freedom to decide on how much teaching Kate wanted to engage in during her student teaching.

While Judy and Shazia expressed that they hardly had agency in terms of lesson planning and implementation, Kate's cooperating teacher generously gave Kate the agency to try out teaching that Kate wanted to practice while being a student teacher. Kate shared, “She also says like, ‘This is how we do it here but if you want to do it in a different way, I am not opposed to that. I'm not making you do it the way I do it.’” Kate noted, however, that she felt more comfortable watching and following the way her cooperating teacher taught in class. Hence, she chose to mainly observe and assist despite the flexibility and freedom she was given.

When asked about the ways she negotiated her teaching practice in the classroom, Kate shared, “There is not much really negotiations. I am very respectful of what she wants to do.” Kate felt that she was in good hands. Kate did not see the need to critically reflect on or trouble the teaching practices she was observing, and she chose to rather adhere to her cooperating teacher's teaching approach.

In sum, Ellen, Shazia, and Judy experienced a lack of agency—or at least restricted agency—as student teachers in their student teaching placements. They felt that their cooperating teachers did not treat them as teachers in the classroom but positioned them either as apprentices (who needed to mirror their practices and priorities) or as assistants (helping with tasks peripheral to teaching practices and/or pedagogical work). They felt the need to adhere to their cooperating teachers' directions and stay within the

boundaries set for them. In these contexts, the three preservice teachers found limited space to negotiate teaching. Kate, on the other hand, was given much agency as a student teacher. While she had the freedom to explore her own teaching, she felt more comfortable watching and learning from her cooperating teacher. Seeing her cooperating teacher as a great mentor, Kate did not see the need to negotiate teaching in ways that departed from her teacher's.

In this section, I explored constraints experienced by four preservice teachers within the context of their student teaching placements. Although many of these constraints were perceived in personified ways, being attributed to cooperating teachers, I explained how they were also informed by larger contextual factors, such as the push-down of academics and the pressures teachers experienced. In the following section, I turn to the four preservice teachers' perspectives and enactments of multicultural education in their student teaching. I sought to analyze how they connected their learnings from the multicultural education course to their practices within the context of their student teaching placements.

Multicultural Perspectives and Enactments

As I analyzed data I collected within the boundaries of this category identified via axial coding, I recognized how preservice teachers' racial identities, life experiences, and racial identity development seemed to inform their multicultural perspectives and enactments in their student teaching.

Shazia and Judy made verbal connections to the multicultural education course when talking about their student teaching experiences. For example, they talked about the

materials in their student teaching placements in light of the books Jennifer had read and in light of their Critical Curriculum Review assignment. In particular, they focused on how materials could better reflect students in their student teaching classrooms. Shazia and Judy revealed their belief that multicultural education was important. At the same time, my analyses also unearthed how Shazia's and Judy's attempts to engage children in multicultural teaching in their student teaching placements displayed a number of limitations; I discuss these limitations in the following section.

I do not claim that the multicultural education course was the only or even main influencer regarding preservice teachers' connections between multicultural education and their student teaching practices. Many other sources could have contributed, such as their racial and ethnic identities, their life experiences, their racial identity development processes, their learnings and reflections from other teacher education courses, their student teaching classroom contexts, etc. With this caveat, I describe the connections they drew in their interviews.

Ellen and Kate, the two White preservice teachers who had resisted reflecting on power, privilege, and Jennifer's situated classroom practices in the multicultural education course hardly noticed moments or the need to engage children in topics surrounding diversity, equity, and social justice. They rather displayed tendencies to easily adhere to the teaching practice they observed and experienced in their student teaching. They did not see the need to interrupt the pervasiveness of Whiteness in their student teaching placements. Further, they continued to regard race as simply biological and positioned critical multicultural education—committed to deconstructing and acting against systems of oppression (Gorski, 2009)—as something outside of their control.

Noticing and Responding to Critical Instances

Shazia and Judy shared that there were instances during their student teaching that demonstrated the necessity to disrupt children's biases and teach about understanding and respecting diversity. Below, I describe Shazia's noticings, putting her multicultural education course assignments and interviews in dialogue with my observations. Then, I turn to Judy. After discussing Shazia and Judy, I discuss the approaches and experiences of Ellen and Kate. I organize the subcategories in this way because whereas Shazia and Judy noticed injustices and noted opportunities for critical teaching in their interviews, Kate and Ellen did not.

Shazia, who had previously communicated her belief that children did not have biases in one of the multicultural education course assignments, was surprised to encounter children's multiple biases within the context of her student teaching placement. She had previously written in her Cultural Memoir assignment (the first assignment for the required multicultural education course, which sought to engage preservice teachers in critically transforming their understandings of their identities in society and consider implications for their teaching):

[Children's] day-to-day experiences have accustomed them to be more open and accommodating to people who look and talk different. While on the subways I will often catch myself staring at people who look differently and I will admit of being judgmental, children are unaware of these biases.

As Shazia reflected on her own biases through a written assignment at the beginning of the multicultural education course, she also wrote about her belief that children who were used to seeing differences among people did not hold biases. Perhaps Shazia did not recognize children's biases when she was an early childhood teacher in Dubai because she did not have opportunities to engage in critical reflection about young children's

biases and the need to engage in critical multicultural teaching. However, in her student teaching, Shazia was able to identify multiple instances that demonstrated children's biases.

As Shazia began to critically reflect on unequal power relationships that are present in society and even amongst young children through the multicultural education course, she started to recognize what used to be inconspicuous phenomena to her. Shazia explicitly shared that she was able to catch five instances that connected to the learnings and reflections from the multicultural education course. Shazia explained that she noticed children's misconceptions about the relationship between language and skin color, skin color and cleanliness, body size and character, color and gender associations, and the need to validate children's unique names. Here, I focus on an incident that demonstrated how Shazia responded to the teachable moment within the boundaries of her student teaching placement, enacting her understanding of multicultural education.

The first instance Shazia noted demonstrated a child's negative perception toward darker skin color. Shazia shared during the second interview:

Once a White boy said to an African American girl, who is the only African American in the classroom, "You are dirty"...I don't know what happened before. But when the boy was quizzed about why he said that, he said, "Her lips are brown."

Shazia explained how she witnessed a White child displaying a negative bias towards an African American child who had brown skin. She noticed that the White child had assumed that the African American child's lips were dirty because they were brown. Contrary to how Shazia had previously stated that children were free from biases and judgmental attitudes unlike adults, she noticed that a child in her student teaching placement already held a bias about skin color: dark skin color as dirty while White,

presumably, meant clean. Being in a mostly monocultural classroom, the child would have little opportunity to understand differences and interrogate his own assumptions without teachers engaging in intentional conversations.

Recognizing such an instance as a problem, Shazia's cooperating teacher asked Shazia to do a read aloud in the afternoon that would provide children with a new perspective. Shazia chose one of the two books recommended by her cooperating teacher and read *I Like Myself* (Beaumont, 2004) to children. She explained that she chose this book because she thought the other book was too wordy, identifying its intended audience as being first or second grade while children in her classroom were PreK. Although Shazia engaged in reading the book, she also noted limitations in her approach to multicultural education. That is, Shazia wanted to learn about how to more deeply engage in conversations with children over time after her teaching. "I don't think they understood what it means to like yourself all the time. What does it mean to like yourself even when you have frizzy hair or straight hair?" She reflected that more planning should take place to make sure children could make text-to-self connections.

Recognizing that children still needed continued discussions and reflections to recognize different identities and diversities, Shazia suggested to her cooperating teacher that perhaps the class could further engage in the topic by doing a "self-portrait activity." Shazia shared that her cooperating teacher eventually incorporated Shazia's idea of doing a self-portrait and mixed different colors to make skin colors to represent each individual in the classroom.

I did mention it to my [cooperating teacher] when this was happening. She didn't take it the way I was thinking about it. Or maybe I wasn't explicit enough because it was the end of the day and I didn't want to tell her what to do. But she did, after the whole color thing happened. We were finishing our previous theme,

which was clinic. So, we were learning about the body, bones, and organs. And she ended up doing a self-portrait. This time she mixed colors. And in the morning when children were coming for table toys, they worked over the whole week and they would come for table toys and she would match the skin colors. So she did different shades of brown and pink and peach. We had a hard time mixing colors because we only had basic colors. We didn't have skin tone colors so I told her maybe next year, maybe she should order those. And it would make her life so much easier. So they ended up making a self-portrait and it ended up being very different. They just painted one day. They looked at the mirror. She was leading that activity. And the next day, they added hair with crayons. And it's actually out on the boards now.

Shazia was careful about making suggestions as a student teacher. However, while she was aware of the limitations she faced as a student teacher, she still sought space to suggest to her cooperating teacher that the class would benefit from doing a self-portrait activity. Responding to Shazia's suggestion, Shazia's cooperating teacher added a self-portrait activity to the clinic theme. Shazia's cooperating teacher mixed different colors so that children could express their different identities. Shazia also suggested that her cooperating teacher could order skin color paint next year to better express children's different skin tones.

Shazia noted that she did not think the self-portrait activity necessarily helped children learn to respect different identities. Elaborating on what she meant by how her cooperating teacher "didn't take it the way [she] was thinking about," she said:

It was just a passing thing. It was never a planned lesson. There was never an objective. I know the teacher had told me she was going to do it. She was like "Let's see if the kids come up with what we want them to know." So, in a way there was a follow-up to it.

As a "follow-up" to the skin color bias incident, Shazia hoped that the teachers could plan more carefully with a clear objective of teaching about respecting diverse identities.

However, she felt that the self-portrait activity became more of a "passing thing" when it got added to the clinic theme without deliberate planning. Shazia perceived that children

were not “ingrained” with the idea that all skin colors are beautiful the way they are. She felt that (at least some) children still saw some skin colors as more desirable and others as less desirable, thereby reifying the durable legacy of racist ideas in the context of the classroom.

While it is noteworthy that Shazia problematized a child’s skin color bias and that she took a step to suggest a self-portrait activity to her cooperating teacher to teach children about respecting different identities, it should also be noted that Shazia’s approach to multicultural teaching here lacked a critical perspective. It is not clear in what ways Shazia would have taken the teachable moment differently if she was the headteacher in this classroom. However, based on what happened here, Shazia did not question power constructs but focused only on celebrating differences. As such, her approach did not take on the hierarchies of power based on skin color and race that are so deeply entrenched in society. After all, the issue that had to be discussed was not about loving or describing oneself, but about troubling racist ideas.

Similar to how Shazia noticed the need to acknowledge children’s diverse identities at her student teaching placement, Judy shared an alarming incident at her student teaching placement that reminded her of the importance of teaching about diversity and respecting differences. She recalled:

in the classroom, there is an Indian girl. She has dark skin. She asked one of the Korean girls, “Can I be your friend?” and that Korean girl said, “No, I don’t want to be your friend because your skin is dark.” She, like, literally said that to her. So, she was really upset. But she’s not the type that comes to the teacher and tells everything. She kind of kept it to herself and that’s why my cooperating teacher and I didn’t know. And when it happened, I wasn’t there. So, I found out later on. And then my cooperating teacher found out because she went home that day and told her mom. . . . So the mom got really upset. And it was one of the days the parents got together with the teacher. It was for, like, a multicultural dinner night

or something. And the mom came and talked to my cooperating teacher and my cooperating teacher was kind of very shocked.

By pointing out how a Korean girl “literally said” to the only Indian girl in the classroom that she could not be her friend because her skin was dark, Judy expressed how taken aback she was. Judy had an opportunity to witness how even young children were not free from the impacts of racist ideas and racial hierarchies. When asked about how they responded to this incident, Judy shared that her cooperating teacher read a book to children about respecting differences.

I don't think she necessarily brought it up to the Korean kid right away but later, recently we were reading a book called *It's Okay to be Different*. This is the book that I presented [during the multicultural education course]. But yeah, we read the book. And we really focused on the page where like people are different, but we can all be friends. My cooperating teacher kept mentioning how this was blue. This one was yellow. But they are all friends and that's the kind of environment that we should be having in the classroom. So that's how we kind of said it, like to the whole group. But I don't know to what extent [the Korean girl] got it.

After she became aware of the incident, Judy's cooperating teacher read *It's Okay to be Different* by Todd Parr (2009) aloud to teach children that they should respect differences and create a classroom community that was welcoming toward all members. Judy was familiar with this book because she had reviewed and presented the book for a group assignment in the multicultural education course she had previously taken. Judy used the word “we” to describe how her cooperating teacher focused on a certain page to teach children about respecting differences. Although it seemed that Judy's cooperating teacher was the teacher who engaged children in discussion, Judy's choice of the pronoun “we” indicated that Judy also felt the same urgency as a teacher to address children's racial biases.

While Judy did seem to share a sense of urgency at this moment, it must also be noted that Judy did not problematize how her cooperating teacher approached this real and prevalent social issue using a fictional book and ending the conversation there. Judy's cooperating teacher did not raise issues of colorism with children and Judy did not question whether her cooperating teacher's approach rather contributed to diluting what actually happened in the classroom.

Similar to what her cooperating teacher did, Judy later read *The Peace Book* (Parr, 2010) translated in Korean to once again discuss with children the importance of valuing differences among people. I was able to observe this lesson when Judy was teaching it (the excerpt below was translated from Korean to English by me). As Judy opened the first page and showed it to the children, she asked:

Judy: 사람들이 다 어때요? (What do you notice about these people?)

Children: 다 달라요! (They all look different!)

Judy: 피부색은 어때요? (What do you notice about their skin?)

Child: 주황색, 갈색, 초록색, 노란색, 파란색이에요. (Orange, brown, green, yellow, and blue.)

Judy: 그렇죠. 다 웃고 있나요? (Right. And are they smiling?)

Children: 네! (Yes!)

Judy: 맞아요. 신발도 다르고, 피부색도 다르고, 옷도 다 다른데 다 웃고 있네요. 그게 평화예요! (Right. They have different shoes, skin, and clothes but they are all smiling. That is peace!)

Judy first asked children to say what they noticed, and children pointed out that people all looked different in the book. Then, going further, Judy asked more directly about people's skin color in the book. After children responded with different skin colors, Judy directed children's attention to people's happy faces. Judy attempted to engage children in a dialogue to help them learn that even if people looked different outwardly, they could

still have peaceful and harmonious relationships, respecting each other and honoring their differences.

Because Judy had to stick closely to what her cooperating teacher suggested to her as a student teacher, this book had been chosen by her cooperating teacher. Judy's teaching resembled Shazia's example; that is, Judy focused on accepting diversity and did not undertake a careful problematization of the power dynamics in her student teaching classroom. Although well-meaning, Judy had not addressed the racialized hierarchies in U.S. society and globally, which had informed the exclusion of the Indian girl by her Korean peer. While the book had children with different colors, there was one character of each color. In other words, there was no majority or minority. Contrarily, in Judy's student teaching classroom, most children were Korean and only one child was Indian. In order for children to recognize unequal power relations that led to unjust treatments in the classroom, Judy had to go further from simply and simplistically discussing harmonious relationships. Employing a critical perspective as a teacher would have meant exposing children to the existence of power relations based on skin color and the deepening of power imbalances based on number. It would have also meant inviting children to dialogue about ways in which they could disrupt inequity and injustices that come from such power dynamics. Despite how Judy had verbally conceptualized multicultural education in close alignment with a critical approach, her teaching resembled her cooperating teacher's, more closely reflective of a liberal approach to multicultural education.

While displaying limitations in the ways Judy conceptualized and enacted multicultural teaching within the context of her student teaching placement, my analysis

of Judy's interview responses revealed that she continued to reflect on the multicultural education course. Whereas she had not enacted a critical approach to multicultural education in her teaching, she engaged in critically reviewing materials in the classroom where she was placed. For example, Judy noticed that while her student teaching placement was a bilingual classroom, it did not have enough books to affirm children's unique cultural identities. Judy shared during the third interview:

I don't know what kind of books they read before I started student teaching, but when I came in, they were doing a lot of informative text reading and writing. So, they started with non-fiction. That was the first month. And towards the end, we read like lots of story books that don't necessarily have human beings. Just like animals...but not really like culturally based. It was lacking in that.

Judy noticed that her student teaching placement privileged informational texts and that it was "lacking" in culturally relevant books. Although this results from a prioritization of informational texts sponsored by the Common Core, which had been adopted by the state, Judy noticed that the books employed did not reflect the identities, cultural practices, and language repertoires of the children who comprised the classroom community.

When asked about what could make children's learning more meaningful, Judy expressed that the books introduced in the multicultural education course would be great resources for children, such as those in her student teaching, to become more aware of issues surrounding diversity, equity, and social justice.

I think more books. I feel like...I mean there are books, but then I want more books that can be critically analyzed even from the kids' perspectives. You know a lot of recent books that we read and discussed in the course were fairly recent books and they are not in the library of many schools. So, more books and they can read more books freely. They can take it home and bring it back. So, more books in that sense. You know books like *Those Shoes* [(Boelts, 2007)] or *Hey, Little Ant* [(Hoose et al., 1998)] are something like one copy per class. So then we read it in class and we discuss it in class but it's always left by the teacher's desk

or the top shelf. So, if we have at least two to three copies of each book like that and make it more available for children to actually read during their free time or take it home during the weekends, that would help them kind of be more aware. Keep looking at it a little more. It's more exposure.

Judy's student teaching placement might have had children's books that aimed to broaden children's perspectives. However, here Judy claimed that having one copy per class was not enough. In order for children to be able to "critically analyze" these books, she stated that early childhood classrooms needed more copies available. Then, children could "freely" access these books, have "more exposure", and become "more aware" of issues surrounding diversity, equity, and social justice.

Even while Shazia and Judy seemed to extend their reflections based on the critical orientation of the multicultural education course during their student teaching, they showed limitations in imagining and implementing multicultural teaching that was transformative and social action-oriented. A critical approach to multicultural education is predicated on moving beyond simply promoting harmonious relationships; such an approach discounts the injustices that arise from power differences. As such, to address the kinds of issues that surfaced in the classrooms where Shazia and Judy were student teaching, it is important that early childhood teachers move beyond a celebration of differences devoid from considerations of issues of power in society. This means employing a critical perspective to multicultural teaching that necessarily engages children in problematizing issues of power and privilege.

Findings from Shazia and Judy's data revealed the complexity of deepening conversations with young children on issues of difference, culture, and power and pointed toward the need for teachers to continue to be supported in their teaching and learning as

they develop as critical multicultural educators. Doing so will likely bring teachers closer to pedagogical enactments that can foster transformation.

Back to “Normal” Teaching

Kate and Ellen’s reflections and actions demonstrated that their student teaching experiences hardly reflected practices that aligned with the aims and purposes of their required multicultural education course. They instead readily accepted the practices sponsored in their student teaching placements. They deemed the teaching practices present in their student teaching placements as being “normal.”

Kate and Ellen’s approaches to teaching and commitments in their student teaching placements differed from Shazia’s and Judy’s. Shazia and Judy, despite displaying limitations in their enactment of multicultural teaching, displayed actions which signaled their willingness to engage in teaching that sought to address inequities visible in the actions and interactions of children in their student teaching settings.

Contrary to Judy who mentioned that she gravitated towards the book collection when she first entered into her student teaching placement to see whether children were being exposed to books that discussed people’s cultures, Kate’s responses indicated that she did not engage in examining her student teaching classroom using a multicultural lens. When directly asked whether there were books that discussed people’s differences or cultures in her student teaching placement, Kate said, “There is *And Tango Makes Three* [(Richardson & Parnell, 2015)]. I haven’t really looked that hard but off the top of my head, the read-aloud books, no... I wouldn’t say that.” Kate did not attend to whether her student teaching placement had books by and about minoritized people; books that reflected multiple identities, cultures, and languages. In order to think about whether

there were diverse books in her student teaching placement, she had to recollect her memories based on the books that were used for read-alouds. This was the only example she could provide, even after direct prompting; a book about two male penguins in Central Park's zoo, who adopt an egg and along with Tango make a family.

Kate did not seem to recognize the problem of being situated in a monocultural learning environment, which deemed dominant values, images, and experiences as normal. Hence, even when she had an opportunity to contribute books to the classroom, Kate said:

I brought in books I like and that I think it will be good for the classroom, and [my CT] really liked them too and I left it there too...And they weren't in any ways cultural. Ha ha. They were like books I liked, books I were read to me when I was a child.

When looking for books to bring into class, Kate seemed to think more about her own interest and experience and less about what children should be exposed to. Kate made a contrast between books she liked and books that were "in any ways cultural." When she thought about which books would be "good for the classroom," books that reflected children and other people's lives were not of her concern.

To demonstrate how neither she nor her cooperating teacher saw the need to talk with children about respecting "differences and cultures" in the classroom, Kate shared:

Like there are little things. For example, like when we talked about Easter, there was a kid who said, "I don't celebrate Easter," and another kid was like, "Why?" But there was never like a fight or anything. Then my CT would say, "You know some people celebrate Easter," but it was over with. There was never like fights on that or any kind of problems regarding multiculturalism.

Kate seemed to believe that only when there were fights or problems should early childhood teachers discuss "people's differences and cultures." With the teacher's prompting and support, the incident above could have led to meaningful learning

opportunities for children to learn about family traditions, beliefs, and practices. However, Kate's cooperating teacher did not treat this interaction as a teachable moment. From her interviews and my observation notes, it seemed that Kate was not experiencing teaching that aligned with the aims of the multicultural education course she had previously taken. And Kate did not question this teaching approach but readily accepted the way her cooperating teacher glanced over the topic. As Kate mentioned earlier, she did not see the need to negotiate teaching in her cooperating teacher's classroom; instead, her belief that multicultural teaching was needed only when particular occasions arose was affirmed in her student teaching.

To be sure, Kate did not entirely dismiss children's different cultures; she simply did not see the need to center children's diverse cultures, perspectives, and traditions in the classroom. Nevertheless, she saw herself as a learner of her students. The following example helps us see this.

I try to do it like in my own one-on-one work with them. There happens to be a moment where like, "Oh, what is the Indian holiday you celebrate?" Or something like that. I try to talk to them more about certain things that might be important to them. Because when Easter was going on, there is this girl who is Indian. She was like, "We don't do that! But we do something else!" So I was asking her about it. And I am interested because I really don't know. So in that way, I try to, but like in the whole group, I really haven't.

Here, Kate mentioned two reasons for talking "one-on-one" about an "Indian holiday" with an Indian child. First, Kate perceived that the child's culture was "important" to the child. Second, Kate also mentioned that she was interested because she really did not know. Kate believed that teachers should talk with children about what was important to them, but she did not imagine to the point where teachers could extend these conversations to "the whole group" so that other children could learn about people's

different practices and cultural values. Kate rather limited the conversation to be a personal learning opportunity for herself. Kate did not see how such approach to teaching leads to the perpetuation of White privilege and maintenance of White superiority. Nevertheless, this insight led me to wonder how Kate might engage in such practice in her own classroom, and if she might in the future, move beyond one-on-one interactions and engage her students in multicultural learning experiences.

For now, the setting of her student teaching placement seemed to influence her stance. Specifically, Kate talked about the reputation of the school where her student teaching classroom was located to justify her seemingly monocultural teaching approach and her cooperating teacher's. She said, "[This] is a very good school. It has a very good reputation. And I don't see them saying like a good school means like multiculturalism. I don't see that." Kate had been placed in a predominantly White and affluent school that had high standardized test scores. Relaying test scores as measures of the quality of school without examining links between income and test scores, Kate claimed that the "very good school" she was placed in did not highlight cultures and diversities. Kate was not placed in a student teaching environment that helped her reflect about issues of diversity, equity, and social justice. And because she perceived her student teaching placement to be a "very good school," she leaned even closer towards adopting her student teaching placement's monocultural teaching approach.

In addition to talking about why she did not see multicultural teaching as an imperative in early childhood classrooms, citing her student teaching placement, Kate also expressed how she felt about teaching multiculturally. "This is going to sound bad. But I don't feel so passionate about it." By articulating how she felt about multicultural

education, Kate revealed her belief that one needs to feel passionate about multicultural education in order to engage in it. In other words, she treated teaching for diversity, equity, and social justice as an option and saw it as an approach predicated on one's feelings.

Similar to Kate, Ellen also talked about her student teaching when explaining why she did not find space to talk about respecting differences. When directly asked about whether she believed there should be space in early childhood classrooms for exploring and respecting differences among people, Ellen shared during the third interview:

I mean it's interesting. There should be space but I think it really depends on the classroom environment. We have so many behavior issues that are unrelated to race. That sort of takes up our time and a lot of what we are responding to isn't a race thing. It's a behavior thing.

Ellen acknowledged that "there should be space" to explore differences among people, but that those could be done conditionally based on the "classroom environment." She explained that since her student teaching classroom was busy dealing with children's "behavior issues" and that because the "issues" were "unrelated to race," they did not have space to talk about respecting racial and ethnic differences.

Echoing what Kate argued, Ellen also thought that children's cultural identities and diversities should be addressed in the classroom when they arose as "issues." This was what she meant when she said earlier in Chapter IV that she believed it was "important to establish a classroom culture that [was] anti-racism." Ellen indicated that she would "respond to" race issues if they happened in class, but not be proactive about centering issues of race, racism, equity, and justice in her teaching.

Ellen's choice of curriculum also indicated that she did not see urgency in employing a critical multicultural perspective. When Ellen was given the responsibility of

creating and implementing a whole social studies unit on “Neighborhood,” she created a neighborhood unit that was devoid of issues or questions pertaining to justice, diversity and equity. Ellen shared:

So, it started with just, like, neighborhood overview. We talked with the kids about what is a neighborhood. And we talked about things that were in our school neighborhood...I went on google maps and took screenshots of different places in the neighborhood and showed them the pictures and they were, like, very excited and they would say like why it is important to have a pharmacy in a neighborhood. So, we did that. I did map-making with them. This was a push from my student teaching advisor...And then they did map keys. And then they did the pre-neighborhood walk and then a neighborhood walk.

Ellen was placed in a predominantly White school located in the Upper East Side of New York City that attracted mostly upper-middle-class families. Ellen taught children about why it was important to have places such as “pharmacies” in their neighborhood. Pushed by her student teaching supervisor, she also taught children how to use maps. While these could be helpful topics to be discussed with children, Ellen’s neighborhood unit clearly reflected an absence of a critical multicultural lens. Being placed in a neighborhood that was predominantly White and affluent, Ellen could have prompted children to think about their privileges and question societal inequities by having them recognize the racial make-up and environment of the community and comparing them to other neighborhoods.

Different from Kate who found it difficult to recall whether there were culturally based books in the student teaching classroom, Ellen remembered seeing books that were “multicultural neighborhood books” in her student teaching placement. However, Ellen added, “That’s not really where the lessons are going. So, they are there so kids can see them but they are not really being addressed.” Ellen explained that despite the availability of resources that could be used to teach from a multicultural perspective, the lessons were

not going in the direction of cultural diversity. Here, it is important to note Ellen's awareness of the multicultural resources. Despite the presence of resources and her awareness of them, Ellen rather aligned herself and her teaching practices with her student teaching placement's direction. While lack of student teacher agency could have been a reason for alignment, it must be noted that she did not problematize during the interview that these resources were not being utilized in her student teaching.

Whereas in her social studies unit, Ellen aligned with the general approach of her cooperating teacher, she noted having opportunities to see what it was like to incorporate children's home cultures in her student teaching classroom. She explained:

So, they had parents come in and told about like where they are from and a lot of, there are at least three kids in our class whose parents are from Ireland and so that was really different. We have one whose parents are from Japan. So we have parents who are from all different places. So there was a lot of conversation about that. And they would share like what they like to do at home. So that was very interesting.

Ellen recalled that her student teaching placement invited "a lot of conversations" about different home cultures. Findings from my interviews with Ellen revealed that she supported the idea of incorporating children's home cultures in school based on her positive exposure during student teaching. However, at the point that this study took place, Ellen's advocacy in teaching about cultural diversity to young children was not fully aligned with a critical perspective, addressing issues pertaining to power and privilege.

As conveyed in Chapter IV, Ellen felt frustrated about how the required multicultural education course she took did not seem to talk about all cultural groups, thereby failing to communicate that everyone matters. She had not recognized (or perhaps not fully understood or accepted) that the course focused on intersectional

injustices. She believed that everyone should receive equal attention, prizing equality of representation as justice in curriculum and teaching. As such, she was not resistant to exploring differences in and through her teaching. Nevertheless, her orientation to incorporating children's home cultures in early childhood classrooms was aligned with a liberal approach, focusing on documenting and mapping differences without exploring issues of racism and entangled forms of bigotry in education and society. She explained, with regards to multicultural education:

I think it's definitely interesting. In a public school environment especially in New York City, it's very interesting because everybody comes from such different backgrounds. And when there are all these differences, it's very interesting to bring them to the class so that people understand where people are coming from. Like you know public schools' spring break is during Passover, it's interesting some kids celebrate Easter and some celebrate Passover. Some don't celebrate either. It's hard in public schools because they don't really talk about religion and there is a lot of things you can't really talk about but as much as you can, I think it's good.

Different from Kate who mentioned that "it was over it" after her cooperating teacher mentioned briefly about how different people celebrate different holidays, Ellen believed that it would be good for teachers to have conversations with children about different traditions, beliefs, and practices. Using Passover as an example, a tradition that she celebrates as a Jewish person, Ellen supported the idea of teachers and children talking about people's different backgrounds "as much as [they could]" in order for everyone to be able to "understand where people [were] coming from." Ellen welcomed the idea of discussing cultural diversity with children as long as power and privilege issues were not talked about.

Kate and Ellen both displayed tendencies to adhere to the teaching orientations sponsored by their cooperating teachers in their student teaching without questioning the

status quo using a critical multicultural perspective. Perhaps Shazia and Judy found more space to think about and engage in multicultural teaching because they student taught with cooperating teachers who were teachers of color keen about highlighting and respecting children's diverse identities. Nevertheless, Kate and Ellen's choice of books, curricular content, and verbal reflections indicated that they hardly saw the need to prioritize multicultural education in their student teaching classrooms. Yet, different from Kate who solidified her belief that there was no space to teach about diverse cultures in early childhood classrooms, Ellen displayed openness about incorporating home cultures in the classroom to promote cultural diversity. Ellen's approach, similar to Shazia's and Judy's, did not fully or centrally undertake power and privilege in society, a central feature of critical approaches to multicultural education.

Tensions in Negotiating Multicultural Teaching

A central premise of the multicultural education course Ellen, Judy, Kate, and Shazia took was that to be able to engage in critical multicultural teaching, educators need to reconceptualize the way they understand themselves and rethink the role of culture and children's identities in curriculum and teaching. Whereas they had been exposed to a number of examples via Jennifer's practices as well as windows into multicultural teaching via course texts, the common practice of dictating a specific curriculum and pedagogy upon teachers led Ellen, Judy, Kate, and Shazia to varying degrees of struggles to engage in multicultural teaching that allowed for multiple perspectives, that was context-driven, and that interrupted injustices and fostered justice.

My analyses of the four preservice teachers' experiences in student teaching in light of the multicultural education course, drawing on interviews, observations, and artifacts indicated that all four preservice teachers experienced tensions and negotiations as they continued to reflect on conceptualizing and operationalizing critical multicultural teaching. As I read and reread data across participants seeking to understand how they negotiated multicultural teaching, it was clear that Ellen, Judy, Kate, and Shazia experienced the required multicultural education course and their student teaching placements in different ways, informed by their prior experiences, racial identities, and racial identity development processes. Not troubling the stronghold of Whiteness in schooling and society through her teaching, Kate engaged in one-on-one engagements with a child in her student teaching placement about a cultural celebration, marginalizing it within the larger context of the classroom. Ellen engaged in learning from families about their values, practices, histories, and identities, engaging in an approach marked by contributions and additions. Shazia and Judy, although displaying limitations, sought to respond to instances of prejudice and bigotry voiced by the children in their student teaching placements. The four preservice teachers' tensions reflected the complexity of engaging in multicultural teaching. Some of them seemed a bit more comfortable—e.g., Shazia suggesting resources to her cooperating teacher—and others were more reluctant—e.g., Kate situating her practice in one-on-one interactions. Whereas Kate, Ellen, Shazia, and Judy's conceptualizations ranged along a spectrum that defined multicultural education as being more aligned with liberal to being more aligned with critical aims, they each engaged in multicultural teaching in their own setting (albeit defined and enacted quite differently).

The following two excerpts show Judy's tensions regarding having critical conversations with children about race in early childhood classrooms. She explained during the third interview:

I think it's really important to give children multiple viewpoints...And so to really help them not to stereotype or to have misconceptions, I think it's really important to actually do mention it more in classrooms like that where it is more homogeneous because they are used to one type of thinking.

Given the demographic makeup of her student teaching classroom where Judy was placed (comprised of mostly Asian and Asian American children), Judy expressed her belief that it was even more important to discuss multiple points of view and positionalities in early childhood classrooms where diversity was not visibly the norm. After all, issues pertaining to colorism and hierarchies within cultural, ethnic, and racial groups often go problematically unacknowledged. Judy noticed that children in her student teaching placement had stereotypes and misconceptions because they did not have many opportunities to be exposed to more visible diversities naturally. They then came to define who belongs, who can play, who can be friends based on membership in the majority group in the classroom.

While she saw the need to talk about children's "stereotypes" and "misconceptions," she wondered about the feasibility of organically engaging in such conversations when the class makeup was seemingly so homogeneous. The following excerpt reveals what kind of stereotypes and misconceptions she was thinking about. As she thought about her student teaching placement, she said:

Yeah, I think because their environment, their neighborhood is so predominantly Asian that they don't have much exposure [to racial diversity] that they don't talk about it. So, when kids don't bring it up, it's hard for teachers to be like, "Let's talk about race." You know? It's something that needs to be like coming up from the children and we talk about it that way but then they don't

bring it up. And in their neighborhood, it's really not common to see differences. Judy was thinking about possibilities that could lead to disrupting children's stereotypes and misconceptions about "race" in particular. Judy's understanding of homogeneity in the community where the students in her student teaching placement came from overlooked the diversity within cultural groups. Thinking of multicultural education primarily pertaining to race and not to ethnicities and other hierarchies of privilege, which are intersectionally imposed to disempower and oppress, Judy had difficulty thinking about how to reimagine multicultural education critically within the context of her student teaching placement.

In addition, even though she perceived the need for children in homogeneous settings to discuss multiple perspectives, she felt tension as she imagined ways for teachers to discuss race when children did "not bring it up" themselves. As shown in Chapter IV, Judy had reflected earlier that she would want to proactively create teachable moments for children to recognize their privileges based on the supplies they had. However, when she thought about the possibilities of starting an authentic dialogue about race with children, Judy demonstrated hesitation. She reflected that it would be hard for teachers to engage children without children bringing up the topic themselves. It must be noted that even when there was an incident among children that did bring up the topic of colorism across Asian Americans (Korean vs. Indian), Judy had a hard time imagining and engaging in critical multicultural teaching. Such mixed reflections indicated Judy's continued negotiations and tensions as she thought about ways to enact multicultural teaching in her future teaching.

Shazia displayed similar tensions and negotiations about ways to approach multicultural education. As analyzed in the previous chapter, Shazia stated in her interviews that she thought multicultural education should focus more on cultural celebrations (e.g., goods and food) and focus less on “negative” discourse. As a person who took pride in the fact that she came from a cultural background that celebrated diversities rather than problematized unequal power relations, she displayed uncertainty whether discussing and challenging racial and cultural injustices was an ideal approach to multicultural education. However, instances that Shazia perceived and acted upon as issues that required conversations with children in her student teaching demonstrated that she was starting to see the importance of multicultural teaching beyond simply celebrating diverse cultures. One example of how she negotiated tensions in her student teaching placement and navigated teaching in multicultural ways was visible in her active role in problematizing Eurocentric classroom practice that seemed to minoritize or disregard a child’s identity. Shazia shared her realization that young children cared deeply about their names and how their names were pronounced by others.

[There is a girl who] is very reserved and quiet. I know the [name] means “star” in Urdu. So today, I was sitting with her...and I was playing with her and someone else. And she goes, “That’s not how you say your name!” And I was like, “My name?” and I said, “What is your name?” And after she said it, she corrected how we were pronouncing her name. And I was like, “But that’s not how we have been calling you,” and she was like, “You should tell them!”

For months, the child who had an Urdu name had been reticent about others in the classroom pronouncing her name inaccurately. Noticing this, Shazia had asked the child to pronounce her name. Then Shazia pointed out that people had not been saying her name the right way. Shazia engaged in a dialogue with the child that led her to develop courage to speak up about a classroom practice that needed to change. Shazia recounted:

I called the teachers over and I asked, “What is her name?” and they all said it [how they used to call her] and we told her to explain her name. And this was only with the teachers so when we came back from recess, when children were on the carpet, we invited [her] over and had her teach us how to say her name right. And luckily her mom came to pick her up so I told her what happened.

Shazia recognized this incident as a moment for her to support the child in troubling a classroom practice that adhered to Eurocentric ways of pronouncing names. Shazia asked the child to pronounce her name to the teachers first, and then the child had an opportunity to teach children how to pronounce her name correctly.

Shazia communicated her excitement that the child’s mother came to pick her up and that she shared what had happened. Her excitement to share this incident with the child’s mother shed light on Shazia’s future commitment to honor children’s identities through problematizing the status quo. Shazia’s comment indicated that the child was able to “gain confidence” because teachers valued her name and centrally incorporated learning names in class. Shazia proudly added and reflected that it was meaningful that children had an opportunity to discuss how everyone wanted to be called. She also mentioned that she and her cooperating teacher discussed what books could be read with children to further discuss names.

Kate’s tensions were visible in her journal entry where she reflected on her student teaching experience, an assignment in her student teaching practicum. In it, Kate demonstrated her hesitance engaging in multicultural education as being grounded on her lack of confidence and developing knowledge of teaching.

This semester, I really learned **HOW** to teach, which is something I felt like I really needed. I think that [this teacher education program] does not focus enough on different methods of how to teach young children. How can a teacher implement multiculturalism and other values if she/he doesn’t even understand how to teach a lesson in an effective manner!?

Kate's journal entry highlighted the importance of practice in teacher education. Kate yearned to learn "different methods of how to teach young children" from first-hand experience. It was clear that she did not connect the examples and approaches presented in her multicultural education course to practice. After all, it was not her practice, but someone else's. Kate's tensions underscored the imperative for multicultural teaching experiences and opportunities in teacher education programs.

Reflecting on the larger context of education and the contextual tensions visible through the constraints experienced by her mentor teacher, she noted:

That's another thing about the course. It had like this view that teachers don't have enough to do and they can just forfeit the curriculum and be like, "Well, I am just going to do this." If you are not in that type of school, it's not going [to] happen. Yeah maybe if you are at another school like an inquiry-based school or private school too that doesn't follow a curriculum and they have a lot of wiggle room, that might fly a little bit better. But my teacher has a problem with finishing what she needs to get done every day. Like we usually don't get through everything. So to add something gets really difficult. And this school, the academics are very stressed.

To Kate, the multicultural education course seemed to be quite unrealistic because it did not seem to consider the context teachers were placed in. Rather than seeing multicultural education as an approach, Kate's comment indicated that she considered it as an add-on to the curriculum. Perceiving curriculum as static, something that needed to be finished and gotten through, Kate thought that there was no "wiggle room" for teachers to negotiate multicultural teaching in schools like her student teaching placement.

Experiencing a student teaching context where a critical approach to multicultural education was employed by a White teacher may have been helpful to Kate as she negotiated becoming a teacher and learning how to teach. The misalignment between the multicultural education course and her student teaching setting reaffirmed Kate's belief

that White teachers did not have to engage in multicultural education; as she stated, it would not be authentic. Kate had never experienced multicultural teaching firsthand and she rather saw it as the work of teachers of color. Her White cooperating teacher reified her belief by not engaging in critical multicultural teaching. Hence, her student teaching experience, combined with her prior life experiences and early stage of racial identity development served to reaffirm her rejection of critical multicultural teaching.

Similarly, Ellen expressed her frustration about her teacher education program not focusing on discussing practical teaching skills that would be needed in her future teaching. When she saw multicultural teaching in practice, being part of it, she was quite positive about incorporating it in her future teaching. Nevertheless, she yearned to learn more about how to navigate everyday teaching with practical skills. She had a hard time reconciling both. She explained:

We know. We get it. So sure I am very prepared to incorporate the parents and to be a multicultural teacher, not be racist as whoever would say. But on the other hand, alright, now I have to sit down and teach a reading lesson. The reality is a little a different. I mean that's dealing with graduate school...that was all about social justice, and I know that that's one of the main tenets of this program....But before you can even do these social justice projects, you have to teach...The very practical things.

Reiterating her understanding of the multicultural education course, Ellen mentioned that she felt “very prepared to incorporate the parents and to be a multicultural teacher.” Ellen felt that her teacher education program, on the other hand, did not talk about “the very practical things.”

As someone who envisioned teacher education as a space to develop concrete teaching skills to get ready to enter into the classroom, Ellen experienced many tensions. She explained:

It's tricky. We all know we are going to be shocked when we get out into the real world and discover what we can do practically in our classrooms and what we can't and like all of these great ideas, and that's a lot of what made us be very frustrated in this class and also in other classrooms like they are teaching us to do all of these things and to be multicultural and to do social justice and to be activists and everything but it's like... There was one class and it was like, "What are you going to do in your first year of teaching?" and it was like, honestly in your first year of teaching, we are probably not going to be doing all of these social justice projects because we are going to want to get our feet on the ground. It felt like a disconnect from reality.

Ellen felt a sense of urgency in knowing what to do in her first year of teaching. This sense of immediacy obfuscated longer-term goals and visions for teaching. It created tension for her as she perceived that being "multicultural," doing "social justice," and being "activists" were not practical things that beginning teachers could consider as they got ready to step into early childhood classrooms. She felt that the emphasis on these aspects in her teacher education program created a "disconnect from reality" as she thought they were not helpful for first-year teachers in getting their "feet on the ground." Rather than viewing teacher education as a space where she could learn to critically interpret complex situations and develop as a curriculum-maker committed to justice in and through teaching, Ellen perceived it as a space to acquire a set of teaching strategies to be deployed in her first year of teaching.

Summary

In this chapter, I sought to understand preservice teachers' experiences, practices, negotiations and tensions in their student teaching placements the academic year after taking a required multicultural teacher education course. As I revisited the four preservice teachers' conceptualizations, reflections, and practices pertaining to multicultural

education, it was clear that there were many tensions as they each reflected on multicultural education and negotiated multicultural teaching and learning in their student teaching contexts; they each experienced ongoing tensions and negotiations in their teaching philosophy and approach to multicultural education.

Despite a multitude of examples provided in the multicultural education course, which had been taught by a practicing teacher who offered many windows into her practice, data analyses suggested that all of the preservice teachers may have benefitted from more hands-on, first-hand experiences engaging in multicultural teaching practices. Further, a more in-depth discussion about the pressures and tensions experienced by sociopolitical factors, such as the pushdown of academics in early childhood education and the standardization of teaching, would have been beneficial, as preservice teachers perceived these as major obstacles to engaging in multicultural teaching.

Further, as I analyzed the data, I found that preservice teachers' racial identities, life experiences, and racial identity development informed their multicultural perspectives, commitments, and enactments. Kate and Ellen, the White preservice teachers who had benefitted (whether knowingly or not) from systems of White supremacy lacked reflections and engagements in multicultural teaching in the context of student teaching. Shazia and Judy were more amenable to multicultural ideas, informed by their own life experiences and racial identities. Nevertheless, they experienced obstacles as they sought to engage in multicultural teaching in their student teaching experiences. Perhaps an acknowledgment of pressures and tensions associated with student teaching and first-year teaching could have facilitated their process of becoming and being multicultural teachers in early childhood classrooms and supported them to not

regard critical multicultural teaching as being the work of accomplished and experienced teachers only.

In the following and final chapter, I discuss the three main findings of this study and offer implications of this work for multicultural teacher education practices, programs, and research.

Chapter VI

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study focused on learning about both early childhood preservice teachers' reflections pertaining to their experiences in a required multicultural education course and their teaching actions and dispositions in student teaching one academic year after completing the multicultural education course. The study sought to understand the learning experiences and their potential influence on subsequent teaching negotiated by four preservice teachers in light of the favoring of critically-oriented multicultural education courses (e.g., Gorski, 2009; Jenks et al., 2001; Liggett, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2011). That is, it sought to understand the relationship between the course's orientation, preservice teachers' learning (pertaining to their conceptualization of multicultural education and the importance they attributed to it), and their ensuing practice within the context of student teaching. Findings unveiled tensions and complexities, which invite the field to more fully problematize the relationship between a course's orientation and the learning sponsored by it.

Using critical pedagogy as an analytical lens, this study is firmly grounded on a critical-ideological paradigmatic orientation, committing to disrupting and challenging the status quo. Through this paradigm, acknowledging my belief that early childhood education must be transformed to better serve minoritized young children, I sought to understand the ways in which early childhood preservice teachers negotiated their student teaching in light of their multicultural education course reflections. This orientation was

supported by a number of interrelated assumptions, explicated by Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) who wrote:

All thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted; [b] facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; [c] language is central to the formation of subjectivity; [d] certain groups in society are privileged over others; [e] oppression has many faces and that focusing on one at the expense of others often elides the interconnections among them; and [f] mainstream research practices are generally implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression. (pp. 139–140)

Engaging these assumptions and deploying a critical-ideological paradigmatic orientation, namely that under the assumption that realities and experiences are mediated by differential power relationships, the following questions guided this study:

1. How did preservice teachers (across racial and ethnic identifications) construct their experiences in a required multicultural education course?
 - a. How did they construct their experiences in writing (as they experienced the course via multicultural education course assignments)?
 - b. How did they construct their experiences orally (as they recalled their experiences in the course, via recall interviews)?
2. How did preservice teachers (across racial and ethnic identifications) who had previously taken the multicultural education course make sense of and navigate their student teaching experiences?
 - a. How do they make meaning of being a teacher?
 - i. In what ways, if any, were such meanings related to the content and orientation of the multicultural education course they took?
 - b. How did they navigate their student teaching experiences?

- i. In what ways, if any, were their student teaching experiences related to learnings from the multicultural education course?

In this chapter, I discuss the three main findings of this study; offer the implications of this work for multicultural teacher education practices, programs, and research; and identify limitations of the study.

Discussion

Whether at the undergraduate or graduate level, preservice teachers are required to take a multicultural education course in teacher education programs. Such courses are in place as a result of accreditation mandates (McDonald & Zeichner, 2009). Although a fixture in U.S. teacher education programs, these courses vary considerably and can be organized according to a typology that ranges from conservative to liberal to critical approaches to multicultural education (Gorski, 2009). Given the belief that multicultural education courses should take on a critical perspective, I sought to inquire into how preservice teachers experienced a required multicultural course that employed transformative and emancipatory aims (stated in the syllabus and visible in the organization of the course along three interrelated levels of transformation: transformation of self, transformation of teaching and transformation of society). That is, I wanted to explore the relationship between taking a required critical multicultural education course and preservice teachers' beliefs and practices pertaining to multicultural education. I specifically sought to understand the experiences preservice teachers had in such a course and how they negotiated their teaching practice within the context of student teaching the following academic year.

I had specifically hoped to see if and how preservice teachers who were previously enrolled in a required multicultural education course started to imagine, plan, and enact teaching that embraced diversity and aimed to disrupt societal inequalities during their student teaching. Perhaps I expected to find simplistic connections. Instead, I unveiled a number of tensions experienced by preservice teachers, many strongly informed by sociopolitical factors and movements as discussed in detail in Chapter IV and Chapter V. In this chapter, I draw on Chapter IV and Chapter V as I discuss the three key categories which help us understand preservice teachers' experiences and negotiations. They are power and privilege in identity development; pedagogical possibilities; and professional dispositions. It is important to note that there are many factors besides the required multicultural education course which likely have informed the four preservice teachers' identities, practices, and dispositions.

Power and Privilege in Identity Development

One of the key premises of critical multicultural education is that teachers need to critically consider the power and privilege they have in society, as a way of transforming their understanding of themselves as individuals who have been privileged and disprivileged in many ways in schools and society. Doing so is assumed to help teachers question their deep-seated understandings pertaining to equality as justice, meritocracy, and education as neutral—all of which serve to keep status quo inequities in place in and through schooling (Souto-Manning, 2013). In other words, the required multicultural education course taken by the four preservice teachers with whom I learned in this study started with the aim of fostering learning that could help preservice teachers challenge and trouble their assumptions and come to see themselves anew—as cultural beings

within a larger system characterized by pervasive and ingrained racism and associated inequities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Whereas all four preservice teachers in my study welcomed the idea of realizing that everyone is a cultural being, not all of them were equally willing to engage in examinations of power and privilege in society. Specifically, participants who had benefited from systems of inequity and experienced privileges associated with their race, ethnicity, language and socioeconomic status were more resistant to engage in such investigations. In a way, the closer they were to dominant categories, the more overtly resistant they were, and the farther their identities were from dominant categories pertaining to race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic standing, the more likely they were to see the importance of engaging in critical investigations of the systems in place.

As I read and reread interview transcripts, artifacts, and my observational notes, I consistently saw a connection between

- (a) their racial identities, life experiences, and their racial identity development; and
- (b) their professional identity development and commitments—e.g., what they saw as a priority in their teaching.

Whereas Kate, who had not engaged in deconstructing myths that uphold racism and inequality, such as meritocracy, conveyed more resistance to acknowledging and engaging in a deep examination of power and privilege in society, Judy, who had grown up in the U.S. as a person whose home culture had been constantly minoritized, more easily embraced an analysis of power and privilege and how they impacted her identity and positioning in schools and society.

Ellen, Shazia, and Judy demonstrated an awareness of the fact that they had cultures and that there was not such a thing as a “normal” person—Ellen identifying as Jewish, Shazia as Brown/Pakistani, and Judy as Korean American. Kate, who initially saw herself as acultural, or normal, eventually embraced this understanding as well. That is, all four preservice teachers did not demonstrate discomfort or engage in pushback when discussing how all people are cultural beings. Based on this realization, Kate, Ellen, and Shazia supported the idea or saw the possibility of engaging in multicultural education using a contributions or additive approach in early childhood classrooms—whether on special occasions (Kate), weekly (Ellen), or on a daily basis (Shazia).

However, when preservice teachers were invited to reflect on systemic power and privilege in relation to their identities, White preservice teachers experienced tensions and displayed resistance. They did so in a variety of ways, which have been discussed in Chapter IV and V. For example, justifying how her father, whose ancestors could be understood as an immigrant too, had worked hard and succeeded in U.S. society, Kate seemed to brush aside the pervasive and ingrained racism that stacked the odds against immigrants of color in U.S. society. She conveyed a tension between her father’s perspective that he had not benefited from Whiteness and Jennifer’s approach to multicultural education, which had sociopolitical, emancipatory, and activist aims.

Kate’s and Ellen’s display of resistance combined with their nascent racial identity development point toward the need for teacher education programs to more centrally attend to the racial identity development of teachers. Further, because racial identity development varies, perhaps it would have been beneficial for Kate and Ellen to examine their developing racial and professional identities in light of racialized privilege

and power in schools and society in racial affinity groups. Conceivably Kate would have felt more comfortable discussing and recognizing some of the dissonances she was experiencing as she navigated between what she knew from home and what she was being exposed to in her preservice teacher education program alongside White peers. For her, having a person of color teaching the multicultural education course led her to not see multicultural education as White people's work; her student teaching placement further reified this stance. When asked to participate in an activity that aimed to have preservice teachers think about different privileges people have had based on their social categories, Kate reported that she shut down. She did not see the identification of her power and privilege in society as an opportunity to reflect on her own privileges and implications for teaching. Instead, she felt that she was being personally shamed as an individual and that her family's efforts were being dismissed (e.g., the fact that her father had worked hard). This led her to disengage. While not entirely denying the existence of inequities in U.S. society, Kate subscribed to a common myth that justifies inequities: meritocracy. That is, she conveyed that White people's success mainly came from hard work and that people of color's failure could be attributed to their laziness, framing families and communities of color as problems. Although Kate acknowledged herself as a cultural being, she resisted confronting her own privileges and thinking about ways to disrupt unequal power relations through her teaching.

Ellen's experience of tension and resistance regarding issues surrounding power and privilege was more subtle. Ellen believed that there was no big problem in the general educational context. Therefore, she found it troubling to read from one of the textbooks of the multicultural education course that teachers were contributing to racism

if they were not engaging in anti-racist oriented multicultural education through their teaching. She claimed that such a view was too extreme. While she displayed more openness and willingness than Kate to incorporating children's home cultures in early childhood classrooms, she also resisted the idea of discussing privileges and stereotypes with young children. She claimed that these topics were age-inappropriate for young children. Ellen's understanding of multicultural education was informed by her life experiences and by her racial identity development. Although Ellen had started her racial identity development prior to the multicultural education course, she still needed more reflections and experiences to develop further in her racial identity.

In sum, power and privilege as experienced by (soon-to-be) teachers appeared to be connected to their life experiences, their racial identities, and their racial identity development in the development of their professional identity. Teaching is deeply entangled with one's inwardness (Palmer, 1997); professional and personal identities (including racial identity development) are interconnected. As such, it is important that teacher education programs attend to the racial identity development of preservice teachers. This can be illustrated by the experiences of the four preservice teachers from whom I learned. Because teachers project their own experiences and priorities onto their students and onto their teaching, it was easier for the preservice teachers who had experienced disprivileges in schooling and society to see the need to engage in critical multicultural teaching; conversely, teachers who had benefitted from White privilege found it harder to understand and embrace the necessity of critical multicultural teaching. As such, racial identity development and the consideration of systemic injustices were

deeply connected to professional identity development within a context marked by structural inequities.

Pedagogical Possibilities

Jennifer, an experienced Latina teacher with extensive experience engaging in critical multicultural teaching in her early childhood education classroom in a New York City public school had been invited to teach the multicultural education course in hopes of offering windows into pedagogical possibilities for preservice teachers. During the course, she showed multiple examples of her teaching so that preservice teachers could theorize from practice in deeply contextual and situated ways. She hoped that preservice teachers could start to imagine possibilities of going beyond restrictive teaching practices that normalized the Eurocentric curriculum and reified inequities in and through teaching.

Jennifer's situated teaching practices seemed to either widen or narrow preservice teachers' imaginations around possibilities of engaging in critical and equity-oriented multicultural teaching; their identities and (whether or not they had engaged in) explorations of power and privilege in society filtered such possibilities. Further, teachers who saw themselves in Jennifer seemed to feel validated, expanding their imagination pertaining to pedagogical possibilities. Teachers who did not see themselves in Jennifer (Kate and Ellen) constructed a narrow pedagogical perspective, conveying their belief that critical multicultural education is the work of teachers (of color) like Jennifer. Conversely, Judy and Shazia—both of whom identified as persons of color—conveyed that they found Jennifer's situated teaching examples as reassuring and connectable.

While Judy had conveyed her initial feeling that critical multicultural education would be unreachable when she thought about the pushback she would experience from parents and school leadership, Jennifer's situated teaching practices helped Judy feel more comfortable imagining herself engaging in equity-oriented multicultural education. Similarly, even though Shazia experienced tensions when thinking about ways to best approach multicultural education, she found Jennifer's situated teaching to be helpful because she was able to connect on a more personal level. Both Judy and Shazia mentioned Jennifer's videos and books to be helpful resources, which led them to imagine possibilities for engaging in multicultural teaching that centered on children's identities and diversities in their student teaching settings.

To Kate and Ellen, Jennifer's situated teaching practices seemed to narrow their vision of the possibilities they had for engaging in critical multicultural education. Kate argued that people of color, like Jennifer and her students' parents, should discuss culture with children. Kate acknowledged that Jennifer's teaching was good teaching but that she would not cross the cultural boundary by discussing culture with children because she was not a person of color. She demarcated critical multicultural teaching as people of color's practice. Ellen did not like how Jennifer seemed to highlight only certain cultural groups without giving equal attention to all cultures. Without recognizing that people in the intersection of racial and economic disadvantages experienced many more obstacles in schooling and life given the stronghold of White supremacy in U.S. schools and society, Ellen felt that the required multicultural course was rather agenda-driven. Kate and Ellen both believed that teacher education was a space to acquire a set of teaching

skills. Hence, they had a hard time theorizing and imagining possibilities based on Jennifer's situated teaching practices.

Professional Dispositions

Preservice teachers' professional dispositions, the principles and beliefs that undergird a teacher's approach to teaching, were informed by concepts of identities (e.g., racial, professional) and pedagogical possibilities. These were comprised of the values, commitments, and ethics guiding preservice teachers' commitments and actions in their student teaching settings. As such, they were informed by preservice teachers' identities and experiences in schooling and in their teacher education program, being racialized.

Shazia and Judy noticed in their student teaching critical instances that called for the need to address children's biases resulting from incidents where children made problematic and stereotypical remarks—namely, excluding children based on their skin color and deeming darker children to be dirty. Being paired with cooperating teachers of color who were keen about honoring all children's identities and diversities, both Shazia and Judy sought ways to engage themselves in multicultural teaching within the boundaries they were given as student teachers. So, not only did Shazia and Judy get to see themselves in Jennifer within the context of the multicultural education course, but they also saw themselves in their cooperating teachers.

While it is noteworthy that Shazia and Judy recognized the need and took steps to engage in multicultural teaching, it must also be pointed out that their attempts to engage children were limited in many ways in that they focused on celebrating diversity without attending to deep-seated issues of power and privilege. They were not able to deepen their examination of real issues that were happening in class and engage in teaching that

was transformative and social action-oriented. Perhaps due to their lack of experience and their perceived lack of student teacher agency, their initial attempts to engage in multicultural teaching rather resembled a liberal approach. Nevertheless, their noticings, actions, and reflections during their student teaching made it evident that they were actively thinking about and negotiating teaching based on learnings from the multicultural education course.

Kate and Ellen's student teaching, on the other hand, resembled the "normal" teaching that they were used to. They did not see the need to examine or re-consider the materials and curriculum in place or transform it. Further, they both noted that their student teaching classrooms had no "extra space" (Kate) or "the time" (Ellen) to discuss culture, difference, and power. Notably, both Kate and Ellen's cooperating teachers were White and they did not highlight people's different cultures or identities in their teaching. Instead of problematizing the status quo teaching practice, Kate and Ellen accepted and maintained the ways in which their cooperating teachers engaged in teaching. This further reified their notion that White teachers like themselves should not be worried about multicultural teaching. They each expressed their frustration about their teacher education program. They explained that their needs were not addressed and that it focused too much on multicultural education and social justice perspectives, without teaching about the practical teaching skills they had developed in the context of their student teaching.

These findings beg us to consider the importance of one's personal identity (and the understanding of it within an unequal society) when developing dispositions for enacting multicultural pedagogical possibilities. Perhaps if Kate and Ellen had been

placed in classrooms where White teachers were engaged in critical multicultural teaching, they may have developed an image of themselves as multicultural educators. Nevertheless, the racialization of critical multicultural education had meant that they did not regard critical multicultural education as the work of White teachers like themselves.

In this section, I explored three key findings from this study. First, I explored how, whereas preservice teachers were willing to regard themselves as cultural beings, they did not all engage in considerations of inequities in society with regard to how they had been advantaged and/or disadvantaged in society. In fact, those who had experienced advantages in society based on their racial identity demonstrated resistance to considering how systemic power and institutional inequities impacted their lives. Hence, they were also reluctant to draw implications to their own teaching. Second, I inquired into how seeing or not seeing oneself in the teacher educator and her practices may serve to widen and/or narrow pedagogical possibilities. That is, preservice teachers who saw themselves in their teacher educator, Jennifer, came to regard critical multicultural education as their work; preservice teachers who did not see themselves in Jennifer, constructed critical multicultural education as other people's work. Finally, preservice teachers' dispositions toward multicultural teaching were deeply informed by their understanding and investigations of power and privilege in society and the pedagogical (im)possibilities to which they had been exposed. In addition to the required multicultural education course, their professional dispositions had been significantly informed by their own racial identities, their racial identity development, as well as by the racial identities and teaching approaches sponsored by cooperating teachers in their student teaching

placements. Learning from these findings, in the following section, I offer implications for multicultural teacher education practices, programs, and research.

Implications

This study, a qualitative case study that focused on four preservice teachers' experiences in an early childhood teacher education program leading to initial certification, specifically inquired into their experiences in a required multicultural education course and their student teaching afterwards. Therefore, whereas findings from this study are not generalizable (I discuss limitations in the following section), it provides insights and sheds light on multicultural teacher education practices, programs, and research, to which I turn next.

Implications for Multicultural Teacher Education Practices

This study showed that the two preservice teachers of color's reflections deepened in the multicultural education course when they had the opportunity to learn about situated multicultural teaching practices by a teacher educator of color. Findings point toward the significance of preservice teachers of color being able to see themselves in the materials, approaches, and teacher educators during their teacher education courses and programs. While representation has been deemed important in teaching, it needs to be considered in teacher education as well.

Additionally, findings from this study point to the importance of supporting preservice teachers of color to develop and employ situational pedagogical knowledge and skills, so that they can actively imagine possibilities of enacting and negotiating

critical multicultural teaching in early childhood classrooms. That is, preservice teachers who have a solid understanding of sociopolitical and contextual issues facing culturally diverse students should be given opportunities to learn how to teach in critically multicultural ways and to develop as advocates for their students.

These implications are predicated on teacher educator's intentionality engaging in critically reflective teaching that engages preservice teachers with various multicultural teaching materials and teaching examples. Situated multicultural teaching practices that go beyond well-known pressures, move beyond the restrictive boundaries of adopted curricula, and trouble Eurocentric curriculum demands may not only encourage, but offer powerful insights for preservice teachers of color to examine, adapt, and reinvent multicultural curriculum and pedagogy suitable for their own teaching context. Teacher educators who do not have ample teaching experiences like Jennifer may benefit from showing videos of multicultural teaching examples and from inviting guest speakers to share their personal teaching practices, so that preservice teachers engage in critical analysis of situated multicultural teaching, drawing implications to their own practices.

Recognizing that the two preservice teachers of color's attempts to bring critical perspectives to their teaching practice rather ended up reflecting liberal perspectives of highlighting diversity without attending to issues of power and privilege, implications point toward the need for teacher educators to continue supporting preservice teachers as they develop their teaching approaches, drawing distinctions between a liberal approach and a critical approach to multicultural education. For example, it may be helpful for teacher educators to engage preservice teachers in analyzing these two approaches, coming up with teaching examples or past experiences, and carefully considering the

affordances and shortcomings of each approach so that preservice teachers can thoroughly reflect on more nuanced understanding of multicultural teaching, cultivating a clearer stance and vision in teaching.

Echoing what is widely documented in multicultural teacher education literature, the two White preservice teachers in this study resisted to engage in critical reflection of the power and privilege tied to their racial identity. This reflects the importance of further engaging White preservice teachers in racial identity development work within the context of teacher education programs. That is, White preservice teachers need to develop a positive racial identity by being given opportunities to connect their White identity and anti-racism; this is a long process that requires building of trust and support. Likewise, preservice teachers of color would benefit from more robust support of their racial identity development.

Teacher education must also entail a historical and sociopolitical exploration of racial injustices that continue to permeate our society, so as to question and perhaps challenge their existing views regarding power and privilege in society. Implications point toward the need for teacher educators to remember that without engaging White preservice teachers in learning about histories of inequities, which are largely silenced or marginalized in schools and schooling, sufficient critical reflection of their racial privileges and the legitimacy of the social order created by unequal power relations is unlikely to occur. Without fully contending with the miseducation of White teachers, teacher educators are likely to continue preparing White preservice teachers to treat multicultural education as a teaching strategy that a teacher may or may not feel attracted to.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

Extending the implications of racial identity development to teacher education programs, I suggest that perhaps teacher education programs can employ racial identity development scales (many have been developed and validated by psychologists) instead of standardized test scores (e.g., GRE), which have been proven to safeguard the privileges of Whiteness, in the admissions of preservice teachers to their programs. This is particularly important in early childhood education, where teachers are guiding young children and supporting them through racial identity development; without a positive and well developed racial identity, early childhood teachers are likely to impose harmful assimilationist processes into the dominant culture onto young children of color.

Additionally, findings point toward the need for early childhood teacher education programs to employ a coherent vision of diversity and equity throughout the program if they aim to foster preservice teachers' development and engagement in critical multicultural teaching. The work cannot reside in a single course, even if required for all students. In this study, White preservice teachers demonstrated heightened resistance towards possibilities pertaining to engaging in critical multicultural teaching when they experienced student teaching classrooms that did not center issues of diversity, equity, and social justice. Although it may be challenging to identify and place all student teachers in classrooms that engage with such an approach, findings from this study offer insights into the need for all teacher education courses, including student teaching and practica, to incorporate a critical multicultural lens in order to strengthen preservice teachers' learning experiences. Otherwise, preservice teachers may regard critical multicultural education as an option which they may choose—or not.

As exemplified in this study, preservice teachers may experience constraints and pressures as student teachers pertaining to the development of their own racial identity and teaching practices due to the imposed curricular demands, pressures and expectations enacted by or on their cooperating teachers, and the pushdown of academics in early childhood education. Recognizing these obstacles, teacher educators involved in the supervision and guidance of preservice teachers' student teaching must put intentionality into supporting their racial identity development *and* critical multicultural beliefs and dispositions across courses, in a coordinated way. The experiences of the four preservice teachers from whom I learned shed light onto how teacher educators cannot assume that student teachers who are critically aware of the need to disrupt inequities will engage in critical multicultural teaching practices in their student teaching placements.

Student teaching and practica may benefit from being accompanied by seminars that support preservice teachers in making sense of their student teaching environment and teaching practices through engaging them in readings, discussions, and journal writings using a critical multicultural lens. University supervisors who support student teachers' lesson planning and implementation can also encourage student teachers to engage in teaching that prioritizes children's diverse cultural identities and practices and teaching that challenges young children's various biases, so that they have opportunities to reflect based on their situated teaching practices.

Recognizing the difficulty in centering issues concerning race and ethnicity in teacher education programs when teacher education faculty is primarily consisted of White teacher educators, as is the case of the program the four preservice teachers from whom I learned were enrolled (which is very much representative of national

demographics in early childhood teacher education), teacher education programs should also consider hiring more teacher educators of color who recognize the urgency to disrupt racial injustices and societal inequities as a priority.

Finally, this study offers implications for placing preservice teachers, especially those who do not see the need for critical multicultural teaching in early childhood classrooms. Such students are likely to benefit from being strategically placed as student teachers in classrooms that center children's racial identities and cultural diversities. As shown in this study, when resistant White preservice teachers are paired with cooperating teachers who employ monocultural teaching approaches, they are likely to disregard their role and responsibility pertaining to critical multicultural teaching. That is, they are likely to be influenced easily and significantly by their cooperating teacher's approach. Instead, White preservice teachers who are in the early stage of racial identity development may benefit from being paired with a White cooperating teacher who constantly and skillfully negotiates critical multicultural teaching even in light of pressures and curricular demands. While this does not guarantee that resistant preservice teachers will change their stance immediately, they will at least get an opportunity to (re)consider their beliefs and attitudes as they encounter White teachers engaging in powerful teaching that highlights children's cultural identities and aims to expand equity and social justice.

Implications for Multicultural Teacher Education Research

Findings from this study support the need for multicultural teacher education research to undertake an in-depth exploration of preservice teachers' racial identity, racial identity development, teacher identity development, and teaching practices; after all, teachers' personal and professional development are deeply intertwined. It is not enough

to attend to beliefs and practices; implications of this study point toward the need for a closer investigation of the role of racial identity and racial identity development in one's commitment to and enactment of critical multicultural practices that center sociopolitical and emancipatory commitments.

Additionally, extant multicultural teacher education literature shows that many researchers and teacher educators rely on preservice teachers' written assignments as one of the primary data sources for understanding preservice teachers' evolving beliefs and attitudes in a multicultural education course. My study revealed that preservice teachers expressed many more candid reflections when they were given opportunities to verbally reflect through interviews on their multicultural teacher education experience after they became free of grade influences. Implications point toward the need to understand in what ways preservice teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions for negotiating critical multicultural teaching evolve throughout their teacher education program, by conducting follow-up studies and investigating student teaching and teaching experiences following multicultural education coursework.

Further, implications also point toward the need for researchers to conduct longitudinal studies that go beyond student teaching (which is a setting characterized by constraints in agency and power differentials). It is imperative that researchers follow preservice teachers into their classrooms after they graduate and become full-time teachers to learn about the ways in which multicultural education coursework informs (or not) their teaching perspectives and practices. By conducting research at educational spaces that potentially allow for greater teacher agency, researchers are more likely to gain insights into the ways in which multicultural teacher education experiences and

coursework within the context of initial teacher education inform future teaching practices and priorities.

Limitations

In this section, I consider limitations of my study. I specifically detail limitations pertaining to the alignment of preservice teachers' stance with their student teaching placements. That is, the fact that the student teaching contexts where the four preservice teachers were located aligned closely with their stances and dispositions toward multicultural education was a limitation in this study. This study showed that the two preservice teachers of color noticed critical instances that required teachers to disrupt children's misconceptions and biases. The two preservice teachers of color also displayed negotiations in their teaching in trying to engage children in critical conversations and activities within the boundaries they were given as student teachers. To what extent their student teaching environment contributed to their multicultural lens and dispositions cannot be determined. As such, this comprises a limitation of this study. Both cooperating teachers in these classrooms were teachers of color and they seemed to be keen about honoring children's identities and disrupting children's cultural biases. If the two preservice teachers of color in my study were placed in student teaching environments that resembled the two White preservice teachers' student teaching classrooms, findings would likely have been different. At the same time, whether White preservice teachers in my study would have still demonstrated lack of multicultural lens and dispositions if they were placed in student teaching environments that resembled the two preservice teachers of color's student teaching classrooms remains questionable.

Another limitation had to do with the small number of preservice teachers who participated in this study and their racial identities (two being White and two being Asian or Asian American). This may have inadvertently served to essentialize participants, especially as the White participants displayed an accumulation of privileges whereas the Asian and Asian American participants experienced intersectional oppressions in schooling and in society. As such, it is important to note that multiple factors are at play and that White teachers who are intersectionally minoritized in terms of language and socioeconomics are likely to have different experiences from Kate's and Ellen's.

A third limitation had to do with the unique instructional context of the course. This course not only had an instructor of color (teacher educators of color comprise less than 20% of the early childhood teacher education workforce) who was a full-time classroom teacher, but it also represented the minority of multicultural education courses (Gorski, 2009), being aligned with a critical approach to multicultural education. This means that it is unlikely that such a combination of factors will be present in other settings. As such, it comprises a limitation.

Finally, whereas reality is social and historical but also framed by power relations leads me to feel more sympathetic toward Judy and Shazia, taking an emancipatory approach and focusing on those individuals who have been disempowered and oppressed in society. Additionally, my identity as an Asian means that I am more likely to see myself in their experiences. Such a perspective may have limited the findings of this study.

In this section, I explored four limitations of my study: the alignment between preservice teachers' conceptualizations of multicultural education and the orientation of

their student teaching placements, the danger of essentializing preservice teachers in grouping them according to racial identification, the uniqueness of the course (its orientation and its instructor), and the unequivocal centering of Judy and Shazia, grounded on my belief that their realities are mediated by power relations, being socially and historically constituted. I also acknowledge that there are further limitations not discussed here at this time, including the potential limitation resulting from the fact that Judy and I shared two named languages (Korean and English) and the other three preservice teachers and I only shared one named language (English); this may have skewed the data I collected and/or afforded different interpretations. Nevertheless, with the acknowledgment that no study is without limitations and with the understanding that researchers are unlikely to fully consider all possible limitations, I move to the following section where I offer concluding reflections pertaining to my study.

Concluding Reflections

In this study I sought to gain insights pertinent to the ways in which teacher education programs have been engaging preservice teachers in notions around diversity, equity, and social justice and helping them imagine and engage in teaching that aims to disrupt inequitable ideologies, policies, and practices. To do so, I decided to examine how preservice early childhood teachers experienced a required critical multicultural education course in their teacher education program. After doing so, I sought to understand how they navigated their student teaching experiences and whether and how multicultural learnings, dispositions, and conceptualizations informed their practice. I conducted a retrospective case study to understand early childhood preservice teachers'

reflections from their required multicultural education course and their teaching actions and dispositions during student teaching the academic year following the completion of the multicultural education course. I learned from conducting this study that multicultural teacher education is not a simple task that can be accomplished by one educator within a short period of time within the bounds of one course. I came to understand that teacher educators, preservice teachers, teachers, and researchers all have to work together in developing a shared vision and strive together to create and sustain equitable educational opportunities for all young children—and especially for those whose families and communities have been historically marginalized and continue to be subjugated.

As I learned from four preservice teachers (across racial and ethnic identifications), attending to how they experienced a multicultural education course, I unveiled the importance of these preservice teachers' personal identities, social milieus, and historical contexts to their experience in a required multicultural course that undertook a critical stance. Their personal identities and experiences—as well as how these intersected with privileges and disprivileges in society—deeply informed their experiences in the multicultural education course. That is, their racial identities mattered, and so did their processes of racial identity development, in the development of their teaching identities and practices. Additionally, as they orally recalled their experiences, they communicated how representation mattered; that is, they were more likely to engage in critical multicultural education and recognize its importance if they saw themselves reflected in the course instructor and in the course readings.

Preservice teachers' navigations in student teaching were influenced by a number of factors and cannot simply be seen as a result of their learnings in the multicultural

education course they took. Although there were limitations pertaining to their student teaching placements as described in the previous section, the four preservice teachers made meaning of teaching as informed by a number of factors, in complex ways, which included but were not limited to their prior experiences pertaining to being normalized or othered in schooling and in U.S. society, the beliefs that undergirded their upbringing, their language practices, their racial identity, their racial identity development processes, whether or not they were represented in the critical multicultural education course content, focus, and in its instructor, the orientation, focus, and identity of their cooperating teachers within the context of their student teaching placements, and the racial makeup of the classroom where they were placed.

Preservice teachers' construction of their identities as teachers were deeply influenced by their personal identities (including racial identities). These were reified by racial affinity in their student teaching placements. That is, White preservice teachers were placed with White cooperating teachers in classrooms serving children who were predominantly White. Preservice teachers of color were placed with cooperating teachers of color and one classroom served children who were overwhelmingly of color. Whereas the two preservice teachers of color witnessed instances of overt prejudice, having the opportunity to address these, the two White preservice teachers did not notice any such instances in their classrooms. As such, their placements reified their conceptualizations of multicultural education and reaffirmed their professional dispositions of maintaining hegemonic ideologies and hierarchies of race in schools and society.

As I reflect on my study, I realize how teacher education is much more complex, situated, and nuanced than I had initially realized; the development of teachers entails the

development of teaching practices and of one's racial identity. I also realize how much more urgent the preparation of early childhood teachers committed to emancipatory teaching practices is, as a growing majority of young children of color may be undergoing harmful assimilationist approaches in the name of early education. Given the demographic Whiteness of early childhood teaching and teacher education, this study points toward the urgent need to name, problematize, and interrupt the stronghold of White hegemony in early childhood teaching and teacher education. This means moving away from focusing on the preparation of a monolithic teacher (presumed to be White) and instead fully acknowledging the importance of racial identity development in the preparation and development of teachers as change agents committed to interrupting racialized systems of inequities via counter-hegemonic teaching, social activism, and deconstructing and acting against systems of oppression. With this urgency, as I conclude this study, I refer to the quote with which I started my dissertation.

The increasing cultural diversity of U.S. schools and schoolchildren demands that every teacher, whether new or experienced, thoughtfully examine the local meanings of disparities between home and school, community and school system, and teacher and student and then take responsible action to improve the educational choices and life chances of their own students. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992, p. 113)

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Appendix A

Introductory Email

Dear [name of student],

I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study that aims to understand the reflection and action of preservice teachers during their teacher education program.

As a participant in the study you will be asked to participate in three individual interviews that will last for approximately 45 to 60 minutes each. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed. At the same time, I will visit your student teaching practicum site one to three times during spring semester of 2016. Lastly, you will also be asked to share electronic copies of your written assignment from C&T 4114 (Multicultural Approaches to Teaching Young Children) and lesson plans and journals you submitted for C&T 4708 (Observation and Student Teaching) in spring semester of 2016.

As a participant, you will contribute to the much needed research on understanding the learning experiences of preservice teachers in an early childhood teacher education program.

If you choose to participate in the study, I can assure you that your identity will remain confidential, and that your real name will not be used in the final presentation of findings. Additionally, all collected data will be stored in locked file cabinet.

I will schedule the interviews to happen at times that are most convenient for you. I realize that you are very busy and that your time is precious. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Attached to this email is an informed consent form and a document describing your rights as a participant. Please let me know if you would be willing to participate. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Eun Jeong Jun
Ejj2120@tc.columbia.edu
917-634-6064

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form and Participant's Rights

INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title: Preservice Teachers' Reflections and Actions

Principal Investigator: Eun Jeong Jun, Doctoral student, Teachers College 917-634-6064

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called "Preservice Teachers' Reflections and Actions." You may qualify to take part in this research study because you will be enrolled in a student teaching practicum (C&T 4708) in spring semester of 2016 and you were enrolled in Multicultural Approaches to Teaching Young Children (C&T 4114) in spring semester of 2015. Approximately four people will participate in this study and it will take around 2 to 3 hours of your time to complete.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

This study is being done to understand preservice teachers' learning experiences during their teacher education program.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed three times by the principal investigator (i.e. Eun Jeong Jun). During the interview, you will be asked to discuss your student teaching experience and your graduate education experience. Interviews will be audio-recorded. Each interview will take approximately forty-five to sixty minutes at a location and time that is convenient to you. The principal investigator will also visit your student teaching practicum site one to three times during spring semester of 2016. You will also be asked to share with the principal investigator the written assignments submitted during C&T 4114 and C&T 4708.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The following are some risks associated with this study. No penalty or action will be associated with non-participation. Potential risks stem from any discomfort you may experience in recalling and reflecting on your graduate education experience. You do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you don't want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty. The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of teacher education to better understand ways to prepare preservice teachers to be good teachers for all children.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will receive no payment for your participation in this study.

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when you have completed three interviews, have been observed one to three times at your student teaching practicum site, and shared with the investigator your written assignments submitted for C&T 4114 and C&T 4708. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven't finished.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality will be preserved through the use of pseudonyms. Collected data will be kept confidential, used for professional purposes only, and kept in locked files. The only person with access to the data will be the investigator. All collected data will be kept in a password protected computer in the investigator's home.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

The results of this study will be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in this research study.

_____ I give my consent to be recorded _____
Signature

_____ I do not consent to be recorded _____
Signature

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

___ I consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College _____
Signature

___ I do not consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University _____
Signature

OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes _____ No _____
Initial Initial

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes _____ No _____
Initial Initial

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Eun Jeong Jun, at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Mariana Souto-Manning at [REDACTED]

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future student status or grades.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study

Print name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

Appendix C

Excerpt of a Pilot Interview

(E: Eun Jeong; C: Cathy)

E: In the assignment you list some things as privileges you have. Why do they become privileges to you? Why do you think so?

C: I think they are privileges because they give me greater access to certain things? So even okay, if you want to talk about me growing up overseas, even though I'm different, it has given me a lot of privilege the way people have treated me growing up. You know, being a White person overseas, you know, you are not questioned a lot. For example, if I want to go into a hotel and use the bathroom, they won't stop me. You know, they think like "Okay she probably stays here. She's got money," or something like that. Which is something I could take it for granted a lot. Whereas if a friend of mine would walk in, depending on how they are dressed, and all that right, but it would be easier for me to gain access to certain things. So realizing that? Also, I went to really good schools growing up? I went to international schools. I was very privileged in that way. My parents didn't have tons of money, but I was always had, um, access to travel and seeing different things and experiencing different countries. Um, as far as ability goes, I am physically able to do whatever I want to do. Uh...

E: Okay. So I noticed you wrote about your privileges in the Cultural Memoir. And this is not something everybody wrote about in the very beginning of the course. Is this something that usually comes to your mind when you think about your culture? Or if not, what triggered you to include this in your Cultural Memoir, you think?

C: I think the thing that triggered me was the Power Shuffle, I think.

E: I see.

C: And again, the Power Shuffle was a bit, it did really get me thinking. I didn't really like what I saw? Because it was uncomfortable to walk across the room every single time and be privileged? And it really made me think like wow, I don't always think about the ways I am privileged. It's my life, you know? And I think that that really got me thinking, and there's so much in my life that I am so thankful for but I also started to think about wow, when I feel bad for myself, or sorry about myself, or things don't work out, you know really I shouldn't be ungrateful. Like there's so much that I have. It could be so much worse, I guess. Like I don't know.

E: Okay. I will quote one of the parts you wrote here. "I grew up as a minority for most of my life, I acknowledge that I was a privileged minority and in no way would equate my experiences with people from minority backgrounds in America." So what do you think are the experiences of people from minority backgrounds in the U.S.?

C: Um, well I think like being treated in certain ways. Like, I have friends who have told me, it's like stereotypical stuff that you hear but it's really true to them. Like, if there are African American they will be pulled over when they are driving more often, like people might follow them in a store. Things that I never experienced. Even though I was a minority in other countries, I was always privileged as I've kind of explained to you before. I was always treated pretty much nicer in a lot of ways than they would treat their own people. So although I was minority, it was never like the same kind of experience that minorities in America face. Um, and you know, even if you want to

talk about stuff like the um...the model minority myth you know. Which is supposed to be like, wow they are so great they are Asian you know, people in America but there is still that negative side to it. Certain expectations that are really oppressive but I kind of got sailed through, you know. Yea, I didn't really experience that kind of prejudice.

E: Interesting. You mentioned about how you fear that your privileges can be oppressive to others without you realizing it. Can you tell me more? Why do you think your privilege can be oppressive to others? Maybe as a teacher or just as a human being.

C: Um. Well I think about stuff like, I think about this a lot like, when I think about little girls for example in like a classroom. I remember when I was teaching overseas, all of my students, most of all my students were Asian. And um you know little girls are obsessed with dolls and a lot of dolls are White. You know a lot of them have blond hair, blue eyes whatever. And my little girls tell me a lot like "Oh Ms. Cathy looks like a princess." You know, they would say things like, they would look at my arm and put theirs and say like, "Yours look so White. Mine is so ugly," you know. And I think like that's something for me is like very, it just hits the spot in me that's like, you know, I... get so emotional...(Cathy's voice shakes.)

E: How old were these children?

C: Four? Even this semester, my placement, girls were saying things like, they would bring dolls from home and say things like, "Oh it looks like it could be your daughter. And she's so beautiful," and I would say like, "Oh, why do you think she's beautiful?" "Her blond hair," "her green eyes," or whatever and I would say like, "Well your hair is so beautiful. Look at it." "No, it's ugly and black," you know. So I feel like my own physical ethnicity, race, how I look in some ways might be oppressive without me trying to be oppressive to these students in my class. Especially if girls are looking up to me as like, "That's what I should be. She's my teacher. I love her. And I want to look like her. But I don't look like her. And I'm not good enough." I don't know if that makes sense but...

E: Yeah.

C: It makes me feel like, "Do I have a place in early childhood if I am going to work with people who don't look like me?" which I want to.

E: Is that what you want to do?

C: Yeah! I would like to work at an international school where there's going to be people from all over the world. But I, in no way, want to like make people feel like they are less. And in some ways that's something I have struggled a lot in this program because I feel like, the way who I am or the way I look, if I want to work with minorities or be in that kind of a setting, I will never be able to do it well because again, I am just another White teacher. You know what I mean? Um...

Appendix D

Alignment of Data Collection Methods and Research Questions

Research Questions	Individual Interviews	Document Analysis	Observations
1.a. How did they construct their experiences in writing (as they experienced the course via multicultural education course assignments)?		Multicultural education course assignments	
1.b. How did they construct their experiences orally (as they recalled their experiences in the course, via recall interviews)?	Interview III with Preservice Teachers		
2.a. How do they make meaning of being a teacher?	Interview I with Preservice Teachers		
2.b. How did they navigate their student teaching experiences?	Interview II with Preservice Teachers		Once for each preservice teacher
2.c. In what ways, if any, were their student teaching experiences related to learnings from the multicultural education course?	Interview III with Preservice Teachers	Lesson plans and journals from student teaching	

Appendix E

Reading List of Student Teaching Practicum Seminar (I)

- Ball, D., & Forzani, F. (2010). Teaching skillful teaching. *Educational leadership*, 68(4), 40-45.
- Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. J. (2003). The importance of being playful. *Educational Leadership*, 60(7), 50-53.
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- Carroll, D. (2001). Considering paraeducator training, roles, and responsibilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Nov./Dec. 60-64.
- Curtis, D., & Carter, M. (2005). Rethinking early childhood environments to enhance learning. *Young Children*, 60(3), 34 – 38.
- Horn, M., Pluckebaum, S., Bandera, B., & Burke, P. (1998). Collaboration. In E. A. Tertzell, S. M. Klein, & J. L. Jewett (Eds.), *When teachers reflect: Journeys toward effective inclusive practice* (pp. 161-186). Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Joseph, G. E., & Strain, P. S. (2004). Building positive relationships with young children. *Young Exceptional Children*, 7(4), 21-28.
- Kaiser, B., & Rasminsky, S. (2003). Opening the culture door. *Young Children*, July, 53-56.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), 159-165.
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- Reinsberg, J. (1999). Understanding young children's behavior. *Young Children* 54(4), 54-57.
- Shulman, L. (2007). Good teaching, *The Future of Teaching*, 17(1), 6-7.
- Snow, K. *People first language*. Retrieved from <http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/images/PDF/pfl09.pdf>
- Tarr, P. (2004). Consider the walls. *Young Children*, 59(3), 88-92.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (September 2002). Different learners, different lessons. *Scholastic Instructor*, 24-25, 91.
- Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S., & Arguelles, M. E. (1997). The ABCDEs of co-teaching. *The Council for Exceptional Children*, (Nov/Dec, 4-10).

Appendix F

Reading List of Student Teaching Practicum Seminar (II)

- Beck, I., & McKweon, M. (2001). Text talk: Capturing the benefits of read aloud experiences for young children. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(1), 10-20.
- Beck, I., MeKweon, M., & Kucan, L. (2013). Bringing vocabulary into the earliest grades. In *Bringing words to life (2nd Ed.)*, (55-81). New York: Guilford Press.
- Barclay, K. (2009). Click, clack, moo: Designing effective reading instruction for children in preschool and primary grades. *Childhood Education (Spring)*, 167-172.
- Burns, M. (2005). Looking at how students reason. *Educational Leadership* 63(3), 26-31.
- Chapin, S., O'Connor, C., & Anderson, N. C. (2003). The tools of classroom talk. In *Classroom discussions: Using math talk to help students learn*. Sausalito, CA: Math Solutions Publications.
- Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (3rd Ed.)*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Crain, W. (2011). *Theories of development: Concepts and applications (6th Ed)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Dorsey, E., Danner, N. & Laumann, B. (2014). Adapting lesson plans for preschoolers: Addressing state early learning standards. In K. Pretti-Frontczak, J. GrishamBrown, & L. Sullivan (Eds.), *Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 16* (pp. 39-57). Missoula, MT: Division of Early Childhood.
- Dunlap, G., Strain, P., & Ostry, C. (2010). Addressing challenging behaviors of children with autism spectrum disorders. In H. H. Schertz, C. Wong, & S. L. Odom (Eds.), *Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 12* (pp. 54-65). Missoula, MT: Division for Early Childhood.
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- Lane, H. B., & Wright, T. L. (2007). Maximizing the effectiveness of read alouds. *The Reading Teacher*, 60(7), 668-675.
- Lewis, E. A., Ledford, J. R., Elam, K. L., Wolery, M. & Gast, D. L. (2010). Using small group instruction to teach young children with autism spectrum disorders in early childhood classes. In H. H. Schertz, C. Wong, & S. L. Odom (Eds.), *Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 12* (pp. 86-96). Missoula, MT: Division for Early Childhood.
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- Minzenberg, B., Laughlin, J., & Kaczmarek, L. (1998). Early childhood special education in the developmentally appropriate classroom: A framework for conversation. *Young Exceptional Children*, 2(2), 10-17.

- Neuman, S. B., & Wright, T. S. (2014). The magic of words. *American Educator*, 38(2), 4-14.
- Rowe, M. B. (1996). Science, silence and sanctions. *Science and Children*, 34(1), 35-37.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & McTighe, J. (2006). What really matters in learning (content). In *Integrating Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design* (pp. 24-37). Alexandria, VA: ACSD.

Appendix G

Interview Protocol for Preservice Teacher (I)

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. As I mentioned in the email, the purpose of my research is to understand the reflection and action of preservice teachers enrolled in an early childhood teacher education program. I will be recording this interview. After the interview is transcribed, I will send you the transcript so that you can review and give feedback.

Before we begin, I wanted to reassure you that your identity and information you share will remain confidential and that I am the only person with access to the data. In any oral and/or written presentation of findings I will use a pseudonym.

This interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Before we get started, I wanted to know if you have any questions or concerns. Do I still have your permission to record our conversation?

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

- Can you tell me about your early years and your experiences in school?
- What is the most memorable thing about school then? Why? Tell me more.
- Who did you play with? What do you remember?
- Who was your favorite teacher? Why? Tell me more. Anyone else?
- How were your parents involved in your education?
- How did you decide to become an early childhood teacher?
- What kind of teacher do you want to be and have you thought about what kind of setting?
- Can you try to imagine and describe what an ideal school would look like?
- What do you think are the things or experiences that contributed to these thoughts?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix H

Interview Protocol for Preservice Teacher (II)

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. As I mentioned in the email, the purpose of my research is to understand the reflection and action of preservice teachers enrolled in an early childhood teacher education program. I will be recording this interview. After the interview is transcribed, I will send you the transcript so that you can review and give feedback.

Before we begin, I wanted to reassure you that your identity and information you share will remain confidential and that I am the only person with access to the data. In any oral and/or written presentation of findings I will use a pseudonym.

This interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Before we get started, I wanted to know if you have any questions or concerns. Do I still have your permission to record our conversation?

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

- Can you tell me about the classroom of your current student teaching practicum site? Where is the school? Who is in your classroom? What is it like?
- How is it different from your previous placement?
- So tell me about a regular day in your classroom? How does it go?
- What is your relationship with your cooperating teacher like?
- What about with students? Which ones have you connected to the most? Which ones are you finding it harder to connect with?
- How would you describe your teaching?
- How do you see yourself as a teacher?
- How do you think others see you as a teacher? For example, your colleagues, students, parents, etc.
- How would you describe your cooperating teacher's teaching?

- So when you think about who you are as a teacher and the relationship with your cooperating teacher etc. what comes to mind?
- How do you negotiate your teaching as a student teacher in your cooperating teacher's classroom?
- Can you talk about a special teaching moment at your practicum site? Tell me more.
- What are some of the main things discussed in student teaching seminar?
- What do you think of these in terms of your teaching?
- How do you feel about the feedback you get from your university supervisor and cooperating teacher before and after your lesson?
- Now, take a moment and think about other courses you have taken or are taking. Can you tell me about specific things that have influenced your teaching and how you see yourself as a teacher?
- What are some of the things that make it hard for you to teach the way you believe is best for students?
- Do you think there is one best way to teach children? Tell me more.
- Do you have anything else to say?

Appendix I

Interview Protocol for Preservice Teachers (III)

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. As I mentioned in the email, the purpose of my research is to understand the reflection and action of preservice teachers enrolled in an early childhood teacher education program. I will be recording this interview. After the interview is transcribed, I will send you the transcript so that you can review and give feedback.

Before we begin, I wanted to reassure you that your identity and information you share will remain confidential and that I am the only person with access to the data. In any oral and/or written presentation of findings I will use a pseudonym.

This interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Before we get started, I wanted to know if you have any questions or concerns. Do I still have your permission to record our conversation?

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

- Last time we talked about your student teaching experience. Can you say more about...?
- Remember the day I visited? Was it a typical day for you?
- Were there any instances you noticed the need to talk with children about respecting differences and other cultures? What did you do?
- Can you share with me whether you had a chance to teach a lesson related to respecting differences and other cultures?
- Do you think there is space to incorporate children's experiences, languages, and cultures in early childhood classrooms? Is it necessary?
- What would it look like? (Ask further questions to understand in what ways and to what extent culture should be incorporated. What if all the children are White

and they speak only English? Do they have a culture? Should different cultures still be talked about?)

- What books have you read that reflect who your students are?
- What do you remember from the multicultural education course? What were some of the highlights and tensions?
- What are some of the readings and activities you remember? Why do you remember them?
- What was it like to have Jennifer as the course instructor? What did you think about a Latina teaching the course? What did you think about a full-time public school teacher teaching the course?
- Do you remember any examples she gave based on her experiences as a teacher? Or any children's books she read for class? What were your thoughts?
- So overall, how do you think this course influenced you as a teacher and the way you teach?
- How do you think this course made you think about who you are as a cultural being?
- Were you able to translate any of your learnings from the multicultural education course into student teaching (in the past and now)?
- Did any of the activities or readings influence the way you see children and/or yourself?
- Are there any good ideas for valuing children's cultures in the classroom that you haven't been able to try out? What stopped you? Would this have changed if you were the head teacher? How?

- What are materials you wish you would have had to better honor students in the classroom?
- What are other courses that have influenced the way you honor children for their culture and who they are in early childhood classrooms?
- Now as you look back, can you tell me anything else about valuing children's culture, language, family, etc. in early childhood classrooms?
- Is there anything else you would like to add or ask?