Teaching for diversity and social justice:
Early-service educators' experiences in culturally and linguistically diverse settings

By

Mayriza Mijares Butsic

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2020

Date of final oral examination: 5/4/2020

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:
Nicole Louie, Chair, Assistant Professor in Curriculum & Instruction
Hala Ghousseini, Associate Professor in Curriculum & Instruction
Mary Klehr, Clinical Faculty and Supervisor in Curriculum & Instruction
Rachelle Winkle-Wagner, Professor in Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Table of Contents

Abstract

Teaching for diversity and social justice:
Early-service educators' experiences in culturally and linguistically diverse settings

by

Mayriza Mijares Butsic

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of Wisconsin-Madison

This phenomenological multi-case study sheds light into what early-service teachers encounter while working in today's multicultural and multilingual learning settings. This year-long study is comprised of interviews with five teachers from four schools in the midwestern United States. Participants were recruited by school district administrators as educators with an expressed commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity. This dissertation offers the voices of teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, demonstrating how they experience navigating cultural and linguistic difference, reflect on learning to teach for diversity and social justice, and share experiences with K-12 practitioners and leaders as they take on teaching and learning with an equity lens.

The theme of teaching for diversity and social justice is presented in Chapter 1, which includes relevant literature, a discussion of the theoretical perspective, research structure and a preview of

findings and contributions of each following chapter. Chapter 2, *Navigating cultural and linguistic difference: A multi-case study of how teachers experience supporting their diverse learners*, is an empirical article that focuses on what teachers encounter while supporting learners from diverse cultural backgrounds and who speak languages other than English. Chapter 3, *Learning to teach for social justice and diversity: One teacher's journey of becoming an educator committed to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students*, is another empirical article that showcases one teacher's journey in learning to teach for diversity and social justice. Chapter 4, *Learning from experience(s): What five educators can teach us about working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings*, is a practitioner piece intended for K-12 education community members. This dissertation highlights how participants experience teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, offering perspectives and considerations for how K-12 educators are prepared in diversity and social justice education. This research demonstrates the tensions of doing this work and portrays its real-life messiness. Stories of educators who are undertaking the work and experiencing some success are especially valuable to help teachers realize that they are not alone, and that shortcomings and setbacks do not mean they do not also have successes that are worth celebrating and building on.

Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to succeed on this journey without the love and encouragement of so many people. I am sincerely grateful for the support which has allowed me to do this work that I hope and believe will contribute to the field of education. As I close out my time at UW-Madison, I am reflecting on just how impactful so many have been during this adventure.

Thank you to my lolo Rening and lola Mansing Javellana, educators themselves, who instilled in me a love and joy for learning from a young age. To my parents, Portia and Rey Mijares, my first teachers who sacrificed so much for their children and opened up doors so we could achieve our goals. To my siblings, Christine Mijares Max and Ritz Mijares -- thank you for taking care of your little sister and always cheering me on! Thank you to my husband, John. I am grateful for your unwavering support (often infused with humor) and for being my rock throughout this endeavor. To my children, Ava and Joshy: Seeing the world through your eyes has helped me to more deeply understand what it means to be a learner and a teacher. Your constant love and positive energy is what sparked me on the most challenging of days. I feel blessed and thankful for you. Colleen and Jim Butsic, thank you for all of your encouragement and support while on this endeavor. For longtime friends Diane Nason, Hannah Houghton, Julie Kulek, and Chrissy King: I cannot express how much I enjoyed our "walk and talks" by phone, and when I was feeling stretched thin for helping me make sense of how to find better balance in life.

I have been fortunate to learn with and from amazing educators along this journey. Thank you especially to the five teachers who so warmly welcomed me into their classrooms for this project. I appreciate your trust in me and for sharing your teaching and learning journeys.

Thank you to those who have been such a positive presence in my life and cultivated my desire to grow and learn as an educator. Joann Edmonds, I recall visiting your classroom after first starting my teacher education program. It is teachers like you who first inspired and motivated me to do this work. Thank you to my colleagues and mentors at the University of Michigan, Maria Coolican and Debi Khasnabis, who helped deepen my understanding about education and fostered my development intellectually, professionally, and personally. I have learned so much from my UW-Madison MC-EA/ESL pre-service education cohort members (now colleagues!). I appreciate your deep and thoughtful reflections both in our Friday seminars and while out in the field. Our future is bright with educators like you at the helm.

I am thankful for my extended academic community at UW-Madison. To professors Gloria Ladson-Billings, Maisha Winn, Carl Grant, and François Tochon: Thank you for sparking my points of inquiry and setting me on this path. There are too many to name here, but I hope that

Jessie Nixon, Mary Zuidema, Emily Schindler, Julie Kallio, Allie Murrow, Yanli Zhu, Tarsha Herelle, Gabriela Martinez, Misha Finney, Cory Roseth, Nicholas Mitchell, Kimberly Oamek, Lauren Heap, Kelly Hayek, Tom Owenby, and Kat Nichols know how much I value them as scholars and friends. Thank you for offering your insights and perspectives during working sessions, and for also staying afterwards just to chat. I enjoyed our collaborative spaces troubleshooting problems of practice, and I am so thankful to you all for uplifting me when elements of this program really challenged me.

My thanks go out to Hala Ghousseini. Thank you for your mentorship and for always offering thought provoking questions that helped me to gain new perspectives in doing this work. Thank you to Rachelle Winkle-Wagner for your thoughtful insights and feedback. You have helped me grow so much as a scholar, and I especially appreciate our chats early on in my program that allowed me to conceptualize and undertake this project. To the one and only Mary Klehr, whose work in the teacher education community has positively impacted so many lives: Thank you for all you do. Words cannot express how thankful I am to have met you during my first semester in Madison, and for all the teaching and learning moments we shared. Our work together has helped me to deepen my thinking around how we support our teachers and culturally and linguistically diverse learners. My sincere thanks goes out to Nicole Louie, whose passion and dedication in equity work was evident from the first time we met. Thank you for modeling how to be an engaged scholar**,** and for your unwavering care and attentiveness.

I am extremely grateful. The love, support and encouragement of so many people have helped me tremendously throughout this journey. Thank you for being my community and for sparking meaning and life to this work. I send love and light to all, and look forward to the next time our paths cross.

Chapter 1

Teaching for diversity and social justice: Acknowledging the voices of early-service teachers

Introduction

Although ink-smudged and crumpled, the words on paper made her smile: *I feel like I matter because I see myself in the books you have in our classroom*. Kaitlyn[1], a third year teacher, began incorporating Friday afternoon exit tickets to her fifth graders as glimpses into their perspectives of learning. As an educator with an expressed commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity, this is just one of the ways that she builds her classroom community.

This dissertation is in response to my experiences as a teacher educator who often hears from educators their appreciation for having discussions around teaching in diverse settings yet express frustration in not knowing how to bring learned knowledge and concepts into application in their classrooms. As a 5-year old English language learner acclimating to new surroundings after immigrating to the United States from the Philippines, I remember many challenges. Fraught with language barriers, I spent my formal education years often feeling invisible, unable to see myself in my classroom or learning community. Through my work focused on teacher education in a multicultural context, I strive to confront complex issues in education that need to be addressed in order to better serve today's learners.

[1] Pseudonyms assigned to participants to protect confidentiality

Today's increasingly diverse schools need teachers who possess the knowledge and ability to support learners of various life experiences and backgrounds. In the United States, the history of institutionalized racism and the impoverishment of minority groups bound with new immigration patterns has brought diversity and inequality to the forefront of educational policy and practice (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). Children who speak languages other than the dominant language and whose backgrounds differ from the majority are now becoming part of the majority in urban areas, urbanized suburbs, and even in rural areas (Nieto, 2006). With increasingly diverse student populations, the teaching force is overwhelmingly White, middle class, and monolingual English speaking thus teachers have an increasing number of students who are culturally, linguistically, and economically different from themselves (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). This divide between a predominantly White, monolingual teaching population and students who do not share their teachers' cultural identities has instigated increased attention to preparing teachers for diverse ethnic and linguistic classroom settings (cited in Bauml, Castro, Field & Morowski, 2016).

Understanding that students of various cultural backgrounds and language capabilities enter the classroom, it is imperative that we think about the ways teachers are prepared to meet the needs of each individual learner in their classrooms. Kaur asks "How do teacher educators go about preparing teachers who might be able and confident to effect real change towards attaining a vision of a more just education, and eventually, society?" (2012, p. 486). While teachers may be committed to the ideals of teaching for diversity and social justice, they may not necessarily know ways of implementing it in the classroom (Bauml et al., 2016). It is crucial that teacher educators support teachers' identity development as curriculum-decision makers, those who should and need to challenge potentially oppressive and marginalizing curriculum (Bauml et al.,

2016). Attempts at meeting the needs of diverse learners is not an easy or simple task to "effect the far-reaching changes at individual or systemic levels that are needed for such a transformative agenda of teacher education" (Kaur, 2012, p. 486). To strengthen our understanding of our work and its capacity to move teachers forward, we must research not only what happens across transitions from pre-service education methods courses and into student teaching, but also into the teaching practice (Ullucci & Battey, 2011).

Purpose

Ladson-Billings' work with practicing teachers in *The Dreamkeepers* represents ways that teachers can systematically incorporate student culture and experiences into the learning setting as knowledge that contributes to the collective learning of the classroom community. She urges for this type of research to continue in order to bridge the theoretical and practical, and more importantly to be looking for stories from classrooms and communities to inform and better our practices as teacher educators (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

This work aims to learn how early-service teachers[2] experience the act of teaching for diversity and social justice. How do they navigate the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms where multiple cultural backgrounds and languages are represented? The purpose of this research endeavor is to offer the voices of teachers on the ground doing this important work as to benefit future educators and students. My intention is to contribute to the existing literature by taking on research that has the capacity to inform the field of teacher education. This study apprises teacher

[2] Certified K-12 educators who are in their third through fifth year of teaching

education programs and practice of specific areas, skills and tools that may be addressed and offered in teacher training that will serve beneficial in the development of socially just and equitable practitioners.

Research Questions

This dissertation study asked, "How do early-service educators who express commitments to teaching for diversity and social justice experience teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings?" Specifically, what (a) successes, (b) challenges or barriers, and (c) resources or supports do they experience?

Relevant literature

The literature showcases the journeys and experiences of teachers in their aims to be equitable, social justice-minded educators as evidenced thematically. These themes were extracted to aid in thinking about the ways teachers experience teaching for diversity and social justice, how they define and enact it, and necessary considerations for educators who take on the important work of teaching today's culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Defining what it means to teach for social justice, cultural differences, and the disconnect between theory and practice are themes that arose from the existing literature. One issue present is the ambiguity around what it means 'to teach for diversity and social justice' and the need for firmer conceptualization of what that entails, as well as what it may look like in practice. We also learned that cultural differences served challenging in efforts to teach students of varying backgrounds and who speak different languages than the teacher. The last theme encountered in

the literature was of the disconnect between theory and practice, and that what is learned in teacher education settings is not offered in practical context to be applied in real-life classrooms.

Ambiguity around what it means to teach for diversity and social justice

The research brings to light the inconsistencies around defining and enacting socially just teaching in practice. Young (2010) worked with eight educators through collaborative inquiry and critical case study to gauge their definitions of and how they enact teaching for diversity and social justice. Young hoped to better understand how teachers and administrators understand and utilize concepts. Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy was offered here as a framework for the concept of 'teaching for diversity and social justice.' With inquiry groups, the participants and researcher discussed Ladson-Billings' (1995) article about culturally relevant pedagogy and constructed a checklist for determining the characteristics that constitute this work. Findings demonstrated that the ways participants defined this work differed from each other. For example, as opposed to the teachers' definitions which highlighted content and practice, cultural relevance to Ladson-Billings was more about establishing a culture of high expectations, creating a community of learners, and critiquing knowledge as a socially constructed concept. Young (2010) noted the inconsistency with which teaching for diversity and social justice is understood and applied in academic research and in the school setting, therefore recommending further inquiry-based dialogue among scholars and practitioners to more consistently investigate what this entails for research and work in classroom settings.

Borrero, Flores, and De La Cruz (2016) also made note of this ambiguity in their research that offered the perspectives of seven teachers of color seeking certification for urban school settings.

Here the researchers used culturally relevant pedagogy as a framework for examining perspectives and experiences as they entered the teaching force with a vision for equity and change. Through interview data from focus group discussions with these teachers who were student teaching or in their first year of teaching, the study aimed to learn how these new teachers envision teaching for social justice and diversity as a part of their practice. What were their successes and challenges in enacting it? The aim of this study was to portray the perspectives of these educators so that others, scholars also committed to equitable teaching and learning, can learn from and with them.

Focus group interviews concentrated on participants' experiences as new teachers of color. Primarily, researchers were interested in learning about their successes and challenges as new teachers with a specific focus on ways they were able to incorporate critical frameworks from their teacher education program into their teaching (Borrero et al, 2016). One concept that emerged from the study was the participants' noting of the absence of a shared understanding of what it means to define and enact teaching for diversity and social justice. Carmen, an English teacher at a comprehensive high school whose teaching philosophy included being attentive to diverse learners, shared her definition and the way that she saw it differing from others:

> One of the things that I've dealt with, and that I'm dealing with, is this very white, liberal understanding of cultural relevance, which is, for example, that I just match the general continental assumed ethnicity of a child to the author so then it's relevant. So if I teach a lot of Asian kids, I should be teaching this book about this Chinese American family's immigrant story. Whereas my idea of culturally relevant pedagogy means that I present theory that allows my students to critically

> examine the ways in which power works around their lives, including the bad experiences— not just some blanket ethnic experience (p. 35).

For Carmen, this work was not only about connecting content to students' lives, but it also was about teaching students critical literacies and theory so that they can reimagine their lives. Having a shared understanding of what it means to teach for social justice was a need expressed by the teachers (Borrero et al., 2016).

Chubbuck (2008) explored the realities experienced by a White female teacher, Sara, committed to socially just teaching in her first year as an English teacher in a diverse urban public school. Sara, a recent graduate of a teacher education program with a specific focus on social justice, was selected for this case study because of her openly expressed commitment to equitable teaching. Chubbuck asked, "What are the experiences of an urban White teacher in her efforts to enact a socially just practice?" Specifically, what were Sara's beliefs about being a socially just teacher? How did these beliefs interact, and what were the effects of these interactions on her transition into teaching? Data for this research comprised of interviews, observations, classroom artifacts, and the participant's reflective journal. Sara shared feelings of inadequacy, of not understanding "the big idea" of teaching for social justice and how it should play out in her classroom. Rather than presenting a "seamless" social justice practice, Sara felt that she was "just pulling things out of the hat" with no "greater purpose, bigger picture," and of feeling "very de-centered" and "being just confusing" to her students (Chubbuck, 2008, p. 317). Sara had a strong belief that there is a "correct" way to do social justice but was unsure of what that entailed. Ladson-Billings (2006) herself offered the notion of doing this work can be so

nebulous because what it entails is widely misconceived by scholars and practitioners alike (cited in Young, 2010).

Encountering cultural differences in learning to teach

The literature demonstrated a theme of cultural differences serving as a challenge when teaching for diversity and social justice. Bauml, Castro, Field and Morowski (2016) gathered the perspectives of pre-service teachers about teaching in urban contexts with the intention to inform future practices in teacher education. They conducted interviews with 20 educators at a large research university surrounded by an urban school district. Participants expressed that the process of learning to teach was inherently challenging enough without the perceived demands placed on teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students (2016). Students shared their perceptions of an inherent gap between their own lives and the lives of their students based on differences of culture and race, noting these differences as a strong barrier to teaching and relating to students of color (2016).

Whipp reported on a study that investigated how 12 graduates from one justice-oriented preparation program were conceptualizing socially just teaching after a year of teaching in an urban school and how their perceived experiences before, during, and after their program influenced their socially just teaching practices (2013). This case study aimed to generate factors that contribute to a teacher's definition and enactment of socially just teaching. How do these teachers describe their practices as socially just teachers? What relationships can be seen among these teachers' orientations toward socially just teaching, self-described teaching practices, and self-reported pre-program, during program, and post-program influences? (2013).

Eight of the twelve teachers came into their preparation program with significant prior cross-cultural experiences, having had interactions and knowledge of cultures different than their own. The teaching of these eight included culturally responsive, consciousness-raising and/or advocacy practices, and when questioned cited the program's social justice theme and specific course content and instructors that challenged their thinking about students and schools. One mentioned readings by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Paulo Freire that pulled him out of his "comfort zone." Another noted that her educational policy course work and readings "really opened my eyes to the inequalities in education" (2013, p. 461). She explained that this view was reinforced by her field experiences in various schools serving different socioeconomic classes where she saw disparities in resources (2013). Francine, for example, tried to "help the whole school give every kid a chance to learn" by changing what she called the school's traditional and conservative reading curriculum which had all students reading the same stories and taking the same spelling test every week. She noted, "a lot of the things we're doing aren't really beneficial to a lot of the kids" (2013, p. 459). She convinced the principal to acquire funds for a new reading curriculum that was designed to individually assess all of the students and provide multicultural reading materials and assignments that would address various student needs (2013).

The other four teachers in contrast grew up with little or no exposure to people of diverse races, ethnicities, languages, or socioeconomic classes. Their first interactions with people of color for these four were during college. These four novice teachers did not offer any examples in their interviews of how they were using their students' cultural "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez et al., 2005) in teaching. One teacher, Megan, did however acknowledge the need to "change and

modify lessons because of how differently children learn" but admitted, "I have a lot to learn about their cultures and backgrounds" (2013, p. 461).

The advocacy found in students with rich cross-cultural experiences before and during the program fused in ways that guided and encouraged their social justice-oriented practices, while serving challenging for the teachers with little to no prior cross-cultural experiences. Knowing that multiple factors need to come together for socially just teaching, Whipp emphasized the notion that teacher educators need to acknowledge and address how they can be more deliberate in their efforts to tap into prior experiences and make connections for all of their teachers. They must explore how they can more strategically tailor tasks, fieldwork, and mentoring in ways that address the various needs and readiness of educators to develop as socially just teachers across the continuum from pre-service teacher training to in-service practices (2013).

Translating conception into practice: A disconnect between what is learned in teacher training and the realities of teaching

Learning to teach is often disconnected from the realities of life wherein racism, cultural struggles, impoverishment, decaying schools and communities, and global forces all play a big part in the lives of today's learners (Apple, 2011, p. 228).

The existing research indicates a gap between what is presented in teacher education settings and the reality of what teachers face when working in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, and Sonu (2010) undertook a multi-case study following recent teacher education graduates and how they enact social justice work. Lucy, Jane, and Allison were chosen because of their articulation of tensions in teaching for social justice and classroom practices. Vignettes of their experiences were offered, incorporating data

collected through interviews and lesson observations. The researchers performed a data analysis across the cases, generating themes through a process of open coding from the collected data such as conceptions formed and supports/hindrances they faced (2010). The teachers reported feeling unclear of how they were teaching for social justice, with Jane recognizing a disconnect between the messages she received in her teacher education preparation in regards to social justice and her actual practice (2010). Jane shared that what she had come to learn about teaching was very much different from what she encountered teaching in her actual classroom. The authors suggest that teachers enter a "complex enterprise wrought with tensions, conflicts, and contradictions when they aim to translate conceptions into viable pedagogy" (2010, p. 244).

McDonough (2009) explored the ways in which Jaclyn, a White first-year teacher, enacted teaching for social justice and diversity in the context of her fifth grade classroom. Using participant observation and open-ended interviewing, McDonough's ethnographic case study specifically drew on one classroom teacher's narrative, providing an intimate view of the ways in which meaning was made in her culturally and linguistically diverse classroom community. While the majority of students were children of color, the majority of teachers and administrators in Jaclyn's school were White.

Jaclyn expressed growth and learning of certain issues, sharing her experience of a teacher education course that made her "consciously and for long periods of time think about race and identity" (2009). She gained an awareness of her choices as an educator with the help of her teacher training experiences, but yet remained uncertain about what actions she might be able to take to initiate transformative spaces and changes. In essence, she encountered a disconnect

between how she imagined schools to function and the reality of work in diverse school settings (2009). McDonough urged for more research focused on the practices of classroom teachers, as she believes that by trying to look at the efforts of teachers, we will better learn how to support them as they engage in advocacy practices and transformative change (2009).

Ladson-Billings (2001) discussed the disconnect between what goes on in teacher education settings and in our K-12 schools, noting, "there is a wide gulf of wanting to be a good teacher and actually becoming one" (p. 8). In *Crossing over to Canaan,* Ladson-Billings opens with findings from a Public Agenda report's notion of teachers believing that "they could have used far more preparation for the realities and challenges they inevitably had to confront when running real-world classrooms (cited in Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 2). This research undertook a qualitative, year-long ethnographic study of eight teachers completing an experiential teacher accreditation model called Teach for Diversity (TFD), a 15-month graduate level elementary certification program with a mission to prepare teachers to work in diverse learning environments (2001).

Ladson-Billings offered the voices and narratives of what she claims is an undervalued source, those of novice teachers (2001). She describes how they negotiated their first year as teachers during their final student teaching semester, reporting their struggles to translate complex social issues into meaningful curriculum (2001). While social justice concepts and issues may have been raised in teacher education training, they were often addressed in abstract rather than concrete and practical means (2001). Ladson-Billings claims the field of teacher education as one

driven by politics and regulated by state legislatures, spaces where educators are engaged in a sequence of learning that too often have little relation to the actual work of teaching (2001).

The need for new research in teacher training: Acknowledging the voices of early-service teachers

The ambiguity around what it means 'to teach for diversity and social justice' and the need for firmer conceptualization of what that entails was a common theme encountered in the literature. This is evidenced by teachers in the study by Borrero and colleagues who expressed a desire and necessity for having shared understandings of what it means to teach for social justice (Borrero et al., 2016). Cultural and language differences between the teacher and students rendered a challenge in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. The literature speaks of strenuous demands that are placed on educators who teach students of varying cultural backgrounds and who speak different languages than them. The existing research also revealed a disconnect between what was learned in teacher education and the realities of teaching in today's classrooms. This discrepancy was substantiated in cases like Jane's, where she shared that what she had come to learn about teaching was very much different from what she encountered teaching in her actual classroom (Agarwal et al, 2010). The literature highlighted these three themes, urging for new research that has the capability to inform how teachers are trained in diversity and social justice education.

This work centers the voices and experiences of teachers. Their perspectives provide up-close viewpoints of what it entails to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. The themes from the existing literature indicate three areas of focus that helped guide my inquiry and

situate my gaze as a researcher. I aim to contribute to the field and investigate intently how teachers experience 'teaching for diversity and social justice', how they navigate cultural difference/barriers, and what their experiences as teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students are so that we can make stronger connections to teacher training. What do practicing teachers encounter and face in these settings? This is an opportunity to learn from them as the situations, issues, and ideas that they share will offer teacher educators lenses with which to view and assess how we currently structure teacher training. Moreover, these findings have led me specifically to the question of how educators who express commitments to teaching for diversity and social justice experience teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. More precisely, what successes, challenges/barriers, and supports do they experience? While not an outright apparent theme found in the existing research, I was also interested in learning about the types of supports that teachers received and is the reason for why it was a specific point of my inquiry. Research undertaken by Whipp (2013) was one study in the literature that addressed the notion of resources and supports available to teachers. Participants spoke of the advantages of mentors, collaboration with co-workers, crediting "phenomenal" administrators and colleagues for supporting them at times when they felt "clueless." While this was mentioned in the analysis, specific details were not offered in regards to what was appreciated and desired in context with teaching and learning.

The literature taken up here provided stories of teachers to inform teacher education, with many of the voices from those of pre-service or novice first-year teachers. It is significant to note that the existing literature offered here is mostly limited to the voices of teachers just beginning their practice. As Felicia (Borrero et al., 2016) noted of her first year of teaching "We all over-

exhausted ourselves, we all overworked ourselves, we didn't take care of ourselves, and that has become the understanding of 'that's what you do as a social justice educator,'" (p. 32). Teachers in her group continually expressed and reflected on their newness in the profession. It was not explicitly talked about as an excuse or a barrier to the understanding and enactment of culturally relevant pedagogy, but as of a reality of their identities as teachers. Especially during the first years, one may be inundated with learning the ropes, understanding the school culture, rules and regulations. One's first year in the teaching profession is a time that is customarily identified as demanding, if not overwhelming (Agarwal et al., 2010). Many are just happy to survive the first year and are unable to think further than surviving the day-to-day assignments of organizing and managing a classroom and getting paperwork completed for administration (Katz, 1995).

As such, new research to inform teacher education needs to be enacted that includes the voices of early-service teachers. This research offers the voices of educators while in their third through fifth year of teaching, offering insights into what they encounter in the classroom and in connection to their own teacher education experiences just a few years prior. Few studies have looked at the development of socially just teachers over time or attempted to link particular elements of a teacher education program to the enactment of socially just teaching practices (Whipp, 2013). 'Up close' perspectives will prove insightful and this research with early-service teachers will have much to contribute to the field. At this point in their career they will have had some experience teaching and can talk about and demonstrate the ways in which issues of diversity have been playing out in their school community. Research of early-service educators' experiences of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings can offer perspectives into

how we as teacher educators may better structure teacher education programming so it is responsive to today's teachers and learners.

A phenomenological perspective on teaching

Phenomenology is rooted in philosophy, drawing on the work of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Bourdieu, and Habermas. There is not just one single doctrine in phenomenology; rather it can be viewed as a movement united by a common core (Aspers, 2009). This framework asserts that understanding is based fundamentally on practices of the everyday lifeworld, serving as a basis of interpretation and the "stepping stone" to knowledge (Heidegger, 1927/1996). Its philosophical underpinnings rely on the lived experiences of individuals and how they have both subjective experiences of a phenomenon and objective experiences of something in common with other people (Creswell, 2013).

Intentionality is a principal theme of phenomenology, thus the salient structure of experience. Much of phenomenology proceeds as the study of different aspects of intentionality (Moustakas, 1994). There exists no dichotomy of subject and object, as this mindset flows naturally from the intentionality of consciousness. The reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual. The basic intentional structure of consciousness, we find in reflection or analysis, involves further forms of experience. Thus, phenomenology develops a complex account of awareness: awareness of one's own experience, the self in different roles, purpose or intention in action, linguistic activity, and social interactions (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological attitude attempts to maintain a precarious balance between an immediate grasping of meaning as experienced in everyday living and reflection (van Manen, 1997).

"Phenomenology shows us what various ranges of human experiences are possible, what worlds people inhabit, how these experiences may be described, and how language (if we give it its full value) has powers to disclose the worlds in which we dwell as fathers, mothers, teachers, students, and so forth" (van Manen, 1997, p. 48).

Here I use a phenomenological framework that situates who I am as a researcher and what I aim to do in my work. Researchers who take on a phenomenological frame of thought use their research as a means to search for understanding of a phenomenon through a focus on lived experiences. This perspective allows me as the researcher to consider points of view and offer the voices of teachers in order to gain a better understanding of what it means to teach for diversity and social justice. It is a "disciplined, rigorous effort to understand experience profoundly and authentically" (Pinar et al., 2004, p. 405). As I am interested in gaining new perspectives to inform diversity and social justice teacher education practices, this framework is fundamental to my work. I center the voices of early-service teachers and their experiences while teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. Here, my goal is to investigate the connection of the individual experiences of early-service teachers with the reality of teaching in today's culturally and linguistically diverse settings.

This idea of the phenomenological can serve as a crucial ingredient of transformative pedagogy because it provokes a change in the manner in which educators think and act (Pinar et al., 2004). This is in agreement with my work as I seek to gather meaning from educators' experiences about what it entails to teach for diversity and social justice, thus informing the field of teacher education. Phenomenology with its goal to reveal that which is unknown allows me to gain and offer perspectives of educators in the process of learning and teaching with their students

(Rafferty, 2011). What do these early-service teachers' experiences tell us about the act of teaching in today's globalized society? A phenomenon, this act of teaching, is a suitable starting point for inquiry. We can discern the various components of what it means to teach for diversity and social justice and understand the essences of the phenomenon in order to inform the field of teacher education.

While there are varying schools of phenomenology, I chose to use Husserl's perspective of empirical transcendental phenomenological thought which is concerned with the '*whatness*' of a thing, regarding logical thinking and intuition as the means of reaching understanding of a phenomenon. In my role as a researcher, I aim to learn more about the phenomenon of 'teaching for diversity and social justice', *what* it is and *what* it entails through the lenses of the teachers doing the work. This research investigating how early-service educators experience teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms is grounded in empirical transcendental phenomenological inquiry. This approach using systematic procedures is consistent with the philosophical view of balancing both the objective and subjective approaches to knowledge and detailed data analysis steps (Moustakas, 1994). This approach is focused on the experiences of participants and less on the interpretations of the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl envisioned phenomenology as a task which describes the lived world through the lens of a detached observer. Here, the phenomenon of interest is the act of 'teaching for diversity and social justice' with a focus on the experiences of early-service teachers taking part in this phenomenon.

Transcendental means "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994). As it concerns the 'whatness' of a thing, it takes into account logical thought and intuition as the means of coming to a better understanding of a certain phenomenon. This

framework required that I take part in 'bracketing' (Moustakas, 1994) as a way to set aside my own assumptions and biases as an immigrant English learner, former teacher, and current teacher educator and researcher and to be wholly focused on the experiences of the participants. The purpose of this reflection is to become aware of one's own biases and assumptions in order to bracket them, or set them aside, and to be able to engage with the experience without any preconceived notions about what will be found in the inquiry. This process serves as a protection from researchers imposing their assumptions or biases on the study (Laverty, 2003). The intention of utilizing this framework was to be able to offer fresh and new perspectives while centering the voices and experiences of teachers doing this work.

In undertaking a transcendental phenomenological project, it is worthwhile to note the challenge of bracketing and the ability to truly separate out what is already learned and known in this realm of education. It is hard to set aside the work that has already taken place in regards to teaching for diversity and social justice. Despite this realization, I continued to utilize a transcendental lens with the intention to showcase teachers' perspectives and experience in the field. As the process of bracketing proved challenging in my role as researcher, I realized that if I were to take on this type of research again I may incorporate a hermeneutical phenomenological lens. Similar to the transcendental approach, hermeneutic phenomenology has been used widely by researchers as a method towards understanding lived experiences and articulating the reflective character of those experiences. It may be appropriate to seek out a hermeneutical perspective in this type of work; from this perspective, meaning is not directly given to us, as is the belief of transcendental work, but may require a hermeneutic passage to come to new knowledge. Claiming that to be human was to interpret, Heidegger (1927/1962) stressed that every encounter involves an interpretation influenced by an individual's background or

historicality. Polkinghorne (1983) described this hermeneutic interpretive process as focused on historical meanings of experience as well as the development and cumulative effects at both individual and social levels. This process is obtained via a hermeneutic circle which moves from parts of an experience to the whole of the experience, and back and forth repeatedly to increase the depth of engagement with and understanding of the phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 1983).

It is interesting to note that while the focus and outcomes of the research, including data collection, subject selection, and the understanding of the lived experience may be similar, the position of the researcher, the process of data analysis, and the issues of rigor or credibility can provide striking contrasts between these methodologies (Laverty, 2003). Specifically, the biases and assumptions of the researcher are not bracketed or set aside in hermeneutic phenomenology, but rather are embedded and essential to an interpretive process. "The researcher is called, on an ongoing basis, to give considerable thought to their own experience and to explicitly claim the ways in which their position or experience relates to the issues being researched" (Laverty, 2003). The explicit recognition of assumptions and influences as contributing to the research process in hermeneutic phenomenology is in contrast to the naming and then bracketing of bias or assumptions in transcendental research (Laverty, 2003). As this more aligns in the ways that I interacted with participants, it is evident that a hermeneutical lens is more aligned with future work that may be undertaken in this breadth of inquiry.

Despite these potential limitations, the choice to proceed in utilizing a transcendental lens was with my intention to focus on the participants' experiences and feelings in a descriptive manner. The decision to use a transcendental approach allowed me to highlight the sentiments expressed by the teachers and to center their voices. Those who align themselves with this research design share a devotion to experiences as a way to obtain comprehensive descriptions. This research

design allowed me to gather meanings from several individuals who have experienced the phenomenon in order to arrive at a better understanding of what it means to 'teach for diversity and social justice.' It is important to understand common experiences in order to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). In this way, this research design aligned well to achieve my research purpose and objectives. Acknowledging that our schools can be dynamic and fluid, we must gain 'fresh eyes' in the field. In the context of their classrooms, how do today's teachers experience the work of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students? How do they traverse cultural and language barriers? In moving this work forward, we must learn with and from teachers.

Methods

To reiterate, my original research question was "How do early-service educators who express commitments to teaching for diversity and social justice experience teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms?" More specifically, what (a) successes, (b) challenges or barriers, and (c) resources or supports do they experience?

A phenomenological case study design with purposeful sampling offers perspectives from different sources, providing in-depth understanding and ability to identify and note themes across the cases (Creswell, 2013). These in-depth and extensive pieces of data provide valuable insight into what teachers face in diverse classroom settings. Here I define a "case" as 'an educator who has expressed a commitment to teaching for diversity and social justice who is in their third through fifth year of teaching'. This study used a longitudinal design to build and strengthen

relationships, providing more accurate understandings through data collected over the course of an entire academic school year.

Participants and field sites

The study utilized a year-long multi-case study of early service K-12 teachers recruited through community nomination (Foster, 1997). Educators were nominated by administrators as practitioners who expressed a commitment to teaching for diversity and social justice. Grounded in phenomenological perspective and inquiry, it was essential to recruit a group of individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Thus, they were all classroom teachers involved in the act of 'teaching for diversity and social justice.' I aimed to recruit teachers who teach different levels (elementary, middle, and high school) and content areas to offer broader perspectives of what teachers face in various realms of the profession. In order to offer broad perspectives, my intent was to recruit participants who are diverse in terms of gender and cultural backgrounds. The determination of the five chosen participants was decided on how well their practice seemed to reflect administrators' impressions of their work as socially just educators and how reflective they were about their practice in the first initial interview. All five teachers who ultimately took part in this research identified as white, English-speaking females. The field sites were K-12 classrooms from four different schools in the midwestern United States with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations.

Data Collection

In phenomenological research, data collection typically involves interviewing individuals who experience the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). In this phenomenological case study design,

interviews, observations, and artifact documents served as data points to truly get a sense of teachers' experiences. There were five cycles of data collection. For each of these cycles, each participant was interviewed, observed and had an opportunity to provide relevant artifacts.

Interviews. Phenomenological inquiry generally offers two broad questions: What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon? (Creswell, 2013). These are the types of questions that were central in structuring my interview protocol. In accordance with the phenomenological perspective that aims to learn deeply about the lived experience, teachers were offered semi-structured, open-ended questions that allowed them to delve deeply into what they encounter as teachers in diverse classrooms [See Appendix A for Interview Protocol]. How do these teachers teach for diversity and social justice? What are their perceptions of enacting this practice? How do they feel their teacher education program prepared them to work in diverse classrooms, specifically linking teacher education experiences to practice. What types of supports work and are requested from these teachers? What can we learn from those supports about how teacher education could be improved?

These interviews were scheduled throughout the duration of the academic school year and took place roughly during the months of September, November, January, March, and May during the 2018-2019 academic year. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their answers to provide rich detail regarding their experiences in schools. Interview protocol and questions were provided in advance to enable each participant to have sufficient time to prepare and reflect upon prior experiences. The final interview enabled participants to revisit previous perspectives and reflect upon their experiences throughout the entire year. Each of these interviews explored

participants' perspectives of situations observed by the researcher during classroom observations. In total there were 25 interviews that lasted anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes in length. Interviews served as the primary source of data in this research, whereas classroom observations and artifacts were meant to solely to offer the researcher insights into the teachers' experiences and practices and served as talking points for the interviews.

Classroom Observations. Phenomenological research centers the experiences of the participants. In order for me as the research to gain a deeper sense of understanding of teachers' experiences and sentiments, I also observed each participant teaching on four separate occasions during the school year on the same day just prior to a scheduled interview. These visits were intentionally spread out equally throughout the duration of the academic school year and took place roughly during the months of November, January, March, and May. The field notes I took during the observations served only to make note of teachers' actions in the context of teaching and learning in their classroom, thus providing deepened understandings from the interviews of what they were experiencing as teachers committed to diversity and social justice education.

Artifacts: Reflective journals, Lesson plans, and Student work. Participants were also provided a reflective journal for the duration of the year, in which they were able to record significant events, issues, and questions that came up in regards to supporting their culturally and linguistically diverse settings. The journal excerpts reflected the participant's encounters and experiences related to meeting the needs of the diverse learners in the classroom. Excerpts served as talking points during interviews to refresh and spark reflection regarding occurrences or situations that took place in the time since the prior interview. What challenges were

encountered? How knowledgeable and confident did the teacher feel in addressing certain issues? Lesson plans and student work were at times offered during interviews to also serve as opportunities to allow participants to share out their experiences of what teaching for diversity and social justice entailed for them throughout that school year.

Data Analysis

My approach to data analysis in this transcendental phenomenological research was quite structured. Ensuring that I as the researcher first take part in *epoche* before the data analysis, it was imperative that I implement systematic procedures that moved from narrow units of analysis shared by the participants (ie significant statements) to broader meaning units, and then on to detailed descriptions that allowed me to summarize 'what' the individuals experienced and 'how' they experienced it (Creswell, 2013). The 'how' was captured through descriptors of emotions and feelings threaded through the following chapters that participants expressed of undertaking this work.

I identified and highlighted statements provided by participants from the transcripts, clustered them into meaning units and then eventually themes. The first step of my analysis entailed the process of *horizontalization*. Moustakas (1994) describes the horizon as "the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinct character" (p. 95). Here, specific statements were identified from the transcripts that described information about the participants' experiences. The statements served as the horizons or textural meanings (Creswell, 2013). I carefully examined significant statements, then clustered the statements into themes, or meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). Data analysis in this design included the act of *reduction*, reducing

information to significant statements or quotes and then combining the statements into themes. As I identified each horizon and its textural qualities, my aim was to understand better the experience of what it means to teach for diversity and social justice (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Here I utilized 'in vivo' coding (Manning, 2017) wherein I assigned a label, or code, to a section of data from the interview transcript. These were short words and phrases uttered by participants from the interview transcripts.

An issue in utilizing the transcendental approach was encountered in my efforts to 'bracket' prior knowledge. In my attempts to 'bracket', I recorded journal memos for each interview and captured the perceptions and feelings of participants through the specific words and experiences they shared during the site visits. However, with the existence of prior studies and approaches that have explained the slipperiness and tensions of teaching and learning to teach for social justice, I was left wondering if in this work can one really know something as if for the first time and truly set aside one's own prior knowledge. Contrary to my initial goal of intentionally bracketing, I felt that my experiences as a student, teacher, and teacher educator may have helped me to better make sense of what teachers shared. In reflection, the process became an attempt to bridge transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology as it more aligned with my research framework and methodology.

My intention was to keep participants' words and sentiments the focus of this work so that readers gain deeper understandings of what teaching for diversity and social justice entail. In the attempt to stay true to the transcendental phenomenological approach in data analysis, I aimed to uphold the centering of teachers' voices. The initial research questions about teachers' "successes, challenges/barriers, and supports" served as a grounding point in this work and were designed to get at the 'whatness' of the experience of teaching and learning to teach for

diversity and social justice. I spent a long time with the data and trying to understand what teachers were saying. When reading over the transcripts, guided by the words uttered from the participants, key words and ideas from the interview data were identified as the themes presented in the following chapter Findings sections.

Researcher Positionality

"Look upon yourself and ask 'What are you doing to improve the human condition? How do you challenge yourself to make a contribution to better the world in which you live? There is work everywhere. There is need in every direction. Humanity and the entire earth require your attention. When you learn, teach.'"

-Guy Johnson, Maya Angelou's son, speaking at her memorial (Pasque & Salazar Pérez, 2015, p. 164)

My life experiences have shaped who I am as a researcher, what I offer, and what I hope to achieve through this work. As a 5-year old English language learner acclimating to new surroundings after immigrating to the United States from the Philippines, I remember the challenges of finding my place in the world. My parents came to this country with their suitcases and what money they had in their pockets. I recall quizzical looks from others when we spoke our native language, a dialect of Tagalog, an almost unheard-of language around metro Detroit. My first several years of school were challenging fraught with language barriers, and I spent my formal education experience feeling invisible, unable to see myself in my classroom or learning community.

As a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction focused on teacher education in a multicultural context, I strive to step outside my comfort zone and confront complex issues in

education that need to be addressed in order to better serve today's learners. These are the experiences that have led me to who I am and who I strive to be through my research, which is an *agent of change*. I am inspired to investigate ways in which I can provide rich experiences for our teachers so that they feel knowledgeable and confident to tackle the situations that they will encounter when working with linguistically and culturally diverse students.

This leads me to where I am today and the concern I feel when teachers committed to diversity and social justice education share their worries with me of feeling unprepared or able to work in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. In our schools every day are students who need us. They need and deserve educators who can support, encourage, and advocate for them. There is no time to waste. As teacher educators we must ensure that we go beyond having conversations around diversity and social justice and allow our teachers to think about how issues around culture and race may play out in their own classrooms. What can we learn from teachers doing this work? What considerations are there to be aware of in designing teacher training? The answers I hope to share with educators so they can cultivate and nurture their students' desire to learn.

Chapter Overview

A unified thread through the following three papers in this dissertation is teacher voice. In the following chapters, I address different aspects of teachers' experiences as educators committed to teaching for social justice and diversity. To align with the phenomenological framework of focusing on experiences around the act of teaching for diversity and social justice, efforts were made to focus on what the teachers in the study experienced. My intention was to foreground and

center their subjective experiences, not their students. This work is more emotive than analytic. It is not of teachers narrating just what has happened in their classrooms, but rather highlights the emotions and feelings that surfaced for them in undertaking this work. I intentionally designed this research to speak to teachers' experiences, in part because I feel that teachers' voices really matter and are often missing from studies about teaching diverse students.

Chapter 2, *Navigating cultural and linguistic difference*: *A multi-case study of how teachers experience supporting their diverse learners,* offers the experiences of five K-12 teachers as they aimed to support learners from various cultural backgrounds and who speak languages other than English. Chapter 3, *Learning to teach for social justice and diversity: One teacher's journey of becoming an educator committed to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students,* features the voice of third-grade teacher Alison as she shares her experiences of how she has come to be an educator with a commitment to equitable teaching and learning. Chapter 4, *Learning from experience(s): What five educators teach us about how we train teachers to work in culturally and linguistically diverse settings*, is a practitioner piece intended for K-12 education community members.

Chapter 2

Navigating cultural and linguistic difference: A multi-case study of how teachers experience supporting their diverse learners

The second chapter, *Navigating cultural and linguistic difference*: *A multi-case study of how teachers experience supporting their diverse learners*, is an empirical article that focuses on what teachers encounter while supporting learners from diverse cultural backgrounds and who speak languages other than English. Here I utilize a phenomenological case study analysis of five K-12

educators to delve deeply into what today's teachers encounter in teaching and learning spaces in classrooms where students are representative of different cultural backgrounds and linguistic capabilities.

Participants shared the desire for their culturally and linguistically diverse students to feel safe, included, and valued. They noted their efforts to bring in students' strengths into learning spaces. Participants also indicated the challenges around relatability, and that their own life experiences and backgrounds made it challenging to connect with members of the school community who come from different cultural backgrounds or speak languages other than English. This chapter contributes to the field of teacher education as it sheds light into the day-to-day aspects of teaching and the inherent messiness and tensions that teachers shared were part of this work. This study can then also inform teacher education programs of specific areas to be addressed and attentive to so that teacher preparation opportunities are responsive to the realities of today's classroom settings.

Chapter 3

Learning to teach for social justice and diversity: One teacher's journey of becoming an educator committed to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students

Chapter 3 presents another empirical article that showcases one teacher's journey in learning to teach for diversity and social justice. While Chapter 2 included perspectives of all five study participants, here I highlight the experiences of third-grade teacher, Alison. From my very first interview with her, I felt it remarkable how deeply she reflected not just on her current classroom experiences, but how effortlessly she was able to tie prior life and learning experiences as foundational to her work as an educator. Revisiting the components of teacher identity formation

in the previously presented literature propelled me to focus my lens here on the act of 'learning to teach for diversity and social justice.' What can we learn from Alison's experiences and insights to guide our thinking about preparing one to teach in diverse settings?

Through participant interviews over the course of an academic school year, Alison shared the various sentiments and emotions she felt in the process of 'learning to teach for diversity and social justice.' This paper is important because it sheds light on her experiences in learning to do this work, and allows us to better understand the complexities of learning to teach. While similar experiences and themes arose in the Findings, there were components that posed as tensions. Presented themes demonstrated the ways that Alison felt both supported her development as an educator with an expressed commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity, and also served as impediments. She shared that some experiences allowed her to gain knowledge and perspectives, while others have served as a hindrance which stunted her development and challenged her practices and beliefs. This work demonstrates the value of centering teachers' voices and what teacher educators can learn from them in regards to teacher training practices and programming.

Chapter 4

Learning from experience(s): What five educators can teach us about working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings

There is an urgent matter of training educators to support and advocate for students in today's increasingly diverse classrooms. Research that can inform teacher education practices is necessary as to ensure that educators possess the knowledge and skills to support students of

diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Research in education is generally written for an academic audience, and a large problem lies in the trend that academic researchers tend to write for each other rather than for practitioners or policymakers (Sleeter, 2014). Here, participants share their experiences with K-12 practitioners and leaders as they take on teaching and learning with an equity lens. This work acknowledges what teachers have encountered while supporting their diverse learners and provides insights and considerations for teacher education practices and programming. Acknowledging that research is typically written for an academic audience and not generally accessible to practitioners or policymakers, this last chapter is a practitioner piece intended for K-12 education community members. This article highlights how participants navigated cultural and linguistic difference, providing perspectives of teachers doing this work and offering considerations for how we prepare K-12 educators in diversity and social justice education.

The piece opens with a story about Amy, a former student teacher who I supervised in her teacher education program before she set out to teach in a large urban midwestern city. It is interactions with teachers such as Amy that have served as the impetus of this work. This story sets up the notion of educators wanting to challenge inequalities and drive social change through their work but who feel unprepared and discouraged to do just that. This piece centers the feelings of five teachers as they navigated cultural and linguistic differences in teaching and learning spaces, and the ways in which they felt at times inadequate, frustrated, successful, and anxious.

The emotions described through stories from teachers such as Alison and Kaitlyn help readers understand what Amy might have felt and the challenges she faced that led her to leave teaching. We gain a greater sense of what teachers on the ground day in and day out with their students encounter. From here, we recognize the wide range of emotions and feelings that teachers experience while supporting their culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This is an opportune time to acknowledge what they have encountered and how we as teacher educators might consider the design and content of future training and professional development opportunities.

Contributions

The tensions and struggles that are embedded in the data from this study demonstrate that teaching and learning to teach in culturally responsive ways is not easy. It is difficult, messy and often fraught with tensions. While texts such as the aforementioned *Dreamkeepers* offer ways that this type of teaching goes well, here I am offering evidence of some of the conflicts and difficulties in practice.

This work can contribute in various ways to the field of education. For our pre-service and in-service teachers, we acknowledge that there is no tried and true method when it comes to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This research demonstrates the various contrasts of doing this work, both the heartening and disheartening aspects of being a teacher working for diversity and social justice. For teacher educators, it is worthwhile to note that there can be no script or guideline to adhere to when it comes to educating those who choose to work in this field. We realize the inherent messiness of this work.

As our schools are dynamic and fluid, it is imperative that we gain 'fresh eyes' in the field. This qualitative phenomenological multi-case study analysis contributes to the field of teacher education because it offers perspectives into what teachers encounter working in diverse settings. Specifically, this research allows us to gain insights into how today's teachers experience working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. What do they encounter as educators supporting learners of different cultural backgrounds and those who speak other languages than English? In their classrooms how do educators traverse cultural and language barriers? How do their experiences help us as teacher educators bridge the concepts of teaching for diversity and inform us of circumstances and needs in our schools? From there, how can we move forward in designing teacher training spaces that meet the needs of our diverse learners? The answers I hope to impart on future educational communities so they can cultivate and nurture their students' desire to learn. We must make stronger connections between what is learned in teacher education and the realities of teaching. We can learn so much from acknowledging the voices of teachers. What can we learn from these five educators who are committed to supporting and advocating for their culturally and linguistically diverse students?

Chapter 2

Navigating cultural and linguistic difference: A multi-case study of how teachers experience supporting their diverse learners

Abstract

This chapter investigates what early service educators experience as they navigate teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. I utilize a phenomenological case study analysis of five K-12 educators to delve deeply into what today's teachers encounter in teaching and learning spaces in classrooms where students are representative of different cultural backgrounds and linguistic capabilities. Participants shared the desire for their culturally and linguistically diverse students to feel safe, included, and valued. They noted their efforts to bring in students' strengths into learning spaces. Participants also indicated the challenges around relatability, and that their own life experiences and backgrounds made it challenging to connect with members of the school community who come from different cultural backgrounds or speak languages other than English. This study can inform teacher education programs of specific areas, skills and tools that may be addressed and offered in teacher training that will serve beneficial in the development of equitable, socially just practitioners. This study also demonstrates that teaching in culturally responsive ways is not easy and cannot be scripted. It is often difficult, messy and fraught with tensions. While texts such as Gloria Ladson-Billngs' *Dreamkeepers* offer ways that this type of teaching goes well, here I offer evidence of some of the conflicts and difficulties in practice. Portrayals of the real life messiness of the work is necessary so that teachers understand what they are taking on and can develop tools and networks that can help them. It also allows

teachers to realize that they are not alone, and that shortcomings in doing this work does not mean that there are not also many successes that are worth celebrating and building on.

Introduction

Today's increasingly diverse schools need teachers who possess the knowledge and ability to support learners of various life experiences and backgrounds. The more fluid boundaries separating different regions and technological developments have resulted in mass exodus of people all over the world thus transforming the demographic makeup of our schools (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). The United States' historical narrative of minority group impoverishment and institutionalized racism in complement with recent immigration patterns has instigated a focus on diversity and equity to the forefront of policy and practice in education (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). In urban, suburban, and rural areas, students of various cultural backgrounds and who speak languages other than English are now becoming part of the majority (Nieto, 2006). With increasingly diverse school populations, an increasing number of students are culturally, linguistically, and economically different from their teachers as the teaching force is overwhelmingly made up of White, middle class, monolingual English speakers (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). According to Ladson-Billings (2001) the evident contrast of the predominantly White monolingual teachers and students with various different cultural identities has sparked greater attention to how teachers are trained for diverse ethnic and linguistic classroom settings (cited in Bauml, Castro, Field & Morowski, 2016).

Understanding that students of various cultural backgrounds and language capabilities enter the classroom, it is imperative that we think about the ways teachers are prepared to meet the needs of each individual learner in their classrooms. How do teacher educators[3] prepare teachers who

[3] A teacher educator is one who instructs and mentors teachers, in the context of both pre-service and in-service training spaces

are able and confident to effect change, attaining a vision of a more just education and society? It is imperative that teacher training practices and programming are attentive to how one's teacher identity is developed as a curriculum-decision maker, as one who should and needs to challenge potentially oppressive and marginalizing curriculum (Bauml et al., 2016). In order to strengthen our understanding of teacher education work and its capacity to propel teachers forward, it is necessary that we research what happens across transitions from coursework, to student teaching, and into one's teaching practice (Ullucci & Battey, 2011).

This work asks, "How do early-service educators who are committed to teaching for diversity and social justice navigate cultural and linguistic differences?" My aim is to contribute to existing literature by taking on research that has the capacity to inform the field of teacher training. This study shows how early-service teachers[4] encounter the act of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. How do they navigate the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms where multiple cultures and languages are represented? This study can inform teacher education programs of specific areas, skills and tools that may be addressed and offered in teacher training that will serve beneficial in the development of equitable, socially just practitioners. This research endeavor offers the voices of teachers on the ground doing this important work as to benefit future educators and students.

In the review of relevant literature, I begin by exploring existing research that examines teachers' perspectives of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. These bodies of work showcase the journeys and experiences in educational spaces around the theme of equitable

[4] Certified K-12 educators who are in their third through fifth year of teaching

teaching and learning, especially around cultural and linguistic differences. The research also elucidates the need for continued research in this area with considerations for a focus on ways teachers are trained to teach for diversity and social justice education.

Related literature

Teachers' perspectives of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms

One theme evident in the literature is how teachers experience challenge around supporting their culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Work by Bauml, Castro, Field and Morowski (2016) demonstrates how novice teachers experienced hurdles when instructing students who come from another cultural background than themselves or speak a language other than English. Bauml and the team of researchers gathered the perspectives of pre-service teachers about teaching in urban contexts with the intention to inform future practices in teacher education. They conducted interviews with 20 pre-service teachers in a teacher preparation program at State University, a large research university surrounded by an urban school district. Typical of many university-based pre-service teacher programs and representative of student demographics at State, the majority of the participants (14) were White females but also included two White males, one Latino male and one Latina female, one African American female, and one female who identified herself as African American and White. At the time of the interviews, all participants were enrolled in or had recently completed teacher education coursework required for graduation and had also completed at least one semester of field experience in conjunction with teacher education courses. Participants expressed that the process of learning to teach was inherently challenging enough without the perceived demands placed on teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students (2016). Participants shared their perceptions of an inherent

gap between their own lives and the lives of their students based on differences of culture and race, noting these differences as “a strong barrier to teaching and relating to students of color” (2016).

Research by Shady (2014) exhibits the challenge of navigating school spaces and lack of connections with diverse students. Shady undertook an authentic ethnographic study focused on improving teaching and learning of science in a low performing eighth grade class. As an Egyptian immigrant science teacher of bi-racial background, he shared his teaching experiences during one school year in a diverse urban intermediate school in the northeast region of the United States. He perceived that his task was to “fill” students with curriculum content. He shared his lack of awareness of the socio-historical construct of race in the United States, and how it plays a role in structuring students’ lived experiences. He described his teaching experience in his class as “difficult”, wherein students rejected his teaching style and found his cultural practices to be disrespectful. Students voiced their concerns that their class felt lost due to his instructor-focused instruction, and he lamented that failure to connect with students became almost a daily occurrence.

Upon learning of cogenerative dialogue, *cogen*, (Tobin, 2006), through his doctoral program in urban education, Shady decided to implement it as a tool to improve teaching and learning in urban settings. He incorporated whole class, small group, and one-on-one *cogen* as a tool to narrow the cultural gap between the students and himself. The participants shared the responsibility not only for what happened in the *cogen*, but also for the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom. *Cogen* allowed Shady and his students to engage in a collaborative effort to identify and implement positive changes in their classroom's teaching and learning

practices. He took opportunity of the *cogen* process to investigate positions on race. Shady alongside his students learned how to interact more successfully across different categorical representations, such as ethnicity and social class to meet their shared learning goals and motives. Collaboratively, Shady and his students decided that shifting to a student-centered approach was necessary to maximize connections and learning. Shady argued that detailed analysis of everyday teaching and learning acts could serve as a reflective means of improving culturally responsive educational practices. Shady described the pedagogical and cultural ripple effect of utilizing *cogen* in his classroom. He asserted that teachers should undergo continuous cultural training and professional development, practices such as *cogen*, to serve useful as challenges of globalization impact education spaces.

Perspectives from in-service teachers around the act of teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students were offered by Bonner, Warren and Jiang (2017). These researchers explored the perceptions of teachers in urban P-12 public schools in the southwestern United States. 430 teachers voluntarily participated in the study, where over 80% of the P-12 students in these districts were of Hispanic/Latino or African American backgrounds. Qualitative surveys were offered in which participants completed four sentence stems: (a) "I would describe my attitudes and feelings toward diverse student populations (or multicultural issues) as follows . . ."; (b) "Culturally responsive teaching or instruction that recognizes and affirms the culture, history, and language of diverse students would include the following teaching behaviors . . ."; (c) "My capacity/ability for effectively teaching culturally diverse students is . . ."; and (d) "I believe that instruction that meets the academic needs of culturally diverse students will produce the following outcomes/results . . ." (Bonner et al., 2017).

Teachers shared thoughts around teaching and learning, such as: “Diverse student populations are an asset. While the language barriers can be difficult, the various cultures, languages, and beliefs enhance the classroom discussions and learning” (2017). Another teacher shared her believed capacity to effectively teach culturally diverse students, understanding their needs and building strong relationship with families. Participants shared students’ ability to learn in a safe and comfortable environment, and the need to be able to find ways to make diverse students to feel welcome in the classroom in order for them to be able to learn. One shared respect for each child and treating each one as valuable contributors to the classroom, which means incorporating their everyday experiences into the curriculum.

Study participants noted a desire to allow students to learn about diversity as it fosters “global citizens and culturally sensitive humans.” Participants also shared the importance to the classroom culture because it broadens their perspective and hopefully diminishes bias. Even with a prevailing enthusiasm for classroom diversity and an overall sense of strong expertise, some teachers expressed frustration with the challenges inherent in addressing a multitude of cultures and languages in daily classroom instruction. This work allowed for many voices to be heard, demonstrating the goals and potential impact that attending to our diverse learners has on school-aged learners and the communities in which the teachers work.

The importance of centering multicultural, social justice-oriented work in teacher education

There is a need to be attentive to the work of how educators support their students in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Whipp reported on a study that investigated how 12 graduates from one justice-oriented preparation program were conceptualizing socially just

teaching after a year of teaching in an urban school and how their perceived experiences before, during, and after their program were influencing their socially just teaching practices (2013). How do these teachers describe their practices as socially just teachers? What pre-program, program, and post-program factors do these teachers describe as influencing socially just teaching practices? What relationships can be seen among these teachers' orientations toward socially just teaching, self-described teaching practices, and self-reported pre-program, during program, and post-program influences? (2013).

One teacher, Francine, noted the school's traditional and conservative reading curriculum which had all students reading the same stories and taking the same spelling test every week, stating "a lot of the things we're doing aren't really beneficial to a lot of the kids" (2013, p. 459). Another teacher, Megan, acknowledged the need to "change and modify lessons because of how differently children learn" admitting that "I have a lot to learn about their cultures and backgrounds" (2013, p. 461). Whipp emphasized the notion that teacher educators need to acknowledge and address how they can be more deliberate in their efforts to tap into the prior experiences and make connections for all of their teacher candidates. They must explore how they can more strategically tailor coursework, fieldwork, and mentoring in ways that address the various needs and readiness of candidates to develop as socially just teachers across the continuum from pre-service teacher training to in-service practices (2013).

In *The Dreamkeepers* (1994), Gloria Ladson-Billings' three-year ethnographic study offered the voices of eight experienced female educators through interviews, classroom observations, video, and collaborative group meetings. This work provided narratives and insights from their

experiences teaching African American children. *The Dreamkeepers* represents ways that teachers can systematically incorporate student culture and experiences into the learning setting as knowledge that contributes to the collective learning of the classroom community. Ladson-Billings urges for this type of research to continue in order to bridge the theoretical and practical, and more importantly to be looking for exemplary practice in classrooms and communities to inform and better our practices as teacher educators (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The need for research to inform teacher education practice and programming: Acknowledging the voices of early-service teachers

The literature presented indicates that there exists a focus on teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse spaces, and with that the need to take on more research that offers the experiences and perspectives of teachers doing this work. As evidenced by research by Whipp and Bauml and colleagues, there is a strong emphasis on perspectives of pre-service or novice educators. We learn a lot in this field of research such as through Shady's accounts of teaching in New York, but research such as this is limited in number. While it is beneficial to hear sentiments of teachers through qualitative survey prompts designed by Bonner and fellow research team members, we must go a step further. We must dig deeper to infuse detailed stories and experiences, and then learn from them.

Teacher voices offer up-close and personal perspectives, which I believe to be compellingly informative as these teachers are the ones day after day in the classroom with their students. As such, this chapter documents the effort to seek out the voices of early-service teachers. At this point in their career, early-service educators will have had some experience teaching and can talk about and demonstrate the ways in which issues of equity and diversity play out in a classroom

setting. They may also be able to make connections to their teacher training, and how it played a role in their development as educators committed to teaching for social justice and diversity. As noted from a teacher in regards to her first year teaching "We all over-exhausted ourselves, we all overworked ourselves, we didn't take care of ourselves, and that has become the understanding of 'that's what you do as a social justice educator,'" (Borrero et al., 2016, p. 32).

While not explicitly stated as an excuse or barrier to doing this work, other teachers in her group consistently expressed and reflected on the challenges of being novices in the profession, and as a reality of their identities as teachers in undertaking this work. It was noted that especially in the first few years in the field, teachers reported feeling overwhelmed with learning school systems, understanding the school culture, rules, and regulations. Many are incapable of thinking past the day-to-day routines, of organizing and managing classrooms, and submitting paperwork for administration. Many reported feeling happy just to survive their first year of teaching (Katz, 1995).

New research incorporating the voices of early-service teachers has the capability to inform and transform how teachers are trained in diversity and social justice education. At this point in their career, they will have had some experience in the classroom setting and can begin to make sense of how issues of diversity and social justice play out. They are also at a point where they can make connections to their own teacher education experiences just a few years prior to undertaking this work. As our schools are fluid and ever changing this work offers fresh perspectives into what is currently taking place in schools. This research also allowed me to build rapport with participants over time, and fostered a setting where participants could revisit

and delve deeper into the experiences they had over the course of an entire school year. Research of early-service teachers' experiences of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings can offer insights into how we as teacher educators may better structure teacher education programs so they are responsive to today's teachers and learners. We need a clearer sense of what this work is and what it entails in our schools.

Conceptual framework: **A phenomenological framework for understanding the act of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings**

Utilizing a phenomenological framework situates who I am both as a researcher and what I strive to do in my work. This orientation has propelled me in the design of my research problem and questions, serving as a guide to systematically structure my research design, data analysis, and findings interpretation. Phenomenology asserts that understanding is based fundamentally on practices of the everyday lifeworld, serving as a basis of interpretation and the "stepping stone" to knowledge (Heidegger, 1927/1996). The philosophical underpinnings of this framework rely on lived experiences of individuals, and are attentive to how they have individual, subjective experiences of a phenomenon while also possessing objective experiences of something in common with others (Creswell, 2013). In my role as a researcher, I aim to learn about what 'teaching for diversity and social justice' entails through the lenses of the teachers enacting the work.

Intentionality, a principal theme of phenomenology, serves as a salient structure of experience. Many branches of phenomenology proceed as a study of various aspects of intentionality (Moustakas, 1994). This mindset flows naturally from the intentionality of consciousness where no dichotomy of subject and object exists. The reality of an object is perceived through one's

meaning of the experience. Through reflection and analysis, we find that the basic intentional structure of consciousness involves further forms of experience. Phenomenological work allows for development of complex accounts of awareness: awareness of a person's own experience, the self in various roles, purpose or intentions, linguistic choices, and social interactions. Phenomenology thus offers insights into conscious experience and conditions that help to give experience its intentionality (Moustakas, 1994). Incorporation of a phenomenological attitude in research attempts to maintain a precarious balance between an immediate grasping of meaning as experienced in everyday living and reflection (van Manen, 1997). "Phenomenology shows us what various ranges of human experiences are possible, what worlds people inhabit, how these experiences may be described, and how language (if we give it its full value) has powers to disclose the worlds in which we dwell as fathers, mothers, teachers, students, and so forth" (van Manen, 1997, p. 48).

I employ phenomenology here as a means to search for understanding of an educational phenomenon through a focus on teachers' lived experiences. This framework allows for deeper understandings of what it means to 'teach for diversity and social justice.' It is a "disciplined, rigorous effort to understand experience profoundly and authentically" (Pinar et al., 2004, p. 405). With the aim to showcase perspectives in order to inform social justice teacher education practices, this framework is fundamental to my work as it centers the voices of early-service teachers and their experiences while teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. It is vital in my work that I recognize the broad philosophical assumptions of phenomenological thought. Here my goal is to examine connections of the individual experiences of early-service teachers and the reality of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. This

phenomenological notion serves as a crucial agent of transformative pedagogy because it can provoke a change in the manner in which educators think and act (Pinar et al., 2004). Changes that can move this work forward occur because "our taken-for-granted notions of self-understanding, reflection, and practical competence are all reconceived in phenomenological inquiry" (Pinar et al., 2004, p. 413).

While there exist varying schools of phenomenology, I align here with Husserl's perspective of empirical transcendental phenomenological. *Transcendental* means "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994). This concerns the 'whatness' of a thing and takes into account logical thought and intuition as the means of coming to a better understanding of a certain phenomenon. This framework required that I take part in 'bracketing' (Moustakas, 1994) as a way to set aside my own assumptions and biases as an immigrant English learner, former teacher, and current teacher educator and researcher and to be wholly focused on the experiences of the participants. The intention of utilizing this framework was to be able to offer fresh and new perspectives while centering the voices and experiences of teachers doing this work.

This framework aligns with my research intentions as I aim to gather meaning from educators' experiences about what teaching for diversity and social justice looks and feels like, thus informing the field of teacher education. "The phenomenological can facilitate this transformation because its goal is to reveal that which is hidden and disclose the role of educators and students in the process of learning and teaching" (Rafferty, 2011, p. 387). What do these early-service teachers' experiences tell us about the act of teaching in today's globalized

society? Examining this phenomenon, this act of teaching, serves as a spark for reflection and action. The challenge here will be to explicate the phenomenon in terms of its constituents and possible meanings, thus discerning the features of consciousness and arrival at an understanding of the essences of the experience.

Method

This research draws on data from a larger, broader study of inquiry that explored the experiences of early-service teachers with an expressed commitment to teaching for diversity and social justice and the (a) successes, (b) challenges/barriers, and (c) supports and resources they encountered in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Research design: A phenomenological multi-case study inquiry

This phenomenological case study design with purposeful sampling offers perspectives from different sources, providing in-depth understanding and ability to identify and note themes across the cases (Creswell, 2013). These in-depth and extensive pieces of data provide valuable insight into what teachers face in diverse classroom settings and hopefully inform teacher educators as to what today's teacher needs to know and should be able to do in order to support and advocate for their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Here I define a "case" as 'an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice who is in his or her third through fifth year of teaching'. This study used a longitudinal design to build and strengthen relationships, providing more accurate understandings through data collected over the course of an entire academic school year.

Participants

The study utilized a year-long case study analysis of five early service K-12 teachers recruited through community nomination (Foster, 1997). Grounded in phenomenological perspective and inquiry, it was essential to recruit a group of individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). All five teachers identified as white English-speaking women. They were nominated by district administrators as educators committed to teaching for diversity and social justice. Two participants taught at the elementary level (kindergarten and third grade), two at the middle school level (fifth grade and Special Education), and one at the high school level (Special Education). The field sites were their classrooms with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations in a school district located in the midwestern United States. The school district's mission statement aims to "enhance student engagement and well-being so that all students receive a quality and equitable education and graduate as responsible citizens of our community and the world." Participants were assured of confidentiality throughout their participation, and pseudonyms were assigned to participants and any names attached to data that was collected.

Anna

Anna's class of seventeen kindergarteners exhibited enthusiasm and a desire to learn each time I entered their classroom. Eight of her students represented home cultures and languages other than English, and her primary teaching goal was to make sure that all her students have what they need. She wanted them to all be successful but realized that they all need different things. Four years prior she graduated from a "curriculum-focused" mid-sized teacher education

program. One of her teaching values was that all of her students should have access to curriculum, and that education is a vehicle for social justice and social change.

Alison

Alison has enjoyed teaching third grade at Westside elementary school, and has also had two years of experience teaching middle school German part time prior to her hire at the elementary level. She had twenty-three students in her class, one third of who represent several cultural backgrounds and including five students whose first or home language was not English. This was her first year with students who receive English as a Second Language (ESL) support, and she expressed that as a new and eye-opening experience. Alison believed that her role as an educator is to help students function as human beings, to be respectful of one another, to be curious and to keep asking questions. Her teacher education program was at a state school in a smaller city in the midwestern United States with a population of around 11, 200. At the time of data collection, Alison was enrolled in graduate courses that were helping her to formulate a stronger teacher identity as a practitioner committed to her culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Kaitlyn

Kaitlyn was a teacher at Kingston Middle School, having just finished her third year as a fifth grade classroom teacher. Her class of 25 students represents students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Many of her students' families spoke Spanish at home. She had two Hmong students, and also several students of local tribal nations. Kaitlyn possessed an assets-based perspective in her teaching. Her philosophy was that respect comes first and learning comes afterwards. Of her teacher education experience from a moderate-sized state university in the midwestern United States, she shared that "it was very much curriculum-based and lesson

plans and standards and not necessarily teaching to the test but, you know, more of the "on paper' and literal pieces of teaching."

Diane

Diane was in her fifth year as a middle school special education teacher at Kingston Middle School. She attended a large public research-focused university in the midwestern United States, and had also pursued graduate studies with a focus on equitable teaching and learning. As an undergraduate, she took a Globalization and Education course. From there she wanted to be in service and was drawn to the focus on how kids' life trajectory was influenced by education. Over this past year, Diane taught several Special Education math and literacy classes. She was drawn to Kingston because of the school district's expressed commitment to social justice and diversity education.

Natasha

Natasha received her education training from the same large research-focused institution as Diane. This was her fourth year of teaching at a community high school of one hundred and twenty students, and was drawn to her school because it offered voice and choice. Her school incorporates a seminar model, and she instructed various 6-week seminar courses throughout the year with a literacy component as her specializations were English and also Special Education. Her philosophy was helping young people discover who they are as human beings. As a guide, her role was to help them explore different aspects of their learner identity and personal identity. She believed there is an expressed need for expertise in different types of learning, and having flexibility. For students who are of ethnic minorities, she really tried to help them focus on their identity. She shared her struggles throughout her pre-service teacher education program in that

she did not feel that she was afforded opportunities to address these various aspects of teacher identity and learning as she had hoped to do.

Table 1: Participants

Participant name	Years of teaching experience	Grade level/subject
Anna	5	Kindergarten at East Meadow Elementary
Alison	5	3rd grade at Westside Elementary
Kaitlyn	3	Middle school 5th grade at Kingston Middle School
Diane	5	Middle school Special education at Kingston Middle School
Natasha	4	High school English and Special education at Carter Community School

Data Collection

In this phenomenological case study design, interviews, observations, and artifact documents served as data points to truly get a sense of teachers' experiences. There was an initial interview followed by four cycles of data collection wherein each participant were interviewed, observed and allowed an opportunity to provide relevant artifacts.

Interviews. In accordance with the phenomenological perspective that aims to learn deeply about the lived experience, teachers were offered semi-structured, open-ended questions that allowed them to delve deeply into what they encounter as teachers in diverse classrooms. The initial interview acquainted the researcher and participant, providing space for participants to share their teaching background and philosophy. The interviews were scheduled spread out throughout the duration of the academic school year and took place during the months of September,

November, January, March, and May of the 2018-19 school year. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their answers to provide rich detail regarding their experiences in schools. Interview protocol and questions were provided in advance to enable each participant to have sufficient time to prepare and reflect upon prior experiences. The final interview enabled participants to revisit previous perspectives and reflect upon their experiences throughout the entire year. Each of these interviews explored participants' perspectives of situations observed by the researcher during classroom observations. Interview transcripts served as the primary data that was used for the data analysis. There were a total of 25 interviews, each one lasting between 30-60 minutes in duration.

Classroom Observations. To obtain a better understanding of what teachers face in today's diverse classrooms and to enable a comparison of findings, for each of the cycles of data collection I observed each participant teaching on four separate occasions during the school year on the same day of an interview. The visits were intentionally spread out equally throughout the duration of the academic school year and took place during the months of November, January, March, and May. Field notes documenting teacher actions and interactions during instruction time were taken serving as possible topics to discuss during the interviews.

Artifacts: Reflective journals, Lesson plans, and Student work. Participants were provided a reflective journal for the duration of the year as a place to record significant experiences or events deemed to be important to each participant in regards to teaching and learning in diverse classroom. How knowledgeable and confident did she feel addressing these issues? What challenges were encountered? What might the participant wish she had known prior in order to

better address these circumstances? Reflective journal excerpts were incorporated into the interviews, as participants often used them to refresh their memories of things that had happened since the previous visit and as opportunities to share out their experiences. Lesson plans and student work were also offered by participants, serving as a talking piece to allow participants to dive deeper into their experiences of what teaching for diversity and social justice entails.

Data Analysis

As an immigrant English language learner and former teacher myself, I first took part in bracketing (Moustakas, 1994) to set aside my own assumptions and biases in educational spaces and to be wholly focused on the experiences of the participants. I transcribed each of the interviews, and then identified significant statements in the database from participants, clustering statements into meaning units and then eventually themes. The first step of my analysis entailed the process of *horizontalization*. Moustakas (1994) describes the horizon as "the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinct character" (p. 95). Here, specific statements were identified from the transcripts that describe information about the participants' experiences. I utilized 'in vivo' coding (Manning, 2017) wherein I assigned a label, a code, to a section of data from the interview transcript. These were short words and phrases uttered by participants from the interview transcripts. These significant statements simply taken from the transcripts demonstrate the range of perspectives about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The statements were the horizons or textural meanings (Creswell, 2013). Data analysis in this design entailed *reduction*, reducing information to significant statements or quotes and then combining the statements into themes (Moustakas, 1994).

An issue I encountered with the transcendental phenomenology approach was in my efforts to "bracket" off prior knowledge. In realizing the fact that prior studies and approaches have attended to the act of teaching and learning to teach for social justice, I wondered if it was indeed possible to learn something as if for the first time and truly set aside one's own prior knowledge. Contrary to my goal of intentionally bracketing, I felt that my experiences as a student, teacher, and teacher educator may have instead helped me to better make sense of what teachers shared.

In my effort to 'bracket', I kept journal memos for each interview and attempted to capture the perceptions and feelings of the five participants through the words and experiences they shared during the site visits. My intention was to keep their words and their sentiments the focus of this work so that readers were able to gain a deeper understanding of what teaching for diversity and social justice entail. In attempts to stay true to the transcendental phenomenological approach in data analysis, I aimed to uphold the centering of teachers' voices and the initial research questions about teachers' "successes, challenges/barriers, and supports" served as a grounding point in this work. They were designed to get at the 'whatness' of the experience of teaching and learning to teach for diversity and social justice. I spent a long time with the data and trying to understand what teachers were saying.

Guided by the words uttered from the participants, key words and ideas served as the initial 'codes' towards identifying overarching themes. Cross-case analyses compared the details from the cases and examined whether the variables that were noted in one case were also evident and/or significant in the other cases. As I thought about each horizon and its textural qualities, I began to better understand the experiences of what it means to teach for diversity and social

justice (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Themes that arose are presented next in the Findings section.

Findings

Recall that the research question is "How do early-service educators who are committed to teaching for diversity and social justice navigate cultural and linguistic differences?" The voices of the participants are representative of themes that speak to the research questions presented.

I begin by addressing how participants experienced success in their efforts to teach for diversity and social justice. They expressed pride in their students, pride in themselves as educators, and of positivity and hope for being able to support future learners, rooted in their classroom practices and students' responses. I then share participants' feelings of overwhelm, frustration, and insecurity related to cultural and linguistic differences that they experienced as barriers in teaching and learning spaces. These stories demonstrate that despite experiencing success in some aspects of teaching for diversity and social justice, there were moments that remained where the teachers were left feeling inadequate in doing this work.

Experiencing success

During interviews, teachers shared what they called "A-ha!" moments, in which as educators they felt they were making positive steps towards better supporting their learners. In these spaces, as white English-speaking teachers, there was a recognition that their students had different life experiences then them. This recognition was accompanied in many instances by a

sense of pride and success in leveraging and celebrating these differences to support students. Two forms of support emerged as consistent sources of these positive feelings about navigating difference: incorporating specific strategies to bring to light the knowledge and expertise that culturally and linguistically diverse students contribute to the learning space, and putting in place meaningful and relevant academic learning opportunities for their students; and cultivating classroom settings where students felt welcome and safe, and where they could bring their life perspectives and insights to learn with and from one another.

Feelings of success in supporting academic learning

Participants talked about efforts to engage and support students academically that brought them feelings of success. This was both from the viewpoint of the educator who cultivates a strong focus on relevant and meaningful learning, and also for their students who then felt connected and successful in the classroom. They mentioned strategies such as providing scaffolding for their English language learners, designing activities that incorporated students' strengths and interests, and incorporating texts that were representative of and relevant to students' lives.

Alison shared how proud she felt of how she came to see how her third graders need different things to feel and be successful. Specifically talking about her English language learners, she challenged herself to think of more ways to foster learning and conversation:

> Specifically talking about my ELL students, we talk a lot about holding a conversation, and what are some ways that we can agree or disagree and some sentence stems, language frames that we can use to help us in those conversations. And so actually, I've heard kids use them outside of their book club conversations when they're talking to other people. So we know that we're just giving spaces for kids to engage who maybe would not have otherwise.

In literacy, she presented sentence stems and language frames that could be used to help in those conversations. As a result she was delighted to hear her students throughout the school year use them outside of the classroom when they were talking to other people. This talks to the notion of opening up conversations and connections that otherwise might not have taken place. To connect to culturally and linguistically diverse students, at the beginning of the year Alison specifically incorporated a lot of modeling in classes such as math. She noted feeling more connected with her students and their learning, as she was able to see the positive impact from making the vocabulary more visible and accessible for students. Alison shared that math is so vocabulary rich and the challenge of knowing if students understand the vocabulary in the correct sense. She shared that this was one way she worked at incorporating a more equitable, social justice-focused lens in her teaching.

Participants also reflected on ways of getting their students to use what they know in learning spaces, in more and in different ways. This is an arena in which high school teacher Natasha shared feeling successful as a teacher. In her 'Zombie Epidemiology' science seminar, students pondered questions such as 'Are zombies real? If there was such a thing as "zombieness" how would it spread? Do zombies have social skills? Can they learn?' In this course, they considered these questions in depth as they explored epidemiology, the science of how diseases spread.

To connect with her students she presented storylines similar to the Walking Dead, a television series in which she knew many of her students were familiar. She noted to students how social and political factors, such as in their own lived realities, often combine with science to create complex situations that put lives at risk. Students explored these themes related to Ebola outbreaks in the Congo and Sierra Leone. They came prepared to model best strategies for taking over the world using a pathogen that attacks humans, and documented results in a

scientific and technical writing piece. One of her students in particular possessed knowledge that contributed to achievement of learning goals and deeper understanding of concepts. Natasha shared that many of her students were really knowledgeable of the more technical aspects, exceeding her expectations of what she thought they knew about DNA and diseases:

> I'm trying to get them to use knowledge in more and in different ways. We have kids who are really, like, who are really knowledgeable into some of the more technical aspects, even more than the biology of DNA and stuff. Two students were getting down to the real minutiae of what they can do with the scientific method, and so the first part of the class was a lot of trying to pull in their own personal experiences and background knowledge and connections.

Natasha felt impactful when seeing how making connections to learning sparked her students' motivation and engagement. She shared the story of one of her students, Alana. Alana signed up for *Perspectives*, a seminar that Natasha taught second semester. It was a literacy-based course that came out of an expressed need from school faculty for students to have opportunities to strengthen critical thinking and digital media literacy skills. Natasha pointed out that students are living in an age of misinformation and it is necessary for them to be thoughtful and thorough in their process of researching a social topic that is of interest to them. Through Alana's writing Natasha had learned more about Alana and the experiences and the life that she has had. Natasha noted her efforts to create a positive climate culture space for her students to feel comfortable in. She described her attempts to engage students through specific writing prompts, and was captivated at the ways in which Alana opened up to share her prior knowledge and expertise. It began to make clearer sense how Alana connected with various social justice topics, and she was

able to bring her whole self in and actively contribute to the learning space. In speaking of Alana, Natasha shared:

> In her writing I have learned more about her and the experiences that she's had and the life that she's had. And it makes sense to me when I read what she writes. I understand why she connects so much more to this and what we talk about, because it's the life that she lives every day… And the more she's in class, the more she is talking. And so I am trying to create more of a climate culture space for her to feel comfortable in.

For Natasha, this work is about supporting students as they navigate the world. She shared that, for her, connected learning is about:

> How we can do it better, and how are we connecting with the students in more ways than what we're asking them to do academically? And so just talking and listening to them as human beings, as individuals who have likes, dislikes, interests, strengths, weaknesses. They have goals for themselves that aren't related to school, just trying to get to know them and who they are and who they want to become because they don't fully know who they are yet.

Kindergarten teacher Anna felt hopeful. As she opened up another box of books, she was excited to see the expression on her students' faces as she placed the new texts in their Reading Corner. A priority of Anna's that school year was to incorporate more diverse books in her classroom library. She shared her school's concern around literacy, as they had been noticing learning gaps with their students of color:

> Our students of color are not achieving as well as their white counterparts. And one reason we thought is they don't see themselves in books. How are they engaged? And we've been noticing there's a lack of books about people of color. And, in particular, books that are just about everyday life. Instead of it being like, you know, a book about Martin Luther King, Jr., or Rosa Parks or something, it's a book about everyday life just like every other book. And so we've been working really hard, my classroom, and then a third grade classroom is going to do a pilot. So we've bought other collections of books that fit in with our curriculum. So they're right off of our curriculum website. But they are books about diversity, books with different kinds of characters.

Anna set out to pilot her "diverse books" initiative. She scoured and researched books about different themes so that "all kids, different kinds of kids, whatever your skin color, or your background or your cultural makeup, you're going to be able to see yourself, understand more things and have it be relatable to you." Anna read a variety of stories that her students, all students, could see themselves in. Her students saw that there are people just like them in these books. Upon entering Anna's classroom, an outside observer would be able to see the variety of texts available to place in each student's book box. In a classroom visit where the class took part in a read-aloud about a student, Armando, who was heading into first grade just like them, the children listened intently. Throughout the story, students excitedly shared 'I like to do that at home, too!' and 'Hey, I go there with my grandpa just like Armando does.' In reflection while sharing about this literacy endeavor, Anna noted:

> I want them to be able to say 'It could be my family.' What we want to do is have them feel more connected. And feel like we're respecting their culture and their background, where they come from. So that's kind of what our plan is, next year I

> want to implement it even more and be really purposeful in the books that I'm choosing for certain students.

Feeling connected and united in community-oriented spaces

Teachers expressed sentiments of being proud of the unity and connections that have transpired in their classroom. They have felt successful supporting students on a personal level and in community with one another. The stories shared here speak to the pride teachers have felt wherein students and their identities are valued, especially for their students of color and who speak different home languages than their white classmates. This theme was widespread across the teachers and connected as well to the previous sub-theme. It notes an overlap between supporting students' academic learning and the sense of community in learning spaces.

Kaitlyn spoke about feeling united as she attempted to enrich learning spaces by building classroom community with her fifth graders. Her teaching philosophy is to tie into students' needs and how they want to feel respected and represented in their classroom. In designing her lessons, she asked herself "How can I incorporate materials that will help them feel proud of who they are?" This has resulted in social studies lessons where students were encouraged to share their voices and opinions. When it comes to teaching and learning she strives to make sure that she is doing in it a way that is equitable. She also shared that she aims to make sure that she does things in a way that she will actually learn, too. She noted her constant desire for her students to strengthen their bonds and to ask questions about one another, and her desire to be as accurate as possible with any questions that come her way. "And I want students to also know that if I don't know the answer, I'll look it up. And then we'll talk about it." These community-focused efforts

demonstrate the ways in which Kaitlyn was able to build rapport and establish a positive space for learning.

Alison felt safe and aware in her classroom, and made every effort to ensure her students felt that same way, too. She acknowledged that her students come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and in order for them to learn and be successful in the classroom "they need to feel this is a safe place for them." One of the ways that she does this is together as a class they create classroom norms:

> And so when they help create the rules, and they know what those rules mean, then they can feel safe in their actions and feel safe that people will respond to them and talk to them and communicate with them in that safe and respectful way because they know that that's what the expectation is.

Alison strives to make it feel as normal as possible that people are different. When it comes to talking about differences, she shared that "it's scary for them." In order to establish this safe space she shared how she actively works to cultivate community and make sure students are feeling comfortable, stating "I talk to my students about how differences can bring us closer together." She opens up conversations about what it means to be in a community. She noted the capacity of her third graders to be very introspective and deep and already at such a young age. A shared norm in her classroom is to lift each other up. She posed the question to her students of what it means to lift each other up. How can you lift somebody up? "That's what we work on. It's really hard." Alison noted lots of conversations and playing a lot of games. Daily Morning Meetings where they check in, learn about one another and play collaborative team games help bring them together to feel like they are one community. After an observed classroom lesson,

Alison shared how her class talks about differences in cultures and differences in people all the time. They talk about how even though people are different from one another, they can be friends. She emphasized her intentional focus on creating a space where kids can share their ideas with others in a way that can help them grow and learn together.

Alison shared that she wanted everyone to feel like they belong and to feel like the classroom is a safe place for them. She recognized that her students practice different traditions at home and makes a concerted effort to build a community where each student's traditions are acknowledged and celebrated. While she celebrates certain holidays such as Christmas, she understands that not everybody in the classroom community does. This has resulted in her thinking, "I need to make it normal." She communicates to her class that they do not always have to do the same thing. She shared thoughtfully the manner in which she helps celebrate each member of their classroom community. She described her attempts of fostering an inclusive learning environment, sharing her sentiment that in saying that it is normal to celebrate Christmas but it is not normal to celebrate other traditions, then the students might feel like they do not belong there. As Alison notes of her classroom practices:

> That is not what we do here. It is a way of bringing it all together, creating a space where everyone feels like this is where everyone is at and that we're moving forward together from here.

Unrelatability

Participants shared a common thread in that the inability to relate to students of different cultural backgrounds and who spoke languages different than them proved challenging. This was not just

in regards to their experiences as classroom teachers, but also of how these differences and disconnects ultimately impact the students themselves. Here, teachers expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and unable to adequately support their students because of cultural and linguistic differences. They shared their worries of student disengagement because of feeling like they were not knowledgeable enough in the various facets of teaching in a multicultural and multilingual learning setting. In contrast to the "A-ha!" moments described above, here the teachers shared "Uh-oh!" sentiments due to the challenges and barriers faced when instructing students who represent various cultural backgrounds and language capabilities.

Lines of (mis)communication

A resonant theme that emerged was the notion of communication issues as a barrier to supporting student learning. Teachers noted feeling like there were unclear lines of communication with both students and families who spoke languages other than English at home, and reported sentiments of being overwhelmed in trying to obtain multi-tiered systems of support for students newly learning English. This was especially noted by three teachers, Anna, Diane and Alison.

For Anna, undertaking this work has left her feeling detached and disconnected from her kindergarten students and families. She specifically noted that she felt that linguistic differences often hindered open communication with students and their families. She explained the concern in that "Considering that my students are diverse learners, I realize that their experiences are different than mine. I have students who sometimes I'm worried that I'm not getting my point across or I'm not communicating as well as I should." Anna also shared that in her classroom

none of her students qualified for English language support and therefore a resource teacher was not readily available to assist her. Despite her efforts to connect with families and caregivers, it was often the case that they spoke languages other than English.

For Alison's third graders who speak different languages at home, she claimed that her inability to speak those languages served as a challenge and caused her to be hesitant and cautious in her work. She described the walls that were erected because she could not connect with their parents. The open communication back and forth about the needs of their child was not there because she was felt unable to interact with them in a more traditional sense:

> And that's really hard. And not even just the linguistically diverse kids, also the culturally diverse kids. There are some things that students from other cultures come with that is not a norm in my culture. So that's really hard too and I mean, I never want to offend anybody or make them feel uncomfortable. So it's hard for me to know, if I'm making someone uncomfortable, if they don't tell me, 'We don't do that at my house. Please stop.'

Alison shared the challenge of navigating parent-teacher conferences as well. She noted that language and cultural barriers exist between herself, as an English speaker, and for the families whose home language is not English. She also shared that she also does not have knowledge of all the insights into what might be offensive. For example, when she greets families, is it appropriate that they shake hands? She also noted that she makes the effort to make eye contact when speaking, but parents have instead looked away. She admitted that she does not know all of the cultural nuances that come along with those different cultures, "and so that's tricky."

As Alison had students who do not speak English at home, it was a challenge as she did not speak their home languages. In terms of instruction, Alison noted that it is hard to know when or if language barriers exist.

> I have some students who don't speak English at home. So that's tricky for me because I speak English at home. So it's kind of hard to know always, is the barrier that they don't understand what we're doing or is the barrier that I'm using vocabulary that they don't understand? So that's hard.

She worried that students do not understand the vocabulary she is using or what they are supposed to be doing for an activity. Even at times when she has asked students if they understand or if they had questions, their reaction might be a nod and they think they understand, but she wondered if they indeed did understand. Alison explained that the home communication piece also proved to be an obstacle. Towards the end of the school year a parent note had gone home requesting parental insights and considerations for classroom placement for the following year. She shared:

> And one of my students brought something back that had many things on it, about how I did not communicate enough during the year and that they need somebody that is more open to cultural differences and things like that.

She noted that one thing she always tried to foster was relationships with families, and this left her curious as to what that family was really looking for. She admitted the challenge of being unable to communicate with them directly, stating that she needed more help communicating with them, but that support was not always available.

Diane's account of a new student to her eighth grade special education classroom allowed her to share multi-faceted considerations for supporting a student who had recently moved to the district and for the family who did not speak English. She shared:

> We had a new student from another country who hasn't had real formal schooling. And so they don't speak English. And they also are deaf. So we're like dealing with a lot of different systems, trying to even just refer him for special ed. And I think something that I didn't get a ton of experience in is just navigating a lot of the systems and then getting experience with those systems in order to help make them work for families.

According to Diane, this experience was both perplexing and overwhelming from an educator standpoint. The student had never been in a formal education setting, and not a lot of resources were readily available to support him as a deaf learner. It was a lot of problem-solving in the moment while figuring out how to navigate, for Diane, unfamiliar and complex systems. She kept asking, "How am I supposed to make it work for this family?"

I don't look or sound like you: Divergent characteristics and feelings of disconnection and stress

Every teacher in the study shared the challenges of learning in classrooms where students come from different cultural backgrounds or speak different languages than them. These challenges made them feel unable to relate to their students and worried that cultural and linguistic disconnects negatively impacted their learning.

For example, Anna's kindergarten students are culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and she recognized that their life experiences are quite different than hers as a white middle-class woman from the midwestern region of the United States.

> And so coming into the school, where they're being bussed from pretty far away to this brand new neighborhood that they don't know anything about. And now they're, they're supposed to trust me, because I'm a teacher. That's just, that's just not how it works.

Anna claimed feeling incompatible culturally and linguistically with her learners, and that building relationships with the students and families is crucial yet difficult. To that point, she admitted that she had a momentous task of trying to find strategies that could help bridge the differences between her own lived experiences and those of her 5-year old students.

The mismatch that Natasha felt between herself and her high school students left her worried that it was negatively impacting their ability to feel connected in their learning. She recalled a day in which she attempted to make real-life connections to content but did not know how. She spoke in particular of one student:

> As a young African American man, it was fascinating for me to see him interested in so many different things that were attached to his culture, but also not clearly to me. I could not see the clear connections at all.

While content in her efforts to engage students, she was not necessarily sure she knew how to connect students' lives into learning settings. Not in a "separate, out there" aspect but rather in ways that felt organic and relevant. She recognized that her life experiences were very different from that of her student, resulting in a hindrance to connected learning. This made her feel detached and unable to relate to students in ways that could foster continued growth and development in academic spaces.

Diane also spoke of the division she felt between herself and her culturally and linguistically diverse middle school students. However, in more detail she shared the impact of this disconnect in regards to achieving learning goals. Even with continuous intention to get to know her students more closely, the reality is that she has experiences and perspectives that differ greatly from that of her special education students. She shared after an observed math class:

> Sometimes story problems work real well for kids. However, they might be presented with a random character going somewhere and doing something, And sometimes they don't connect, because it's not their experience, especially our kiddos here that are on the spectrum.

This at times left her feeling deflated and powerless when structures were not put in place for students to feel visible and integrated into learning spaces. They need ways to better connect, so how can she make that happen? According to Diane, it needs to be relevant for their life.

One particular challenge shared by Alison was the stress of not knowing. For her, it was hard not knowing the background knowledge that her third graders are coming in with, and where there might be barriers to their learning.

> And so from day one I always feel like I am asking questions and sometimes they're looking at me, like, 'I know what you're talking about, let's move on to something harder.' But how do you best approach that?

Alison shared the challenge of finding a balance between opening up conversations about what they all bring to learning spaces and their unique differences without singling people out. In those instances, she felt unable to bring differences up fearing that effect. She shared an eye-opening moment at the beginning of the school year in September when her class read a story with a Native American character called Stone Fox. To begin to engage students in the text, she pointed out traditions and specifically the ways in which Native Americans were named. Students began to offer up the significance of their own given names, and Alison was so excited that students were eagerly connecting to concepts related to the text they were reading. Although, one of her students with a name often associated to a particular culture was visibly taken aback when she noted that sentiment to the entire class. He became embarrassed because her current understanding of the namesake did not hold true to the student. She shared the potential impact on the student, of his identity in the classroom, and how he was perceived and known to those around him. "I learned to really be careful about pointing out to a huge group of people that somebody is different if they don't want to feel different. And it's hard to know."

Kaitlyn spoke primarily of her struggles of feeling vulnerable "to relate to students of color or who speak a different language because I am a white 24-year old woman. And how can I have

those conversations with them?" She proceeded to offer an example of a student last year who was African American who often used the 'N' word out on the playground. He took to calling students who were white that name, which was confusing as to why he would use that term. She talked with the teacher across the hall, with the principal, with the student engagement specialist and asked herself how she might approach this situation because she is not African American. How should she approach this situation because that's not her word to say? Kaitlyn proceeded to have a conversation with that student, here reflecting on that memory:

> How for me, or for somebody else who is not African American or not somebody of color how confusing that might be because we usually think of that as a horrible and derogatory term. But for others, especially if they hear it at home or they hear it in their neighborhood or they hear it in the songs that they are listening to or the movies that they're watching. How should I approach it and I think that's where I have to step back and think how am I going to approach this in a way that's not telling them what to do or what to say when I'm not African American?

Essentially, she asked how instead can she enter into the conversation framing it more in a way of "I'm trying to help you and learn from you". So for Kaitlyn at first that was a challenge of what to do next. She wanted to know how to approach the situation in a way where she can also learn from it and it is not just scolding a student. Kaitlyn openly shared other incidents that had arisen in her classroom, in situations where she was still learning how to navigate in professional ways. She provided an example of what she felt was a very harsh, racially charged incident of her fifth grade students using the 'N' word when they were not African American:

> The conversation went from me being a white woman to saying to students who are African American that they can't say that word, and how that's speaking on my white privilege, and not truly understanding, and not being able to understand why they're using that word or what they're using it for.

Forthright, she shared that she has learned from these incidents and she will continue bringing that into her room when something similar happens again. All the while, her goal always is to know that she needed to take those little, respectful steps and to keep learning. In regards to her students and classroom structures, she notes:

> I am really trying to tie into their needs and how they want to feel respected and how they want to be represented in their classroom. How can I incorporate materials that will help them feel proud of who they are?

For Kaitlyn, it was also important to share her desire for continued learning:

> I think for me, a big challenge of being a new educator is having the resources to learn about every single culture and religion that's represented in the school, and how I want to be as accurate as possible with any questions that come my way. And I want students to also know that if I don't know the answer, I'll look it up. And we'll talk about it. But I just think, how I can respond to tough questions about race or about religion in the right way, where, you know, I have the right information.

Discussion

Case study research involves the study of cases within a real-life, contemporary context or setting (Yin, 2009). This research demonstrates how a qualitative phenomenological multi-case study analysis contributes to the field, offering new perspectives into what teachers encounter while working in today's diverse school settings.

This study explored the notion of rich interactions socially, as well as academically, in teaching and learning spaces. Teachers were attentive to community-building practices with the goal of enriching connections between and with their students. They were intentional with incorporation of learning opportunities that were relevant and meaningful to the lives of their students. They spoke of the positive impact of these efforts. A resonant belief from participants is the importance of valuing each learner in the classroom and making strides to connect them, not only with each other, but also to the learning that takes place. These five teachers expressed a commitment to supporting their culturally and linguistically diverse school communities. We must consider their expressed insights and perspectives, informing teacher educators of how we might strengthen the design of teacher training to foster and cultivate ways in which educators can honor difference and diversity.

We also learned from participants that many barriers exist in the realm of supporting students of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. When faced with situations that were outside the realm of their own cultural and linguistic knowledge, participants reacted in ways that according to them were negative. Due to speaking a different language than some of their students and their families, Alison and Anna believed that it was difficult to ever know if they were able to

understand her or the expressed learning intentions. Along with language and communication barriers, Kaitlyn encountered situations wherein cultural difference played a role in how she engaged in the learning space with her students. She expressed the challenge of not feeling prepared and confident to address the racially-charged incidents that took place surrounding students' use of the 'N' word. We must examine how teachers in their training can reflect on their own identity and offer them spaces and discussions around ways they may navigate cultural difference in their classrooms.

In utilizing the phenomenological framework that focuses on lived experiences, it is important to note the depth and range of emotions and feelings shared by participants un undertaking this work. It speaks to the holistic and humanistic aspects of teaching for diversity and social justice, and that within these classroom stories are people who continue to develop as teachers and learners. As school demographics shift, so too should aspects of the preparation that today's teachers receive in their teacher training. I contend that an examination of teachers' experiences in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms should inform efforts in teacher education practices. We must learn from these teachers to guide this work forward.

Implications

This study is in response to my experiences as a teacher educator who often hears from teachers their appreciation for having discussions around teaching in diverse settings, yet express frustration in not feeling confident or able to support their culturally and linguistically diverse learners. As a 5-year old English language learner myself acclimating to new surroundings after

immigrating to the United States from the Philippines, I remember the challenges in schooling. Fraught with language barriers, I spent my formal education years often feeling invisible, unable to see myself in my classroom or learning community. As a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction focused on teacher education in a multicultural context, this work allows me to begin confronting complex issues in education that can be brought to light in order to better serve today's learners.

Acknowledging that our schools are dynamic and fluid, we must gain 'fresh eyes' in the field. In the context of their classrooms, how do today's teachers experience the work of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students? How do they traverse cultural and language barriers? How do their experiences bridge the 'concept' of teaching for diversity and inform us of practical situations and needs in current school context? This study informs teacher educators to think about how we can structure teacher education programs to better prepare teachers to be advocates for and support each of the unique learners in their classrooms. It is important because it will provide teacher education programs with areas to be attentive to in creating teacher training curriculum. How might we more strongly design teacher education experiences moving forward that is in alignment with the needs of today's teachers and learners?

This paper documents the experiences of five teachers. They have shared their commitment to continued learning in their efforts to teach for diversity and social justice. They admitted their successes but also their struggles and imperfections in navigating those challenges. This work is messy, challenging, and often fraught with tensions. While texts such as the aforementioned *Dreamkeepers* offers ways that this type of teaching goes well, here I offered evidence of some of the challenges and complexities in and learning to be an equitable and socially just educator.

This work contributes in various ways to the field of education. For our pre-service and in-service teachers, we acknowledge that there is no tried and true method when it comes to learning to support our culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This research demonstrates the various contrasts of doing this work, both the proclaimed heartening and disheartening aspects of teaching for diversity and social justice. For teacher educators, it is worthwhile to note that there can be no script or guideline to adhere to when it comes to educating those who choose to work in this field. We realize the inherent messiness of this work. At times the work of supporting culturally and linguistically diverse learners is presented as a straightforward matter of adopting the "right" attitudes and beliefs and implementing best practices. Portraying the real life messiness of this work is necessary and important. It can help teachers understand the difficulty of what they are taking on and can develop tools and networks that help them cope instead of feeling inadequate and burning out. Stories of teachers who are undertaking the work and experiencing some success are especially valuable to help new and struggling teachers realize that they are not alone, and that shortcomings and setbacks do not mean they do not also have successes that are worth celebrating and building on.

Lives are at stake every day. Each of our students matters, and we must help and support them in their lived realities. As teachers, we will need to say that “this is your country, this is your world, this is your body, and you must find some way to live within the all of it” (Coates, 2015, p. 12). Teachers are entrusted with this immense responsibility in educating and developing our youth. My goal through this work is to shed light into what teachers of today’s diverse classrooms face. It offers fresh perspectives into practice, and offers considerations in how we might shift teacher

education programming in order to ensure teachers are knowledgeable, competent, and confident in regards to equitable teaching and learning.

Chapter 3

Learning to teach for social justice and diversity: One teacher's journey of becoming an educator committed to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students

Abstract

Today's schools necessitate educators who are attentive to the cultural and linguistic diversity represented in their classrooms. This phenomenological case study showcases one teacher's journey in learning to teach for diversity and social justice. Through participant interviews over the course of an academic school year, third grade teacher Alison shared the various sentiments and emotions she felt in the process of 'learning to teach for diversity and social justice.' Alison reflected not only on her current classroom experiences, but tied in seamlessly how prior life and learning experiences served as foundational to her work as an educator. This paper is important because it sheds light on her experiences in learning to do this work. This research is part of a larger study which centers the experiences of five early-service educators teaching in their culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. This case study of Alison allows us to get into the complexities of doing this work. While similar experiences and themes arose in the Findings, there were components that posed as opposites. Presented themese served in ways that Alison felt both supported her development as an educator with an expressed commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity, and also that she felt served as impediments. She noted that some experiences allowed her to gain knowledge and perspectives, while others have served as a hindrance which stunted her development and challenged her practices and beliefs. This work demonstrates the value of centering teachers' voices and what teacher educators can learn from them in regards to teacher training practices and programming.

Introduction

Today's schools necessitate educators who are attentive to the cultural and linguistic diversity represented in their classrooms. Recent trends in teacher education reveal a more intentional focus on how teachers are trained for diversity and social justice education. However, many teachers do not come to the profession predisposed to think about the role that equity, diversity and social justice have to do with teaching (Picower, 2012). In regards to teacher education practices and policy, what needs to be taken into account when preparing educators who set out to teach in diverse settings? What do we know about the journey and development of teachers with an expressed commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity?

While there have been active efforts to recruit more teachers of color, the teaching force in the United States is 83% white and predominantly middle class (US Department of Education, 2015). How do these teachers learn to support students of different cultural backgrounds and linguistic capabilities? Teacher educators must foster teachers' development as curriculum decision-makers, where marginalizing and oppressive curriculum in schools should and needs to be challenged (Bauml et al., 2016). It is neither simple nor easy to meet the needs of diverse learners and to "effect the far-reaching changes at individual or systemic levels that are needed for such a transformative agenda of teacher education" (Kaur, 2012). Consequently, it is imperative to understand how one develops as an educator for social justice and diversity. Nieto, in taking up the challenge of how to prepare teachers for diverse classrooms, asks how might we prepare future and current teachers for classrooms that are diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, nationality, language and other differences? (2006) .What kinds of dispositions

and abilities might teachers need to teach in today's diverse schools, and how can they develop them? In her work, Nieto offered teachers' insights and an analysis of their writing in the hope that they may be helpful for thinking about transforming teacher preparation for diversity. This work takes on a greater urgency than ever because of the sociopolitical context in which teachers and students teach and learn every day. "It is generally accepted that research on what works, where, and for whom is needed in order to improve both teacher education and classroom practice, especially as these pertain to teaching students from diverse backgrounds" (2006, p. 457).

This paper focuses on a teacher with an expressed commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity. It is important because it sheds light on her experiences in learning to do this work. This research is part of a larger study which centers the experiences of five early-service teachers in their culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. This case study of third grade teacher Alison allows us to get into the complexities of doing this work. Alison is an educator who thinks deeply and intentionally about her practice. She stood out as a practitioner who was most actively seeking ways to improve as a teacher for social justice. Opportunities arose that allowed her to reflect on and grow in her practice, and she used field visit observations and interviews as a chance to think deeply about her experiences and how she came to be an educator committed to equitable teaching. My research question here is "How does an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice experience learning to teach?"

Related literature

The need for research that focuses on learning to teach for diversity and social justice in context

While recent literature attends to the notion of "teaching for diversity and social justice", there are limited studies that focus on teachers' process of *learning to teach* for diversity and social justice and what that entails. Chubbuck (2008) explored the realities experienced by a White female novice teacher, Sara, committed to socially just teaching in her first year as an English teacher in a diverse urban public school. Sara, a recent graduate of a teacher education program in a mid-sized urban university with a specific focus on socially just teaching, was selected for this case study because of her openly expressed commitment to social justice teaching. Sara shared feelings of inadequacy, of not understanding "the big idea" of teaching for social justice and how it should play out in her classroom. Rather than presenting a "seamless" social justice practice, Sara felt that she was "just pulling things out of the hat" with no "greater purpose, bigger picture," of feeling "very de-centered" and being "just confusing" to her students (Chubbuck, 2008). While providing teacher perspective of doing this work, it does not offer a bigger picture of how one comes to this work in connection to what it looks like in practice.

Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, and Sonu (2010) undertook a multi-case study following recent teacher education graduates and how they enact social justice curricula. Lucy, Jane, and Allison were chosen because of their articulation of experiences in teaching for social justice and their classroom practices. Vignettes were offered, incorporating data collected through interviews and lesson observations. The teachers reported feeling unclear of how they were teaching for social justice, with Jane recognizing a disconnect between the messages she

received in her teacher education preparation in regards to social justice and her actual practice (2010). The authors suggest that teachers enter a complex enterprise wrought with tensions, conflicts, and contradictions when they aim to translate conceptions into pedagogy (2010). Given the increasing racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in classrooms in the US and around the world, there is so little research devoted to complexities in *learning to teach* diverse students well (Sleeter, 2014).

McDonough (2009) explored the ways in which a White first-year teacher performed critical racial consciousness in the context of her classroom. This ethnographic case study took place in Jaclyn's fifth-grade classroom. Using participant observation and open-ended interviewing, McDonough specifically drew on one classroom teacher's narrative, providing an intimate view of the ways in which meaning is made related to race in her classroom community. The Parks School located in a major urban area in the Northeast US is similar demographically to urban schools across the United States. While the majority of students were children of color, the majority of teachers and administrators were White. The 17 students in Jaclyn's fifth-grade inclusion classroom were diverse in language, race, and ethnicity.

Jaclyn expressed learning of certain issues, sharing her experience of a course that made her consciously and deeply consider race and identity in educational spaces. "I do know that as I learned history in school I was disgusted when reading about how whites treated Native Americans, Blacks, and Asians, but as an individual I do not really see what I can do to fight institutional racism" (McDonough, 2009, p. 532). Jaclyn gained a sense of awareness from her teacher education experiences, but yet remained uncertain about what actions she might be able

to take to initiate transformative spaces and changes. In essence, she encountered a disconnect between how she imagined schools to function and the reality of work in diverse school settings (2009). McDonough urged for more research focused on the practices of classroom teachers, as she believes that by trying to look at the efforts and experiences of teachers, we will better learn how to support them as they engage in social justice work and transformative change (2009).

Life experiences as influential in learning to teach

We must be attentive to the notion that life experiences outside of formal teacher education settings impact one's learning to teach for diversity and social justice education. Whipp reported on an exploratory study that investigated how twelve graduates from one justice-oriented preparation program were thinking about socially just teaching after a year of working in an urban school and how their experiences before, during, and after their program were influencing their socially just teaching practices (2013). What factors do these teachers describe as influences on their practice? What relationships were seen among these teachers' orientations toward socially just teaching, self-described teaching practices, and self-reported pre-program, during program, and post-program influences? (2013).

Eight of the twelve teachers came into their preparation program with significant prior cross-cultural experiences. The teaching of these eight included culturally responsive, consciousness-raising and/or advocacy practices, and when questioned cited the program's social justice theme and specific course content and instructors that challenged their thinking about students and schools. One mentioned readings by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Paulo Freire that pulled him out of his "comfort zone." Another noted that educational policy course work and readings "really

opened my eyes to the inequalities in education" (2013, p. 461). She explained that this view was reinforced by her field experiences in various schools serving different socioeconomic classes where she saw disparities in resources (2013). The other teachers in contrast grew up with little or no exposure to people of diverse races, ethnicities, languages, or socioeconomic classes. Their first interactions with people of color for these four novice teachers were during college. These teachers did not offer any examples in their interviews of how they were using their students' cultural "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez et al., 2005) in teaching. One of these teachers, Megan, acknowledged the need to change and modify lessons because of how differently children learn but admitted that she had a lot to learn about other cultures and backgrounds. The advocacy found in students with rich cross-cultural experiences before and during the program fused in ways that guided and encouraged their social justice-oriented culturally relevant teaching practices. Knowing that multiple factors need to come together for socially just teaching, Whipp emphasizes the notion that teacher educators across many justice-oriented programs need to acknowledge and address how they can be more deliberate in their efforts to tap into prior experiences and make connections for all of their teachers.

Teachers' prior experiences influenced the degree to which they developed their identities as equitable educators, and their experiences informed where they located a need for change in their practice in the classroom, their role in the school, and their responsibility in the greater community and society (Wager & Foote, 2013). Teachers' positional identities relative to equitable mathematics pedagogy influenced how they enacted equitable mathematics pedagogy. For the teachers in this study, the lived experiences they brought to the professional development program from their own histories, prior professional development experiences in equity and mathematics, and their classroom contexts contributed to their identities as equitable

mathematics educators and influenced what they noticed about children's learning. The researchers were facilitators of professional development or instructors in methods courses and explored the challenges and possibilities of equitable mathematics pedagogy. They ask here, "in what ways were they influential in their development as equitable teachers?"

One participant, Sydney, who utilized a critical perspective in learning to teach, was getting her master's degree in English as a Second Language (ESL) and had participated in multiple professional development programs in equity. These professional learning opportunities allowed teachers such as Sydney to investigate their positionality as educators in multicultural spaces. The sessions offered teachers ways to think about and reflect on who they are in their roles as social justice-minded teachers. "Teachers see classrooms through different lenses depending on their experiences, educational philosophies, cultural backgrounds, and so on…" (2013, p. 171). The teachers' personal and professional experiences were related to their positional identity and thus how they focused their teacher lens in doing this work (2013).

Method

Conceptual framework

A phenomenological framework asserts that understanding is based fundamentally on practices of the everyday lifeworld, serving as a basis of interpretation and the "stepping stone" to knowledge (Heidegger, 1927). I take on this frame of thought in search of better understanding of a phenomenon through a focus on lived experiences. Phenomenology is a "disciplined, rigorous effort to understand experience profoundly and authentically" (Pinar et al., 2004). In my

role as researcher, I aim to learn more about the phenomenon of 'learning to teach for diversity and social justice' through the lens of a teacher doing the work. What does Alison's experiences tell us about learning to teach in today's globalized society? We can discern the various components of what it means to learn to teach for diversity and social justice and understand the essences of the phenomenon in order to inform the field of teacher education.

I align here with Husserl's perspective of empirical transcendental phenomenology. *Transcendental* means "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994). This concerns the 'whatness' of a thing and takes into account logical thought and intuition as the means of coming to a better understanding of a certain phenomenon. This framework requires that the researcher take part in 'bracketing' (Moustakas, 1994) as a way to set aside biases and assumptions. I aimed to be wholly focused on the experiences of the participants and the intention of utilizing this framework was to be able to offer fresh and new perspectives while centering the voices of teachers doing this work.

I utilize van Manen's take towards phenomenology in that it is not simply enough to recall experiences that one has. Phenomenological research is the study of lived experience. It is the world not as we conceptualize, categorize, or theorize it, but rather how it is experienced (van Manen, 1984). Rather than a study that focuses on whether or how something happens, it sheds light on the nature of the experience so one can better understand what a particular experience might be like. Phenomenological research is a search for what it means to be human (van Manen, 1984). "As we research the possible meaning structures of our lived experiences, we come to a fuller grasp of what it means to be in the world as a man, a woman, a child, taking into account

the sociocultural and historical traditions which have given meaning to our ways of being in the world" (van Manen, 1984, p. 38)

Research design: A Case Study Inquiry

This research draws on data from a larger, broader study of inquiry that explored the experiences of early-service teachers and what they have encountered in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Acknowledging the phenomenological stance, the structure and sequence allowed Alison opportunities to dive deeply and at times revisit experiences that she shared as foundational in her journey thus far as an educator with an expressed commitment to teaching for diversity and social justice.

This case study design with purposeful sampling offers perspective and in-depth understanding to identify and note themes (Creswell, 2013). These extensive pieces of data provide valuable insight into Alison's development as a socially just educator. Here I define a "case" as 'an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice who is in their third through fifth year of teaching'. Early-service teachers, defined here as educators in their their third through fifth year of teaching, were recruited specifically for this research as they had a few years of teaching experience to be able to talk more deeply about what teaching for diversity and social justice looks and feels like for them. This also allowed Alison to make connections to aspects of formal teacher education experiences in recent years. This study used a longitudinal design to build and strengthen relationships, providing more accurate understandings through data collected over the course of the 2018-2019 academic school year.

Participant selection and field site

The study utilized a year-long case study analysis of early service K-12 teachers recruited through community nomination (Foster, 1997). Alison was nominated by district administrators as an educator with an expressed commitment to teaching for diversity and social justice. Interviews took place in Alison's third grade classroom with a culturally and linguistically diverse student population in a school district located in the midwestern United States. The school district's mission statement aims to "enhance student engagement and well-being so that all students receive a quality and equitable education and graduate as responsible citizens of our community and the world." Alison was assured of confidentiality throughout participation, with a pseudonym assigned and attached to any data that was collected.

Alison

Alison has enjoyed teaching third grade at Westside elementary school, and has also had two years of experience teaching middle school German part time prior to her hire at the elementary level. She had twenty-three students in her class, one third of who represent several cultural backgrounds and including five students whose first or home language was not English. This was her first year with students who receive English as a Second Language (ESL) support, and she expressed that as a new and eye-opening experience. Alison believed that her role as an educator is to help students function as human beings, to be respectful of one another, to be curious and to keep asking questions. Her teacher education program was at a state school in a smaller city in the midwestern United States with a population of around 11, 200. At the time of data collection, Alison was enrolled in graduate courses that she shared as helping her to formulate a

stronger teacher identity as a practitioner committed to her culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Alison identifies as a white female who grew up in a small homogeneous white English-speaking town in the midwestern United States. Alison has shared that she has always been very self reflective, and open to the idea that she does not know everything. “I think the willingness to be self reflective and being open to a different narrative, I think has helped me to be able to see from a different perspective or see another side of the history that I was brought up in.” While reflective in personality, she also noted that in the case of her teaching and learning she did not always know how to reflect in a way that pushed her thinking and practice. While on the topic of her own teacher training experiences, she shared that she primarily aimed to just complete the tasks, the programmatic checkboxes. “But it wasn't meaningful, and I was just doing the tasks to get the A. And it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you graduated with a 4.0 or 2.0. That's not going to tell anybody how good of a teacher you're going to be.”

Alison insists that for her teaching is about practice. It is hard and never perfect. It does not matter if one has been doing it three years or thirty years. It is never perfect, and always changing and evolving. She thinks a lot about how she thinks, and about why she may be feeling that way:

> I think just practicing identifying your real emotiona and what caused that to happen is so important. So, for example, I had a student that was struggling and acting out behaviorally. We had made it so many months into the school year and one day he blew up at me, angry and frustrated. I was really upset. But to cry and

> move on isn't helpful for anyone. You have to think, why does that make me feel that way? What did I say or do that made my student react the way that he did? What can we do differently next time? And just really taking that pause and thinking, well that's not how I want it to be. So what can I do to make it the way that I want it to be. So I think just practicing that is really hard. Some people don't want to do it. And there's no script for it either. No knowing of exactly what you do next. There's no 'if, then' for that.

For Alison, she shared that it is a practice. It is a constant learning and practice.

Data Collection

In this case study design, interviews and observations served as data points to truly get a sense of Alison's experiences. There was an initial interview followed by four cycles of data collection wherein Alison was interviewed and observed. In accordance with the phenomenological perspective that focuses on the act of learning to teach for social justice, Alison was offered semi-structured, open-ended questions that allowed her to delve deeply into what she has encountered in her development as an educator committed to teaching for social justice and diversity.

The initial interview acquainted the researcher and participant, providing space for Alison to share her teaching background and philosophy. The interviews were scheduled spread out throughout the duration of the academic school year and took place during the months of September, November, January, March, and May during the 2018-19 school year. Alison was encouraged to elaborate on her answers to provide rich detail regarding her experiences. Interview protocol and questions were provided in advance to enable Alison to have sufficient

time to prepare and reflect upon prior experiences. The final interview enabled her to revisit previous perspectives and reflect upon experiences more deeply. Interview transcripts served as the primary data that was used for the data analysis. There were a total of five interviews, each one laasting 30-60 minutes in duration.

Field visit observations allowed me as a researcher a glimpse into Alison's practice as an educator with an expressed commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity. The notes taken during the field visit observations were used as a way to provide myself, as researcher, a glimpse into Alison's world. Questions and notes that came up during the observation visits served as taking points and deeper inquiry to her practice and development during the interviews.

Data Analysis

Utilizing a phenomenological framework, I first took part in 'bracketing' (Moustakas, 1994) to set aside my own assumptions and biases in educational spaces and to be wholly focused on Alison's experiences. In my effort to 'bracket', I kept journal memos for each interview with Alison and attempted to capture her perceptions and feelings through the words and experiences she shared during the five site visits. My intention was to keep her words and their sentiments the focus of this work so that readers gain a deeper understanding of what learning to teach for diversity and social justice entails.

In this process I found myself to be much more critical of the idea of 'bracketing', and if we as researchers are able to separate prior knowledge in undertaking this work. Specifically noting the messiness that teaching and learning to teach for social justice entail, it was a challenge to set aside my own life experiences and knowledge. Contrary to my goal of intentionally bracketing, I

felt that my experiences as a student, teacher, and teacher educator may have instead helped me to better make sense of what Alison shared. In reflection, the process became an attempt to perhaps bridge transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology. A transcendental approach is descriptive, whereas a hermeneutical framework that is more interpretive better aligned with how I interacted with Alison and her experiences. I also questioned the purpose and reasons behind the act of 'bracketing.' For instance, if in the field of teacher education we already know that some ways of teaching are more likely to promote justice and cultural sensitivity, why would we choose to omit that understanding in making sense of the data? In undertaking this work, I realized the inefficiency of casting aside knowledge previously built, and realizing the need to continue building and moving forward our knowledge. In attempts to stay true to the transcendental phenomenological approach in data analysis, I aimed to uphold the centering of Alison's voice, while recognizing that this inevitably involved interpretation on my part.

Alison spoke very candidly and openly of her work and learning to become a teacher with a commitment to teaching for diversity and social justice. After each interview, I transcribed the data and then identified significant statements from what was shared. The *horizontalization* process was the first step of my analysis. Moustakas (1994) describes the horizon as "the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinct character" (p. 95). Here, specific statements were identified from the transcripts that describe information about Alison's experiences in learning to teach for diversity and social justice. These significant statements simply taken from the transcripts demonstrate the various components shared about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Through the process of "in vivo" coding (Manning, 2017), initial codes were Alison's words she shared in the interviews and taken from the interview transcripts. Data analysis utilizing a

phenomenological framework entailed *reduction*, reducing information to significant statements, the initial 'in vivo codes', and then combining the statements into themes (Moustakas, 1994). As I thought about each horizon and its textural qualities, I began to better understand the experiences of what it means to learn to teach for diversity and social justice (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Phenomenological themes are the structures of experience. When analyzing a phenomenon we strive to determine what the themes are, the experienential structures that make up the experience. The themes that arose from Alison's accounts are presented next in the Findings section.

Findings

Alison has gained new perspectives, learning that people do things differently, learning ways to critique the ways that she learned and how she thinks about equity work. She has learned to question social norms and the way she was brought up. She has expressed that she is constantly growing in her practice, and that there is so much she still does not know. She views herself as someone who is constantly learning and growing, expressing that the language and the ways she views children and learning is not perfect.

While similar experiences and themes arose in the data, there were effects that she felt posed as opposites. Themes that came up served in ways that according to Alison both supported her development as an educator with an expressed commitment to teaching for diversity and social justice, and also served as impediments. Some experiences allowed her to gain knowledge and perspectives, and others have served as a hindrance which she stated as stunting her development and challenging her practices and beliefs.

Impressionable, and Enlightened: Formative experiences that have shaped identity as a social justice educator

Childhood experiences served as a foundation for how Alison thinks about diversity and social justice topics. She reported feeling unknowledgeable and unable to make sense of the diverse world around her due to circumstances in her upbringing. She shared interactions within her family living in a homogenous rural community in the midwestern United States. Growing up, she often heard "Oh, we don't talk about that. Or, that's uncomfortable to talk about, so we're not going to talk about it" when it came to difference. That was the reality and the world she grew up in. They did not talk about people of color or other marginalized groups. Alison added that when at the grocery store, if someone looked or sounded different, those in her circle would tell her "Don't talk about that, don't point that out. Don't say anything." In reflection of this story, Alison noted the way that this part of her life history promoted the minimization and invalidation of others' lives and experiences. Throughout her public school education experience, Alison revealed the use of textbooks that featured only white euro-centric history:

> They talked a lot about Christopher Columbus and the first Thanksgiving. It was very romanticized. And it's not the real story. So in my brain, I had all these romantic views. And it was never a topic of open discussion.

She noted these experiences as stifling and detrimental in her teacher development, a stark opposite to her own practice, as the learning of these histories and the dominant narratives offered in her childhood constructed ways of thinking that did not value other perspectives.

In contrast to her younger childhood years was an experience that Alison expressed as enlightening. A year-long study abroad program in Germany during high school provided Alison new perspectives with which to consider how other people live and learn. She described it as a rich opportunity to be immersed in a different culture. She shared accounts of living in a place where no one looked like her, and having no idea of what was going on because of cultural and language barriers. There, she recognized herself as a person who was marginalized and how it now makes her think of her own practice as a teacher:

> I think having that experience helped me to have empathy for people in our country who are marginalized. So then, when I'm coming to my classroom every day and I'm looking at my students, and then thinking about their backgrounds, I put myself in their shoes and think about how would that have felt for me.

For instance, if everybody in the majority had had this common experience and speaks the same language and then a student without that same upbringing did not understand, it prompted her to have empathy and make intentional changes in her interactions and instruction methods with that learner. She shared the value of her study abroad experience as one that was so helpful in a truly immersive way. Her outlook and purpose for her study abroad experience was to learn and grow. Alison's formative experience of coming from somewhere as part of the majority group and living somewhere where that was not the case helped her to have empathy and be able to understand from a different perspective for her students.

According to Alison, it opened her eyes and revealed to her that people are different from her and that she still has a lot to learn. It was helpful in that she was able to bring that experience into

the classroom, recognizing that there are people around her that she does not know anything about their culture, and that cannot make assumptions about them. Even if someone might look like her, they may be doing different things than she does. It fuels her desire in being open to asking questions and saying to her students, "This is what I noticed about you. Can you tell me more about it because I want to learn?"

Defeated, and Uplifted*: *Collegial interactions that impacted development and practice

Many colleagues have helped Alison become aware of different culturally and linguistically diverse components of teaching that better support her learners. Alison expressed efforts of fellow teachers who have left her feeling encouraged and elevated in doing this work. When co-teaching with a special education teacher, she appreciated learning from her how and in which ways students need different things to feel and be successful. Together with this teacher, she engaged in conversations around noticings of what children did in the classroom. Alison shared a particular example with one of her English language learners, and the goal to better figure out what the student needed. This colleague encouraged Alison to think about what that meant for this specific learner. Notably, "Why do we think that they're doing something in particular, really trying to understand the kids' needs, and using that as a springboard for instructional decision-making."

Alison spoke of an English as a Second Language (ESL) colleague who was very supportive and helped her often. This colleague taught her a lot about teacher language and transferable skills to teach children, and how that was more conducive to learning than what Alison was currently saying and doing with her English learner students. Alison shared an instance of her not

knowing how to effectively work with small groups, and this teacher assisted with the implementation and delivery of the work. She helped Alison think of scaffolds to put in place, and how to focus on one thing at a time but to keep working on it. Alison noted that this work requires constant learning. This has allowed her to notice newer and newer things. Moving forward, with that knowledge, she shared:

> I can take that with my next kiddos, because there's always going to be English learner students, there's always going to be culturally diverse kids, or linguistically diverse kids, that now I can take that knowledge and understanding. I can implement better scaffolds for them or create small groups for them, or figure out different tools that they can use to help them and just moving forward and being better every year.

Other collegial interactions Alison claimed had the opposite effect and challenged her practices and beliefs as an educator committed to equity. Alison shared sentiments of feeling encumbered, noting these encounters as inhibiting her drive to support her learners. The year prior she had a conflict with one of her colleagues who accused her of not being a culturally responsive teacher. Both Alison and this colleague had a shared goal of supporting their learners, so this exchange was really difficult for Alison. “It was an assumption and it was a really unfair statement.” Although a terrible situation at the time, Alison revealed that it did serve as a good pause for her to ponder if what she was actually doing in her classroom was culturally responsive or not. Because if not, then she felt it was necessary to change it. Being given space and time to reflect on those pieces is something additional that sustains her thinking in her journey as a social justice educator. She added that in walking through her school building, it is hard to miss that almost all of the teachers are white. Alison shared the frustration she felt when colleagues were

at different points of their learning, where assumptions were made prior to having opportunities to dig into deep discussions around race and culture in classroom settings. Alison shared the notion of colleagues becoming very defensive when topics like that were brought to the table, and the negative impact it had on her desire to engage with colleagues and continue growing as a teacher committed to supporting her culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Insecure, and Emboldened: The role of teacher education opportunities in learning to teach

Teacher learning opportunities have resulted in Alison feeling unsure and unprepared to work with her culturally and linguistically diverse students. According to her, the elements of pre-service teacher training did not attend to ways of teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. The work was very focused on theoretical thinking with limited practicum opportunities. Alison believed that she entered into teaching not knowing what she was doing, feeling that her pre-service experiences did not help to prepare her for diversity and social justice work in her school communities.

Alison was astonished that field site classrooms associated with her pre-service teacher education program were very homogeneous with primarily white students. She noted that everybody did the same thing, all the time. She shared how hard it was to start learning about ways to communicate with a diverse classroom because, for her, it just was not available or viable in those settings. Her perception of this learning in context of field experiences was challenging because it depended on where she was geographically. She admitted that just because one is learning about concepts in a course does not mean there are ways to practice it in context. In reflecting on where her institution was located, the school populations she worked with were

homogeneous white K-12 students. Even when learning about those topics in coursework, she did not have the opportunity to put learned concepts into practice there. The opportunity just did not present itself. She pondered, “How do you create a culture of equity and social justice when there is no diversity?”

Alison was left flustered when trying to make connections between learning and practice during her teacher education program coursework. Opportunities for equity learning were “separate” and not ingrained into the institutional structure. They had to be sought out outside of the required programming, which Alison reported as frustrating to undertake on top of her programmatic obligations. As a pre-service teacher, she was able to attend one conference where educator Jane Elliott spoke about her ‘Blue eyes/Brown eyes Exercise’. This exercise undertaken in 1968 by teacher activist Jane Elliott served as eye-opening in the field of education and showcasing ways in which there exists discrimination based on one’s characteristics.

For someone like Alison from a rural community who admitted not truly understanding some of the prejudices that are still in our society today, coming to something like that, and actually hearing about people's real life experiences was really helpful. Elliott came to speak at her university, and Alison noted of the experience:

> Hearing her talk about her experience and its effect on the kids, their psychological response to that... I thought was one of the most influential pieces that got me thinking, 'Okay, what I say to kids really matters'. I need to be really careful about how I address kids and how I approach situations because they really internalize that. I felt like her coming to talk to us about her experiment, it just really spoke to me.

Alison expressed that, while a valuable experience, she felt detached from her teacher training and it left her wondering what happens beyond the talk? She shared that just gaining that perspective is not enough and what was learned does not necessarily ensure that one has opportunities to engage with diversity and social justice experiences. She asked herself, "What happens next?"

Conversely, Alison reported feeling invigorated and motivated in her efforts as a social justice and diversity educator through meaningful graduate level coursework that fostered her ability to gain perspectives as an equity-oriented educator. In pursuit of her Masters of Art in Education grounded in social justice, a recent project that she completed was looking at different cultures and comparing them to her own culture. She shared that endeavors such as these has helped her to understand a little bit better about some disconnects that students of different cultural backgrounds might be having. The project that her group took on was specifically about Spanish-speaking households. They investigated more deeply what family dynamics may look like and be different, how language pieces might be different, and ways in which students might have trouble understanding concepts in English if their home language is Spanish.

> That was so valuable, because I can bring that knowledge to the several students who speak Spanish in my class, and I can say, 'Okay, so these might be some things that might be some misconceptions, I need to talk about and front load on'. So that that has been so helpful as well.

Alison also shared that constant learning through her graduate school classes gave her a new sense of awareness of different cultural and linguistically diverse components that she perhaps

knew, but did not yet have opportunities to dive deeper. To make her point, she acknowledged that one of her English language learners was able to exhibit really good understanding in reading English, but did not use academic or technical vocabulary when speaking.

> So I thought, 'That's an ELL thing,' I really need to make sure that I'm checking in with him and making that a priority, so that he can speak use more of the academic language learned when conversing in English. It was helping me to be more aware of the needs of my students.

Alison's graduate school coursework that she was currently enrolled in was centered around action research, which she shared was both fascinating and practical. The theoretical content they were learning was around English language learners, creating equity in the classroom, and making sure everyone has an equal opportunity of learning.

> I think bringing those topics to light for me, and then trying to put them into practice has been really beneficial**,** not only for me as a teacher, because for me, I'm a white middle class person. My experiences and my understanding, and my background knowledge is very different from every single child in here. Putting it into perspective, okay, just because this is how I grew up does not mean that that's their experience, and I need to understand where they're coming from so that I can better meet their needs as learners. Their needs are certainly not what my needs were.

Alison's school district communicates a focus on social justice, which she noted as something that strongly sustains her as a teacher with a commitment to teaching for diversity. A big focus for the district professional learning is equitable teaching that allowed teachers to dive into

concepts and issues encountered in school settings. For the entire school year, all of Alison's professional development work days were centered around equity with all of the buildings district-wide doing equity work just within themselves. The fact that it is so prominent and such a focus for her district helped with sustainability and continues to make her think about things that she maybe would not have thought about before, had it not been presented to her. She shared that this consistent and continual professional development grounded in equity is so valuable, where other districts just do not offer that. For a recent Professional Development (PD) session on the Archaeology of Self, teachers broke out into collaborative learning groups. It brought together a random assortment of district teachers, at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Book studies through PD sessions such as these elevated Alison's knowledge of issues around teaching for equity. For her, these continued learning opportunities are common shared experiences for teachers in her school which allowed them together to think through concepts presented in the various texts. In a previous book study session, teachers had read the first few chapters of the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. Each person read a section of the text, and took on a Jigsaw activity where they were able to share out and learn with and from each other. In reflecting on the experience, she noted:

> I think it's just the beginning of discussions that we're having about what white supremacy truly is. It's not always that extreme as I was led to believe in news and media. There is white supremacy everywhere, and what does that look like in school settings?

While professional development sessions have exposed Alison to new information and viewpoints in equity work, she at times felt bewildered at the inability to have clear purpose and structures put in place that foster meaningful learning and discussion. One point she mentioned is those in attendance at these sessions. At a recent gathering, she mentioned that every single person in there, including the presenter, was white except for one. She asked, “So, how can we have these rich discussions about cultural diversity when we're all white?” She noted the challenge of it feeling hard to feel safe to say things in those spaces as norms and expectations were not set. It was often hard to have conversations about race and privilege. She felt there were no established norms of communication. She wondered for the one person of color in attendance if they would feel safe to say something because there might be no one else there to back them up. Alison shared that she herself felt unconfident and unsure of how to have those authentic and deep discussions.

> So I don't know how deep it can really be or meaningful it can be because one thing that I read yesterday that really stood out to me you just think, when we were taught about the civil rights movement, for example. It was all talked about in the past tense, that this isn't happening anymore. This is how it used to be. And now it's fine. Right? Like, that's the white version of racism in our country, but that's not actually accurate. And so when you come to discussions like this, at first it's a little eye opening.

Alison shared that she had no idea that people still experience things like this. She acknowledged that there is another layer that one needs to be open to the fact that this is happening and what we as educators can do. She reiterated the need for a mindset shift and clear procedures and processes to move this work forward. “When you hear certain micro-aggressions or you see specific things that's racism and just being able to identify how it's happening in our society and

in our culture. The unlearning is so hard." Alison noted her desire of having informed and safe spaces to unpack what it entails to teach for social justice and diversity.

Discussion

A true thinking on lived experience is a thoughtful, reflective grasping of what it is that renders a particular experience its special significance (p. 41). According to van Manen (1984), phenomenology requires a reflection on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenen. As demonstrated with what Alison has shared, phenomenological research is "a project of someone: a real person, who in the context of particular individual, social and historical life circumstances, sets out to make sense of a certain aspect of human existence." (p. 40). Within each formative facet or theme presented in the Findings, we learned from Alison that there were aspects that both supported and hindered her development as a social justice and diversity educator. This speaks to the complexity of learning to teach for diversity.

Formative experiences in Alison's upbringing have shaped her learning to teach for social justice and diversity. While reflecting on her development as an educator, it is important to note how she alluded to feeling suppressed and stifled as a young child when it came to acknowledging and embracing diversity. Conversely, we recognize how impressionable her high school study abroad experience was for her in how she currently thinks about her own practice. In teacher education spaces, we must be attentive to how educators' previous life experiences and histories serve as foundational in their continued learning. Moreover, what impact might this have in

regards to training teachers who have little or limited cross-cultural experiences prior to entering the profession?

Professional and collegial interactions serve as influential factors in one's learning as an educator committed to teaching for diversity. Despite feeling uplifted by fellow teachers who helped Alison think about how to more strongly incorporate supports for her English language learners, at times she felt diminished when colleagues with limited experience and knowledge of diversity issues in education jumped to conclusions without making efforts to ask or learn about another's practices and perspectives. As teacher educators we must acknowledge how collegial relationships and professional interchanges are fostered in ways that staff are informed and help each other in moving diversity-focused work forward.

While teachers may be committed to the ideals of social justice and diversity education, they may not necessarily know the mechanics of implementation in the classroom (Bauml et al., 2016). Evidenced by Alison's experiences in formal teacher education spaces, it is imperative to think about objectives, structure, and context deliberately so that learning is meaningful and productive. In various attempts to engage with content and rich discussions through coursework and professional development opporunities, Alison expressed that deeper connections were made for her when there was clear communication and structures for collective and individual growth.

While previous research has attended to experiences of teachers in their journeys as educators for diversity, this study offers a new contribution to the existing literature in that it challenges a 'best practices' approach in learning to teach because of complexities encountered in various aspects

of development as an educator. The variance of sentiments presented within each theme demonstrate stark contrasts in regards to how Alison felt those impacted her development, both negatively and positively. It is interesting to also note that similar sentiments, such as of uplift, enlightenment and being emboldened, were evident in various learning space from childhood, to pre-service, and on to in-service education settings. It is not so simple. Alison has demonstrated the ways in which many facets of her learning trajectory have both challenged and advanced her development in this work. We as teacher educators must carefully consider the experiences that await these teachers as they enter into and continue in this profession, and how we sustain them in this work.

Implications

This study sheds lights into how one teacher came to be an educator committed to teaching for diversity. Acknowledging that today's schools need teachers who can support their culturally and linguistically diverse, we must be attentive to how one learns to teach for diversity and social justice. We must explore how we can more strategically tailor course work, fieldwork, and mentoring in ways that address the various needs and readiness of educators to develop as socially just teachers across the continuum of pre-service and in-service teacher education (Whipp, 2013). What was learned from Alison's reflections that informs teacher programming? What are the various pieces involved in learning to teach, and how can we help future and current teachers?

An appropriate topic for phenomenological inquiry is determined by the questioning of the essential nature of a lived experience, or a certain way of being in the world (van Manen, 1984).

Recognizing that prior lived experiences served influential in Alison's development, future studies are necessary to investigate more deeply the sociocultural approaches to learning and development both within and outside of formal education settings (Lave, 1988). Here we may perhaps use Herrenkohl and Mertl's notion of 'way of being' to guide future research endeavors (2010). One's way of being (including interests, cultural backgrounds, and motivations) must be considered together with academic content and concepts, classroom values, expectations, and patterns of interaction to present a holistic picture of learning and development. "Together we combine these aspects from the dynamic cauldron of the classroom where students and teachers create their classrooom culture, their knowledge, and themselves" (2010). Their work seeks to understand contextual, community, interpersonal, and personal perspectives on knowing and being in learning settings.

According to Herrenkohl and Mertl, teachers' and students' personal interests and motivations, the range of emotions enacted and experienced, values about what is worth knowing and why, and actions that put ways of knowing to powerful use in learning settings are often left unexamined (p. 17). They posit that it is necessary to investigate ways of being, knowing, and doing as intertwined strands that together weave a complex narrative of learning. Their focus of analysis is centered in the development of individual participation over time, identifying ways of being and knowing that are nested within interpersonal, community, and contextual lenses. How does an indvidual's initial way of knowing, interests, motivations, and affective orientations toward learning change over the duration of experiences? How might teachers talk about and reflect on their own participation in learning to teach for diversity and social justice?

As opposed to what might be misconstrued as a static identity, a way of 'being' emphasizes a dynamic process (Hartner, 1999). Through social and cultural contexts, learners bring personal feelings, beliefs, motives and specialized ways of knowing and doing to accomplish various elements of their work (Burke, 1945). A notion of cultivating humanity then must be utilized in teacher education spaces, with the need to support learners to develop skills in tandem with practical knowledge to put what was learned to good use. According to Herrenkohl & Mertl:

> It will be an initially unfamiliar world as they take off on a journey to becoming a teacher, but we must provide opportunities to for them to see how this new world connects to the personal worlds they already know, and encouraging them to become engaged participants who in turn change the intellectual, social and cultural landscape as a result of their own work (2010).

Alison also offers perspectives into the various aspects of formal teacher education settings and structures. We must recognize first who is in teacher education programs and who is teaching in our classrooms. In what ways are we deliberate and intentional with purpose, framing, and delivery in teacher learning? What do teachers do with the knowledge attained? In crafting productive and meaningful learning, we can turn to Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) notion of the relationships of knowledge and practice. These researchers acknowledge various conceptions of how teachers learn, and of the intellectual, social, and organizational structures inherent in supporting one's learning (1999). These different conceptions of teacher education constitute varying ways in which we might improve teacher training and professional development. Cochran-Smith and Lytle present concepts of "knowledge-for-practice",

commonly referred to as formal knowledge and theory, as well as "knowledge-in-practice," or what might be considered essential or practical knowledge that is applied in classroom settings. They then proceed to introduce "knowledge-*of*-practice", which is not a term that divides a devised universal, formal knowledge from practical, applicable knowledge. Instead, it takes into account the idea that the necessary knowledge for one to teach well is generated upon treating one's classroom as spaces for intentional investigation while also taking into account that the knowledge gained and learned from other life spaces is "generative material for interrogation and interpretation" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p. 250). This goes to say that teachers learn when they bring about knowledge of practice by connecting the larger cultural, social and political factors at play in the context of inquiry communities to then construct their work (1999).

This paper documents Alison's journey. She is a teacher who has learned a lot, continues to learn, and is trying to practice teaching for social justice. It is a struggle sometimes and admits it is imperfect, too. The tensions and struggles that are embedded in the data from this study demonstrates that learning to teach in culturally responsive ways is not easy. It is difficult, messy and fraught with tensions. While texts such as Gloria Ladson-Billings' *Dreamkeepers* (1994) offers ways that teaching goes well, here I offer evidence of some of the challenges and complexities in learning to be an equitable and socially just educator.

This work contributes in various ways to the field of education. For our pre-service and in-service teachers, we acknowledge that there is no tried and true method when it comes to learning to support our culturally and linguistically diverse learners. This research demonstrates the various contrasts of doing this work, both the proclaimed heartening and disheartening aspects of learning to teach for diversity and social justice. For teacher educators, it is

worthwhile to note that there can be no script or guideline to adhere to when it comes to educating those who choose to work in this field. We realize the inherent messiness of this work. In teacher education spaces where learning to support culturally and linguistically diverse learners has been presented as a straightforward matter of adopting the "right" attitudes and best practices, it was important here to portray the real life messiness of teaching and learning to teach for social justice and diversity. It is valuable so that teachers understand the difficulty of what they are taking on and can develop tools and networks that help them cope instead of feeling inadequate and burned out. Stories of educators who are undertaking the work and who have experienced some success are especially important to help teachers realize that they are not alone in the journey of learning to teach for diversity and social justice. Along with shortcomings and setbacks that arise, it is important to acknowledge the successes and growth that are worth celebrating and building on.

Alison's perspectives offer a deeper understanding of the process of how one learns to teach for diversity and social justice. Rather than a clear and seamless sequence that takes place solely in teacher education spaces, her words speak to the intricate complexities of her journey as an educator committed to supporting her culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Her insights provide teacher educators with considerations for how to structure and enact teacher training opportunities. With these concepts in mind as educators set out to work in schools, how then might institutions and district administration guide further individual and collective development for their teachers so that they are engaged in informed and collaborative spaces for continued learning? We must consider the experiences and voices of the educators doing this work. How do we continue to move forward together? Let's hear it from the teachers.

Chapter 4

Learning from experience(s): What five educators can teach us about working in culturally and linguistically diverse settings

Learning from teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms

Amy

Challenge inequality. Inspire creativity. Drive social change. Messages such as these were central to the mission statement of Amy's teacher education program, an institution committed to teaching for diversity and social justice. As her field experience supervisor, her strong work ethic and commitment to teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were evident. As a White, middle-class female, as is the majority of U.S. teachers, she requested a diverse school setting specifically for her practicum and student teaching placement as she aimed to make a positive impact in underserved communities. Our post-observation debriefs were laden with her reflections of how she aimed to support her students of diverse cultural backgrounds and linguistic capabilities.

I believed that Amy was a going to be a great teacher, an asset to the school privileged enough to employ her. After accepting a teaching position in an urban high school in a large metropolitan city upon graduation, imagine the disheartenment I felt to hear that she was leaving teaching after just one year. Stories such as Amy's are unfortunately not that uncommon. She is one of many teachers who have expressed to me feeling unprepared and unable to support learners in diverse settings. I came away with the news of Amy's resignation feeling that as her teacher education instructor I had let her down, wondering "*How do we as teacher educators ensure that teachers are knowledgeable and confident to support today's culturally and linguistically diverse students?"*

The need to be attentive to how teachers are trained for diversity and social justice education

Today's increasingly diverse schools need teachers who possess the knowledge and ability to support learners of various life experiences and backgrounds. Human beings are never the same in each and every context, making education a richer, more complex, and more difficult enterprise to organize and implement than previously envisioned (Ladson-Billings, 2004). According to Apple, those who wish to take on teaching in a global world must understand global realities much better than they often do today (2011).

Gloria Ladson-Billings' *The Dreamkeepers (*1994) offered the voices of educators and their experiences teaching African American children. It represents a beginning look at ways that teachers can systematically incorporate student culture and experiences into the learning setting as knowledge that contributes to the collective learning of the classroom community. Ladson-Billings urges for this type of research to continue in order to bridge the theoretical and practical, and more importantly to be looking for exemplary practice in classrooms and communities to inform and better our practices as teacher educators (1994).

A report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ, 2013) built on the view that pre-service teacher education did not lead to improved student learning, portraying teacher education as mediocre (cited in Sleeter, 2014). Sleeter (2014) in her analysis of teacher training programs to inform teacher education policy asked "What kind of research in teacher education would best inform policy, and to what extent are teacher educators engaged in that research?" (p. 146). The research, being fragmented and often narrowly focused, was problematic and usually not directly connected to a shared research agenda on teacher education. It did not situate teacher

educators in a strong position to craft evidence-based narratives in teacher education. Given the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in U.S. classrooms and around the world, Sleeter describes the revelation of seeing so little research devoted to complexities in learning to teach diverse students well (2014). There is a caution of policy advocacy based on ideology more than evidence (2014), stating an urgency of this inquiry with compelling data to inform teacher education. Nieto (2006) took up the challenge of how to prepare teachers for diverse classrooms by exploring some essential questions for teacher preparation given our current global context. She asked, how might schools of education prepare teachers and future teachers for classrooms that are diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, nationality, language and other differences? What kinds of dispositions and abilities might teachers need to teach in today's diverse schools, and how can they develop them? "It is generally accepted that research on what works, where and for whom is needed in order to improve both teacher education and classroom practice, especially as these pertain to teaching students from diverse backgrounds" (2006, p. 457).

What can we learn from teachers doing this work?

This article draws on dissertation data from a larger, broader study of inquiry that explored the experiences of early-service teachers and the (a) successes, (b) challenges/barriers, and (c) supports and resources they encountered in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Specifically, I asked "How do early service educators who are committed to teaching for diversity and social justice navigate cultural and linguistic differences?" The research utilized a year-long case study analysis of five early service K-12 teachers recruited through community nomination (Foster, 1997) by district administrators as educators committed to teaching for diversity and social justice. Grounded in phenomenological perspective and inquiry that focuses

on lived experiences (van Manen, 1997), it was essential to recruit a group of individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon, the act of 'teaching for diversity and social justice'. All five teachers identified as white English-speaking females. Teachers were offered semi-structured, open-ended questions that allowed them to delve deeply into what they encounter as teachers in diverse classrooms. This is what I learned from five teachers after one year with them in their classrooms.

Participant name	**Years of teaching experience**	**Grade level/subject**
Anna	5	Kindergarten at East Meadow Elementary
Alison	5	3rd grade at Westside Elementary
Kaitlyn	3	Middle school 5th grade at Kingston Middle School
Diane	5	Middle school Special education at Kingston Middle School
Natasha	4	High school English and Special education at Carter Community School

We need to honor difference and diversity

We must honor difference and diversity. This took the form of incorporating instructional connections to bring to light the knowledge and expertise that students contribute to the classroom, and also building community to help create a space where students felt valued and safe. Natasha, a high school English and Special Education teacher, reflected on feeling proud of how students were demonstrating what they know in learning spaces and in different ways. When teaching her 'Zombie Epidemiology' seminar, students pondered questions such as 'Are zombies real? If there was such a thing as "zombieness" how would it spread? She reports

feeling connected with her students while presenting storylines similar to the Walking Dead, a television series in which she knew many of her students were fans. She shared with students how social and political factors, such as in their own lived realities, often combine with science to create complex situations that put lives at risk. Students explored these themes related to Ebola outbreaks in the Congo and Sierra Leone, and came prepared to model best strategies for taking over the world using a pathogen that attacks humans. This prompted students to document results in a scientific and technical writing piece. According to Natasha, it was a tremendous effort of "trying to pull in their own personal experiences and background knowledge and connections." She was delighted to see how one student in particular, who possessed knowledge that contributed to achievement of learning goals and deeper understanding of concepts, was getting beyond concepts of DNA and really getting down to the real minutiae of what they could accomplish with the scientific method.

Perspectives was a literacy-based course that came out of an expressed need from school faculty for students to have opportunities to strengthen critical thinking and digital media literacy skills. Natasha shared the notion of students living in an age of misinformation. She expressed a necessity for students to be thoughtful and thorough in their process of researching a social topic that is of interest to them while fostering a classroom climate culture for students to be comfortable. One particularly reclusive but bright student, Alana, connected with various social justice topics through the specific, reflective writing prompts that Natasha presented. Natasha felt a sense of pride in witnessing Alana open us and share her prior knowledge and expertise.

Third grade teacher Alison described the need to recognize where students were at in their learning journey and her efforts to work in an assets-based approach in helping support them. In order for her students to learn and be successful in the classroom "they need to feel this is a safe place for them." Together with her class creating classroom norms, she felt uplifted in a community space they had established together. Here, they all can feel safe in their actions and feel safe that others will communicate and respond in a respectful way because that is what the expectation is. Alison strives to make it feel as normal as possible that people are different, consistently talking to students about how differences can bring them closer together." With the norm of lifting each other up, as a community they talked about the specific ways they would lift one another up. She recognizes that her students practice different traditions at home and makes a concerted effort to acknowledge and celebrate them. With certain holidays such as Christmas, she understands that not everybody celebrates and has resulted in her thinking, "I need to make it normal." She communicates to her class consistently that they do not always do the same thing. While noting its importance, Alison also reported this task as trying and exhausting, reporting "I don't know all the things". She shared feeling overwhelmed in doing this work, uninformed of the various cultural backgrounds and knowledge that students possess and how to bring those attributes to light in learning spaces.

Breaking down cultural and linguistic barriers is really hard

Relating to students of different cultural backgrounds and who spoke different languages proved challenging, not only in regards to their experiences as classroom teachers but also in how the disconnects impact the students themselves. Considering that Anna's kindergarten students are culturally and linguistically diverse learners, she shared that their life experiences are quite

different than hers as a white middle-class woman from the midwestern region of the United States. “And so coming into the school, where they're being bussed from pretty far away to this brand new neighborhood that they don't know anything about is hard. And now they're just supposed to trust me, because I'm a teacher. That's just not how it works.” Anna claimed feeling disconnected, and that she needed to prioritize and keep working on building relationships with not just the students, but with also the families. She asks herself what are some strategies that can help bridge that disconnect between her own lived experiences and those of her 5-year old students?

Diane’s accounts of frustration arose when talking about a new student to her eighth grade special education classroom. She felt flustered and scrambled for resources, brainstorming multi-faceted considerations for supporting a student who had recently moved to the district wherein all family members spoke a language other than English. The student had no real formal schooling experience and is also deaf. It was a lot of learning to deal with and navigate a lot of different systems. She kept asking, “How am I supposed to make this work for the family?” In more detail, Diane shared the impact of her perceived inability to make connections in regards to achieving learning goals. Even with continuous intention to get to know her students more closely, the reality is that she has experiences and perspectives that differ greatly from that of her special education students. In sharing about her efforts for her students to connect during math class, she noted the challenge of crafting meaningful and relevant learning opportunities: “Sometimes story problems work real well for kids. However, they might be presented with a random character going somewhere and doing something. And sometimes they don't connect, because it's not their experience, especially for our kiddos that are on the spectrum.” They need

ways to better connect, so how can she make that happen? According to Diane, learning needs to be relevant to students' lives, which is something she shared she continually works towards.

One particular challenge shared by Alison was not knowing the background knowledge that her third graders were coming in with, and where there might be barriers to their learning. "From day one I always feel like I'm asking questions, and sometimes they're looking at me, like 'I know what you're talking about, let's move on to something harder.' But how do you best approach that?" Alison shared feeling unsure of how to find a balance between opening up conversations about what they all bring to learning spaces and their unique differences without singling people out in ways that connote deficit perspectives. In those instances, she felt apprehensive and has opted at times to not bring differences up fearing that effect.

She shared an eye-opening moment at the beginning of the school year in September when her class read a story with a Native American character called Stone Fox. Wanting to engage students in the text, she pointed out traditions and specifically the ways in which Native Americans were named. Students began to offer up the significance of their own given names, and Alison was so excited that students were eagerly connecting to concepts related to the text they were reading. Although, one of her students with a name often associated to a particular culture was visibly taken aback when she noted that sentiment to the entire class. This student became embarrassed because Alison's current understanding of the namesake did not hold true to that student. She shared the potential impact on the student, of his identity in the classroom, and how he was perceived and known to those around him. "I learned to really be careful about

pointing out to a huge group of people that somebody is different if they don't want to feel different. And it's hard to know. I don't always know what to do."

Fifth grade teacher Kaitlyn spoke primarily of her struggles to relate to students of color or who speak a different language "and because I am a white 24-year old woman, how can I have those deep conversations with them?" She shared a story of her African American student who often used the 'N' word out on the playground. He took to calling students who were white that name, which was confusing as to why he would use that term. She expressed concern and talked with colleagues, her principal, and the student engagement specialist of how she might approach this situation. How could and should she approach this situation because she felt that's not her word to say?

Kaitlyn had a conversation with that student, and noted how "for me, or for somebody else who is not African American or not somebody of color how confusing that might be because we usually think of that as a horrible and derogatory term. But for others, especially if they hear it at home or they hear it in their neighborhood or they hear it in the songs that they are listening to or the movies that they're watching… how should I approach it? I think that's where I have to step back and think how am I going to approach this in a way that's not telling them what to do or what to say when I'm not African American?" Essentially, she reported having to ask herself hard questions of how could try to enter into the conversation framing it in a way of where she can learn from the student. For Kaitlyn, at first, that was a challenge of what to do next. She wanted to know but did not know how to approach the situation in a way where she can learn from a student and it is not just scolding. She felt that it put her in a position of vulnerability.

Kaitlyn openly shared other incidents that had arisen in her classroom, in situations where she was still learning how to navigate in professional ways. She provided an example of a very harsh, racially charged incident of her fifth grade students using the 'N' word when they were not African American. The conversation went from her being a white woman saying to students who are African American that they cannot say that word, and how for her it felt like that was speaking on her white privilege. She was unable to understand why they were using that word or what they were using it for. Forthright, she shared that she has learned from these incidents and she will continue bringing that into her classroom when something similar happens again. All the while, her goal always is to know that she is taking those difficult, respectful steps and to keep learning.

Supporting teachers of diverse classrooms: Implications moving forward

These five teachers shared their experiences in teaching and learning spaces. They reported a vast array of emotions and sentiments in doing this work, ranging from proud and uplifted to uncertain and frustrated. These were shared in various spaces and different facets of teaching and learning. A resonant belief is the importance of valuing each learner in the classroom and making strides to connect them, not only with each other, but also to the learning that takes place. While attentive to uplifting community-building practices with the goal of enriching connections, it was noted that this was not a task easily attained. While proud of what they saw their students accomplish through relevant and meaningful learning opportunities, teachers were unsure of ways to incorporate students' funds of knowledge in ways where they could actively contribute.

Many barriers exist in the realm of supporting students of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. When faced with situations that were outside the realm of their own cultural and linguistic knowledge, it resulted in teachers' negative sentiments and feelings of inadequacy. Due to speaking a different language than some of their students and their families, Alison and Anna believed that it was difficult to ever know if students were able to understand them or the expressed learning intentions. Along with language and communication barriers, Kaitlyn encountered situations wherein cultural difference played a role in how she engaged in the learning space with her students. She expressed the challenge of not feeling prepared and confident to address the racially-charged incidents that took place surrounding students' use of the 'N' word.

We must consider these insights and perspectives to inform teacher educators of how we might strengthen the design of teacher training to foster and cultivate ways in which educators can honor difference and diversity. These accounts from teachers speak to the complexities of doing this work. These teachers' perspectives bring to light the tensions of doing diversity and social justice work and portrays its real-life messiness. Stories of educators who are undertaking the work and experiencing some success are especially valuable to help other teachers realize that they are not alone, and that shortcomings and setbacks do not mean they do not also have successes that are worth celebrating and building on.

As next steps, we must examine how teachers in their training and professional development can reflect on their own identities and offer them spaces and discussions around ways they may navigate cultural and linguistic difference in their classrooms. As school demographics continue

to shift, so too should aspects of the preparation that educators receive in their teacher training. Here we have the privilege of learning from these teachers' experiences, and we must continue to listen to the voices of teachers to guide this work forward. Each student matters, and we must help and support each individual in their lived realities. Teachers are entrusted with an immense responsibility in educating and developing our youth. Our job is to support them along the journey. Challenge inequality. Inspire creativity. Drive social change. How do we help prepare and train teachers to do just that? The next time a teacher like Amy with a heartfelt desire to teach and positively impact students comes into my school, I hope we know better what to do.

Mayriza Mijares Butsic is a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has accepted the role of Assistant Director in a K-8 school in the midwestern United States where she will focus on supporting educators and learners with an equity lens.

References

Agarwal, R., Epstein, S., Oppenheim, R., Oyler, C. & Sonu, D. (2010). From Ideal to Practice and Back Again: Beginning Teachers Teaching for Social Justice. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(3), 237-247.

Apple, M. W. (2011). Global crises, social justice, and teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(2), 222 – 234. DOI: 10.1177/0022487110385428

Aspers, P. (2009) Empirical Phenomenology: A Qualitative Research Approach (The Cologne Seminars), *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology, 9*(2), 1-12. DOI: 10.1080/20797222.2009.11433992

Ayers, W. (1998). Foreword: Popular education—Teaching for social justice. In W. Ayers, J. A. Hunt, & T. Quinn (Eds.), Teaching for social justice (pp. xvii–xxxv). New York: New Press.

Bauml, M., Castro, A, Field, S.L., & Morowski, D.L. (2016). Learning from Preservice Teachers Thoughts about Teaching in Urban Schools. *Education and Urban Society***,** *48*(1), 4-29.

Beachum, F. & McCray, C. (2008). Dealing with Cultural Collision in Urban Schools. In G. Goodman's (Ed.) *Educational Psychology: An Application of Critical Constructivism* (p. 13-31). New York: Peter Lang.

Bonner, P.J., Warren, S.R., & Jiang, Y.H. (2017). Voices From Urban Classrooms: Teachers' Perceptions on Instructing Diverse Students and Using Culturally Responsive Teaching. *Education and Urban Society, 50*(8) 697–726.

Borrero, N.E., Flores, E. & De la Cruz, G. (2016). Developing and Enacting Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Voices of New Teachers of Color. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 49*(1), 27-40.
Chubbuck, S. (2008). A Novice Teacher's Beliefs about Socially Just Teaching: Dialogue of Many Voices. *New Educator, 4*(4), 309-329.

Coates, T. (2015). Between the World and Me. New York: Spiegel and Grau.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1999). Relationships of Knowledge and Practice: Teacher Learning in Communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 249-305.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education . New York City: Teachers College Press.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Villegas, A.M. (2014). Framing teacher preparation research: An overview of the field, Part 1. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *66*, 7–20. doi:10.1177/0022487114549072

Cohen, L., & Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education.* (5th ed.) London: Routledge.

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design. Choosing among five approaches.* 3nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Crotty, M. (1998). Critical inquiry: The Marxist heritage. *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspectives in the research process.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 112-138.

Denzin, N.K. (2015) What is critical qualitative inquiry? In G.S. Canella, MS. Perez, & P.A. Pasque, *Critical qualitative inquiry: Foundations and future.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 31-50.

Foster, M. (1997). *Black Teachers on Teaching*. New York: New Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture". In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 3-30.

Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd doi: 10.4135/9781412963909

Heidegger, M. (1927/1996). Being and Time (translation). New York: State University of New York Press.

Herrenkohl, L. R., & Mertl, V. (2010). How students come to be, know, and do: A case for a broad view of learning. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Katz, L. (1995). The Developmental Stages of Teachers in Talks with Teachers of Young Children: A Collection. Stamford, CT: Ablex

Kaur, B. (2012). Equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28, 485-492.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Education Research Journal*, *35*, 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). New directions in multicultural education: Complexities, boundaries, and critical race theory. In J. A. Banks & C. A. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed., pp. 50–65). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2006). Yes, but how do we do it? Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In J. Landsman and C. W. Lewis (Eds.) White teachers/diverse classrooms: A guide to building inclusive schools, promoting high expectations, and eliminating racism (pp. 29-42). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children (*2nd ed.). San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey- Bass.

Laverty, S.M. (2003). Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2*(3), 21-35.

Manning, J. (2017). In vivo coding, *The international encyclopedia of communication research methods*. Mathes J. ed. New York, NY: Wiley Blackwell,

Maxwell, J. (2012). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mcdonough, K. (2009). Pathways to Critical Consciousness: A First-Year Teacher's Engagement With Issues of Race and Equity. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*(5), 528-537.

Moerer-Urdahl, T. & Creswell, J. (2004). Using Transcendental Phenomenology to Explore the "Ripple Effect" in a Leadership Mentoring Program. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods 3*(2), 1-28.

Moustakas, C. (1994). Phenomenological research methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nieto, S. (2006). Solidarity, Courage and Heart: What Teacher Educators Can Learn from a New Generation of Teachers. *Intercultural Education 17*(5), 457-473.

Pasque, P. & Salazar Pérez, M. (2015). Centering critical inquiry: Methodologies that facilitate critical qualitative research. In G.S. Canella, M. Salazar Pérez, and P. Pasque (Eds.) *Critical Qualitative Inquiry: Foundations and Futures*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. P. 139-170.

Picower, B. (2012). *Practice what you teach: Social Justice Education in the Classroom and the Streets*. New York: Routledge.

Pinar, W., Reynolds, W., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. (2004). Understanding curriculum. An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses. New York: Peter Lang.

Polkinghorne, D. (1983). *Methodology for the human sciences: Systems of inquiry*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Rafferty, P. (2011). The Confluence of Curriculum Theory and the Phenomenological for the Critical Pedagogue. *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly, v5(4),* 385-393.

Shady, A. (2014). Negotiating cultural differences in urban science education: an overview of teacher's first-hand experience reflection of cogen journey. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 9*, 31–51.

Sharma, S. (2005). Multicultural education: Teachers' Perceptions and Preparation. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning, 2*(5), 53-63.

Sleeter C. (2014). Toward teacher education research that informs policy. *Educational Researcher, 43*(3), 146-153. doi:10.3102/0013189X14528752

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Stake, R. (2000). Case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (2nd ed.) (pp. 435-454). Thousand Oaks California: Sage.

Stille, Saskia (2015). Identity as a site of difference: toward a complex understanding of identity in multilingual, multicultural classrooms. *Intercultural Education, 26*(6), 483-496.

Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (2016). *Foundations of critical race theory in education*. New York: Routledge.

Tobin, K. (2006). In learning to teach through coteaching and cogenerative dialogue. Teaching Education,17, 133-142.

Tobin, K. (2008). Structuring success in science labs. In A. Rodriguez (Ed.), The multiple faces of agency: Innovative strategies for effecting change in urban school contexts (pp. 83–102). Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishing.

Ullucci, K. & Battey, D. (2011). Exposing color blindness/grounding color consciousness: Challenges for teacher education. *Urban Education, 46*(6), 1195-1225.

U. S. Department of Education. (2015). Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools. National Center for Educational Statistics. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cge.asp

van Manen, M. (1984). Practicing phenomenological writing. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy, 2*(1), 1-34. DOI: https://doi.org/10.29173/pandp14931

Van Manen, M. (1997). Phenomenological pedagogy and the question of meaning. In D. Vandenberg (Ed.), Phenomenology & education discourse (pp. 41-68). Johannesburg, South Africa: Heinemann.

Watts, M. & Jofili, Z. (1998). Towards Critical Constructivist Teaching. *International Journal of Science Education 20*(2), p. 173-185. **DOI:**10.1080/095006998020020

Whipp, J. (2013). Developing socially just teachers: The interaction of experiences before, during, and after teacher preparation in beginning urban teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education 64*(5), 454-467.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Young, E. (2010). Challenges to Conceptualizing and Actualizing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: How Viable Is the Theory in Classroom Practice. *Journal of teacher education, 61*(3), 248-260.

Appendix A: Semi-structured interview questions [tentative]

Research question: "How do early-service educators who express commitments to teaching for diversity and social justice experience teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms?" Specifically, what (1a) successes, (1b) challenges or barriers, and (1c) resources or supports do they experience?

Interview I: Initial interview (September 2018)

This first interview begins with preliminary questions that serve as an opportunity for the researcher to learn about context, teacher development, goals and practices of participants who have expressed a commitment to 'teaching for diversity and social justice.' The determination of the three participants chosen for the case study analysis will be decided on how well their responses seem to reflect administrators' impressions of their work as socially just educators and how reflective they are about their practices in this first initial interview.

Interview Question	Intended Connection to Research Question
How long have you been teaching? Have you been at this school the entire time?	
What drew you to this school?	
Describe your students.	
How did you come to be a teacher?	
Describe your teaching philosophy in general. What should kids learn in school and how do you think that they learn best?	
Can you tell me about what your goals are as a teacher? Prompt for connections to teaching for diversity and social justice: -You were nominated by a fellow educator as someone who really cares about diversity and social justice. Would you say that's accurate? What does that mean to you? How would you define 'teaching for diversity and social justice'? -Probe for pedagogy: As an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice, what are some ways you enact the practice? Can you tell me more about what that looks like in your classroom, on kind of a day to day basis?	

Are there any experiences or people who you would point to as being especially important in your development as a teacher? (Who/what and how so?)	
Reflecting on your last two to four years of teaching in your classroom, what have you perceived thus far as… … the greatest successes you have encountered in your efforts to teach your culturally and linguistically diverse learners? …the biggest challenges you face while teaching in today's culturally and linguistically diverse settings? …supports/professional experiences that have aided in your goals of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students? How were they helpful?	 1a 1b 1c
Thank you for sharing … Let's transition now to your current practices and what you're experiencing in your classroom… Let's talk about how today's lesson went…(Today's observed lesson as a prompt) -What were your goals? -Successes? Did you notice anything that felt like a success today? -What were some challenges faced? Do you have any particular students in mind? What makes you think that? Does this feel connected to… …a pattern of success? …a recurring challenge? …or an isolated event?	 1a 1b 1a 1b 1c
So far this year, what other types of (other) successes have you encountered in regards to meeting the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners?	1a
Since the beginning of this year, what challenges/barriers have hindered your ability to achieve the goals you have set as an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice? -How well-prepared did you feel to effectively address or overcome these challenges? -What of your teacher training experiences helped you to address these challenges? In what way specifically? What might have been lacking? -What would have helped you to better face these challenges?	1b
Since the start of this year, what types of resources and/or supports	1c

have you received that helps you meet the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners? What has been beneficial? How so? What would you want more of?	
(Provide participants an opportunity to share any reflective journal excerpts, lesson plans, or student work as 'talking points' to describe what they are experiencing) Successes? Challenges/barriers? Supports?	 1a 1b 1c
Probing prompts for elaboration or clarification of any of the previous questions: • I hear you saying… Can you say a little more about that? • Can you think of a particular moment when that happened …?	1a, 1b, 1c
Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have any questions for me?	

Interview 2 (November 2018):

Interview Question	Intended Connection to Research Question
(That day's observed lesson as a prompt to start the conversation) Let's start with your thoughts about how today's lesson went… -What were your goals? -Successes? Did you notice anything that felt like a success today? -What were some challenges faced? Do you have any particular students in mind? What makes you think that? Does this feel connected to… …a pattern of success? …a recurring challenge? …or an isolated event?	 1a 1b 1a 1b 1a, 1b
(Since my last visit…), what other types of successes have you encountered in regards to meeting the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners?	1a
(Since my last visit…), what challenges do	1b

you feel like you're currently dealing with as far as making your goals as an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice a reality? -How well-prepared did you feel to effectively address or overcome these challenges? -What of your teacher training experiences helped you to address these challenges? In what way specifically? What might have been lacking? -What would have helped you to better face these challenges?	
(Since my last visit…), what types of resources and/or supports have you experienced that helps you meet the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners? What has been beneficial? How so? What would you want more of?	1c
(Provide participants an opportunity to share any reflective journal excerpts, lesson plans, or student work as 'talking points' to describe what they are experiencing) Successes? Challenges/barriers? Supports?	 1a 1b 1c
Probing prompts for elaboration or clarification of any of the previous questions: • I hear you saying… Can you say a little more about that? • Can you think of a particular moment when that happened …?	1a, 1b, 1c
Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have any questions for me?	1a, 1b, 1c

Interview 3 (January 2019):

Interview Question	Intended Connection to Research Question
(That day's observed lesson as a prompt to start the conversation) Let's start with your thoughts about how today's lesson went…	

-What were your goals? -Successes? Did you notice anything that felt like a success today? -What were some challenges faced? Do you have any particular students in mind? What makes you think that? Does this feel connected to… …a pattern of success? …a recurring challenge? …or an isolated event?	 1a 1b 1a 1b 1a, 1b
(Since my last visit…), what other types of successes have you encountered in regards to meeting the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners?	1a
(Since my last visit…), what challenges do you feel like you're currently dealing with as far as making your goals as an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice a reality? -How well-prepared did you feel to effectively address or overcome these challenges? -What of your teacher training experiences helped you to address these challenges? In what way specifically? What might have been lacking? -What would have helped you to better face these challenges?	1b
(Since my last visit…), what types of resources and/or supports have you experienced that helps you meet the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners? What has been beneficial? How so? What would you want more of?	1c
(Provide participants an opportunity to share any reflective journal excerpts, lesson plans, or student work as 'talking points' to describe what they are experiencing) Successes? Challenges/barriers? Supports?	 1a 1b 1c
Probing questions for elaboration or clarification: • I hear you saying… Can you say a little more about that? • Can you think of a particular moment	1a, 1b, 1c

when that happened …?	
Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have any questions for me?	1a, 1b, 1c

Interview 4 (March 2019):

Interview Question	Intended Connection to Research Question
(That day's observed lesson as a prompt to start the conversation) Let's start with your thoughts about how today's lesson went… -What were your goals? -Successes? Did you notice anything that felt like a success today? -What were some challenges faced? Do you have any particular students in mind? What makes you think that? Does this feel connected to… …a pattern of success? …a recurring challenge? …or an isolated event?	 1a 1b 1a 1b 1a, 1b
(Since my last visit…), what other types of successes have you encountered in regards to meeting the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners?	1a
(Since my last visit…), what challenges do you feel like you're currently dealing with as far as making your goals as an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice a reality? -How well-prepared did you feel to effectively address or overcome these challenges? -What of your teacher training experiences helped you to address these challenges? In what way specifically? What might have been lacking? -What would have helped you to better face these challenges?	1b
(Since my last visit…), what types of resources and/or supports have you experienced that helps you meet the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners? What has been beneficial? How so? What would you want more of?	1c

(Provide participants an opportunity to share any reflective journal excerpts, lesson plans, or student work as 'talking points' to describe what they are experiencing) Successes? Challenges/barriers? Supports?	 1a 1b 1c
Probing questions for elaboration or clarification: • I hear you saying… Can you say a little more about that? • Can you think of a particular moment when that happened …?	1a, 1b, 1c
Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have any questions for me?	1a, 1b, 1c

Interview 5 (May 2019):

The ending portion of this interview will serve as a closing and final reflection of the events over the course of the past year.

Interview Question	Intended Connection to Research Question
(That day's observed lesson as a prompt to start the conversation) Let's start with your thoughts about how today's lesson went… -What were your goals? -Successes? Did you notice anything that felt like a success today? -What were some challenges faced? Do you have any particular students in mind? What makes you think that? Does this feel connected to… …a pattern of success? …a recurring challenge? …or an isolated event?	 1a 1b 1a 1b 1a, 1b
(Since my last visit…), what other types of successes have you encountered in regards to meeting the needs of your culturally and	1a

linguistically diverse learners?	
(Since my last visit…), what challenges do you feel like you're currently dealing with as far as making your goals as an educator committed to teaching for diversity and social justice a reality? -How well-prepared did you feel to effectively address or overcome these challenges? -What of your teacher training experiences helped you to address these challenges? In what way specifically? What might have been lacking? -What would have helped you to better face these challenges?	1b
(Since my last visit…), what types of resources and/or supports have you experienced that helps you meet the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners? What has been beneficial? How so? What would you want more of?	1c
(Provide participants an opportunity to share any reflective journal excerpts, lesson plans, or student work as 'talking points' to describe what they are experiencing) Successes? Challenges/barriers? Supports?	1a 1b 1c
Probing questions for elaboration or clarification: • I hear you saying… Can you say a little more about that? • Can you think of a particular moment when that happened …?	1a, 1b, 1c

Interview Question	Intended Connection to Research Question
What would you say are the most memorable moments from class this past year? Why do these moments stick out to you?	
Looking back, what do you wish you had known or had that would have helped you to better face the circumstances you encountered	

over the year?	
What more did you want to share regarding the successes you experienced this year?	1a
As this is our final interview, is there anything you want to add in regards to challenges/barriers you experienced (in meeting the needs of your culturally and linguistically diverse learners)? What would you say were the biggest challenges/barrier(s) this year in regards to teaching your culturally and linguistically diverse learners?	1b
What more did you want to add regarding resources and/or supports have you experienced that helps in the teaching and learning of culturally and linguistically diverse learners?	1c
In reflection over this past year, what do you wish you had known more about that would have helped you to better face the situations you encountered?	
What recommendations or suggestions would you suggest to teacher education programs to better prepare tomorrow's teachers to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse settings?	
What advice would you give to first-year teachers set out to teach in their own classrooms this Fall?	
Probing questions for elaboration or clarification: • I hear you saying… Can you say a little more about that? • Can you think of a particular moment when that happened …?	1a, 1b, 1c
Thank you for your time, and for sharing your experiences over the course of the school year. Have you any last questions for me?	