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ABSTRACT

Service learning in preservice teacher education helps students to understand themselves and diverse members of the community, develop intercultural competence, and investigate more deeply what it means to be a member of the community. "Human Diversity, Power, and Opportunity in Social Institutions," is an introductory course that requires reading, writing, discussion, and a 10-week service learning project in the community. The students, mostly middle class, European Americans from small towns and suburbs in Michigan, volunteer in settings that bring them into contact with diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic groups. To study how students' lives were affected by their community experiences three exemplary stories were constructed using narrative analysis. These stories suggested that the narrative is a form through which preservice teachers can better interpret the educational lives of diverse learners and their own roles in those lives. By linking their personal stories with those of children and adults in schools and communities, preservice teachers can learn to recognize the needs, aspirations, and contributions of diverse Americans. (Contains 39 references, and 2 charts on methods in multicultural education.) (LH)

Preparing Teachers for Diversity: A Service Learning Approach

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by Donald F. Hones

One's-Self I sing, a simple, separate Person;
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word *en masse*.
- Walt Whitman

Teacher educators today face the challenge of preparing teachers to work with an increasingly diverse student population. In two recent thought-provoking studies, Ladson-Billings (1995) stresses the need to prepare teachers for a culturally relevant pedagogy, while Cochran-Smith (1995) argues that teacher educators must move beyond "color blindness" and "basket making" towards a critical examination of the role of race, class and gender in the educational lives of students. In this paper I will argue that service learning could provide educators with a much-needed component in preparing teachers to work with culturally diverse students. Service learning is based on a long tradition of volunteerism in American society, and combines reflection on experience with learning on the part of all participants (Kinsley, 1993; Bellah, et al, 1991). Through service learning, students can better understand themselves and diverse members of the community, develop intercultural competence, and at the same time engage in acts of civic idealism (Zeichner and Melnick, 1996; Cooper, 1993). Sullivan (1991) notes that engaging pre-service teachers in service learning helps them develop their faculties of critical reflection, especially on issues of student empowerment and reciprocal learning in the classroom.

As a teacher educator, I focus my efforts on achieving such an educational goal among undergraduate students in a social foundations of education course. The course, entitled "Human Diversity, Power and Opportunity in Social Institutions," involves social analysis of education, especially in examining ways in which schools both reproduce and challenge social hierarchies based on race, class and gender. The course generally requires substantial amounts of critical reading, writing, and discussion, but in my section, there is an additional service learning requirement: My students, most of whom are middle-class, European Americans from small

towns and suburbs, choose from among several urban service learning sites around Windigo, Michigan.[1] In these sites they volunteer with children and adults who are mostly African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos, some of whom speak languages other than English, most of whom are poor. By combining reading, discussion, action, and reflection, this approach to teaching social foundations of education encourages students to investigate more deeply what it means to be a member of a community outside the university walls, and what it means to be a teacher in a diverse, democratic society.

Theoretical/Historical Framework

There is a long history of efforts in the field of teacher education to learn about teaching through experiences in the community. Harkavy and Puckett (1994) trace the roots of service learning to the efforts of John Dewey, Jane Addams, and other educators of the Progressive Era who sought to advance learning by applying knowledge to real problems. At the beginning of the post-WWII era, the Flowers Report (1948) recommended that pre-service teachers become engaged in community experiences in order to break down barriers among the schools, families, and communities. Beginning in the 1960s, thousands of teachers were trained to work in areas of poverty through the National Teachers Corps, and community-based experiences were fundamental to their training (Weiner, 1993). The National and Community Service Act of 1990 has encouraged public schools to integrate service into their curricula. Nevertheless, in an extensive national survey of pre-service teaching programs, Zeichner and Melnick (1996) found only a few cases where community experiential learning was central to teacher preparation, despite evidence of the benefits for participants in such programs. The gap between the backgrounds of pre-service teachers and their students continues to grow, and teacher education programs struggle to find ways to re-orient their students' attitudes toward culturally and socioeconomically diverse students (Paine, 1989; Zeichner, 1996).

In my work with pre-service teachers I have sought to make a connection between the teaching of diversity and field experiences in community settings. Borrowing from Sleeter and

[1] The names of persons, schools, community agencies and cities have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Grant (1987), I would like to explore four philosophical stances that have guided the practice of multicultural education. Each of these stances--assimilationist, human relations, ethnic studies, and critical--holds both a promise and a danger for teaching about diversity: In the assimilationist model, minority students are taught the skills and values they need to enter the dominant discourse (Gee, 1990; Delpit, 1988); however, within the lives of these students, a "divide and conquer" process may result, where home culture and language are devalued, and students are alienated from their families, their communities, and themselves. This, in turn, may lead variously to resistance strategies (Ogbu, 1991) or, in limited cases, to the hollow success of the "scholarship boy" (Rodriguez, 1982). In the human relations model, communication and self-esteem are fostered among diverse students (Zimpher and Ashburn, 1992; Garcia and Pugh, 1992); however, a "don't worry, be happy" syndrome may result, with real social and historical conflicts glossed over, and multicultural education can become the celebration of forgetfulness on a societal scale (Cochran-Smith, 1995). In the ethnic studies model, there is room for in-depth discussion and exploration of cultural and linguistic variations, traditions, and values (Banks, 1981; Gay, 1977); nevertheless, a "tourist curriculum" may result, with cultures seen as exotic, in isolation, and removed for everyday experience (Grant, 1991; McDiarmid, 1992). Finally, the critical model focuses attention on and encourages critical thinking about the relationship between cultural difference and social justice (Freire, 1968; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Greene, 1996); however, a "sledgehammer approach" may result, filling students with guilt without offering avenues for taking responsibility, solidifying animosities rather than opening dialogue (Sleeter, 1995).

When service learning in community settings is connected to the study of diversity issues in education, many of the promises of the four philosophies mentioned above can be fulfilled while many of the dangers can be avoided. Service learning has a critical focus, which addresses real educational concerns within communities in the light of educational philosophies and practices, and provides students with opportunities for critical reflection, and creative participation with diverse others (Dewey, 1916; Covello, 1958; Kinsley, 1993). Service learning has an action focus, providing opportunities to act responsibly on issues of education and social justice, and to become

engaged in meaningful and enlightening educational activities in diverse communities (Tellez, Hlebowitsh, Cohen and Norwood, 1995). Finally, service learning has a civic focus. It encourages respect for culturally and socioeconomically diverse partners in the community and in schools, yet focuses on common relationships and responsibilities of citizens. It offers a pathway toward the *unum* through acknowledgement of the contributions and potentials of the *pluribus* (Bellah, et al., 1991; Cooper, 1993).[2]

John Dewey was a strong advocate for education that was experiential and that connected students, teachers and schools with their society. Dewey (1900) also foreshadowed our continuing problem of an educational system which exacerbates class distinctions, "the division into 'cultured' people and 'workers,' the separation of theory and practice" (27). For Dewey, to foster better learning and to build a more just, democratic society, schools needed to embody service and a sense of community:

> When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guaranty of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious (29).

In the spirit of Dewey, service learning allows for an educational process that is problem-posing, wherein students can identify, investigate, and attempt to solve problems that affect the lives of other members of society. Through engaging with others of different ethnicities, social classes, and language backgrounds, students can learn from and become invested in a larger community that stretches the limits of their experience, their imagination, and their sense of self.

Methodology and Data Sources

"Human Diversity, Power, and Opportunity in Social Institutions," focuses on the problems and possibilities facing diverse students in educational settings. Included in the course are reading and writing about critical issues in education, class discussion, and a ten-week service learning project in the surrounding community. The students in my class were mostly European-

[2] For a tabular summary of these four models of multicultural education and the ways in which service learning can fulfill the promise of learning about diversity, see Appendix A.

American, mostly middle-class, mostly from suburbs and small towns in Michigan, and mostly freshmen and sophmores. Students chose from a number of educational sites within the community, and made a minimum fifteen hour commitment to their project sites. I selected educational sites that would bring students into contact with members of diverse ethnic, socioeconomic and linguistic groups, and these sites included elementary and middle schools, community service agencies, and the homes of newly arrived refugees to the United States. Students kept weekly journals for their project, in which they were asked to critically reflect on their service learning experiences. Once each week in class, students discussed issues raised in their projects in small groups. The journals, critical readings and small group discussions provided the basis for a final case study of an individual learner, a classroom situation, or an institution (Sykes and Bird, 1992; Shulman and Mesa-Baines, 1993).

In order to track the evolution of student thinking about diversity issues in education, with students' written permission, photocopies were made of student writing, including two critical reaction papers about readings, a longer critical essay, critical reflection journals and final papers regarding the service learning projects. Students also completed a course evaluation questionnaire at the end of the term. In addition, several students volunteered for follow-up interviews regarding their thoughts about the place of cultural diversity in teacher education, the value of critical readings and critical reflection about diversity issues, and their thoughts on the service learning component. I chose an intensive sub-sample of six students for short, audio-taped interviews, and three of these students were then chosen as exemplary case studies.

Narrative Inquiry and Analysis

In Keeping Slug Woman Alive (1993), Greg Sarris reflects on the difficulties he experiences and the insights he gains from doing the life history of Mabel McKay, a Pomo medicine woman whom he has known since childhood. He concludes that such narrative research is best envisioned as a dialogue of discovery of the self and the Other:

> In understanding another person and culture you must simultaneously understand yourself. The process is ongoing, an endeavor aimed not at a final and transparent understanding of the

> Other or of the self, but at continued communication, at an ever-widening understanding of both (6).

The students in my course began their dialogues with diverse Others by reading narratives of educational experiences found in such work as W.E.B. DuBois' (1900) "The Coming of John," or Alex Kotlowitz' (1991) There are No Children Here. Students continued their dialogues through service learning experiences in the community. I have chosen to use narrative analysis as a way to examine the data collected in student journals, papers, course evaluations and audiotaped interviews.

According to Polkinghorne (1995),*Narrative analysis* involves the production of an emplotted narrative or story (e.g., life story, case study, life history). The narrative inquirer seeks to configure data elements into a unified, meaningful story. Narrative analysis involves synthesis of data, not categorization. Polkinghorne suggests that in narrative analysis the inquirer must begin with the question, How did this happen? Then the inquirer gathers the data necessary to answer the question, and this collected data is then interpreted and integrated into a story. Polkinghorne (1995) suggests that "the final story must fit the data while at the same time bringing an order and meaningfulness that is not apparent in the data themselves" (16).

Three Narratives of Individuals, Schools and Community

I wanted to get a better picture of how students' lives were affected by their community service learning experiences. Several students volunteered to be interviewed about their class and field experience, and these interviews were audiotaped. After transcribing these tapes and reviewing student writings from the course, I decided to profile three exemplary stories that provided some range in student backgrounds and community service learning experiences. These stories were constructed using a form of narrative analysis suggested by Polkinghorne (1995). In draft form these narratives were shared with each of the three student informants, and their comments, criticisms and additional memories of events helped shape the versions of the stories presented below. Following the three stories I use grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to examine some emergent themes.

Angela and Marcus Garvey School

Angela MacKenzie is a tall, dark-haired woman from a middle-class community in suburban Detroit. There, she says that her "friends were from the same types of families, the same everything." Her high school "really wasn't diverse at all. It was Catholic, very few black kids." Angela notes that coming to the university "was a big transition for me--meeting new people, becoming friends with new people."

Angela felt fortunate to have a large, close-knit extended family living within a few blocks of her parents' house. In describing herself and her own sense family and of culture, Angela says:

> My family is Hispanic actually, whatever that means. My grandparents are from Sevilla, Spain. My mom and all of them speak Spanish. I can understand some, too, but I don't speak it well. We just had a big family reunion and my cousins from over there came. They still do all the traditional things. That's a cultural side of me that a lot of people don't know. Yeah, I look white, but they really don't know that I have this background and this culture.

Because she receives a minority scholarship, Angela has experienced some friction with some of her friends, "because they see me as something different."

For their service learning project, Angela and her classmate Rob spent ten weeks at Marcus Garvey, a charter elementary school with an Afrocentric curriculum. The school was in its first year of operations, but was thriving because of a great deal of parental and community support. Angela describes the immediate, visual differences between Marcus Garvey and the schools she had attended:

> As we were walking down the halls, several things caught my eye. All of the pictures of people that the kids drew that were proudly being displayed on the walls had the faces colored in black. Even some of the snowmen were colored that way! In addition, since February was Black History month, there were many informational posters on the walls about Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. I came from a very white school district where we were stunned if there were more than five black students in our class.

Initially, she felt uncomfortable and "out of place" in this predominantly African-American setting, but became more relaxed when welcomed by the students and staff:

> As we entered the school for the first time, the people immediately noticed our presence. The long stares, the sharp glances, and the

> loud whispering were increasing. For the first time in my life, I was the minority. Never before have I felt so out of place. It felt as if they had something against me. Then I saw a smile. Another smile crept across a custodian's tired face. A friendly hello, a shy wave, and a firm handshake from a student helped to revive my positive expectations about the school.

At Marcus Garvey School Angela and Rob were asked to work individually with two African American brothers, James and Johnny, who were having difficulties with some subjects. Usually, Rob worked with Johnny, who was younger and more gregarious. Angela spent more time with James, the older, more pensive brother who had had to repeat a year. In dialogue that went beyond the subject matter at hand, James and Angela began to bridge the racial divide that had separated their families and communities:

> James finished all of his homework and still wanted to talk to me a little. He told me that he got held back and that is why he is in the same grade now as his brother. Then, the most amazing thing happened to me. I have a dialogue of it:
>
> James: Miss Mac, can I ask you a question?
> Angela: Sure, go ahead.
> James: I really can't ask you it because it's bad.
> Angela: I'm sure I won't think it is that bad.
> James: Can I write it down?
>
> On his paper he wrote: "Are you prejudiced?" I have never been so stunned for an answer in my life. He was staring at me fearfully. I felt bad that he was asking me this question. I kept wondering quickly if it was something I said or something I did to make him ask me. What was even more ironic was that he was working and spelling and couldn't spell well, but he was an excellent reader. He spelled the word "prejudiced" exactly right.
>
> I replied: Heck no! You and I are friends, right? Where would you get such a crazy idea?
> James: Well I just had to make sure because then if you were, you and I couldn't be friends.

Angela, James, Rob and Johnny became quite close through these weekly "study sessions" of two hours. They were able to learn about one another as people, not just as teachers and students. Angela says, "They were really open to us...Once they trusted us, we became like confidants for them." When the boys' shared personal information about their father, mother, and other relatives, Angela and Rob would ask each other,"Should we *know* this?"

For the final presentations of our service learning projects members of the public were invited, and Angela and Rob got permission from Marcus Garvey School and the boys' mother for James and Johnny to attend. They brought the brothers to the university, and gave them a tour of the dorms, the union, and finally brought them to the presentations. When it was there turn to talk about their project, Angela and Rob invited James and Johnny to come up, and to share their views on the experience. Afterwards, Angela reflected:

> When Johnny and James came to the university it made them feel really important. They wanted to meet our friends, they wanted to meet our roommates, they wanted to know *everything*! When they saw all the kids on campus walking around, they said, "This must be so much fun for you! This is great! We are going to college!" I think it really gave them something to work towards.

Angela MacKenzie used her community service learning project to familiarize herself with a school culture and worldview distinctly different from her own. In the process, she was able to challenge the *de facto* racial segregation that often separates the people of her own suburban community from the people of urban areas such as Lansing and Detroit. Moreover, she was able to form a friendship with two brothers, and through their dialogue together they were able to open windows for each other onto new worlds--the world of youth in the inner city, and the world of the university. Unfortunately, James and Johnny seemed all too aware that such a friendship would be tenuous, and might not last for long. Angela evidently sensed this feeling in James' apologetic behavior:

> The boys looked at us as friends, but they also looked up to us. Johnny was always the one who needed attention in class, but when he was just with us, he wasn't like that, because he knew he had our attention. James was always apologizing to us when he was being a bad kid. He'd say, "I'm sorry I'm doing this to you." He knew that Rob and I would have a lot of patience, and you could tell that he was trying so hard to please us, to make sure that we would still be there.

Dana and the "Problem Child"

Dana Goldman grew up in a middle class suburb of Chicago, but she finished high school in a small city in southwestern Michigan. It was in Michigan that she first felt like a member of a minority:

> I'm Jewish. I grew up in an area with a lot of Jewish people. When I moved to Michigan, at the high school I was the only Jewish person there. I saw so much ignorance, and a lot of prejudice. People would say, "Oh, you got *jewed*." Even a guy I wound up seeing for awhile made a comment like that. I was forgiving, because I knew it was ignorance. They didn't know that their comments had serious connotations.

Moreover, in Michigan Dana first confronted racial divisions exacerbated by disparities in income levels. Two cities stared across the river at each other: Dana's was picturesque, affluent, and largely European-American; the other was run-down, impoverished, and mostly African-American. In Chicago Dana had known African-American students in her neighborhood and in her school, "but they were equal to the other students as far as their income level, middle- to upper middle-class." In Southwestern Michigan she encountered for the first time lines of demarcation that separated communities and individuals by class as well as race, and it made a deep impression on her.

For her service learning project Dana worked in a first grade classroom in R.E. Olds, an urban elementary school. The children at Olds school reflected the diversity and poverty of their inner-city neighborhood, yet their camaraderie made an immediate impression on Dana:

> There were a lot of low-income children who had very dirty clothes, and they didn't look like they had been taken care of very well. It was culturally very diverse. It was a majority of African Americans, but there were Asian and Caucasian Americans as well. It was pretty mixed. To me it was nice seeing little kids who were from different cultures interacting with one another, and they didn't at all notice any type of differences between themselves.

Dana was encouraged by Ms. Davis, the classroom teacher, to teach an art lesson to the whole class shortly after beginning her volunteer experience. On the day of the lesson, she had her first encounter with Nathan, and began to document the social construction of a "problem" child:

> The day I taught a lesson in water colors was the first day I became acquainted with Nathan. I began while I instructed the class and Nathan did not follow my directions. I did not notice, but Kendra, the girl sitting next to him, did. She put her hand up and Ms. Davis asked her what was wrong.
>
> "Ms. Davis, Nathan is scribbling all over his paper!" she said accusingly.

Ms. Davis' response to this accusation revealed the extent to which the students in the class were influenced by their teacher's opinion of Nathan as a *troublemaker*, already beyond redemption in the first grade:

> "Just ignore him," said Ms. Davis. "Nathan does not know what he's doing, you know that."
>
> She looked at me and said quietly, "Just ignore Nathan. He's a troublemaker, *there's nothing you can do with him.*"

Dana was naturally curious to look more closely at this boy who had established an early reputation as a troublemaker. What struck her most deeply about the boy was a physical appearance that seemed to indicate a life of poverty and neglect both at home and at school:

> Nathan is a short, thin, pale child. He had an intense expression on his face while he scribbled all over his paper. This particular day he had a huge Hawaiian Punch moustache and dried chocolate ice cream dripped down his cheek. His hair was matted to his head and his clothes were very dirty. My heart went out to him and I wondered what his family situation was. I expected they did not have much money.

The watercolor lesson offered Dana a chance to deconstruct the image of Nathan as a troublemaker and at the same time, offer positive reinforcement for his artistry. When another boy complained that Nathan was "making a mess," Dana went over to observe for herself. What she found was a much-criticized boy engaged in an interesting, creative experiment:

> He was splashing his paint brush in the water. As soon as I walked up to him he stopped, made a goofy face, and started adding water to his already wet paper. He then held the paper up and let the streaks of paint drip down. Personally, I was impressed with his creativity. This same technique was something I used on my own, abstract, watercolor projects.

When Dana told Nathan that she admired his work, and that his was a technique she herself used in her abstract watercolor projects, he smiled, and "for the rest of the class he was fairly quiet."

Despite the apparent success of this positive reinforcement, Nathan continued to be treated as a "problem child" by Ms. Davis. According to Dana, the teacher "singled out Nathan, and students like him, in front of the class" and "she put them down verbally quite a bit." Moreover, when Dana was asked to take Nathan and four other "special education" children out into the hall for tutoring, she realized that there were other teachers at the school who did not hesitate to criticize students like Nathan in their presence:

> Some teachers walking by told me I would have my hands full with *this group*. They said that Nathan was especially problematic. When children hear adults talking negatively about them or labeling them it is very damaging. I think it is wrong to make a child that already has problems feel uncomfortable or different.

For children like Nathan, the labels of *problem child* and *troublemaker* are often attached early, in his case, by first grade. As Dana observed, teachers model this process of differentiating the acceptable from the unacceptable, the good from the bad, and children at school follow suit. To his life of apparent poverty and neglect at home, Nathan can now add a school experience of social ostracism on the part of other children and indifference ranging to distaste on the part of teachers. His status as *troublemaker* has been socially constructed, and already he shows signs of accepting, and fulfilling, this role that many in school see as his destiny.

Stella and Las Tres Marias

Adopted as a child, Stella Henderson was raised in a small town on the border between Michigan and Indiana. She describes the community she grew up in as working- to middle-class, European-American, and religious. Stella says her parents gave her a "sheltered" upbringing which prevented her from really seeing and feeling the rural poverty that could be found in her town, or the structural racism that kept children from a predominantly African-American town nearby from entering her school system. Nevertheless, Stella has a talent for seeing to the heart of a matter, as she shows in her descriptions of Las Tres Marias Community Center and the people that she met there.

Founded by the members of a largely Latino church, Las Tres Marias provides a free health clinic, a food shelf and community kitchen, drug and alcohol counseling, and educational services

for children and adults on the northside of Windigo, Michigan. For her service learning project, Stella became a volunteer in the child services program, which was located in trailer behind the main building at Las Tres Marias. Stella felt a sense of abandonment as she surveyed the boarded-up factories and rundown homes in the immediate neighborhood of the center:

> (There) are various factories, some abandoned with their windows broken out like gaping mouths and eyes. While it is obviously a working class neighborhood leading up to the center, it seems to be a clean and moderately safe area. However, the closer you get to Tres Marias, the rougher the neighborhood looks and the more worn down the houses. Poverty really strikes you in this area between the factories and the housing.

What gave life and vitality to these surroundings were the children who would come to the center after school. They ranged in age from five to fourteen, and they reflected the diverse population of the immediate neighborhood. Many among the younger children spoke only in Spanish. Overall, what impressed Stella most was their eagerness to come to the after-school program and their happiness to be there:

> The younger ones come in with a burst of enthusiasm. For instance, Pedro is a five-year old boy who speaks little English who loves to color and cut things out. The older boys come in with a sense of familiarity. Tomas is a young man of thirteen who knows the room upside down. He seems very intelligent, but knows here very little is expected of him and he is allowed to relax. He and his friends discuss pertinent topics in their lives and bond over video games.

Like the boys in Chicago she had read about in Alex Kotlowitz' There are No Children Here (1991), Stella noted that the boys at Las Tres Marias seemed "a lot more grown up than I expected," children who had to take on adult roles and responsibilities at an early age. She couldn't help comparing their lives to her own childhood within a safe, middle-class environment:

> Some of the boys like Tomas have to be the men of the household. They have to be more mature. On the other hand, I was a *kid* for as long as I wanted to be, with the minimum of responsibilities.

Moreover, Stella began to understand the child services program created a safe space for Tomas and other youth to spend time with friends, off the street:

> It was really hard for me to look at Tomas and the others and realize that they don't have the opportunity to be just kids, and that they

> don't have the places to go to feel safe, to play ball with their buddies, and that sort of thing. They very seldom broke the rules of the back room because they wanted to be there so much. It wasn't a dangerous place. They stayed there for as long as possible.

Stella used part of her time at Las Tres Marias observing the authority figures of the center in their interactions with children. Particularly fascinating for her was Harper, the man in charge of the "back room," as the trailer was called:

> He is an older African American man, short, with glasses and a bit round in the middle. He seems almost a comical character with his constant laugh and gossip, yet the children truly respect him. When Harper is around the children are playful and natural, but not disrepectful or unruly.

Particularly impressive was Harper's attention to each child and his knowledge of each child's family and personal history:

> Harper truly cares for each child as an individual. If a child does not show up for a period of time he calls home and keeps calling until he or she returns to the program. He knows almost everything about the children, their families and backgrounds. The program must take up a huge part of his life with all the time he spends on it.

In Stella's view, the positive relationship which Harper enjoyed with the children in the back room, and which he fostered in the children's interactions with each other, was due to a mutual respect:

> Because Harper is genuinely interested in the children he gives them respect. In return they give him respect. It becomes more of a give and take relationship. The children feel comfortable with Harper around and are their relaxed selves. This is important because when Harper leaves the room there is still an established order. Also the children are learning to respect one another if given the respect they desire from their peers.

Harper shared in the children's games, in the conversations of older youth, and in the free meals prepared in the kitchenette. He was like a kid himself when it was time to distribute sports cards to the children. In Stella's opinion, he spoke the "language of youth," and his leadership came through example, like a peer:

> Harper tries to speak their language to them, not the Spanish in which many of them are fluent, but the language of youth. He is attempting to communicate more deeply with them and they feel that. Harper becomes more of a peer, or someone learning from the

> children and something of a counselor rather than a teacher. He is the teacher of basic respect rather than the harbinger of authority.

Because attendance in the backroom was non-compulsory and sporadic, Stella did not have the chance to develop more than temporary relationships with any of the children. Yet, through her close observation of Harper she was able to see the importance of connecting to the lives of children by learning about their families and their histories, and of teaching respect by listening carefully and avoiding judgments.

Themes in the Narratives

The service learning experience narratives of Angela, Dana and Stella differ in several ways. Unlike Dana and Stella, Angela was able to form a strong relationship with children through her regular work with two brothers. Of the three, Dana had the most opportunity to participate as a teacher of many students, and to observe how roles were socially-constructed within a classroom. On the other hand, Stella had the unique opportunity to work in a learning setting outside of a school, and to observe how an "authority figure" could build a relationship with children based on trust and respect. Nevertheless, despite some apparent differences in their experiences, all three pre-service teachers engaged in a process of building, reframing and confirming knowledge, and their three narratives share some common themes:

All three women had some familiarity with the racial and social class divisions in society and in schools, yet their service learning experiences seemed to both heighten their awareness and encourage them to seek ways to build bridges to diverse youth. Angela began to appreciate different ways in which young African-Americans like James and Johnny might perceive European-American instructors:

> When Rob and I did the project it was such a stepping stone for us. Because we were with them a lot, we could actually see how the two boys we worked with operated, and how they thought of us. It was really different seeing things from the other side. Most of the kids probably grew up in black neighborhoods, and the school instructors were of the same culture and background, so they related better to them than to us.

For Dana and for Stella, the ways in which social class influenced both schooling and life chances were clarified as the lives of inner-city children appeared in stark contrast to their own. In a small way, Dana was able to bring a voice of positive reinforcement to Nathan, a poor, neglected European-American child who had already been written off as a troublemaker by his first grade teacher. Stella was able to learn a great deal from the variety of working class children at Las Tres Marias, yet she felt that she had little to give them in return:

> It was hard for me and other people in my group because we felt that there was nothing we could really give these people. Here we were, white, female college students and the majority of them were Hispanic, thirteen- or fourteen-year old boys. That's a hard age, anyway. It was really interesting to work with them, and yet really hard. I felt that they were teaching us a lot more and that we should give them something back.

Angela, Dana and Stella also learned to respect the knowledge available to them from children and adults in school and community settings. Through her work with James, Angela learned the importance of addressing racial issues directly and with honesty. Through careful observation of the interaction of teachers and students with children like Nathan, Dana learned how a *troublemaker* can be socially constructed, and how a well-placed critique and compliment can help to deconstruct this label. From Harper, Stella learned that it is possible to establish through words and small actions a safe, respectful place for children, even in a trailer that overlooks abandoned factories.

Will these three women continue to value stronger relationships between schools and communities, teachers and homes? From her position as a volunteer within the school Dana tended to see parent-teacher conflict from the teacher's point of view:

> Not only do the children have personal problems, but the parents aren't very cooperative, either. In the school I'm in right now I have seen a parent actually fighting with a teacher who disciplined her son. If the parents are uncooperative and unsupportive, then there is no way that a teacher is going to be able to help a child learn.

Nevertheless, she recognizes the need for greater dialogue between the school and community:

> There are parent-teacher conferences and things like that, but I think that there should be more. Sometimes in those conferences it is just the parents sitting in the room where their children are and the

> teacher talking to them, but there is no interaction. I think that is really needed.

Angela noticed the high degree of parental involvement at Marcus Garvey, and perhaps this is a result of its very specific charter mission to serve as an educational center for an African-American community that may not be happy with parent-school relationships at other public schools. In her description of Harper, Stella makes it clear that she views part of a teacher's "authority" as resting on her/his ability to understand student lives by getting to know their families. Moreover, it was clear that all three students want to learn from, and give something back to diverse children in the community. This interest in learning about the lives of children may well encourage Angela, Dana and Stella to further explore the relationships between schools and diverse families as they become classroom teachers themselves.

Implications for Educators

The narratives of Angela MacKenzie, Dana Goldman and Stella Henderson offer exceptional cases of the role of service learning in deepening the understanding of pre-service teachers on issues race and class as they impact children in educational settings. Their stories suggest the power of the narrative as a form through which pre-service teachers can better interpret the educational lives of diverse learners, and their own roles in those lives. The study of life stories provides both a format for teacher--student relationships (Walker-Moffat, 1995) as well as a location for continual professional development. Witherell and Noddings (1991) suggest that narratives are central to the work of teachers and counselors, allowing one to penetrate cultural barriers, discover one's "self" and the "other," and deepen understanding. Teacher education, then, can not only expose pre-service and continuing teachers to the lives of diverse Americans, but provide them the conceptual and methodological tools to better understand those lives. Critical, narrative inquiry has an important place in that toolkit.

Many of my students suggested that writing a narrative case study of a child or adult whose background differed substantially from their own challenged them to reflect on their own roles in the classroom, in the community, and in society. Narratives, after all, have the power to

raise ethical questions for pre-service teachers. Works such as Kotlowitz's (1991) There are No Children Here, the story of two African-American boys growing up in Chicago's housing projects, move my students to raise ethical questions: Why does the drug trade appear to be one of the few economic alternatives in many poor urban neighborhoods? Why must children dodge bullets on a school playground? Why do many members of our society want to demonize "welfare mothers" and their children rather than address the social and economic reasons for their poverty and marginalization?

The short service learning narratives of Angela, Dana and Stella raise similar moral questions: Is there a lack of educational opportunity in public schools for some children, enough to cause some parents to opt for charter experiments such as Marcus Garvey school? What becomes of children such as Nathan who are labeled *troublemakers* as early as first grade? Is it the school's role to help such children relate better with their peers and society, or to merely keep them under control until such time as they are relieved of the task by the police? Why are there so few safe places for the children of Las Tres Marias to gather and play? Good narratives cause the reader to ask such moral questions. They enable educators to engage students and others in the "realm of practical ethics" on the mutual "quest for goodness and meaning" (Witherell and Noddings, 1991:4). I believe that the writing of narrative case studies of diverse children and adults encouraged many of my students to think more deeply about themselves, their fellow Americans, and the contributions all members of the community make to a democratic education.

Service learning has the power to increase the empathy and understanding of pre-service teachers for diverse learners and communities. In their oral and written evaluations, many of my students felt that face-to-face interactions with diverse members of the community underscored the issues raised in classroom texts and discussions. As pre-service teachers they have begun to engage in critical reflection on their roles within classrooms and other settings that involve power relationships based on race, class and gender. In university settings such as ours, where the majority of pre-service teachers are European-American and middle-class, service learning in community settings has the potential to challenge preconceptions and build relationships with

Others in ways that classroom discussions, however critical, cannot. For this reason, a well-structured community service learning component should be a part of any introductory coursework in the social foundations of education. Moreover, teacher education programs that begin with community service learning placements may be able to encourage the development of a teaching corps that enters the classroom with a better understanding and appreciation for diverse learners and diverse ways of knowing (e.g., Belenky, et al., 1986).

Service learning can also help many undergraduates in choosing majors and career paths. Many of my students were able to recommit to their goals of becoming teachers, and several expressed their desire to continue to engage in service learning once they enter the classroom as professionals. Equally important, a few students were found out through this service learning experience that they were not interested in becoming teachers, at least at this time.

Nevertheless, for several students, the service experience did not appear to engender either serious reflection or deeper understanding about issues of diversity in education. When confronted with settings such as Las Tres Marias where they would have no clearly defined teaching role, some students became frustrated, equally uneasy about merely observing or engaging children in activities that had no apparent relationship to school work. One lesson I learned was to take great care in the future to place only the most independent students in relatively unstructured learning environments.

Other students in the class appreciated the service learning project for putting them in contact with the lives of diverse children, but failed to challenge many of their preconceptions of who was *to blame* when such children "failed" in school and in life: Rather than analyze the extreme social and economic inequalities that separated the lives of many urban children from their own lives, some of my students insistently placed blame on the *family* and its inadequacies for the failure of the children. I realized that this focus on family inadequacy reflected the tenor of national debates on "family values" and the need to combat the particular problems raised by "single-parent families." In response, I have incorporated readings into the syllabus that problematize the social construction of "at-risk" children and families (Swadener and Lubeck, 1995). Teacher educators

who wish to implement service learning must be ready to continually challenge students to grapple with their own preconceptions about diversity in the light of readings, discussions, and reflections on their own experiential learning.

Finally, once trust is established between a university classroom and a community agency or school, it is important that service learning relationships continue from semester to semester and from year to year. Six months after her work at Marcus Garvey School ended, Angela told me that she still thought about James and Johnny, and wondered how they were doing. It is likely that the impact on James and Johnny is great when tutors and friends such as Angela and Rob come and go in their lives. University students need to move on, but it is imperative that teacher preparation programs continue to foster relationships with children such as James and Johnny through their schools and agencies. This will send the signal to the children as well as the schools that the university and its students truly want to work with them and learn about their lives.

In his evaluation of educational reforms driven by the needs of the market rather than the needs of community, Robert Bellah (1991) describes a national contradiction between support for individual achievement and support for a democratic society:

> There is an obvious tension between schools as machines for the production of competitive, skilled workers and schools as learning communities for the creation of citizens. When we care only about what Toqueville called the "little circle of our family and friends" or only about people with skin the same color as ours, we are certainly not acting responsibly to create a good national society. When we care only about our own nation, we do not contribute much to a good world society. When we care only about human beings, we do not treat the natural world with the respect that it deserves (285).

Service learning is one way to begin a critical dialogue with pre-service teachers about the educational needs of a diverse, democratic society. Narrative case studies of service learning experiences offer students a form in which to better understand, and share, dialogues of the self and the Other. By connecting their personal stories with the stories of children and adults in schools and communities, pre-service teachers begin to recognize the needs, aspirations and contributions of diverse Americans. As Maxine Green (1996) suggests, "a plurality of American

voices must be attended to, that a plurality of life-stories must be heeded" (28) if the promise of the American community is to be fulfilled.

Four Avenues in Multicultural Education*

	The Promise	The Danger
Assimilationist	Teaches minority students the skills and values they need to enter the dominant discourse (Gee, 1990; Delpit, 1988)	"Divide and Conquer" process may result, where home culture and language are devalued, and students are alienated from their families, their communities, and themselves; leads variously to resistance strategies (Ogbu, 1991) or, in limited cases, to the hollow success of the "scholarship boy" (Rodriguez, 1982)
Human Relations	Fosters communication and self-esteem among diverse students (Zimpher and Ashburn, 1992; Garcia and Pugh, 1992)	"Don't Worry, Be Happy" syndrome may result, with real social and historical conflicts glossed over, and the celebration of forgetfulness on a societal scale (Cochran-Smith, 1995)
Ethnic Studies	Allows for in-depth discussion and exploration of cultural and linguistic variations, traditions, and values (Banks, 1981; Gay, 1977)	"Tourist Curriculum" may result, with cultures seen as exotic, in isolation, removed for everyday experience (Grant, 1991; McDiarmid, 1992)
Critical	Focuses attention on relationship between cultural difference and social justice (Freire, 1968; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Greene, 1996)	"Sledgehammer Approach" may result, filling students with guilt without offering avenues for taking responsibility, solidifying animosities rather than opening dialogue (Sleeter, 1995)

*These categories are influenced by the work of Sleeter, C. and Grant, C., 1987. An Analysis of Multicultural Education in the United States. Harvard Educational Review, 57(4), 421-444.

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Critical Focus	Addresses real educational concerns within communities in the light of educational philosophies and practices; provides students with opportunities for critical reflection, and to participate creatively and critically with diverse others (Dewey, 1916; Covello, 1958; Kinsley, 1993)
Action Focus	Provides opportunities to act responsibly on issues of education and social justice, to become engaged in meaningful and enlightening educational activities in diverse communities (Tellez, Hlebowitsh, Cohen and Norwood, 1995)
Civic Focus	Encourages respect for culturally and socioeconomically diverse partners in the community and in schools, yet focuses on common relationships and responsibilities of citizens; offers a pathway toward the *unum* through acknowledgement of the contributions and potentials of the *pluribus* (Bellah, et al., 1991; Cooper, 1993)

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