

Teacher Educators' Understanding of Diversity

Painting a Picture through Narrative Portraits

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Often while reading a book one feels that the author would have preferred to paint rather than write; one can sense the pleasure he [sic] derives from describing a landscape or a person, as if he were painting what he is saying, because deep in his heart he would have preferred to use brushes and colors.

—Pablo Picasso

Introduction

Education research literature is rife with images of pre- and in-service teachers in urban settings. In fact, entire publications are grounded in the study of this population (see *Journal of Urban Education, Education and Urban Society, The Urban Review, Perspectives on Urban Education, The National Journal of Urban Education, and Rethinking Schools*). In contrast, the literature landscape featuring teacher educators responsible for preparing teachers to teach offers sparse images of their backgrounds and experiences (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005).

Additionally, images of teacher educators' understanding of matters of diversity are further muted. The knowledge base in teacher education often ignores the background, experiences, and training of teacher educators' *writ large*, and particularly absent are those working in programs preparing pre- and in-service teachers to be responsive to the rich demographic diversity of their students. This article adds to the teacher education landscape and provides a sharper image of teacher educators by investigating education faculty working in a program that foregrounds the relevance of diversity in teaching and learning.

My overarching premise is that as teacher education programs profess a need for K-12 teachers to address the *demographic imperative* (Grant & Gibson,

2011), it is equally prudent to determine if the professors in those programs are prepared to teach diversity content. This study is delineated by the process of creating a painting, in this instance, a portrait, in narrative form, of teacher educators.

As suggested by Pablo Picasso in the opening quotation, I would have preferred to paint the research with brushes and colors. To clarify, the narrative portraits displayed here are not tantamount to narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006) or portraiture (Jenlick & Jenlick, 2005; Lightfoot & Davis, 2002) as methodological tools.

Instead, I employ the materials used to paint portraits such as the stretchers, canvas, primer, paints, palette, and brushes as analogous to crafting this written research. Utilizing a painting analogy is designed to describe the comparable elements of developing narrative portraits to the process undertaken by a painter to produce visual images. As research artists, we can use the analogy to talk about, synthesize, and expand the gallery of information on teacher educators.

The Frame: Teacher Educators

Teacher educators are responsible for the preparation and implementation of courses and accountable for the development of pre- and in-service teachers. As critiques regarding the preparation of teachers persist, examining the experiential backgrounds of teacher educators contributes to a more robust understanding of who is teaching the teachers (Grant & Agosto, 2006).

Cole's (1999) research characterizes teacher educators as each having their "own goals, interests, perspectives, experiences, and issues shaped and driven by personal and career histories, values, beliefs, and commitments" (p. 282). Given their importance to the successful development of PK-12 teachers, knowledge

of their backgrounds and experiences is needed to further understand the viability of teacher education institutions to support their missions.

Additionally, teacher educators expect teachers to attend to the opportunities afforded by working with students from a variety of geographic, ability, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, economic, gendered, and racial backgrounds/experiences (Adams, Blumenfeld, Castañada, Hackman, Peters, & Zuñiga, 2010; Hollins, 2008; Ball & Tyson, 2011; Irizarry, 2011). Consequently, teacher educators' content knowledge necessarily is expected to include their particular subject matter in conjunction with an understanding of diversity and multicultural education. The narrative portraits offered here are framed to address teacher educators' significant role in preparing teachers to teach *with, to* and *for* diversity and must therefore have requisite skills and knowledge to do so.

Reviewing the Literature Landscape

The current literature landscape of teacher educators' backgrounds is scant; however, we do know some demographic data. Traditionally recognized as a male-dominated field, teacher education has progressively feminized (Melnick & Zeichner, 1998; Warren, 1985) and is predominantly White (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Although scholars from a variety of ethnic and racial groups are slowly growing a presence among teacher education faculty, it remains limited.

The dominance of White representation may be explained by the overall racial and ethnic composition of the faculty population in higher education. Villegas and Lucas (2002) state that in 1995, faculty of color comprised 12% of the full-time, tenure-track teaching personnel. In 2005, faculty of color, including instructors and professors at all levels, accounted for

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16.5% of the faculty (NCES, 2007). Turner, González, and Wood (2008) also report 17% of full-time faculty members are of color and that in 2005 2.7% of this total was women. Under these circumstances, it is not unreasonable to conjecture why teacher education institutions are aligned with the national racial and gender trend with respect to faculty representation in higher education.

Few investigations beyond those explicitly focused on diversity courses specifically address teacher educators' multicultural education training, backgrounds, and experiences. However, Merryfield (1996) did examine 77 teacher educators, from the United States and Canada who were purposefully peer-selected as highly effective in making connections between multicultural and global education for K-12 teachers. Their profiles revealed the relevance of family experiences, home life, and community environment in shaping participants' thinking regarding multicultural education.

With the 1996 study, Merryfield (2000) offered a sampling of lived experiences from Asian-American, African/African-American/Black, and European-American/White educators. Participants were asked to write about a significant experience in their personal and professional lives that brought them to their understanding of multicultural education and global education. Among the sources of significant influences were their childhood community, schooling, and teaching experiences.

Taylor (1999) surveyed 78 predominantly White preservice teachers and 45 predominantly White teacher educators at one institution, to compare the multicultural knowledge between the two groups. Taylor found that teacher educators are likely to have limited background knowledge, if any, in the area of multicultural education. Furthermore, the degree of knowledge was minimally more than that of their students'. Taylor's research did not include the nature and composition of teacher educators' understanding of and training in multicultural education; however, the findings illustrate the importance of determining the extent of multicultural education knowledge teacher educators bring to their profession.

Researchers in the field of teacher education and multicultural education seem to agree that teacher educators are not fully preparing K-12 teachers to navigate the sociocultural maze of schools and their students (Banks, 2009). If teacher educators' knowledge is indeed barely

more than their students', what reasonable expectations should there be as they prepare teachers for this area of teaching?

Stretching the Canvas: Guiding Principles

Zeichner, Grant, Gay, Gillette, Valli, and Villegas' (1998) design principles delineate among three facets of a multicultural teacher education program: (a) institutional, (b) personnel, and (c) curriculum/instruction. Each facet includes an assessment of the integration of multicultural education. For these portraits, I focus on the personnel principle.

The personnel principle entails understanding, commitment, and competency in multicultural education as criteria for teacher education constituents to possess. Personnel, including staff, administrators, and faculty members are considered fundamental in fostering multicultural education tenets. Racial and ethnic representation among personnel is a common consideration within this principle; however, attention is also given to academic proficiencies, dispositions, skills, capacities, and affiliations.

For example, a faculty search would identify high standards for an academically successful candidate in conjunction with demonstrated experiences learning a second language or teaching in a cross-cultural setting. In turn, such assets could strengthen the faculty member's ability to be culturally responsive in their curriculum and instruction, a presumed desired outcome for institutions supporting diversity initiatives.

Priming the Canvas: Research Questions

The following research question was used to prime the canvas: what are the backgrounds, experiences, and training of teacher educators in a program whose mission explicitly defines diversity as a component of teacher preparation? The program under study is nested within an urban university located in a southeastern city in the United States. It is a two-year initial certification and master's urban-focused program designed for prospective PK-5 teachers who came to the field of education primarily from other disciplines.

Sitting for the portraits were all 10 program faculty members. Within the institution's college of education, these teacher educators were housed in a department that focused on undergraduate

and graduate PK-5 studies. Reflecting the demographic trends within the college, the department was mostly White women. The program, however, had the highest and only concentration of Black or Other full and part time faculty members in the department, a total of six. With respect to status, four of the participants were tenure track, two part-time, two clinical (non-tenure track), one tenured, and one graduate student.

The Palette and the Paints: Definition of Terms and Data

Data were gathered from a larger study analyzing teacher educators' intentions and observed practices with respect to diversity and multicultural education (DME). Given the breadth of definitions of DME within and across multiple fields, for this study, I defined diversity as reflecting similarities or differences based on one or more visible or invisible characteristics including culture, race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, religion, sexual orientation/identity, nationality, ethnicity, geographic location, age, and language.

Regarding multicultural education, I utilized Nieto's definition (Nieto & Bode, 2011) that includes seven core characteristics:

It is pervasive, permeating the curriculum, instruction, physical environment, and relationships in and out of school communities.

It is an ongoing process.

It is basic education for all students.

It is important for all.

It is antiracist, antidiscriminatory, including challenging multiple forms of discrimination and affirming students.

It promotes democratic principles of social justice.

It implements the tenets of critical pedagogy.

This definition of DME formed the study's paint palette.

The data, which can be considered as the paints used to create these teacher educator portraits, were culled from two main sources: (a) interviews (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003; Merriam, 1998) and (b) documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

Interviews

In 2007 I began conducting semi-structured interviews averaging 90 minutes

with each participant. I used the first interview to solicit information about each individual's background, experience, training, and definition of DME.

The second interview entailed further clarifications and thinking that had occurred since the first interview and preliminary analysis, and a third interview was initiated on a case-by-case basis to refine, confirm, or solicit further information. Participants were also asked to provide their own pseudonym that in turn provided additional insight into their lives.

Documents

Prior to conducting the interviews, I reviewed all 10 faculty vitae and all of the two-year program's 26 course syllabi for terminology and content relative to DME. I further developed a demographic identity data form utilizing the work of Cushner (2003), the definition of diversity used in the study, and considering information from Gardenswartz and Rowe (1994) and Wisniewski and Ducharme (1989).

Participants were asked to use the form to self-identify along various dimensions of diversity. Except for socioeconomic status (SES), no specific characteristics were provided; only categorical headings (see aforementioned definition of diversity). For SES, they were asked to describe their financial resources currently and when they were growing up as *severely* or *moderately limited*, or *mostly limitless* or their own words. I recorded information not provided as *unspecified*.

Mixing the Paints and Applying to Canvas: Data Analysis

The richness and textures of the color of the paints were brought to the fore by applying an analysis that involved an *a priori* and iterative (Miles & Huberman, 1994) coding process. The research questions informed the initial coding matrix in conjunction with Zeichner et al.'s (1998) design principles. I developed second and third level codes by identifying themes across data sets iteratively detailing their respective backgrounds, experiences, and training.

The participants' backgrounds were initially determined by the demographic identity data form and asking them about their K-12 schooling and neighborhood communities. I also noted what one of the participants called *pivotal stories*¹ that provided further information about aspects of their lives and post K-12 education experi-

ences. Training data consisted of their explicit reports on how they developed their understanding of key concepts related to their work. Additionally, I used content analysis (Stemler, 2001; Weber, 1990) of their vitae to gain further insights.

Vitae provided baseline information of the faculty's research areas, teaching experiences, service, and professional endeavors. I also analyzed vitae and syllabi for the presence and use of *diversity*, *multicultural education*, and related content and terminology, a process described in more detail elsewhere (Stenhouse, 2007, 2011). Syllabi represented faculty members' written intentions regarding their course content. Vitae and syllabi were categorized as *opaque* (none/minimal), *translucent* (diffuse/moderate), or *transparent* (high/substantial) in their visibility of DME.

The Painter

As the painter, I held the palette, mixed the paints, and determined how they would appear on the canvas, taking particular note of how the paints contrasted and complemented each other. I did not work in isolation but in tandem with participants via formal and informal member checks and reviews by peers, and disciplinary experts throughout my analysis to craft the portraits.

I also possessed several brushes that influenced the ways in which I approached this project (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005): (a) my role and responsibilities within the case under study as a facilitator and collaborator, (b) my professional work and training in teacher education and (c) my academic and practitioner background in DME. I do not consider my insider and outsider perspectives to be a liability. Instead, I contend that my situated position in the research may uncover nuances rendered invisible to others (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

As a *narrative portrait artist*, I aimed to not only create real-life informative paintings but also dynamic portraits representative of the essence of the participants.

Painting a Picture through Narrative Portraits: Findings

I chose to first paint an individual portrait that featured each participant's unique contours formed by their respective narratives, including baseline information, the transparency of DME within their vitae and syllabi, and their influences in

understanding DME. Although not fully explicated here, each participant shared a pivotal story that illuminated facets of their background, experiences, and training.

In lieu of an extensive recounting of each teacher educator's narrative portrait, I offer a collective composite reflecting their demographic characteristics, schooling/community backgrounds, background identities, cross-cultural experiences, and training.

Demographic Portrait

Participants self-identified across several dimensions of diversity. All but one identified a racial affiliation: four Black/African Americans; four White/Caucasians; and one Southeast Asian. For ethnicity and nationality all identified either or both. Two noted being U.S. citizens and another, who had been in the U.S. for 20 years, also identified with Zambia and Tanzania. The remaining participants only offered their ethnic heritages that included European (Irish, German, Scotch Irish, Southern Italian, Swedish, Hungarian), African, Geechee, Cherokee, and Goan.

Six reported currently being middle class or living with moderately limited resources, two noted being severely limited in financial resources, and two classified themselves as working class. Seven grew up in the same category as they described themselves currently; of the other three, one identified as middle class currently but had one upper class parent/one working class parent and two stated being more limited in resources currently than when growing up in moderate circumstances.

The majority identified as female. All who specified were heterosexual. All grew up in a Christian environment and/or were currently Christian. For those who self-reported, the age range spanned late twenties to late sixties. Two noted having a disability. Six reported being in good health, of the remaining, one was unspecified and three shared specific conditions with which they attend.

One notable finding from their narratives is that they all spoke English as a primary language but only one participant claimed to speak and understand English only. The remaining participants also spoke English and six spoke and understood to varying degrees Spanish (3), French (2), Swahili (1), Ebonics (1), or German (1). Additionally, three understood but did not speak Spanish and one understood but did not speak Gullah and French.

Years of employment at the institution ranged from one to 27 years (average of 6.4)

and program range was one to nine (average of 4.1). All but one served as a supervisor in this field-based program. Each taught at least two and at most five courses. Six taught courses in both years of the program. Their program responsibilities matched their content and fields of interest.

K-12 Schooling and Community Background Portrait

The participants' school and community background portraits reflect the racial, socioeconomic, and cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity of their early schooling and neighborhood environments. Bellraye, Erin, Michelle, Puppet Lady, and William² indicated attending a racially homogenous school setting and living in a racially homogeneous community that reflected their respective racial and class identities. Although Erin's schooling and community was racially homogenous, she reported living in a heterogeneous socioeconomic community.

On the other hand, Ciarra lived within a racially and culturally heterogeneous community and attended a racially and economically homogenous school. Kira's racially and socioeconomically heterogeneous schooling was in contrast to the White and socioeconomic (working and middle class) homogeneity of her community. Sofia attended school and lived in a neighborhood that was homogeneously White until other families left while her family stayed in the community that racially transformed. Retrospectively, Sofia concluded that:

My experiences were different from a lot of people. If I had grown up in a strictly white community I might not have had the more conscious raising experience that I had.

Chameleon and Jamie went to school and lived in racially or culturally heterogeneous communities. Jamie identified neighbors with whom she played and who visited her parent's home: one child who participated in the Special Olympics, another child was transnationally adopted, and another family had divorced parents.

The significance of homogeneous or heterogeneous school settings and communities in the development of identity has produced varied perspectives (Coleman, 1966; Howard, 2006; Siddle Walker, 1996); however, regardless of perspective, schooling and community experiences have consistent implications for shaping one's knowledge and dispositions about self and diversity (Hollins, 2011).

Black/African-American participants emphasized the affirming aspects of a ho-

mogeneous community. White participants noted that going to school or living in heterogeneous settings were positive and fostered their learning regarding race, class, and language. Those who identified as neither Black nor White recounted growing up in racially and culturally heterogeneous communities and afforded opportunities to widen their perspectives.

Background Identity Portrait

As the participants described happenings in their lives, two key patterns became apparent. First, everyone articulated a consciousness about their racial and ethnic/cultural identities and second, they all shared that they were consistently affirmed by those around them.

Who I am doesn't start with a racial context. I have a strong understanding of my heritage and my background.

I was challenged as a little White girl who thought I was awesome or whatever. I went and student taught in Ireland. ... part of it was also to know more about [myself], because I am mostly Irish. I have some German.

I see myself as one of many. One of many intelligent, gifted people of color.

Did I say last time about my dad's side of the family being Italian?...so here's an example of my story...

Identity consciousness. Everyone articulated a distinction between their racial identity(ies) and their ethnic and cultural identities. For instance, Chameleon was specific about identifying culturally and by ethnic heritage and consciously did not identify racially. Kira spoke of incidents in her K-12 school life as a "White girl," but also had a consciousness of her family's Irish heritage and had spent time in Ireland as a student teacher.

Puppet Lady offered her view of the salience of being Black in conjunction with a strong ethnic and cultural association with the collective of individuals who identify as being of "African descent." Identity and the capacity to be self-reflective regarding one's identity is a cornerstone of DME.

Affirmation. All participants reported being affirmed for who they are in their most local sphere of influence (e.g., family, community). Participants' affirmations related to race, ethnicity/culture, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability.

For instance, Michelle, William, Puppet Lady, and Bellraye communicated the relevance of growing up in a predominantly, if not exclusively, Black commu-

nity and the consistent positive messages they received about who they are and the consistent expressed high expectations. Michelle stated:

Well one thing I know for sure is that I grew up in an all Black community, went to all Black schools and it was very supportive, encouraging and nurturing and when you left there you thought you could build a rocket. Even if you can't build a rocket, you thought you could build a rocket. I do attribute that to that homogeneous experience. ... Sometimes people give me the sense that they think there is something wrong with those homogenous settings but because of my experience, I don't. I think it is actually the thing that made me the person I am today.

Erin reflected on the positive reinforcement she received on what would be labeled as a learning disability. Erin remarked she was always made to feel "smart" by her parents and others despite the fact that her dyslexia could have been perceived as a deficit and prohibitive of being smart. Her dyslexia was not considered a "strike against [her];" "[I]...didn't learn how to read until I was in 5th or 6th grade...I...wasn't pegged into a category I could have never come out of or that would have changed my outlook on whether I was smart or not."

Being affirmed in such ways as exemplified is not to suggest that conflicts or contradictions were not present in their environments. For instance, Erin considered the fact that she was not "labeled" and placed into special education but also acknowledged the consequence of not getting the support that possibly might have been useful. Additionally, Kira acknowledged that her parents were open to ideas and encouraged her to question the world in which she lived; however, issues of race (and class) informed her family history, which included her assessment that, "my grandfather was a racist."

Within such complexities and dynamics lay a sense of affirmation capturing a distinguishing reality in the narratives regarding ways someone or a collective group of people fortified participants' sense of value and worth as a human being. Being affirmed as a person is one facet of developing a critical stance towards matters of diversity (Nieto & Bode, 2011).

Portrait of Cross-Cultural Experiences

Unsurprisingly, the experiences teacher educators bring to their work have implications for engaging DME. Melnick and Zeichner (1998) contend that teacher

educators are bound by the extent of their cross-cultural experiences; when these experiences are limited, teachers are left “culturally encapsulated” (p. 88). To the contrary, all the participants shared cross-cultural experiences indicative of specific experiences regarding DME.

First, everyone reported a history of migrating either regionally or internationally, or both, which had led to pivotal experiences in their understanding of themselves and others. Their reasons for moving were prompted by school, work, partner, or family reasons. Five (Bellraye, Michelle, Erin, William, and Jamie) moved domes-

tically to communities unlike the ones in which they grew up or attended school. Three (Kira, Chameleon, and Sofia) lived outside of the U.S. in places rooted to their ethnic identities. One (Ciarra) was born outside of the U.S. and lived in India and Tanzania. As did others, one in particular (Puppet Lady) traveled extensively within the U.S. and abroad.

Second, a majority of the participants recounted times they experienced one or more of the following: marginalization, privilege, or exposure to inequity (See Table 1).

Marginalization and privilege. Marginalization was reflected with a time or a specific

incident in the participants’ lives when a facet of their identity was experienced as outside the realm of the dominant norm. Privilege was experienced during a specific time or incident when a facet of their identity as part of a systemically privileged group was made apparent.

For example, Bellraye shared the experience of being in her first racially integrated setting in graduate school and being marginalized because of skin color. In this setting, Bellraye’s professor presumed her to be ignorant because she was Black. Bellraye further noted the way in which her socioeconomic privilege as middle class

Table 1
Thematic Overview of Teacher Educators’ Backgrounds, Experiences, and Training

<i>Participant (Pivotal story)</i>	<i>Background</i>	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Training</i>
Bellraye (Migrant workers)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially homogenous k-12 schooling Racially homogenous community	Geographic migrations Marginalization/Privilege Exposure to inequity	Self-informed
Chameleon (American Literature Professor)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Culturally heterogeneous k-12 schooling Culturally heterogeneous community	Geographic migrations Environmental factors	Graduate school Intentional opportunities Self-informed
Ciarra (Father)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially/class homogenous k-12 schooling Racially/culturally heterogeneous community	Geographic migrations Marginalization/Privilege Exposure to inequity	Graduate school
Erin (Dyslexia)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially homogenous k-12 schooling Racially homogenous class heterogeneous community	Geographic migrations Exposure to inequity	Self-informed
Jamie (Chain linked fence)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially homogenous/heterogeneous schooling Racially/culturally heterogeneous community	Geographic migrations	Graduate school
Kira (Proposition 187)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially and class heterogeneous k-12 schooling Racially and class homogenous community	Geographic migrations Privilege Exposure to inequity	Graduate school
Michelle (Black boy/tracking)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially homogenous k-12 schooling Racially homogenous community	Geographic migrations Exposure to inequity	Graduate school
Puppet Lady (Civil Rights)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially homogenous schooling Racially homogeneous community	Geographic migration(s) Marginalization Environmental factors	Intentional opportunities
Sofia (The 60s)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially heterogeneous schooling Racially heterogeneous community	Geographic migrations Intentional opportunities Exposure to inequity	Intentional opportunities Self informed
William (Throw away kids)	Identity consciousness Local sphere affirmation Racially homogenous k-12 schooling Racially and class homogenous community	Geographic migrations Marginalization/Privilege	Graduate school

was made apparent with her work with economically impoverished migrant farm workers. A move to California produced what she identified as a “very life-changing experience” that invited an exploration of race, class, prejudice, and politics.

I worked in a school system where there’s a lot of conflict going on in terms of the services that were provided for the migrant population and what was provided for the predominately White population... I wanted to improve what was being provided for the kids in our district by improving the lot of the teachers and what I learned in that process was all of the things that impact teaching....

Others like Bellraye who were marginalized because of either race or even nationality also described instances of recognizing their socioeconomic privilege. Participants privileged by race also indicated their recognition of this systemic reality. Erin recalled the following conversation:

...somebody was trying to say that in this day and age there was no difference. That you are human and that you’re treated the same way and that you have the same opportunities and me thinking, ‘How can anybody think that?’ Not that it’s right, but you know as a White person White people’s attitudes and prejudices... would you trade— ...that you were Black, would you think that you would have had all the same opportunities? ...how can you think there’s not a difference? How can you think that there is not some systematic thing going on?

Although the participants’ acknowledgement of their privilege is noteworthy, it is also important to note that they experienced systemic privilege on multiple levels (i.e., language (English as a first language), identified religion (Christian), ability, sexual identity (heterosexual); however, these aspects were either absent or minimally spoken of during their narratives.

Exposure to inequity. Exposure to inequity was aligned with a time when participants’ communicated having directly witnessed inequity or inequitable acts. Such instances occurred in three narratives, one of which was Michelle’s story of a Black boy who was about to be denied access to a higher track by her fellow seventh grade colleagues.

...we had a little Black boy that had graduated number one from his class but it was primarily a Black elementary school. This middle school that I was at, they track kids and despite his scores and despite the fact that he had graduated at the top of his class, my teammates

wanted to put him in the third-level math group and I said, “Absolutely not.” Their reasoning was—and I can see it like it was yesterday—well, she said to me, “His school is not the same as school over here.” She would have taken a White child from another school that could have been number 10 in the class and would have put them into a higher group than she wanted to put that little boy. That experience, it always stayed with me.

Michelle took verbal issue with her colleagues’ deficit assumptions and racial determinism regarding the student’s success and advocated for his placement in the appropriate class. This experience, as Michelle stated, “stayed with me.” Other participants also expressed being witness to inequities that stayed with them based on race, SES and language.

Environmental factors. Environmental factors constituted experiences participants were afforded based on others in their lives such as parents, family, or community. Although other participants experienced similar influences evident in the telling of portions of their narratives, it was repeatedly distinctive in these particular teacher educators’ narratives.

Chameleon spoke of various experiences with diverse people and places throughout life and being with parents who actively challenged inequities. Puppet Lady stressed familial and communal participation within the Civil Rights Movement as foundational in shaping her perspectives. She shared that:

I mean, the whole Civil Rights Movement was a big, big, big influence on my life; and for me, the whole notion of being aware of who you are, where you come from, who are important people in your life. The whole notion that you’re striving for something and striving to do better in this life than those that came before you. You know that you support others that are striving.

Common features found in the portraits’ were such things as the teacher educators’ racial/ethnic/cultural identity consciousness, their affirming experiences, and geographic migrations. Most shared experiences with privilege or inequity. These factors were important contributors to faculty members’ perceptions and values regarding diversity and subsequent implementation within their coursework (Smolen, Colville-Hall, Liang, & Macdonald, 2006).

Experiential components of learning about diversity are often supported in teacher preparation programs (Zeichner

et al., 1998) however such experiences are presumed to be incorporated with explicit opportunities to interrogate the experiences towards deeper understanding of multiple meanings and subsequent consequences in life and in teaching. As such, perhaps teacher educators’ training offered such opportunities.

Training Portrait

I defined training as a specific source or activity that increased or broadened a participant’s academic knowledge and skills regarding DME. Three categories of training became evident (See Table 1); those who (a) were engaged during graduate school, (b) self-informed, and (c) undertook intentional opportunities. One participant (Sofia) is present in two different categories; one participant (Chameleon) is present in all three.

During graduate school coursework, Chameleon, Cierra, Jamie, Kira, Michelle, and William engaged literature, materials, topics, or frameworks relevant to diversity. They shared:

I think I came to the graduate program looking for, I don’t know, something to help me understand how the educational system had become such—how math had become such a gatekeeper for Black kids.

One class I took...taught me a lot—that really opened my eyes and it actually, for the first time, got me really interested in just history in the U.S. and the world...

I took a couple really good social foundations classes my first year. I really liked the professor that I had. He opened me up to a lot of things about being a White middle class female and being a teacher—some good foundation helped a lot.

I was in grad school...and doing work in multicultural education around science. And reading things about equity and reading things about how certain groups are oppressed and really kind of pushing myself to think about diversity different.

And I was just really engaged in looking at ... literature through a different lens through a unique lens...And so working on my master’s in children’s lit[erature] really opened my eyes to that. And so it’s just learning all of that information...I was just like wow, this is great it, really does cross discipline areas.

Bellraye, Chameleon, Erin, and Sofia became self-informed by taking the initiative to extend their learning and understanding primarily through reading texts exclusive of their K-16 and beyond education experiences, secondarily by seeking

out information from colleagues. Chameleon, Puppet Lady, and Sofia intentionally became actively involved in movements (e.g., Civil Rights) or organizations that facilitated training opportunities to engage diversity such as the Peace Corp or the Anti-defamation League. As Chameleon offered:

One of the things I did explicitly was to seek out different organizations that did diversity training. So I did get trained...I would go to these different organizations and actually experience how they facilitated conversations and what kinds of activities that they use.

Lev Vygotsky's notion of the *zone of proximal development*, applied broadly, might be applicable in framing the teacher educators' training settings as they developed their understanding of diversity with others or self-directed learning activities. Considering what they had already experienced, the opportunity to transform experience into personal or professional action via more knowledgeable others was instrumental to the process.

Portrait of Definitions

Definitions of diversity. Participants' definitions explicitly entailed particular demographics of the participants, such as race, class, gender, language, sexuality, and other markers of human identity; however, the dominant diversity discourse centered on race, culture, and socioeconomic background and, to a lesser extent, language. Diversity included surface as well as deeper connotations not exclusively visible. Diversity was viewed as dynamic rather than static and comprised ideological and experiential dimensions such as ones' thoughts, opinions, and background.

Diversity was not posed as exclusive to particular populations or the "other" but was seen as present within and across individuals, groups, schools, and society. An understanding and valuing of diversity was perceived as necessary for shaping the curricular and societal responses to diversity and diverse learners. Diversity was multidimensional and firmly considered an asset to learning.

Definitions of multicultural education. Participants' definitions of multicultural education encompassed several trends. Participants' definitions included various dimensions and experiences with diversity, such as allusions to raced, gendered, and cultural identities and the notion of going beyond the surface of engaging related is-

suues. They also stressed the divergent ways multicultural education can be defined, which serve to either broaden understanding of inequities or potentially undermine facets of diversity and explorations of power. Additionally, Cierra (born and raised outside the United States) and Jamie (initiator and facilitator of programs abroad) specifically connected multicultural education with global issues.

Select participants offered specific indicators of going beyond a superficial understanding of multicultural education. For example, William extended the definition to include an examination of societal norms that affect different groups of people and investigations of the sociopolitical contexts of these experiences. Chameleon viewed multicultural education as embodied and modeled through the intentions and actions of teachers. Therefore, multicultural education was not relegated to strategies or materials but reflected in ones' attitudes, personal behaviors, and pedagogical practices.

Most everyone did not use the term multicultural education in a research or teaching context. Aside from defining DME as I asked, participants offered additional DME related terms during their interviews that reflected overall program discourse/initiatives or language within the respective subject areas they taught. Terms posed by five or fewer participants included, from most to least, *empowering education, equity, social justice, change agent, critical consciousness, sociocultural, deficit model, citizenship, and mismatch*.

As with diversity, participants were consistent in forwarding the relevance of knowledge and dispositions when exploring definitions of multicultural education. Studying multicultural education involved acknowledging aspects of diversity and power with implications for social justice, but the locales were less descript or assumed, thus only two participants specifically mentioned global implications as a facet of multicultural education. For the other participants the U.S. urban context is perhaps assumed, given the focus of the program. Also less evident were specific skills needed to negotiate the various understandings of multicultural education.

The teacher educators communicated concrete ways in which they were influenced in their interest, commitment, and perspectives regarding DME through their background, experiences, and training. According to Zeichner and his colleagues' (1998) fifth design principle of informed vision and good practice in teacher edu-

cation, teacher educators should be committed and competent in multicultural education.

As such, Zeichner et al. (1998) posit such competences can be achieved experientially, through professional development, within research agendas, and experiences with diverse communities and people; however, the scholars further contend that the level and degree of training and specific engagement with multicultural education and its corresponding issues tend to be nominal for teacher educators. Participants demonstrated active engagement in developing their understanding and expanding their experiences through a variety of means and intentions related to their discipline and role within the program.

Relationship among Documents, Definitions, and Narratives

Insights gleaned from analyzing their vitae, syllabi, and interviews (narratives) yielded noteworthy trends. As illustrated in their respective vitae, three were transparent, four translucent, and three opaque with respect to DME content. Therefore, seven of the vitae reflected at least moderate experiences associated with DME. The remaining vitae reflected minimal or no diversity content. Although evidence suggests that a majority of the teacher educators had at least moderately engaged DME related issues, they varied on the nature and degree of their experiences.

The relationship between the vitae and syllabi content suggest that teacher educators with opaque or translucent vitae tended to draft opaque syllabi while some translucent or transparent vitae yielded transparent syllabi. Notably, six out of the eight transparent courses were taught between two instructors with transparent vitae indicating a direct relationship between visibility of DME in vitae and syllabi. These two instructors also fell into more than one category of training.

Contrary to the document analysis, the teacher educators' verbalized biographies revealed they all possessed backgrounds, experiences, and training evident of their direct involvement with aspects of DME. Examination of their documents and narratives suggest the participants all directly interfaced with aspects of diversity through an understanding of their own race, class, ability or cultural identities; participated in some form of training that enhanced their knowledge and skills pertaining to diversity; and presented constructive albeit varied definitions of DME.

Race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic sta-

tus were predominant in the participants' narratives. Present but discussed less were sex/gender, language, and ability. Excluding the two diversity courses, these findings were also evident in the program syllabi. Based on the definition of diversity used in this study, absent were consistent references to religion, sexual orientation/identity, nationality, and age. Absences such as these are relevant considering a program's mission, faculty intentions, and overall sociocultural implications for education.

Discussion

Our current gallery of information on educators is filled with portraits of P-12 teachers; however, fewer pictures have been painted regarding teacher educators, specifically those who are responsible for developing content-strong and responsive teachers who are able to meet the sociopolitical/sociocultural demands of P-12 teaching.

From reviewing documents and interviewing the faculty members of one teacher preparation program, my results have revealed that the aspects of their narrative portraits blended into the limited literature landscape and provided unique features for further examination of teacher educators' backgrounds, experiences, and training.

Blending into the Landscape

The teacher educators in this study blended into the known landscape of the professoriate, including possessing public school teaching experience (Troyer, 1986), being predominantly female (Melnick & Zeichner, 1998), working and middle class (Ducharme, 1993; Ducharme & Agne, 1982; Troyer, 1986), and professing familial, schooling, and community influences on their perceptions regarding DME (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Merryfield, 2000).

In further assessing the significant characteristics of teacher educators, Paccione's (2000) survey of multicultural educators who teach kindergarten to higher education was used to determine what factors influenced their understanding of multicultural education. Paccione did not disaggregate data for K-12 teachers and teacher educators and the findings suggest that several characteristics align with the narratives of the teacher educators in this study.

In particular, Paccione (2000) identifies training, education courses, books, critical incidents/significant events, mentors, role models, interactive friendships, and exten-

sive cultural immersion as indicative of transformational awareness. Each teacher educator discussed a minimum of three of these characteristics, collectively they discussed them all.

Each described training, coursework, book or mentors/colleagues as influential to their development. Everyone who specified having graduate school experiences (coursework) produced courses with more transparency in their documents expect for one. Those who were self-informed in addition to external experiences yielded a higher degree of transparency.

Perhaps then we should consider that teacher educators' background and experiences would be better served with purposefully ongoing meaningful training with knowledgeable others with continued engagement in what educator Paulo Freire refers to as *praxis*.

Valentín (2006) states that "having the necessary (academic) tools, models and supporting resources in place—to meet the challenges that we, as a people, are confronted with become paramount in responsibly preparing and facilitating diversity" (p.199). I would argue that determining the level of DME knowledge and expertise of faculty within a program committed to diversity is likewise critical.

In Taylor's (1999) study of faculty perceptions, beliefs, and commitment to teaching diversity in teacher education, faculty demonstrated only a slightly statistically higher degree of multicultural knowledge than their students. If the level of commitment to preparing teachers for various communities of students is taken seriously, sustained mediocrity regarding the multicultural education knowledge-base of teacher educators across all disciplines should be examined and challenged.

One challenge rests in how to develop the range of known critical and transformative approaches to DME throughout the teacher educators' teaching and learning processes (Leistyna, Lavandez, & Nelson, 2004). Jenks, Lee, and Kapol (2001) offer that most teacher educators have not engaged in transformative experiences that would support their efforts to advance the same with their pre-service teachers.

With respect to defining terms, participants had ready views on DME even if those were not terms they used consistently or at all in their research or teaching. Their definitions of diversity more often than not overlapped. Their definitions of multicultural education did intersect, but also elicited less overlap particularly when offering any specific approaches or skills.

Additionally, the fact that only two out of the 10 specifically discussed multicultural education in concert with global education is an ongoing disconnect between these two interrelated areas, despite the majority having lived abroad. Vavrus (2002) suggests a lack of inclusion of issues regarding globalization in the teacher education programs is a result of a knowledge gap. Evidence of global education was not reflected in any vitae.

Unique Features on the Landscape

Instances whereby teacher educators did not blend into the landscape elucidated three unique images worthy of further consideration: identity, affirmation, and language. Each teacher educator articulated a distinction between their racialized identities and their ethnic and cultural affiliations within a context related to power, privilege, and marginalization.

Scholars from various racial and cultural backgrounds who have reflected upon and shared their individual biographies consistently advance an understanding of their cultural and ethnic heritages while also acknowledging the role that their racialized identities have in political, social, historical, and economic contexts, and subsequent enactments of discrimination, power, privilege, and consciousness (see Patty Bode, Paul Gorski, Asa Hilliard, Gary Howard, Sonia Nieto, Christine Sleeter, Valerie Ooka Pang, Ana Maria Villegas, and others.)

Each teacher educator in this study also communicated about being affirmed within their local spheres of influence. Scholars repeatedly pose delineating race and culture and the significance of affirmation are means of cultivating critical stances towards diversity (Nieto & Bode 2011).

Although language was evident but not prominently discussed by the participants, it is worth noticing that all but one could on some level speak or understand languages other than English. Such abilities are purported to be instructive in building cross-cultural understanding and fostering appreciation for language acquisition (Nieto, 1999).

Consequently, advancing an English-only movement, such as those often purported in the United States, is likely short sighted. As the linguistic diversity that has always been present in the Americas continues to be reflected in P-12 schools and higher education classrooms, supporting an English-*and* movement may prove more instructive. Being plurilingual would be an asset in preparing populations of teachers

who currently remain mostly monolingual (Schulte, 2009) but will likely be teaching linguistically diverse students.

Implications

Selecting Portraits: Recruitment

When selecting portraits from a gallery of possibilities, we need to look beyond the surface and exercise deeper examinations of the techniques and contexts that shape the making of the portraits. Typically, the response to recruitment is centered on demographic difference (i.e., race and gender) (Irvine, 2003; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008) and such efforts should not be abandoned given, for instance, the overwhelming dominance of Whiteness in higher education institutions juxtaposed against the growing numeric dominance of diasporic, indigenous, and multilingual populations in university, college, and P-12 settings.

However, we must challenge what I call the *demographic default* that focuses on recruiting someone of “difference” from the status quo and assumed to be more suited for teaching about diversity because of their sex/gender (female/woman), race (anyone who does not appear White), sexual identity (lesbian or gay) and so forth. Conversely, assuming a member of the status quo is not capable is also egregious. I contend that background and experience in conjunction with the intentional development of knowledge and skills associated with facilitating DME should be stressed over the demographic default approach. All faculty members should possess or acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to maximally develop the DME potential of aspiring teachers.

As stressed by Zeichner et al., criteria for hire should continuously include proficiencies, skills, and affiliations with DME. Zeichner et al. also specify that faculty should understand, commit, and be competent in multicultural education. This study’s participants were not all from the same racialized or gendered backgrounds and had particular proficiencies, skills, and affiliations in addition to the subject matter they taught. Participating, as did these participants, in cultural immersions (domestic and international), learning another language, engaging DME coursework, might be other indices of augmenting a particular consciousness regarding DME.

As an integral part of the hiring process, vitae are critical indicators of faculty members’ acumen. Translucent and transparent vitae consistently conferred more transparent syllabi. Although some

argue (and was supported in this study) that vitae do not always comprehensively reflect teacher educators’ training and experiences, it is nevertheless a focal document used to recruit, filter, select, and promote faculty. Vitae are a primary source of determining an initial “fit” for employment and its content should align with expectations for teaching teachers about diversity across content areas, including diversity courses.

Sustaining Portraits: Retention

As presented here, the teacher educators’ portraits are not static and should retain their vibrancy. Therefore, rather than just “retaining” faculty, sustaining their opportunities for growth is expected. For instance, although professional development and in-service training are a mainstay of PK-12 teachers (AERA, 2005; Guskey, 1986), its prominence in the lives of teacher educators is not comparable.

Sustained professional development would increase the knowledge, skills, and application of theories, constructs, and practices germane to DME. Keehn and Martinez’s (2006) work with adjunct faculty to infuse diversity into their courses state that “a strong and systematic program of professional development appears to hold promise” (p.25). Faculty audits of the program or other diversity course, making use of the university’s teaching and learning center, facilitated working groups, and participation in conferences/organizations focused on DME might be fruitful endeavors.

Significant to the aforementioned implications are two caveats: First, if those making assessments for recruitment and retention have limited knowledge in the areas of DME, the potential to inhibit more expansive critiques exists. Second, the responsibility for bolstering this knowledge does not rest solely with the individual teacher educator but must be sanctioned as an institutional expectation in its policies and practices. Consequently, promotion and tenure expectations, accountability measures, annual review discussions, and budgeted resources can supply the rigor behind the verbal rhetoric of DME initiatives.

A Proposal

The portraits presented here allow for a deeper impression to be forged regarding the narratives of teacher educators, specifically those who profess to teach with an understanding of diversity. I propose an

ongoing effort to craft a teacher education gallery that will keep pace with the known information regarding K-12 teachers.

To continue providing robust teacher educator images, it will be important to determine where they blend and stand out on the education landscape. This is necessary work to form a more comprehensive picture of teacher preparation. Perhaps then we can more fully understand the outcomes of the efforts within teacher education.

Notes

¹ I applied the notion of *pivotal stories*, a phrase used by one of the participants, to the teacher educators’ narratives in an effort to formulate a composite of how selected experiences led them to their various understandings of diversity. The relevance of *pivot* in the word *pivotal* is meant to capture the idea of a change, shift, or catalyst for action that led the participant in a particular direction with respect to their research, teaching, or thinking regarding matters of diversity and multicultural education.

² All names are pseudonyms used to protect privacy.

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