

Mirroring Ourselves Teacher Educators of Color Reading Multicultural Texts

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During the last few decades, U.S. classrooms have experienced dramatic demographic changes. The 2010 U.S. census report indicates that, considering recent trends in immigration and birth rates, within two decades there will no longer be any one majority racial or ethnic group that will make up more than fifty percent of the total population. Upon this demographic change, the challenges are twofold. First, despite the cultural and ethnic diversity in classrooms, the majority of the teaching force comes from White middle-class backgrounds (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Dilworth & Brown, 2008). Second, these teachers neither feel adequately prepared to work with the changing student demographic nor are disposed to do so (Amatea, Cholewa, & Mixon, 2012; Bakari, 2003; Garmon, 2004; Howard & Aleman, 2008; Kim, 2006; Watson, 2012).

To further complicate this picture, preservice teachers of color seem hardly better equipped to work with diverse student populations (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1998; Villegas & Davis, 2007). On the one hand, preservice teachers of color are commended for their commitment to social justice and their capability to access “the culture of power” in relating to students (Philip, 2011). However, at the same time, these teachers may be “as susceptible to the same resistance or ignorance as White preservice teachers [are]” (Castro, 2010, p. 207).

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We argue that similar attention should be paid to teacher educators of colors' beliefs and practices. Though there is research on White teacher educators' beliefs and practices in multicultural education (Galman, Pica-Smith, & Rosenberger, 2010), little is known about teacher educators of color and how their racial and ethnic backgrounds influence their beliefs and practices, more specifically how they read and teach multicultural texts. To what extent do their statuses as cultural insiders/outsideers of the culture portrayed in the text influence their epistemological stances and ways of reading and teaching the text? How do their different identities as readers, teacher educators, and cultural insiders/outsideers impact the ways they read and teach the multicultural text?

This article is based on the results of a larger self-study in which four teacher educators of color participated in a book club designed to discuss the pedagogical possibilities of Yoko Kawashima Watkins' *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* (1986) and its sequel, *My Brother, My Sister, and I* (1994), in their teacher education courses. Filling the gap in research, we focused on responding to the following questions:

1. What happens when teacher educators of color talk about a multicultural text?
 - How do they read the multicultural text?
 - How do they want to teach the text?
2. How does their membership in the culture depicted in the book impact the ways they read and teach the multicultural text?

In doing so, we add additional voices from teacher educators of color (Gay, 2010) to the growing body of literature on the professional development of teacher educators in multicultural teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2003a; O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008). For the purpose of this study, we also define multicultural literature as "literature by and about people who are members of groups considered to be outside the socio-political mainstream of the United States" (Bishop, 1993, p. 39), more specifically books by and about people of color.

The Novels

The Library of Congress classifies *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* (*So Far*)—the story of eleven-year-old Yoko and her family's escape from Korea to Japan during the final days of WWII—as "fictionalized autobiography," while *My Brother, My Sister, and I* (*My Brother*) is categorized as a continuation of Yoko and her family's struggle to survive in post-WWII Japan. Of the two books, *So Far* has garnered the most attention. The novel earned criticism and praise, including a place on

best book lists sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the American Library Association.

Some have argued that this book provides a perspective of the “losers” of WWII and teaches students about the type of courage that helps eleven-year-old Yoko survive during a difficult historical period (Davis, 2006). *So Far* was also at the center of a controversy in 2006 in a middle school in Dover-Sherborn, Massachusetts, for several reasons, including its description of Korean people as aggressors following 45 years of colonization by Japan. Parents wanted the book to be removed from the sixth-grade curriculum due to the violence portrayed in the novel, in particular the scene where Koreans are killing and raping Japanese. Critics were also concerned that fiction such as *So Far* can provide students with misconceptions about certain cultures and teach a “distorted” story about the past (Lee, 2008; Walach, 2008; Eckert, 2006). We chose the book for the book club for its depiction of two countries whose cultures the three teacher educators of color were ethnically affiliated with.

Conceptual Framework

To conceptualize the study, we used research on the reading of multicultural literature grounded in reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) and post-colonial theories (Dei, 2011) as our theoretical lenses in that both reader response theory and post-colonial theories highlight the significance of readers’ identities and positions in engaging and making meaning from texts. Louise Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reader response, for instance, suggests reading is a transaction between the reader and the text that “will involve not only the past experience but also the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader” (1978, p. 20). She goes on to point out that there are different entities, particularly a reader’s stance, which influences a reader’s experience with a text. Rosenblatt argues that readers might take an efferent stance (reading in order to take information away for future use) and/or an aesthetic stance (reading to experience/ to be immersed in the text) while reading.

We also borrow the dichotomous terms “insider” and “outsider” from debates among multiculturalists about the cultural authenticity of creators (e.g., authors and illustrators) of multicultural texts (Fox & Short, 2003; Short & Fox, 2004) as well as from scholarship concerning the cultural relevance of such texts to readers (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sims, 1982). The insider/outsider debate has largely been framed around discussions about the cultural/ethnic backgrounds of creators of texts so that the focus is on whether insiders, those who are likely to share

certain historical and cultural perspectives and experiences, are more apt to create multicultural texts that are truly representative of a cultural group's perspectives and beliefs than a writer outside the cultural group being depicted (Cai, 2002; Fox & Short, 2003; Gates, 199). These same debates have been extended to readers for whom the texts have been said to affirm (insiders) by offering culturally relevant depictions, or inform (outsiders), by teaching respect for and understanding of the depicted group or making those outside the culture aware of experiences, attitudes, historical figures, and periods of the cultural group depicted (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Möller, 2004/2005).

Acknowledging the differences between outsiders' and insiders' perceptions on any culture, post-colonial theories, however, further allow us to explore the complicated ways readers engage with texts that are associated with one's own cultural and racial membership (Dei, 2011). According to post-colonial theorists, readers' memberships and identities are also multilayered and fluid rather than monolithic and static since they belong to more than one community depending on the context (Adler, 2004; Jankie, 2004; Mayuzumi, 2011). Culture is dynamic and more complex than the insider/outsider terms convey (Bertens, 2001; Ching, 2005; Murfin & Ray, 2003). That means that shared race or ethnicity does not lead to monolithic experiences or singular points of view, as groups, particularly those labeled colonizers, impact and influence each other (Bertens, 2001; Gates, 1991; Murfin & Ray, 2003) so that those within a specific cultural group may take on the perspective of those outside the culture (Godina & McCoy, 2000; Yenika-Agbaw, 2003). As a result, the process of reading the multicultural text is complex: "Readers at times resist [multicultural] texts and readings because of their cultural memberships and various identity positions such as female, as African American, as homosexual, as White student, teacher and teacher educators" (Rogers & Soter, 1997).

Multicultural literature has served as a tool for critical evaluation of one's beliefs on the issues of class, race and gender for both students (Beach, 1997; Bean & Rigoni, 2001; Glazier & Seo, 2005; Polleck, 2011; Thein, Guise, & Sloan, 2011) and preservice teachers (Bean, Valerio, & Mallette, 1999; Chevalier & Houser, 1997; Marable, Leavitt-Noble, & Grande, 2010), serving "as both mirror, allowing students to reflect on their own experiences, and as window, providing the opportunity to view the experiences of others" (Bishop, 1990, 2000; Glazier & Seo, 2005, p. 688). Building on these previous studies, we give special consideration to how our cultural memberships and status of insider/outsider of the culture portrayed in the book are defined and how our cultural memberships affect the way we read the multicultural text in the context of the book club.

Methodology

Self-study was chosen as the approach for this study due to theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, we intended to make a contribution to a knowledge-base of scholarship on teaching (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004; Hutchings & Shulman, 1999; LaBoskey, 2004) by reviewing and documenting our own attitudes and beliefs associated with cultural texts and making our learning available to the community of educational researchers, teacher educators, and classroom teachers. Practically, the self-study format served as a professional development opportunity (Cochran-Smith, 2003b; Loughran, & Russell, 2002) for the participating teacher educators of color. It allows participants to spark “dialogue with others,” and in doing so, “gaze both inward and outward” to “uncover culture not as a trait by which to label others, but as a shared experience of making meaning” (Florio-Ruane, 2001, p. 55).

Participants

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2001) was used to invite the participants for the study. Four teacher educators of color at a predominately (64%) white public university in the southeastern United States participated in the study. Two were born and raised in the United States: Karen is Black and female and Jake is a Japanese American male. The other two were females born and raised in Seoul, Korea: Leigh and Emily (all names are pseudonyms). Jake and Karen have strong backgrounds in English, Emily in history, and Leigh in home economics. At the time this study was conducted, Karen had been working with pre-service teachers as a teacher educator six years; Jake four years; Leigh 17 years; and Emily four years. Additionally, the group members expressed a commitment to teacher education and a willingness to be reflective about their teaching.

Process of the Study

Participants met once a month during the nine months of one academic year. In total there were six one-hour meetings. The book club meetings usually took place on Fridays in a classroom in the College of Education, and the discussions were extemporaneous. A naturalistic setting was highlighted so that “authentic conversation” (Florio-Ruane & Clark, 1993) could take place, meaning that there was no-predetermined topic or question about the novel. Topics arose out of concerns about the book. All discussions were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by one of the co-authors. Data sources are consistent with self-study; they include book analysis forms, six audio-taped and transcribed discussions, and

notes from six book club meetings. Multiple data sources and ongoing communication with the study's participants support triangulation.

Data Analysis

Leaning on grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 2007), data analysis involved analytical procedures including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During open coding, transcripts were repeatedly read and sorted with attention to moments when one's racial and ethnic identities were referenced when discussing the text. As the two researchers read the transcripts multiple times, it was evident that teacher educators' responses to the text fall into two core categories: "positioning oneself as cultural outsider" and "positioning as cultural insider." Data were then reread to refine, combine, and eliminate open codes in the creation of axial codes, explaining the relationship between the teacher educators' cultural membership and their positioning as an outsider or insider (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). This process of axial coding resulted in the emergence of three categories such as affirming one's cultural identities, detaching oneself, and shifting positions. During the selective coding, we used techniques such as memoing, drawing a logical diagram, and sorting and reviewing memos (Creswell, 2012) to identify and describe a story line that fully captures the process of how the four teacher educators responded to the multicultural text.

We also ensured the rigor of methodology in this study (Erickson, 1986) by actively searching for disconfirming evidence and conducting member checking (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). Our data analysis centered on the ways in which the cultural and racial identities of teacher educators impact their reading and discussion of the multicultural text, but we also noticed that how each teacher educator positioned him/herself in relation to being culturally involved or detached was influenced by one's discipline. For example, Emily, trained in history, considers the novel as an historical artifact from the post-World War II era and discusses how the novel represents the history of Japan and Korea as well as Japanese and Korean experiences during the period (VanSledright, 2002) whereas Karen, who has an English education background, subscribes to reader response theory where an aesthetic response to literature is valued and encourages personal reactions to characters and events (Rosenblatt, 1978). We also found that Karen employed strategies such as comparing the book to others and questioning whether the author's residence in the U.S. influenced decisions about how the author wrote the book like Jake and Emily who positioned themselves as outsiders. However, our member checking suggests that Karen reads books about other cultures

looking for ways to connect and understand, and her intention was never to detach herself. Thus, we decided not to have detaching strategies for outsiders (See Figure 2).

Findings

The display of our findings was guided by the grounded theory model, evolving from Strauss and Corbin (1990), and further developed from our current investigation (See Figure 1).

Causal Conditions

Two types of causal conditions were observed in relation to how the teacher educators of color understand and envision teaching the multi-

Figure 1
Theoretical Model for Reading and Teaching a Multicultural Text by Teacher Educators of Color

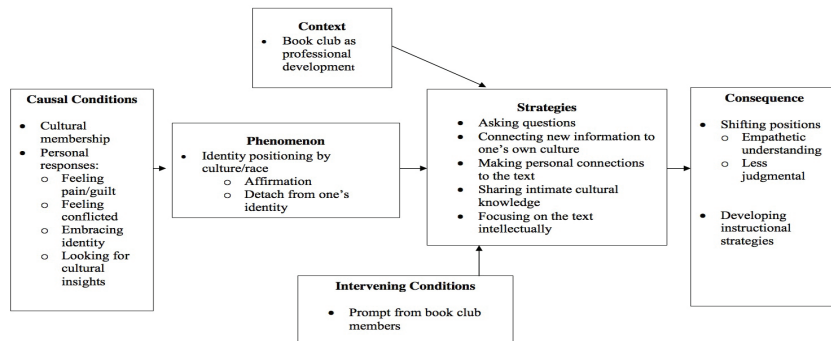
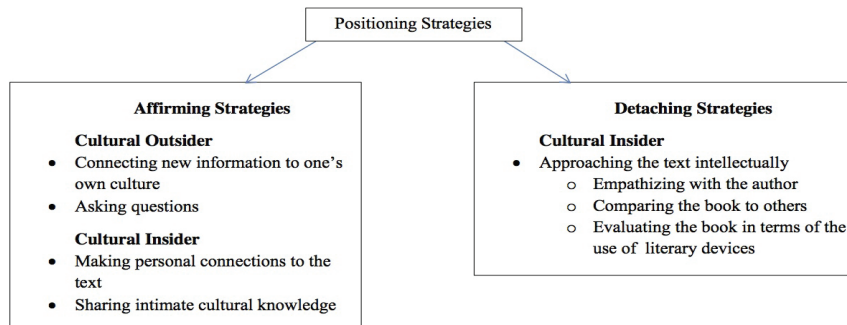


Figure 2
Affirming and Detaching Strategies Employed by Teacher Educators of Color



cultural text. These causal conditions included: (1) membership in the cultures depicted in the text and (2) types of personal responses to the text. The four teacher educators have different types of membership in the Korean and Japanese cultures portrayed in the text. Karen, as an African American female, is an outsider in relation to these cultures. Leigh and Emily are insiders of the Korean culture as Korean American females who grew up in South Korea and later moved to the U.S. Similarly, Jake, as a Japanese American, is also an insider of the culture described in the book.

The second causal condition consists of various personal responses to the text. *So Far* has generated controversy, as noted earlier, for describing Korean people as aggressive and violent toward Yoko and her family. Each teacher educator's response occurred within the condition of their cultural membership, including (1) feeling "painful" as someone who ethnically belongs to the culture whose members began WWII and colonized Korea; (2) feeling conflicted due to the tension between desiring to understand the book objectively and being concerned about being perceived as someone who is "disloyal to the culture" by doing so; (3) expressing pride toward one's own culture and caring about how it is represented and perceived by outsiders; and (4) looking for cultural insights as an outsider of the culture.

The Phenomena Resulting from the Causal Conditions

The two causal conditions—cultural membership and personal responses to the text—resulted in two core phenomena. These were defined in relation to how each of the four teacher educators of color positioned themselves as either an insider or outsider of the cultures depicted in the text. Two of the teacher educators positioned themselves as either a cultural outsider or insider more explicitly by affirming their ethnic and cultural identities, while the other two positioned themselves as outsiders or detached themselves from the cultures depicted, even if they were somehow ethnically and culturally associated with the characters and events in the text. This observation of the two core phenomena supports and extends theories on how readers respond to a multicultural text as both "windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange" and "a mirror that transforms human experience and [in doing so] reflects it back to us" (Bishop, 1990). This metaphor implies readers outside the culture depicted will likely peer at culturally-related experiences through a window, watching as details about the culture are revealed. Conversely, an insider is more likely to view those same cultural experiences as if looking into a mirror bearing the familiar reflection of ways of being and knowing. We argue that the

teacher educators' responses to *So Far* and *My Brother* correlate with these theories in a sense, but readers position themselves in complex and dynamic ways, looking in the mirror and then away.

As stated earlier, Karen, a Black person from the southern United States, naturally positioned herself as a cultural outsider. She started her comments on the book by stating, "I was not very familiar with the history and so I found myself asking a lot of questions that students may want to know." In doing so, her outsider position allowed her to affirm her own ethnic and cultural identity, as we will discuss below. She also repeatedly affirmed her identity as a teacher educator. A pattern we noticed across the conversations is that, when asking questions, Karen often used the phrases "as a teacher," or "if I were to teach this book." Leigh also affirmed her ethnic and cultural identity, but unlike Karen, she did this through her position as an insider of the culture. She was concerned "as a Korean person" that "American readers—kids—will not have the facts" by reading the book only, and that the readers needed "to hear the story from both Korean and Japanese sides." She also shared her discomfort in reading scenes that dishonored her own culture. On the scene where Japanese girls were raped by Korean men while Japanese were escaping from the Korean peninsula to their home country, she considered it untruthful and asked, "Do you believe that rape happened on the [Korean] independence celebration day? I think some of the stories are made up."

In contrast to Leigh, Jake and Emily initially positioned themselves as outsiders, detaching themselves from their ethnic backgrounds rather than identifying with the characters although Jake's stance changed over the course of the conversations, which we will discuss later. Jake, a Japanese American whose grandparents and mother, just like Yoko's family, lived abroad during the war and returned to Japan after the war, rarely positioned himself as an insider during initial discussions. He expressed, "it can be tough to encounter material [like *So Far*] on the emotional level." So instead of identifying himself with a cultural group depicted in the text, he "stepped back into his intellectual kind of mind." Similarly, Emily, who grew up in Korea, was a history major, and is particularly aware of the long history of rivalry between Japan and Korea, also initially expressed that she tried to "stay away from herself as a Korean." She worried that her ethnic identity as a Korean might hinder her from "appropriately" and objectively understanding the text. Detachment from her own cultural identity appeared again when Emily described her role as a teacher educator in the southeastern part of the United States. Explaining that her students were "mainly white females in their early twenties," she expressed that she did not want to give the

impression that she was self-serving or promoting her own causes by including a text like *So Far* in her course.

The Book Club as Context and Intervening Conditions

Multiple strategies to understand and discuss the text as well as its pedagogical uses have evolved in relation to the phenomenon of how the teacher educators of color positioned themselves as cultural outsider or insider. These strategies were also influenced by the context—the book club—in which the discussion occurred. Factors that hindered or facilitated influenced the teacher educators' positioning themselves as insiders or outsiders included but were not limited to prompting from book club members and their professional roles as teacher educators. The book club as a context created prompts that allowed the two teacher educators who positioned themselves as outsiders to also acknowledge their status as insiders during conversations. The fact that Karen positioned herself as an outsider led the rest of the group members, specifically Jake and Emily, to affirm their identities by responding to Karen's questions and sharing intimate knowledge about their own cultures. Likewise, Leigh's affirmation of herself as Korean in turn nudged Jake to affirm his identity and to eventually position himself as an insider. She asked, "Jake, did your parents or any of your relatives have a similar experience like this?" Leigh's questions encouraged Jake to share more of his intimate knowledge as a cultural insider. In fact, in a later conversation, he referred to Leigh's interest and stated, "You guys were asking me about my mother's story," before going on to share more about his mother's experiences without being prompted.

Affirming and Detaching Strategies

Five strategies were identified while the teacher educators discussed multicultural texts. These strategies were employed when the teacher educators attempted to either affirm or detach themselves from their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. These strategies include: (a) asking questions; (b) connecting new information to one's own culture; (c) making personal connections to the text; (d) sharing intimate cultural knowledge; (e) empathizing with the author; (f) comparing the text with other texts; and (g) evaluating the text's literary devices. The strategies are organized in relation to their associated positioning strategies in Figure 2.

Affirming Oneself through the Text

The following positioning strategies were visible when teacher educators affirmed their cultural identities when discussing the text. First, a teacher educator like Karen, who is outside the cultures depicted in the

text, developed her understanding of the culture that she is unfamiliar with by affirming her own cultural identity, asking questions and connecting new information to her own culture. This means that a person who is looking through a metaphorical window or is outside of the culture depicted in the book will not necessarily respond in a “detached” way. Encountering the scene where the angry Korean males raped Japanese females, Karen asked, “What did the Japanese do to Koreans? I thought they [the Japanese] must have really done something to them [Koreans].” She also related the Korean and Japanese experiences during World War II that she had read in the text to African American experiences such as slavery or “passing.” Discussing the part where Yoko and her siblings escaped wearing Korean clothes and speaking Korean, Karen noted, “That interested me, too, this business of passing, putting on the clothes and pretending to be Koreans to get to escape or get to safety, really intrigued me” and “that happens or happened in African American culture and sometimes it still does.”

When the teacher educator is a cultural insider, looking at his/her culture reflected in a mirror, he or she also made personal connections by identifying with the characters and shared intimate knowledge of one’s culture. The first strategy was most frequently observed when Leigh affirmed herself in discussing the text. Leigh made connections to the characters, first Korean characters and then Japanese characters later, by being reminded of her personal experiences. On the scene where the Korean man raped the escaping Japanese girl, she commented:

It [the book] said that no one wanted to help the girls because the Korean men will be angry and bomb down the warehouse. I think this is total fiction. I know the Koreans are angry, this does not mean that the Koreans are vindictive and they planned to bomb down the warehouse.

The second strategy was identified across all the three teacher educators who were somehow ethnically and culturally affiliated with the characters and events in the book. Even in the earlier conversation when Karen asked about the historical background of the story, Jake, for instance, said, “I had a little more historical context which I brought to the table.” When discussing the absence of Yoko’s dad in the story, Emily also shared her intimate cultural knowledge that “he [Yoko’s dad] was in Manchuria” and “one of the things people keep talking about is her father was working for the Japanese army during the war.”

Detaching Oneself from the Text

In detaching themselves from their ethnic and cultural backgrounds,

the teacher educators tended to focus on understanding the text intellectually, treating it as “literary puzzle” (Bean, Valerio, & Mallette, 1999). For that purpose, the teacher educators employed the following strategies: (a) evaluating the book based on its literary devices; (b) empathizing with the author rather than with characters; and (c) comparing the text with other texts. In this way, the discussion focused on the text and its author rather than on the teacher educators’ personal responses to or feelings about the text. These detaching strategies were observed in remarks of Jake and Emily who are insiders of the cultures represented in the book. Jake, for instance, barely identified himself with characters in the text at first, even when apparent connections seemed to surface. He noted, “I almost have to turn my emotions off a little bit, otherwise it’s...it’s pretty heavy.” Instead, Jake looked for literary devices to unpack meanings the author embedded in the text, attending to “how few adjectives there are when applied to people” and how “plot-driven” the text was.

Similarly, Emily rarely identified with any of the characters and made little personal connection to the text. Rather, she tried to understand the intentions of the author. Emily discussed the book in terms of how history is presented by Watkins. She read the section called “Dear Reader”—the section written by the author after the controversy—to the other book club members and wondered how the author’s experience moving from Korea to Japan and eventually immigrating to the U.S. influenced her writing of the book. She noted, “What captured me was that [Watkins’] story really told me about how horrible it was at the end of the war.”

Another strategy the teacher educators used to distance themselves while developing their understanding of the text involved reading [the author’s] other stories and how readers in different countries responded to the book. Jake thought, “it [the story of *So Far*] ended too abruptly” and he wanted to know what happened to Yoko and her siblings, and, in fact, read and brought the sequel, *My Brother*, to the third conversation. He then shared that given his own research, the book was not published in Japan; “there is not some controversy in Japan [about the book]. The Japanese don’t really want to see her story, either. ‘Cause it makes them look bad.” Emily also shared her reading of a Japanese anthropologist’s comments on the book and how readers in the U.S. responded to the book.

Consequences of Strategies for Involvement and Detachment

Two main consequences were observed. We will call the first consequence of positioning oneself as an insider or an outsider shifting positions. Two teacher educators shifted positions from detachment to involvement due to their willingness to empathize with characters and

reduce judgment while discussing the text. For instance, the personal connections Leigh made to the text led to an empathetic understanding of characters. In the first three conversations, she was only able to relate to Korean characters, and she resisted the idea that Korean people could also do bad things to Japanese. Leigh's willingness to empathize with Yoko's family occurred in the fourth and fifth conversations. She connected to the struggles of the three siblings by recalling her experiences growing up with several siblings in South Korea and her experiences as a Korean immigrant in the U.S. On the scene where Ko (Yoko's sister) yells at Yoko, Leigh mentioned, "Their arguments also reminded me of childhood, fighting with my own older sister (all laugh) growing up, so it actually gave me a lot of smiling moments." She also noted, "They used the apple box as a dinner table. That also reminded me of my early years of difficult immigrant life." Her responses shifted due to conversations with her colleagues in the book club.

Conversely, Jake began the book club conversations in a detached manner, intent on discussing historical details and literary devices, but shifted position by the third and fourth conversations. He became more engaged with the text and shared intimate details from his family's experiences in a cheerful and unprompted manner. He also began to empathize with Yoko and her family's hardships. During the fourth conversation, Jake said,

I was just thinking, in many ways, how grateful or thankful that I live in the time that I do and the context that I do. I think within all of us there's a lot of both light and darkness...And to the extent that the good comes out or the bad comes out is dependent a great deal on the circumstances that you find yourself in at the time...[thus] it makes it a little harder to pass judgment on some of the people in [the books].

In the quote above, Jake abandons his position as an outsider in order to offer insight into his personal feelings related to what it means for him to read about a historic wartime from a contemporary space.

Another consequence concerned the teacher educators' desire to develop a list of instructional strategies to help teachers negotiate the array of possible responses to multicultural texts and to help students engage with these texts, which addresses Leigh and Karen's question, "How do you think we, teacher educators, should treat a book with this much controversy?" As a result of thinking about their own responses to the text, the teacher educators noted ideas about preparation needed to teach the text and actual instructional strategies. Two primary ideas concerning preparing to teach the text involved historical accuracy and knowledge and being prepared to offer balanced perspectives. For Leigh,

historical accuracy related to “missing facts” in the book. Leigh suggested that several missing facts were essential and must be shared with students along “with additional materials about Korea.” For instance, she noted, the book tells a story that happened two weeks after the end of World War II. Yet, *So Far* does not say when the story happened. Emily agreed and highlighted the importance of researching the historical accuracy of events in the novel. She also added that classroom teachers will need to be aware of “the complexities of some of the issues and concerns” (e.g., rape, references to comfort women, financial benefits of war) raised in the novel.

Karen mentioned a specific instructional strategy, dialogue journals: “I was thinking about adding this to my book list and having my students do a dialogue journal around different literature that we read.” Jake suggested using this book as a starting point to discuss why certain books become controversial and offered initial questions teachers might pose: “Ok, what do you think? How much do you really know about either Korea or Japan having read this? What do you think you know? Do you think this [book] tells you anything?”

Discussion

Our findings confirm the results from previous studies on in-service teachers, preservice teachers and students that the way in which four teacher educators read a multicultural text emphasizes the phenomena of positioning oneself culturally and, by extension, ideologically. These phenomena also suggest that the mirror/window theory espoused by scholars of multicultural literature (Bishop, 1990; Parsons & Rietschlin, 2014) is apparent, but complicated in that subscribing to “a homogeneous sense of culture that ignored the complicated ways people construct their cultural identities,” is problematic, as “people actively reinvent their cultures in order to make sense of their lives in new geographical, social, and political surroundings” (Dudley-Marling, 2003, p. 311). While Leigh, who is from South Korea, aligned herself with one of the cultural groups depicted in the text and initially used her cultural allegiance and intimate knowledge of Korea to resist *So Far*, Emily, who is also from South Korea, felt conflicted when she tried to assume a neutral position rather than respond in a way that members of her cultural community might have expected. Beach (1997), while arguing that students “adopt stances associated with memberships or status in certain communities,” also maintains, “By responding in ways consistent with the values of a community, readers demonstrate allegiance to a community’s values” (p. 70). When Emily chose not to align herself in a way that indicated community allegiance, guilt ensued.

We also found that given our findings, not all teacher educators of color were actively engaged with the multicultural text and responded to the text in such ways that are dissimilar to how their preservice teachers might. Previous studies suggest that perhaps due to their cultural membership and various identity positions, when in-service and preservice teachers teach multicultural texts, without appropriate scaffolding, they feel it challenging and end up approaching it from a literary analysis stance (Bean, Valerio, & Mallette, 1999) or ethnocentric stance (Dong, 2005). Similarly, Emily and Jake rarely identified themselves with any of the characters and their experiences and tended to evaluate the text as a literary work. We speculate that their detachment from the text may limit important cultural insights that may be generated from personal associations with the characters as a reader. On the other hand, in the first two conversations, Leigh took a firm stance as Korean and did not relate to any of the Japanese characters. As Dong (2005) notes, this stance initially hindered Leigh from engaging and empathizing with the Japanese characters in the book and seeing the historical, social, and cultural context of the critical events in the characters' journeys.

We, however, witnessed the benefits of the book club as professional development that allows teacher educators of color to re-examine their own beliefs and practices in teaching multicultural text. Leigh, who initially used her cultural allegiance and intimate knowledge of Korea to resist *So Far*, expanded her thinking about the text, the Japanese protagonist, and the author's possible intentions as a result of multiple conversations with the other teacher educators. Listing guidelines for reading and responding to multicultural literature, Beach (1997) argues that when reading a multicultural text that depicts characters outside one's culture, the reader should empathize and recognize his/her cultural stance. We believe that Leigh did both at the end.

Establishing a cultural position while participating in a book club that valued personal response resulted in the teacher educators imagining how their students both in and out of the cultures depicted in the book might respond to it, which in turn encouraged them to make teaching central to book club discussions. Dong (2005) notes, "Teacher educators need to inform preservice and in-service teachers of multicultural literature resources and broaden their ways of reading, thinking, and discussing this type of literature" (p. 368). Our analysis supports this and argues that teacher educators need opportunities to become introspective about their own cultural positions (Hidalgo, 1993).

Conclusion

Findings from this study highlight the significant role of a book club as professional development for teacher educators of color in helping provide opportunities for rich discussions that move from detachment to engagement and from individual readings of the text to co-constructed interpretations influenced by cultural self-reflection. Considering this role of a book club, we suggest that both in-service and preservice teachers and students utilize the book club when they teach and learn about multicultural literature.

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