

Her/Him, Them, and Me: Using a Three-Perspective Format in Elementary Social Studies Methods to Promote Intercultural Education Initiatives

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Abstract: Intercultural education, focused on understanding, respecting, and engaging in dialogue among and about different cultures (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2006) adds to multicultural educational efforts by addressing diverse needs in learning and teaching students. This paper argues for focus on intercultural education in elementary social studies methods courses for pre-service teachers (PSTs) and describes the author-created three-perspective format for developing intercultural educational activities. Use of the three-perspective format is described followed by results from a study using the approach to guide response journals focused on the multicultural novel, *Inside Out and Back Again* (Lai, 2011), with 89 PSTs at a highly research intensive university in the southern United States. Open coding of collective case studies revealed three themes in students' journal reflections when using the three-perspective format: insight into diverse perspectives, changes in attitudes for teaching, and a valuable learning experience. Combined with researcher field notes and student-generated emails, these emergent themes could indicate that some students experienced lasting change in attitudes and feelings towards others and themselves that had not been previously considered or held. This level of change could facilitate individual transformation and help make meaningful impressions and paradigm shifts in PSTs as described by Mezirow (1991) in Transformative Learning Theory.

Key words: intercultural education, pre-service teachers, social studies methods, three-perspective format

Introduction

"Too many new teachers are unprepared for the classroom and especially lack experience working with diverse, low-income students and the trauma that can impact students from those backgrounds" (Mader, 2015). Released on September 30, 2015, this statement and others from a panel of educators and teacher trainers organized by Rep. Susan Davis (D-Calif.) in Washington, D.C., ultimately calls for an increased focus on more diverse student teaching experiences in teacher preparation. Valuable gains in preparing pre-service teachers, or PSTs, to work with diverse students and those who experience or have endured traumatic circumstances could be strengthened through coursework that compels PSTs to reflect upon their own dispositions concerning diversity, difficult life events some school children may experience, and the dissonance between PSTs and the students with whom they work. In fact developing dispositions is a hallmark of teacher training, reflected in accreditation standards for teacher education Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013).

Intercultural education, which focuses on the facilitation of understanding, respecting, and engaging in dialogue regarding and between different cultures (UNESCO, 2006), is the culmination of educational

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efforts towards addressing multicultural needs in learning and teaching of students in primary, secondary, and teacher education. Through intercultural educational experiences, PSTs are allowed to encounter and experience the concerns of diverse groups and individuals, understand the difficulties these groups might face, and reflect upon the disquiet that the process of analyzing one's own culture in relation to others can create (Lanas, 2014), thus, working towards preparing PSTs to be better prepared to work with diverse students.

Two primary research questions guided this study: a) What intercultural educational exercise(s) could be used to facilitate change and understanding in PSTs towards diverse students and possible traumatic life events? and b) What behaviors and resultant descriptors would emerge to define the changes or transformation in dispositions among PSTs due to its use? Through the lenses of the transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 1991), in this article, I attempt to explore ideas and practices of intercultural education, argue for a focus on intercultural education in elementary social studies methods courses for teacher preparation, and describe the three-perspective format I created and used in a study with students as a practice for developing intercultural educational concepts.

Understanding Intercultural Education

In discussing ideas of intercultural education, it is important to note its relationship to multicultural education. The terms *multicultural education* and *multiculturalism*, first used by U.S. educators during the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Banks, 1993), have such context-specific and varied definitions that Ogbu (1995) and Özturgut (2011) state there is not necessarily an agreed upon definition among scholars and practitioners regarding the terms. UNESCO (2006, p. 18) states that "Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least *tolerance*, of these cultures." Banks and Banks (2001) describe multicultural education as an educational reform movement using processes where all students have an equal chance to achieve academic success. Nieto (1996, p. 307) offers a deeper concept by labeling it as "antiracist education" which is "important for all students". Jay and Jones' (2005) description of multicultural education advocates adopting a pluralist education for teaching of the students of pre-K through college, and Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (2003) define multicultural education as adopting a culturally responsive pedagogy to address diverse students' needs in the classroom. All of these definitions contain important elements of diversity but they lack unification and specificity. Consequently, the terms multicultural education and multiculturalism seem to serve as catchalls for any educational topic that focuses on diversity and teaching, which, then threatens to mute the importance of the deep theories and processes contained within such as those of intercultural education.

The aim of intercultural education is to go beyond the understandings provided by multicultural education. Instead of promoting "passive coexistence", intercultural education seeks to create understanding, respect and dialogue between cultures (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18). Definitions of intercultural education specifically emphasize addressing the relationships among and within cultures (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1990; Portera, 2011); therefore, it has a deeper purpose which lies within the intentions of multicultural education. Portera (2011, p. 19) distinguishes multiculturalism as the "peaceful coexistence of cultures" while interculturalism is the interaction, exchange, and dialogue

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among and within cultural topics (Abdallah-Preteille, 1990; Portera, 2011); thus, the prefix *inter* is the discerning factor between intercultural and multicultural education.

Intercultural educational practices should allow students to develop their awareness, understandings, and acceptance of others and themselves; hence, causing them to change or transform in their feelings towards others. One significant educational theory which must be combined with intercultural educational practice is Transformational Learning. Developed by Jack Mezirow (1991), Transformational Learning Theory underscores creating learning experiences that inspire individual transformation and make meaningful impressions and paradigm shifts within individuals, which affect later personal practices (Mezirow, 1991).

Many teaching practices fall within the framework of Transformational Learning Theory in connection with intercultural educational concepts. For example, Critical Pedagogy, an educational concept typically used in English Language Teaching, intends to make teachers and learners representatives of transformation by prompting them to examine underlying cultural values and principles in the classroom and learning (Rashidi & Safari, 2010). Another transformative practice is Culturally Responsive Teaching, where cultures, practices, and perceptions of many diverse groups are used as mediums through which to teach academic skills and knowledge (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Critical Reflection is yet another transformative model wherein students analyze and challenge their own personal understandings, which include prejudices, assumptions and beliefs, about other cultures (Danielewicz, 2001; Gay & Kirland, 2003; Greene, 1994; Herrera & Murry, 2016) and can lead individuals to consider their levels of “accommodation readiness” (p. 134) or willingness to interact with others from a culture different from their own (Herrera & Murry, 2016.) Each of these transformational learning practices composes elements of intercultural education because they lead participants to examine relationships among and within cultures and are expressly the types of experiences PSTs needed to address both Rep. Susan Davis’ and the panel of educators’ September 2015 concerns in the introductory quote as well as CAEP standards regarding new teachers’ lack of preparation for working in a diverse classroom.

Teacher Preparation Courses in Elementary Education for Intercultural Education

Current studies featuring intercultural educational methods in teacher preparation can be found across different contexts in coursework; however, many (Abrams, 2002; Rashidi & Safari, 2010; Szecsi, Spillman, Vazquez-Montilla, & Mayberry, 2010) take place in courses focused on second language acquisition or methods which are usually elective courses taken by students who want English as a Second Language endorsement or certification only. One study (Howard, 2003) that did not use ESL focused coursework but employed critical reflection used a course labeled *Identity and Teaching* which was created to prepare teachers to teach in urban school settings. The problem with using language-focused or special topic courses to deliver intercultural educational experiences is that not all teacher education students are typically required to take these courses, thus, jeopardizing exposure to and development of these understandings for future teachers. Therefore, an argument can be made that intercultural educational experiences should take place in coursework that most students are typically required to take.

The new accreditation CAEP standards (2103) outline the experiences teacher education programs must include in order to receive national accreditation. The CAEP embeds aspects of diversity throughout its

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standards for teacher preparation and states in its manual, “Regardless of their residence, personal circumstances, and preparation experiences, candidates need opportunities to develop professional capabilities that will enable them to adjust and adapt instruction in appropriate ways for the diversity they are likely to encounter in their professional lives” (CAEP, 2013, p. 20). CAEP does not specifically mandate any certain courses where diverse, multicultural experiences must occur but expects institutions to base coursework decisions off recommendations from educational associations that focus on research and best teaching practices. Institutions, then, must demonstrate how diversity has been integrated into coursework (CAEP, 2013).

Social Studies Methods as a Platform for Intercultural Education

Traditional elementary education preparation providers use professional standards recommended by educational associations such as the Association for Childhood Education (ACEI) (2007) and the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2012) to guide them on how to choose coursework options to fulfill accreditation requirements. ACEI lists social studies as a main focus in curriculum guidelines for PST preparation stating, “Candidates know, understand, and use the major concepts and modes of inquiry from the social studies . . . to promote elementary students’ abilities to make informed decisions as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society and independent world” (ACEI, 2007, p. 1). Similarly, NAEYC lists social studies as one of the six early childhood discipline areas needed in the curriculum to create a “well-prepared candidate”(NAEYC, 2012, p. 36). Based on the recommendations made by these two prominent associations regarding the preparation of PSTs, coursework which focuses on the teaching of social studies concepts is a key element of elementary teacher education preparation.

In order to design effective coursework for PSTs regarding social studies, specific guidelines concerning teacher preparation within social studies content are issued by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in its document, *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers* (2002). The document, although aimed at secondary social studies teachers, states “Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the study of culture and cultural diversity” (NCSS, 2002, p. 19) is also germane to elementary teachers of social studies. In regard to how teachers must teach social studies in the classroom, the document mandates, “[pre-12] students need to comprehend multiple perspectives that emerge from within their own culture and from the vantage points of the diverse cultural groups within that society” (p. 19). The disposition required to teach students multiple perspectives must be fostered in teacher preparation through intercultural educational experiences. Teachers will struggle to lead their own students in the transformational process if they have not experienced it themselves.

Standards for PST preparation specified by educational associations such as ACEI (2007) and NAEYC (2012) underscore that social studies methods coursework should be a necessary component of elementary teacher education programs. Within the context of that social studies coursework lies an opportunity to expose PSTs to necessary intercultural educational processes because of the existing relationship the coursework has with understanding and teaching culture and diversity as issued through standards for social studies teachers by NCSS (2002).

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Three-Person Perspective Format: Considering Her/Him, Them, and Me

Researchers (Rashidi & Safari, 2011; Richards, 2010) state that despite a growing concentration on intercultural educational practices, such as Critical Pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Critical Reflection, there is a lack of materials available for implementing these practices in coursework in educational settings. Finding a method that can facilitate a shift in students' beliefs about cultures can be difficult because of the complexity of variables involved. As an educator of PSTs, I intentionally sought a transformational learning method to use in my own courses to stimulate a dispositional shift in my students' understandings of their future students and ultimately crafted the three-perspective format to apply to cultural topics in order to promote positive changes in PSTs' dispositions concerning diversity and students who have experienced traumatic life events.

The three-perspective format is an organizational plan that focuses on considering the varying viewpoints involved in any topic of study for the three separate entities of the main person or people involved, a separate group of people who need to be studied, and the student himself/herself. It can be used in conjunction with any topic where another culture outside one's own identified culture is being considered such as examining current news, learning an historical event, or reading multicultural literature. Table 1 provides guidance in basic question creation.

Table 1. *Her/Him, Them, and Me: Framework for Question Creation*

Perspective to Consider	Question Framework
Her/Him - Main person or group	"How does/would _____ feel about what is happening to him/her?"
Them - Other group Perspective	"How would someone from the _____ group/culture feel about this issue?"
Me - Student's Perspective	"How do/would you feel if you were experiencing this issue?"

Accurately responding to these questions will require background research into cultural norms of the focus groups dependent upon the topic and depth needed, which will further the intercultural educational value. For example, one can examine the currently debated issue of displaying the Confederate flag or Confederate monuments into the three-perspective format by considering the separate perspectives of those who are 1) against displaying the flags or monuments; then 2) a second group who support displaying the flags or monuments; and finally 3) for the student her or himself on their feelings towards displaying the flag or monuments. Understandably, students would have to conduct research regarding the first two groups' reasons for their positions to understand the perspectives found there, and then use this information to form and support their own perspectives.

Method of Study

Overarching questions guiding this study were: a) What intercultural educational exercise(s) could be used to facilitate change and understanding in PSTs towards diverse students and possible traumatic life

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events? and b) What behaviors and resultant descriptors would emerge to define the changes or transformation in dispositions among PSTs due to its use? Similar to other studies focusing on intercultural educational exercises, this study was conducted in my own second language methodology courses in three semesters from Spring 2013 to Fall 2014. The results from the study in these courses will be presented here. Because of the results and conclusions drawn from this study, I now use the three-perspective format in my elementary social studies methods courses using the method described here. As explained previously, a focus must be placed on students participating in this valuable experience in coursework that will reach more students such as social studies methods. More details about this decision will be provided in the conclusion.

Participants

Participants included 86 PSTs enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) Methodologies courses, which was an elective course for students attempting to attain ESL state certification. Research was conducted at a university in the southern United States designated as a research intensive (formerly referred to R1 designation). The majority of participants (81% or 70 out of 86) were white females between 20–25 years of age. Because most of my students fell between the ages of 20–25, I elected to include that demographic indicator spanning five years. Because a small number of students did not fall within the ages of 20–25; to accommodate nine of the 86 participants, I elected to add two demographic categories that corresponded to the age ranges found (see Table 2 which provides a further description of all participants of the study). None of the 86 participants labeled themselves as first or second-generation immigrants. Students who did were not included as participants, and their data was not included in the analyses because their responses might have been affected by personal knowledge or feelings about the topic of immigration, a focus in the novel used for the study.

Table 2. *Study Participants*

Gender		White	African American
Female	Age 20–25	70	3
	Age 26–35	5	
	Age 36–45	3	
Male	Age 20–25	4	
	Age 26–35		
	Age 36–45	1	

Procedure

For this assignment, participants read the young adult novel, *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai (2011). This novel was chosen because it features a child who experiences the traumatic event of immigration. In the story, Hà, the main character, gives her account of emigrating from South Vietnam to the United States in the 1970s. The reader learns about the turmoil that sparked the exodus from her homeland, the ocean journey to the United States, the introduction to an Alabama community, and then the settling into a new life and culture. Students were provided the three-perspective format to use in responding to questions about events in the novel in a reflection journal. To begin the assignment, students researched events concerning South Vietnam and the Vietnam War in order to better understand the main character's perspective such as background information about Saigon before the war, catalysts for the war, and major results of the conflict. Then, they individually chose one immigrant population they believed might represent their future students and researched varying topics such as immigration routes and reasons, food, customs and traditions for that culture as needed during the assignment. Immigration and learning a second language are prominent topics in the novel and were specifically used as a factor in selecting the *other group* perspective. Many students chose cultural groups that had immigrated to the region and were part of the public school population such as Mexican, Marshallese, Indian and Vietnamese. Here are sample three-perspective format questions I created for the assignment:

Questions based on Part 1: Saigon (Lai, 2011).

Her- The chapter begins with Hà explaining some of the customs and traditions of the first day of the lunar calendar. Why does Hà tell the reader these things? How do they affect her?

Them- For the immigrant population you have chosen, research the customs and traditions associated with a special holiday or celebration for that culture. What is the holiday? Are there any special foods or activities that go along with it? Why might it be important to familiarize yourself with holidays of your students?

Me- What is a favorite celebration or holiday from your own culture? Why is it special to you?

Her- Throughout this section of the book, Hà mentions several types of foods in Saigon that she eats. Why do you think the author focuses on these?

Them- What are some of the favorite foods a student from your chosen immigrant population might enjoy? Would it be important to know about those foods? How could you use that information?

Me- Are there any of your favorite foods that have special meaning for you? Why?

Her- Hà writes about how her father left home when she was a small child. How does his absence affect her and her family's lives?

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Them- It is possible that a child from your chosen immigrant population might have to live for periods of time without one or two of his/her parents? For the immigrant population you have chosen, research reasons on why a parent might be absent from the home. What are they? How do you think a parent being absent from the child's home affects the child?

Me- Personally, how would having a parent away from the home have affected you as a child? (Please answer with as much detail as you feel comfortable.)

These questions and more using the three-perspective format were created for the entire novel. Students answered the questions individually in a folder.

Data Sources

Data for the study came from three separate sources. Students' reflection journals with responses to questions based on the three-perspective format provided the primary source for data collection. In particular, focus was placed on a summary prompt found at the end of response journal that asked students to reflect upon what they had gained from the assignment of reading the novel and completing the three-perspective format questions. Also, the researcher's field notes recorded during and after students' engagement in group discussions in class were used as a secondary source of data, and finally, two self-generated emails sent to the professor after assignment completion provided another piece of data to measure the results of the activity.

Data Analyses

The qualitative method of a collective case study was used for analyses of this project. Stake (2000) explains that "a researcher may jointly study a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition" (p. 437) when seeking to better understand and theorize about a larger population of cases in a collective case study. Instead of understanding the experiences of only one or two students, as in an intrinsic case study, I wanted to use a collection of cases in an instrumental study format to provide insight into this issue and draw generalizations about using the three-perspective questioning with my specific population (Stake, 2000).

Open coding analyses procedure was used on students' answers to the final prompt in the response journal, which asked:

Reflect over this class assignment. Do you think that reading this book and answering the questions has added to or changed your personal perspective towards students who have recently immigrated? Should this assignment be used with future classes?

To analyze students' responses to this prompt, I first read through responses and employed open coding to establish similar themes across the students' answers. This method avoids using preset codes and uses terms and language from student responses to create the different codes (Esterberg, 2002). After reviewing the codes, they were combined and collapsed to the point of saturation. The recurring codes were categorized into code categories which allowed for the emergence of themes.

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A secondary data source came from field notes I recorded from class discussions during and after students engaged in discussion groups. From questions, comments and thoughts students wanted to discuss in small groups or with the whole class, I recorded my observations. I used the same open coding on these field notes and was able to create themes from the code categories.

Finally, one surprising form of data emerged in the form of student-generated emails sent to me. Two students sent unprompted emails regarding their feelings about the assignment in the weeks following its completion. These emails were analyzed for similarities to the themes gathered from open coding.

Results of Using the Three-Perspective Format

Three forms of data contributed to the trustworthiness of the final themes that resulted from this collective case study. In these data sources, students repeatedly used words such as “new”, “change”, “learned”, and “reflect” as they wrote about immigration, other cultures, and teaching. The open coding analyses of students’ responses to the final prompt about their thoughts concerning using the three-perspective format assignment resulted in three common themes: insight into diverse perspectives, changes in attitudes for teaching, and a valuable learning experience.

Using words such as *perspective* and *thinking*, students indicated their change in thinking about the experiences immigrants might endure that they had not previously which created the “insight into diverse perspectives” theme. One student wrote, “This assignment gave me an inside idea of how a student coming from another country must feel like—the emotions, anxiety, fears. I never would have gotten that kind of perspective” (Student 15B, student reflection journal, March 6, 2014). Another student wrote, “I think that completing this book and reading log have helped me because they have both helped me see a whole new perspective. It was good to see the differences and similarities in cultures” (Student 3C, student reflection journal, October 9, 2014). Another wrote, “Reading the book and answering the questions has helped with my perspective towards students who are learning another language and are different from me” (Student 20B, student reflection journal, March 6, 2014). A final example of having insight into diverse perspectives is from a student who wrote, “This assignment has allowed me to think about the perspectives of future CLD [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse] students I will be working with in my future classroom” (Student 11A, student reflection journal, March 14, 2013). These statements highlight the dispositional shift that occurred by students as they considered their existing worldviews versus their expanding cultural horizons, a shift brought about by reading and responding to the prompts.

The theme of “changes in attitudes for teaching” emerged as some students specifically tied teaching behavior to changes in their thinking. One student wrote, “It is crucial to remember students are all going through their own struggles every day, and I can become a better teacher from this assignment because I might recognize red flags that might hurt my students” (Student 5C, student reflection journal, October 9, 2014). Another stated, “As teachers, it is very important for us to know that backgrounds of the students in our class so that we are able to make sure they are learning to the best of their ability” (Student 7B, student reflection journal, March 14, 2013). Another statement to highlight this theme comes from a student who wrote, “It [The assignment] gives one the chance to reflect upon one’s teaching method and how they can integrate as well as differentiate for all learners and make them feel

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welcomed, loved, and understood” (Student 23C, student reflection journal, October 9, 2014). Finally, two more students wrote, “I have gained so much knowledge from this that I can use it to alter myself as a teacher” (Student 27B, student reflection journal, March 6, 2014) and “I will use what I learned from this book and assignment to help me relate to any students who are not proficient in English in my classroom” (Student 12C, student reflection journal, October 9, 2014). These statements epitomize the kinds of disposition shifts teacher educators seek when carefully constructing in-class experiences that will hopefully augment later teaching.

The final theme of “valuable learning experience” was revealed because many students commented on how the assignment stood out to them as a memorable one that would affect them in later life. One student wrote, “This experience is something that I will be able to remember for my future classroom” (Student 20A, student reflection journal, March 14, 2013). Another stated, “I have gained more respect for immigrants after reading the story and considering others’ needs because of this assignment” (Student 4C, student reflection journal, October 9, 2014). Another commented, “I believe this was a great assignment for all classes. It opens your mind up to a whole new perspective about students from other cultures and countries. If I can be impacted greatly by it, I believe other students can be also” (Student 2B, student reflection journal, March 6, 2014). Continuing to highlight the theme, another student stated, “This assignment was eye-opening. Only when you find a way to connect to others or their particular situation can you begin to feel empathy and find a way to assist them” (Student 8B, student reflection journal, March 6, 2014). Finally, one wrote, “This assignment isn’t like one that I’ve ever done, and I would strongly recommend using it in future classes” (Student 23C, student reflection journal, October 9, 2014). These statements highlighting the value of the activity add to the probability that this experience might be one that stays with students and might have a positive effect on their future actions.

Field notes I collected during and after students’ engagement in discussion groups were also analyzed for codes, categories, and themes. Like the students’ journal responses, the same three main themes emerged: insight into diverse perspectives, changes in attitudes for teaching, and a valuable learning experience. Some verbatim expressions include, “I can see where some people, like from Mexico, must have things really bad to have to choose coming to a new place where they don’t know anyone just like the people in the book” (Student 17C, in-class discussion, September 25, 2014) and “I never thought about the kids in the school around here having to feel this way. You know, when the main character says she hates English words and stuff, I didn’t think about kids feeling that way” (Student 15C, in-class discussion, October 2, 2014).

A final piece of data supporting the emerged themes came from two emails sent after the completion of the class assignment. One student’s email stated:

I liked the questions, but as I was answering them and thinking about what the immigration population I chose had to go through and how it would affect my family, it became uncomfortable. It wasn't a good feeling, but life isn't full of roses, and I think it is a great exercise for students, especially for those wanting to work with students that are from different cultures. (Student 2B, email, June 21, 2014).

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The email contains the emerged themes as well. She thought of other perspectives, mentioned the value the activity holds for students who will work with or teach diverse students, and stated it was a valuable experience. The other email, while briefer in detail, expressed thanks from the student for having participated in the valuable exercise.

Three-perspectives + *n*: Making even more meaning

My course example uses the medium of multicultural literature and reflection to engage students in an intercultural experience. Using multicultural literature alone to expose students to unfamiliar topics in other cultures can help shape teacher candidate's attitudes and perspectives (Gay, 2002), however, Cassidy (2001) notes that readers need to engage in a form of reflection such as narrative and debriefing to make deeper meaning of multicultural readings. The narrative was attained through student response journals, and debriefing was achieved by participation in discussion groups where students discussed their answers to questions in a group format. The addition of the discussion group creates three-perspective + *n* because students considered additional perspectives from their classmates. Several students commented in their reflection journals about the addition of the discussion groups and how it helped them. One wrote, "I also really enjoyed the time we are able to spend talking about the book and the questions in our group. It was good to hear my group's thoughts and compare facts about different countries" (Student 5B, student reflection journal, March 6, 2014).

Conclusion

The themes of gaining insight into others' perspectives, changes in attitudes for teaching, and valuable learning experience combined suggest that some students might have undergone a lasting change in attitudes and feelings towards others and themselves that might not have been previously considered or held. The data collected from student response journals, researcher field notes, and student-generated emails triangulate to reveal a shift in students' dispositions. By participating in this activity, reading the novel and reflecting, students' understanding resulted in an attitudinal change. This level of change, however small, could facilitate individual transformation and help make meaningful impressions and paradigm shifts in students as called for by Mezirow (1991) in Transformative Learning Theory. This response from Student 4B, a White male, serves as a more thorough example of some of the students' experiences and possible transformation:

I never really took into account what it was like to immigrate [sic] from your home to a completely new place. *I* was the neighbor in the book when the family went to Alabama: unwelcoming and standoffish. What I learned should have been something I already knew, but I just wasn't aware of it. People who immigrate have lives and families as well. They have been through struggles and hard times the same as I have. In fact, our lives are very similar. This similarity made me appreciate all people who immigrate. The context of this is outside the classroom, but it also related inside the classroom. I will be more welcome in my daily life with people who immigrated because I read the book and completed the questions. I was really able to connect emotionally a lot with the experiences they went through. (Student 4B, student reflection journal, March 6, 2014).

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Examination of his reflection reveals crucial connections teacher candidates need to make to serve a diverse student body as teachers. He expresses deep understandings about the difficulties of immigration and acculturation from both the perspectives of one experiencing it to one witnessing it. He pledges to make a change in his future thoughts and actions and connects those plans to inside and outside his future classroom. The three-perspective format for examining cultural topics holds promise for transforming students' thinking and attitudes towards culture and diversity.

After completing this assignment with my second language methodologies students, comfortably discussing issues of diversity and immigration became easier because students were more open to discussion than before. However, when I wanted to discuss these same topics with students in social studies methods (who did not experience this activity), I realized they were missing a valuable exercise in intercultural education. Thus, I have purposefully shifted my practice in my courses so that my social studies methods course is the primary venue for this activity as it reaches more students and effortlessly fits with the objectives for learning about culture and diversity.

Teacher candidates must experience necessary intercultural educational practices in order to be better prepared to work with diverse children and understand the experiences those children may have or are living. Transformations in attitudes and practice must occur across all levels of education for ultimate success.

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