"Seeing the Everyday Through New Lenses"

Pedagogies and Practices of Literacy Teacher Educators With a Critical Stance

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Abstract

This article explores the practices and pedagogies of six literacy teacher educators with a critical stance. In this qualitative research study, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant over a three-year period. They were able to negotiate a critical stance into their teacher education courses in several ways: using an expansive definition of literacy; helping student teachers shed deficit perspectives; and integrating popular culture and media in the curriculum. The LTEs conceptualizations of literacy transcended traditional notions such as literacy as a set of autonomous skills (e.g., reading, writing) to include expansive notions of literacy including out of school literacy practices such as home literacies and community literacies. The literacy teacher educators modeled valuing expansive conceptions of literacy by including a wide range of texts in their courses, including: videos, blogs, spoken word, spaces, theatre, and social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook). The teacher educators' progressive views of literacy were negotiated into their classroom by creating invitations for student teachers to disrupt their assumptions of literacy. Implications for literacy teacher education courses include incorporating a range of texts and genres, which model expansive understandings

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of literacy, while modeling for student teachers how to effectively integrate them into literacy teaching. Implications for pre-service teacher education programs include building partnerships in the community including both traditional (e.g., schools) and non-traditional (e.g., community centers) learning spaces.

Introduction

> We need to talk about what the work of literacy teacher educators and teacher educators is *for*, and what it *resists*. . . . Literacy teaching and teacher education are fundamentally about equity, access, and justice. They are about learning and teaching as political acts. (Lytle, 2013, p. xvii)

Described as "linchpins" (Cochran-Smith, 2003) and a "nexus point" (Kosnik, Rowsell, Williamson, Simon, & Beck, 2013) in educational reforms, literacy teacher educators (LTEs) with a critical stance play a key role in preparing future literacy teachers to effectively teach in diverse classrooms. They have the ability to reimagine literacy teacher education as a site of justice and equity, as Lytle (2013) noted to be the aim of teacher education. LTEs play a central role in student teachers' development because they help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for literacy teaching and learning while providing opportunities for them to engage in practices they may not have experienced in their own schooling (Williamson, 2013). As such, LTEs have both the "privilege and responsibility" of creating "learning experiences that support [student teachers'] development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work confidently with culturally and linguistically diverse children and families" (Rogers, 2013, p. 7). Little attention, however, has been paid to *how* LTEs are accomplishing this.

When teacher educators adopt a critical stance, it involves attitudes and dispositions that aim "to question power, inequality, and the status quo; to understand our own participation in power structures; and to reframe and retheorize our beliefs and understandings" (Scherff, 2012, p. 202). When student teachers are given opportunities to inquire into the power and positioning of texts and society, they are able to make links between power and language while valuing diversity (Rogers, 2014; Rogers & Mosley-Wetzel, 2013). The influence LTEs have on the future work of student teachers calls for research focused on teacher educators' beliefs and practices about teaching and learning in relation to their own critical literacy pedagogical practices. This article aims to explore the practices and pedagogies of six LTEs with a critical stance. The specific questions that guided this aspect of the study are as follows:

1. What are the practices and pedagogies of LTEs with a critical stance?

2. What learning opportunities do LTEs provide their student teachers to encourage the development of dispositions and skills needed to teach in today's classrooms?

Gaining insights into how LTEs actualize a critical stance is a timely topic for fellow teacher educators, as Lytle (2013) has asserted: "Literacy teacher educators are looking for powerful accounts that talk back loudly to the central issues, struggles, and conditions of their work" (p. xix). Through a series of interviews and analyses, clarity is gained around their understandings of critical literacy, an often ambiguously understood concept (Vasquez, 2013). Additionally, by studying in depth their backgrounds, knowledge base, and experiences, we will deepen our understanding of the rationale behind the difficult pedagogical decisions this group routinely makes to enact a critical stance. Finally, the findings from this study will help LTEs and administrators to further understand multiple perspectives of critical literacy in higher education contexts. A greater understanding will encourage the refinement and integration of key critical literacy concepts and practices into induction for teacher educators and, in turn, teacher education courses. Teacher educators' conceptualizations and enactments of pedagogy are influenced by the context in which they teach, specifically, by the barriers they face and supports they receive. During a time of educational reforms that have largely focused on outcomes, measures, and mandating the particulars of teacher education courses (Darling-Hammond, 2012), it is necessary to understand the ways in which LTEs negotiate a critical stance to prepare student teachers to teach in diverse classrooms.

A Critical Literacy Framework

Lewison, Leland, and Harste (2008) identified four dimensions of critical literacy practices, of which a critical stance is at the heart. For the purposes of this study, this framework was used to develop interview questions and guide analysis of the data. This comprehensive framework allowed for the complexity of the issues related to critical literacy to be captured. The *four dimensions framework* (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008) offered a valuable model for examining the emphases of critical literacy's work:

1. *Disrupting the commonplace*. Critical literacy is conceptualized as seeing the "everyday" through a new lense. We use language and other sign systems to recognize implicit modes of perception and to consider new frames from which to understand experience.

2. *Interrogating multiple viewpoints*. Authors who describe the multiple viewpoints dimension of critical literacy ask us to imagine standing in the shoes of others—to understand experiences and texts from our own perspectives and the viewpoints of others to consider these various perspectives concurrently.

3. *Focusing on sociopolitical issues*. Teaching is not a neutral form of social practice, yet often it takes place with no attention given to how sociopolitical systems, power relationships, and language are intertwined and inseparable from our teaching.

4. *Taking action and promoting social justice*. This dimension is often perceived

as the definition of critical literacy—yet one cannot take informed action against oppression or promote social justice without expanded understandings and perspectives gained from the other three dimensions. (Lewison et al., 2008)

Rather than simply list the practices and pedagogies of the LTEs, this article focuses on one dimension of their critical literacy practice: disrupting the commonplace. This allowed for an in-depth exploration of the LTEs' actualization of pedagogies. As the four dimensions are highly interrelated, there were several practices, examples of pedagogy, and assignments that could be categorized in more than one dimension; however, for the purposes of reporting the findings, these have been categorized under the dimension they most strongly represent. This overlap and categorization are accurately representative of the critical literacy framework as conceptualized by Lewison et al. (2008).

Disrupting the commonplace is problematizing all subjects of study (Shor, 1999) or "seeing the everyday through new lenses" (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 383). This dimension calls for a problem-posing rather than a problem-solving curriculum (Freire, 1970), in which students' lives and interests are used as curricular resources. Students are encouraged to examine the beliefs and assumptions deemed as "normal" by considering questions like "how is this text trying to position me?" (Luke & Freebody, 1997) and "why do some groups benefit from current forms of education more than others?" (Lewison et al., 2008, p. 8). Educators often include popular culture and media in their curricula to help students examine how people and groups are positioned and constructed by television, video games, and comics (Marshall & Sensoy, 2016; Vasquez, 2013). For example, Vasquez, Tate, and Harste (2013) reported on an ethnographic study with kindergarten students in which the authors engaged with students and examined McDonald's Happy Meals to problematize gender stereotypes they may reinforce. Students raised questions about the selection of the toys for boys and girls made by McDonald's. Vasquez et al. explored topics like identity construction by engaging pupils in a text in which they were both familiar and interested, thus opening up a space for students to raise questions and disrupt commonplace thinking.

Adopting a Critical Stance in Teacher Education

As classrooms become increasingly culturally and racially diverse, the teaching population remains fairly homogenous. A majority of the teaching force in the United States is made up of middle-class, White, and monolingual women, although more than half of public school students are visible minorities (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Rogers, 2013). These demographic shifts have significant implications for classrooms and learning, as research has shown that race and class are complexly linked with classroom dynamics and student achievement (Gay, 2000). Research studies have documented White student teachers failing to authentically engage in critical readings and discourse related to multiculturalism, diversity, and

antioppressive education (Lewison et al., 2002; Marx, 2004). It has been found that student teachers are often uncomfortable with the political responsibility associated with teaching (Milner, 2010). Consequently, student teachers often take the position of being color-blind in response to issues of equity and diversity in the classroom (Milner, 2010; Milner & Laughter, 2015; Sleeter, 2001). Milner and Laughter (2015) identified color-blindness as an obstacle in enacting practices, which center issues of equity, in particular, race and poverty, because this stance masks social inequities while reinforcing Eurocentric discourses in the classroom (Sleeter, 2001). Addressing issues such as race, class, and poverty in explicit and direct ways encourages student teachers to acknowledge and value the range of cultural experiences in their classrooms.

Educators and researchers alike have called for the cultural and linguistic practices of pupils to inform literacy instruction in schools (Heath, 1983; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). When pupils are able to link literacy practices to their existing language practices, they are able to better relate to texts and make meaningful connections. Critical literacy pedagogy calls for students' cultural and linguistic practices to be used when constructing curricula (Lewison et al., 2002; Vasquez, 2013). Beyond making connections to texts, using students' cultural and linguistic practices provides possibilities to use literacies from their communities to question inequalities, imagine solutions, and position themselves and others in new ways, while transforming their daily realities (Gutierrez, 2008; Hall & Piazza, 2008). These powerful practices allow for literacy education to be both reconstructed and co-constructed by teacher and student.

Teachers, however, cannot effectively enact critical literacy pedagogies in their classrooms if they have not been prepared in their teacher education courses. It is challenging for student teachers to teach in a way they did not experience as a student or student teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Han, Madhuri, and Scull (2015) have elaborated:

> Without sufficient knowledge and awareness regarding social and critical consciousness, we cannot expect that [student teachers] will develop and engage in praxis to change the current situations for more just practices for diverse others. As such, without emancipatory knowledge and [critical pedagogy] in the official curriculum, teachers and schools are likely to reproduce and perpetuate the current education inequity and social injustices and reinforce the achievement gap between dominant and minority student groups. (p. 650)

LTEs must create invitations for student teachers to position themselves within larger social systems and social issues to recognize that text is never neutral (Freire, 1970). When teacher educators help student teachers engage with the sociopolitical and transformational aspects of literacy, they are able to reimagine literacy education through a social justice lens. Thus allowing space for student teachers to engage in critical practices will encourage them to do the same in their future classrooms (Rogers, 2013; Vasquez et al., 2013).

Although there has been a trend toward addressing critical issues of diversity and multiculturalism in teacher education courses, many scholars have documented this effort to be artificial (Dixson & Dingus, 2007; Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). Researchers have identified several reasons for this shortcoming: Teacher educators who do not identify with this work are being forced to teach it (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005); teacher educators are using an "add-on" approach to teaching because they are simply appeasing a call to action (Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005); and/or student teachers are resistant to engaging with this work (Dixson & Dingus, 2007, p. 645; Dozier, Johnston, & Rogers, 2006). Dozier et al. identified three sources of tension that further identify why student teachers hesitate to address critical literacy issues in their practice teaching placements: They have difficulty finding a balance between developing a critical stance and developing reading and writing skills; experience critical literacy as a negative stance; and struggle with sociopolitical and multi-modal dimensions of literacy, which can lead to a diversion from struggles with the immediate textual dimensions of print literacy.

Furthermore, student teachers often conceptualize critical literacy as a topic of study rather than a stance: "In an era of high-stakes testing, teachers lament that they do not have time for critical literacy education" (Rogers, 2014, p. 258). LTEs play an integral role in the development and implementation of a critical literacy–focused curriculum in teacher education. The way in which teacher educators approach critical literacy may largely affect student teachers' attitudes and learning; and so, this article aims to gain an understanding of the ways in which LTEs with a critical stance negotiate critical literacy practices into their courses. Although often rife with tensions, engaging in critical literacy practices in teacher education is essential. It allows student teachers to understand how "ideological posture informs their perceptions and actions when working with linguistic-minority and other politically, socially, and economically subordinated students" (Lewison et al., 2008, p. 97).

Studying Literacy Teacher Educators

Teacher educators in general are an underresearched group (Murray & Male, 2005); therefore we know even less about LTEs. In the past, there has been little focus on subgroups of teacher educators (e.g., LTEs vs. physical education teacher educators; primary-focused teacher educators vs. secondary-focused teacher educators). This article recognizes that teacher educators are not a uniform group; their knowledge base, backgrounds, career trajectories, and visions of teacher education are varied. Furthermore, expectations placed on each subgroup vary. For instance, Kosnik et al. (2013) found the work of LTEs to be multilayered and complex. Their work transcends the university classroom because they must determine how government curriculum is included in teacher education, guide students in unpacking their previous experiences, offer in-service courses, and conduct scholarly research. How-

ever, LTEs are not considered as a distinct group of teacher educators, nor are those teacher educators with a critical stance. Kosnik, Dharamshi, Miyata, and Cleovoulou (2014) concluded, "Teacher educators are considered as a homogenous group without attention to the specifics of the discipline they teach. If there are differences in the demands placed on them because of the content they teach these have not yet been identified" (p. 53). Research on LTEs as a distinct group of teacher educators is an emerging area of study in which there exists a very limited body of literature.

Consequently, researchers know very little about LTEs with a critical stance and the ways in which they enact critical literacy practices in their courses. To support student teachers in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of critical literacy practices, LTEs must have a critical stance themselves. As Vasquez (2013) noted, however, LTEs "have not publicly articulated the nature of alignment between our expectations for our own literate lives and our expectations for our students as literacy learners" (p. xiii). When student teachers come to their literacy methods courses, their own backgrounds and views influence how they respond to the material and engage in the learning opportunities offered (Schultz, Jones-Walker, & Chikkatur, 2008). However, student teachers must develop a range of pedagogies and dispositions that includes a commitment to teaching all learners to adequately prepare their future students for engaged participation in society. LTEs play a key role in their student teachers' development because they help them to "acquire the skills to teach effectively, introduce them to new ideas about teaching and learning, and encourage them to unpack their own assumptions and embrace practices they may have not encountered in their own schools" (Kosnik, Dharamshi, Menna, Miyata, & Cleovoulou, 2015, p. 136). So it is especially important that LTEs assume a critical stance for both student teachers and the pupils they will serve.

Furthermore, more attention is needed on how LTEs handle tensions between critical literacy and more traditional understandings of literacy (Martinez, 2008). Better understanding of how to teach teachers about critical literacy calls for research that studies literacy teacher educators. This article answers the call for more research attention on how LTEs bring a critical stance to their teacher education courses for preparing their student teachers for future classrooms. In attempting to understand the complex critical practices of literacy teacher educators with a critical stance, this article aims to fill a gap in current literature.

Methodology

Understanding the sensitive and complex work of LTEs with a critical stance requires a methodology that captures the nuances of their work and their identity. A qualitative methodology approach allowed for in-depth exploration of backgrounds, visions, and practices, which suited the purposes of this research. As noted earlier, a limited body of research has explored the practices and pedagogies of LTEs. Although the research in the area of critical literacy studies is robust, the theoretical

foundation on which to base this particular research was lacking. For these reasons, a modified grounded theory approach was appropriate for the study, as an existing framework of critical literacy practices was used to analyze data collected on LTEs. The understanding of grounded theory is based in the work of Strauss and Corbin (2000), Bryant and Charmaz (2007), and Punch (2009), who noted that the primary purpose of the grounded theory approach is to generate theory from data rather than verify theory from data (Punch, 2009).

The participants in this study were selected from a group of 28 LTEs who were already participants in a large-scale externally funded study titled *Literacy Teacher Educators: Their Backgrounds, Visions, and Practices*. Berg (2004) noted that researchers develop purposive samples when they hold "special knowledge or expertise about [a] group to select [participants] who represent this population" (p. 36). For participant selection, three qualifiers were identified. During the course of the first two interviews, these qualifiers were considered in order to determine a purposive sample.

First, the participants' pedagogical practices illustrated a critical literacy approach as defined by Lewison et al.'s (2008) four dimensions of critical literacy framework (i.e., disrupting the commonplace, viewing multiple perspectives, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action and social justice). Questions posed in the first two interviews helped determine if participants' pedagogical practices were aligned with the critical literacy framework. Questions in the first two interviews, which were particularly helpful in identifying possible participants, were as follows: "What are the particular goals for this course?" and "Tell me about your teaching style."

Second, the participants' publications and research considered critical issues such as social justice, relationships between language and power, and culturally relevant pedagogy. This information was gleaned by questions posed in the first interview (e.g., "Tell me about your experiences with research") as well as from listings of participants' publications on their respective university faculty Web sites.

Third, the theorists who resonated with them came from a critical perspective (e.g., Allan Luke, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Paulo Freire, Celia Genishi). This was determined by interview questions in the second interview (e.g., "Which literacy theorists resonate with you?") and by scanning the references section of their publications. For the purposes of consistency, all participants had earned a PhD, were tenured or tenure-track faculty, and were working at U.S. institutions. Table 1 provides an overview of the six participants in the study (pseudonyms used throughout).

Data collection consisted of interviews with LTEs and a review of their course syllabi (provided by each participant). Each participant was interviewed three times between April 2012 and February 2015. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and had several parts, including background experiences, identity (e.g., academic community, conferences attended), research activities, and pedagogies (e.g., readings/assignments, topics covered, teaching stance).

For data analysis, the transcripts and course syllabi were read several times.

After a few interviews from the first round of interviews had been transcribed, the analysis process began. At this point, the cycle of alternation between data collection and data analysis was initiated (Punch, 2009). A systematic approach to data analysis was followed, employing practices of continuous coding using the qualitative software NVivo9. The first level of analysis, *open coding* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), was used to examine properties of the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000) by identifying salient words and phrases relating to the research questions and any

Table 1
Overview of Six Participants as of February 2015

Participant	Racial background	Years teaching in the classroom (K–12)	Grade level[a]	Years in teacher education[b]	Faculty position	Sample research topic
Maya	Latina	2	ECE, primary	4	Assistant professor	Ethnographic study on first-grade writing practices
Melissa	Latina	6	ECE, primary	8	Associate professor	Breaking cycles of poverty among women
Misa	Black	2	Inter-mediate	6	Associate professor	Ethnographic study of Black and Latina student teachers
Giovanni	Biracial (White and Southeast Asian)	10	Primary, senior	11	Associate professor	Immigrant narratives from fifth-grade students
Dominique	Black	8	Primary	5	Assistant professor	Student teachers use of critical pedagogies in practice teaching placements
Pietro	White	5	Interme-diate, senior	6	Associate professor	Literature discussions in high school English courses

Note. All participants are faculty at U.S. universities. ECE = early childhood education.
[a]Primary, Grades 1–5; intermediate, Grades 6–8; senior, Grades 9–12. [b]Tenure-track faculty.

other category or theme that was emerging. The initial coding of the transcripts was broad. The salient words and phrases from the transcripts were organized into categories (e.g., background, education, qualities). These categories, in addition to some significant interview questions, were used to create core categories or nodes (as referred to in NVivo9). For example, the nodes of early childhood experiences, educational background, and qualities of teacher educator were developed. Several of these nodes had subnodes. For instance, the node of qualities of teacher educator had four subnodes: relational qualities; qualities—knowledge; qualities—dispositions; and qualities—own strengths and talents. With each round of analysis, new codes were added, merged, and collapsed. In total, 110 nodes were developed after merging and collapsing codes and subcodes. In analyzing the second and third interviews, nodes developed for previous interviews are used for coding.

As the study continued, I engaged in *axial coding* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this stage of analysis, using the analytic principle of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), connections between the core categories were determined. As the transcripts, annotations, and memos (which were made directly in NVivo9 software) were analyzed, connections were determined between the core categories. With the use of NVivo9, queries were conducted to see relationships between biographical data and other data. For example, matrix queries were run to explore the connection between years at university and goals for the course.

In the final level of analysis, *selective coding* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116), efforts were made to systematically relate core categories to other categories, "validating those relationships by searching for confirming and disconfirming examples, and filling in categories that needed further refinement and development" (Strauss & Corbin, 2000, p. 111).

Findings

As reviewed earlier, disrupting the commonplace requires "a step outside of one's usual modes of perception and comprehension using new frames to understand experience" (Lewison et al., 2008, p. 8). Throughout their courses, the LTEs disrupted commonplace thinking about literacy teaching and learning by using their local communities as a resource, helping student teachers unlearn, and drawing on popular culture and media in their curricula to make difference visible. It is important to note that critical literacy practices were not treated like an add-on to the curriculum; rather, they were embedded throughout the course, as critical literacy was conceptualized as requiring a multilayered and iterative approach. Student teachers were given multiple opportunities to engage with critical topics and refine their thinking about literacy as a social practice. Melissa wanted student teachers to understand that "our job as teacher learners and teacher researchers is to refine and extend our thinking and to continually push ourselves beyond our current knowledge base." The LTEs embedded critical literacy practices throughout their

courses rather than covering it as a topic of study. This allowed student teachers the opportunity to constantly revisit their thinking related to literacy and deliberately incorporate new insights into course assignments and practice teaching placements, thus developing reflexivity (Lewison et al., 2008).

Across the participants, there were a number of commonalities regarding their pedagogies and practices. The ways in which they enacted these pedagogies were varied and nuanced; however, this article focuses on common themes that emerged among them. It should be noted that it is not being proposed that the six teacher educators have the same visions, practices, and pedagogies. Rather, by examining them as a group, a comprehensive discussion of their work can take place. Thus findings are presented in cross-case analysis format.

Using the Local Community as a Resource

The LTEs expressed a deep commitment to their local communities through involvement in a variety of capacities. Maya facilitated professional development workshops for teachers; Melissa ran after-school programs and advised on school boards; and Dominique conducted her research in schools. However, not all stay connected to the community through schools; Maya and Giovanni worked with adult literacy learners in church-based communities. Since their work was ultimately connected to the community, the need to "remain part of the conversation" (Dominique) was important. The LTEs viewed being involved in schools and with families as an "essential responsibility" (Melissa) of the position. The LTEs' involvement in the community also informed their literacy teacher education practices and pedagogy. The LTEs viewed local communities as an integral part of pupils' learning environments and as such valued the literacy practices and events that occurred in various community spaces. They used their local communities as a resource to help student teachers gain broadened understandings of literacy as a way to make meaning in the world and literacy as multimodal.

Literacy as a Way to Make Meaning in the World

The LTEs' understanding of literacy as a practice that is not neutral was at the core of their pedagogy; and so the LTEs conceptualized literacy practices as meaning-making practices. Melissa poignantly described literacy as a practice in which we "make sense *of* and *in* the world." To help student teachers view literacy in these expansive ways, they worked with student teachers to so they could recognize literacy as a social construct. They wanted student teachers to understand what counted as literacy, and who counted as literate was often determined by dominant discourses in society (Luke & Freebody, 1997). Maya explained why this was a priority in her courses:

I always want to support students and thinking about what are the lenses by which

we view our students? How are we not just describing what we're seeing but often evaluating it? And how is it that a student's performance may really just be a result of our own assumptions or a result of the pedagogical activities that we create that kind of position some as knowing or not knowing?

To support student teachers' development in deepening their understanding of literacy, the LTEs shared examples, created assignments, and included texts that allowed student teachers to arrive at their own understandings of literacy as a way to make meaning in the world. For instance, they used their local communities to challenge assumptions about the site and place of where literacy practices occurred (traditionally taking place in schools). Misa and Maya had student teachers take walks in the communities where they would complete their practice teaching placements. Student teachers were asked to identify places and sites where literacy was taking place. Student teachers recognized literacy practices occurring in a variety of places: Laundromats, subway stations, churches, and community centers. Maya commented that an exercise like this allowed student teachers to view "neighborhood spaces as texts"—a site where community members' knowledge was exchanged and community bonds strengthened. Student teachers were able to witness and engage with various places in the community where literacy events took place and engage with community members to understand "what they speak . . . what they're reading and writing" (Maya). Furthermore, they had a chance to better understand how community members, including their future students, are positioned in these various spaces as well as reflect on some of the explicit and implicit differences from traditional schooling practices.

Another example was in Dominique's course, where student teachers had to complete a community literacy digital project. Student teachers were asked to attend a community literacy event (e.g., spoken word festival, hip-hop cipher, dance workshops) and create a digital project that explored questions such as "How is literacy defined in this community space?"; "What questions about theory/practice/policy does this experience raise?"; and "What lessons can teachers learn from viewing literacy through this lens?" Dominique explained that the assignment's purpose was to "help understand how practices in various community spaces have the potential to inform and influence our conceptions of the term literacy." By asking student teachers to attend community literacy events, Dominique positioned literacy as practices beyond reading and writing. Student teachers witnessed the practices of spoken word artists, dancers, and musicians while considering how literacy was defined in that space. Creating opportunities to deliberately explore how literacy is defined in out-of-school spaces, specifically through expressive art forms, student teachers were able to view the arts as a form of literacy. These opportunities helped student teachers develop a stance toward social justice for their future classrooms. Millman (2009) explained,

By recognizing art as a cultural narrative . . . teachers can help students develop

an understanding of social and cultural meaning in art, and can provide students with the tools to understand their culture and history and a means to work towards social justice. (p. 68)

This assignment worked to help disrupt student teachers' assumptions about how and where literacy practices take place, while encouraging them to acknowledge a variety of literacy practices in community spaces.

Literacy as Multimodal

The LTEs engaged with multimodal practices to help student teachers gain an expansive view of literacy and thus enacted disrupting the commonplace (Lewison et al., 2008). To model this understanding of literacy, the LTEs engaged with their student teachers using alternative texts and forms of expression (Lewison et al., 2008). These often included podcasts, slam poetry, greeting cards, social media, quilt squares, Boalian theater, and maps. Kosnik et al. (2015) identified this practice of using alternate texts and forms of expression as a way to "unsettle student teachers from the dominant discourses about literacy . . . and help student teachers unpack issues related to equity" (p. 145). To help student teachers disrupt the idea of literacy as autonomous and solely a school-based skill, the LTEs had student teachers engage in a variety of multimodal exercises and assignments in their communities. For example, in Maya's course, student teachers were asked to do a literacy analysis assignment, wherein they mapped places they traveled in a week. On her course outline, the assignment is described:

This assignment is designed to encourage metacognitive awareness of your everyday literacy events and practices. Choose two activities that you do as part of your ordinary life, document them (i.e., take notes immediately after the activity so you can remember it), and analyze them using a chart to be handed out in class. You will bring your analysis chart to class for peer discussion, and then prepare a 5 page paper in which you briefly describe the events and analyze them in relation to course concepts and readings about literacy, positioning, and power.

Upon completing their assignments, Maya prompted student teachers to think about their own literacy practices in those spaces as well as privileges they held by traveling to those places. She asked them to consider, "Who are you? How are you read in that space?" Maya related this assignment to Paulo Freire's (1970) notion of "reading the word and the world" because she challenged student teachers to "read" their daily actions and make meaning from them. By asking student teachers to explore their own literacies through an ethnographic lens, they encouraged them to develop metacognitive awareness of their everyday literacy events, literacy practice, and cultural location. This "reading" of their lives helped student teachers not only to deepen their own understanding of the relationship between literacy and schooling but also to increase awareness of their own involvement in current systems of injustice (Sleeter, 2013). Furthermore, Maya used this exercise to facili-

tate conversations around privilege; student teachers gained awareness around their privilege by locating areas/stops they frequented on a map (e.g., visiting affluent neighborhoods, shopping in certain stores and grocery stores).

All of the LTEs developed and maintained relationships in their local communities. They drew on their local communities as a resource from which to help student teachers conceptualize literacy education as well as model expansive pedagogies. Throughout their courses, the LTEs reported that their student teachers' views of literacy evolved. They noted how many student teachers were able to articulate their expansive philosophies of literacy through their deeper understanding of the depth and breadth of literacy teaching and learning.

Creating Opportunities for Student Teachers to Unlearn

Although the six LTEs had an expansive definition of literacy beyond a set of autonomous skills (Street, 1984), such was not always the case with their student teachers. The LTEs reported that student teachers often came into their courses with narrow views of literacy, which were often based upon their own schooling practices as students. In response to student teachers' traditional views of literacy, the LTEs set broad and expansive goals in their courses, namely, helping student teachers unlearn. These findings are not surprising when considering Lortie's (1975) notion of the apprenticeship of observation. He argued, "There are ways in which being a student is like serving an apprenticeship in teaching; students have protracted face-to-face and consequential interactions with established teachers" (p. 61). Yet, as students, they were not aware of their teachers' pedagogical approaches, objectives, planning, student assessment, or analysis of their teaching. In addition, as students, they did not "perceive the teacher as someone making choices among teaching strategies" (p. 63). This often leaves student teachers with a one-dimensional view of teaching. Misa explained why having student teachers unlearn was an important part of her courses:

> [Student teachers] have to unlearn what it means to be a school student, they've been in schools for how many years with a certain type of culture and norms that they know how to be, they know to do school, they know how to be good students. I don't care about that. Now you've got to learn, you are a teacher, you are part of a learning community and I don't want you to then enact those same types of pedagogies that brought you to this space of just consuming what somebody wants.

Edelsky (1999) suggested that an initial step in enacting critical literacy practices in the classroom is realizing that *first* we need to become aware of ourselves and develop an awareness of the larger social systems that are in place, and ***then*** we can support pupils in doing the same. To have the student teachers better understand their own relationships to schooling, three of the six LTEs (Pietro, Maya, Melissa) had them create literacy autobiographies. In these texts, student teachers were to recall and analyze pivotal moments in their literacy learning as well as places where

literacy took place in their lives. Pietro, for example, had teachers complete an assignment to create a literacy history, which helped them to disrupt their assumptions about literacy teaching and learning. This assignment had student teachers locate their own literacy histories and then make connections between the literacy history of a pupil in their classrooms during their practice teaching placement.

Having student teachers analyze their previous schooling experiences (literacy autobiographies, classroom discussions, reflective papers) helped them identify their own filters. They recognized that student teachers often understand teaching in the ways they had experienced it as school-aged children (Lortie, 1975). So, when given opportunities to identify their own relationships to literacy, they were then more ready to "step outside of themselves" (Maya) to better understand diverse settings outside of their own cultural worlds. Melissa noted that this process of "helping student teachers understand privilege and Whiteness" allowed for student teachers to truly begin to understand that "teaching is culturally located and literacy is not neutral."

Identifying, Valuing, and Responding to Pupils' Lives Outside of the Classroom

When considering students teachers' often narrow views of literacy, all six LTEs recognized that holding a deficit perspective of pupils, especially those from traditionally marginalized groups (i.e., pupils of color, pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds), was an obstacle student teachers faced on a path toward a broader conception of literacy. To help student teachers overcome deficit perspectives of pupils, the LTEs invited them to think about the relationships between traditional literacy practices, those who benefit from traditional practices, and those marginalized from those practices, often leading to deficit perspectives. The LTEs aimed to have student teachers value what the pupils brought into the classroom and integrate it into the curriculum in meaningful ways. Dyson (2010) referred to this practice as establishing a "participatory culture" where students and teachers "are responsive to each other and everyone has a part" (p. 314), whereas Moll (1992) referred to this practice as drawing on pupils' "funds of knowledge" and described the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). Although the LTEs used different terms to describe the practice, each spoke about the importance of valuing and responding to pupils' lives outside of the classroom.

Dominique, for example, referred to this approach as an "additive perspective" that positioned students as "experienced" and "knowledgeable." Misa had student teachers challenge their assumptions about who is knowledgeable by helping student teachers see "young people as having capital and certain skills that they bring to their learning process, whether we use it in the classroom or not, but it legitimizes them up front and not seeing them from a deficit perspective." Likewise, Giovanni wanted student teachers to question who counted as knowledgeable in order to "view

the [pupils] they are working with as intellectual resources and as people who come in with rich experiences." Giovanni strongly believed "that [pupils] themselves can contribute to the curriculum in very powerful ways." To help student teachers view all pupils as intellectuals, four of the six LTEs (Pietro, Melissa, Dominique, Maya) had an assignment in their courses that required student teachers to interview and study pupils in their practice teaching placements. Assignments like this helped student teachers view pupils as "curricular informants" (Melissa) who are knowledgeable contributors in the classroom, thus helping student teachers shed deficit perspectives.

Using Popular Culture and Media in Curriculum

The LTEs used current events, popular culture, and media in their curricula to familiarize themselves with student teachers' interest in ways that contributed to their classroom instruction (Milner, 2010). Furthermore, they modeled to student teachers ways in which they could draw on the resources pupils bring from popular media texts to the classroom (Dyson, 2003). In particular, popular culture and media were used to interrupt student teachers' beliefs, including how people are constructed by television, videos, and social media (Marshall & Sensoy, 2016; Vasquez, 2013). Dominique, for example, had her student teachers view and analyze videos for issues of "gender and equity, stereotypes, and intersections around race and gender." Student teachers watched a video about a basketball star and then unpacked the race, gender, and class stereotypes being represented. To extend the activity beyond analysis, Dominique had her student teachers create a counternarrative to the video to dispute commonly held stereotypes of basketball players.

The LTEs also used children's toys and comics as points of entry into larger conversations about issues of power, specifically gender, race, and privilege. Dominique had her student teachers analyze the stereotypes presented in children's toys, while Melissa, who was committed to a "critical take on digital media literacy," had student teachers watch cartoons and analyze how the characters, and thus the people in society they represented, were being constructed. She explained how she used the popular children's cartoons *Sid the Science Kid* and *Dora the Explorer* in her courses:

> They watch and analyze *Sid the Science Kid*, and Sid is supposedly African American and supposedly Jewish. But . . . he doesn't speak African American language . . . there are many things that are made visible and invisible. I [also] show them Dora and Diego in Spanish so that they realize how little Spanish actually Dora and Diego speak and [I show them] the English version, because they think it's fully bilingual otherwise. And then really use that to problematize issues of representation in terms these difficult issues, issues that a lot of times they tip-toe around. Issues of African American language. Why is it that Sid the Science Kid is African American? There is no mention of all of their hairs are straight, all of their language is mainstream American English.

While several LTEs used TV, videos, and cartoons to disrupt the commonplace,

Misa spoke emphatically about her course curriculum mirroring "very much what's going on in the world today." She included the perspectives not only of research scholars but also of community stakeholders who were directly being affected by a particular issue. By doing this, Misa modeled disrupting the commonplace because she problematized whose voices counted and were included in the telling of a community narrative. For instance, she included social media posts (e.g., Instagram, Twitter) and readings from local papers on the Black Lives Matter movement and the civil unrest related to the Mike Brown[1] case. She invited her student teachers to question, "What are these local community folks saying and how is their knowledge legitimized within the work that we have to do?" By positioning the community members as knowledgeable and including voices from beyond traditional media outlets, Misa enacted critical literacy practices in her courses. She encouraged student teachers to see the everyday through new lenses (Lewison et al., 2008).

By using popular culture and media such as children's cartoons, current events, and videos, the LTEs invited student teachers into an examination of how "social norms are communicated through the various arenas of popular culture and how identities are shaped by these experiences" (Lewison et al., 2008, p. 8). Student teachers were given opportunities not only to recognize how perceptions of groups and individuals, informed by media, can inform their practice as future educators but to become authors of media that aimed at disrupting widely held assumptions and beliefs.

Discussion

The purpose of this article was to explore the practices and pedagogies of LTEs with a critical stance. When considering the first research question—what are the practices and pedagogies of LTEs with a critical stance?—it was clear that the LTEs' pedagogy was anchored by their stance: a stance toward texts, social practices, and dominant discourses that valued diversity and demonstrated a deep understanding of power. Regarding Lewison et al.'s (2008) first dimension of critical literacy, disrupting the commonplace, the knowledge of the participants extended far beyond knowledge of traditional literacy. The LTEs held progressive views of literacy as a socially and culturally situated practice, as well as a multimodal and multimediated practice. In regard to the second research question, which addressed the learning opportunities the LTEs provided their student teachers to develop the dispositions and skills needed to teach in today's classrooms, they placed issues related to equity at the center of their courses and designed learning opportunities for student teachers to critically examine issues such as race, class, and privilege throughout their teacher education courses while simultaneously helping student teachers learn the pedagogical tools of the trade. These views were negotiated into teacher education by creating invitations for student teachers to disrupt their assumptions of teaching and learning, including viewing the local community as a

curricular resource, unlearning what they knew about literacy and schooling, and using popular culture and media to understand how individuals and groups are positioned in society. They had to go above and beyond the course curriculum to effectively integrate critical literacy practices while continuously pushing student teachers toward a more expansive understanding of literacy.

Though this study focused on six LTEs with a critical stance, their shared practices and pedagogies have implications for the work of all teacher educators. Their progressive courses suggest that a paradigm shift is needed in teacher education. The LTEs drew on the experiences and views of community stakeholders (teachers, community members, activists, student teachers) to shape the ways in which their courses were conceptualized, designed, and enacted. As a result, they shifted the power and knowledge (Zeichner, 2016) in the teacher education classroom by co-constructing knowledge of teaching and learning with their student teachers and community members. If teacher education is truly to be a site for social justice and equity, it is insufficient to present strategies and techniques for classroom teaching without modeling pedagogies that demonstrate a commitment to all pupils and the communities in which they serve. The implications and recommendations that arise from the findings in this article can be categorized into two areas: implications for literacy instruction in teacher education and implications for preservice teacher education.

Literacy is an evolving practice that should reflect the shifts in contemporary cultures, communication strategies, and societies. LTEs should carefully and deliberately select a wide and expansive range of texts and genres in their courses that transcend traditional notions of literacy as autonomous skills such as reading and writing. The LTEs in this study included a range of texts, including blogs, videos, maps, theater, spoken word, and children's and young adolescent literature. Incorporating expansive texts into teacher education courses will help student teachers broaden their conceptions of literacy while demonstrating that there are multiple ways in which to be literate. Additionally, LTEs must provide student teachers with opportunities to understand the influence of issues like culture, race, class, and privilege on their own literacy development and how this can affect their role as a literacy teacher. Using a range of texts and genres, the LTEs can select texts that consider sociopolitical issues to help student teachers unpack their own, and others,' assumptions about these issues. Finally, LTEs must create opportunities for student teachers to demonstrate their learning in dynamic ways that account for the changing conceptions of literacy. These could include multimodal assignments, community-based projects, and digital compositions.

The LTEs in this study created and maintained relationships in the local community (e.g., churches, schools, community centers), which was an integral component when actualizing critical literacy practices. This work should not be left solely on the shoulders of LTEs; institutional support is required. Preservice literacy teacher education programs must build and maintain educational partnerships in the community,

including both traditional and nontraditional learning spaces. School-based partnerships should be formed across teacher education programs and local schools. This will provide opportunities for teacher educators, student teachers, in-service teachers, and school administrators to collaborate in the areas of teaching and research. The LTEs who formed educational partnerships in this study reported how demanding this was on them because of how time consuming it was. This is not sustainable for LTEs who already have several demands placed on them, so the academic institution needs to play a larger role in the areas of coordination, communication, and logistical planning to ensure the longevity of these partnerships. These partnerships could help in bridging the divide between theory and practice. For example, literacy teacher education courses could be taught in the community, either in local public schools or in community spaces. Physically holding academic courses in the community models to student teachers the importance of being connected to community and will help in recognizing and then responding to the needs of the community at large. Furthermore, establishing relationships in the community will allow LTEs the opportunity to involve student teachers in community events. Student teachers will gain firsthand experience working with community members and understanding community-based literacy practices. Finally, this practice will model for student teachers a basis for knowing why and how to tap into resources outside of schools. Their increased understandings about out-of-school literacy practices will be helpful as they consider how literacy matters to meaning making, identity, and agency. Using this knowledge, they will be better prepared to implement inclusive literacy strategies in their content area classrooms.

As mentioned earlier, the practices and pedagogies of the LTEs in this article often transcended the content areas of literacy and language arts and informed how teacher educators across disciplines conceptualize their teacher education courses (e.g., draw on the community as a curricular resource). Depending solely on literacy education courses to engage student teachers in critical practices will not ensure that student teachers assume a critical stance in their future classrooms. Although literacy teacher education is often viewed as a natural place for critical literacy practices, teacher education programs and teacher educators must work toward incorporating a critical stance in all teacher education courses. Teacher educators, however, require the time to collaborate and share knowledge as well as revise and refine their teacher education courses. If critical literacy is indeed a stance in which texts are read, social issues are examined, and action is taken, there should be opportunities for teacher educators to work in an integrated way toward creating an immersive and cohesive experience for student teachers while in teacher education programs. The responsibility, however, of developing and sustaining a critical stance should not rely solely on individual teacher educators; rather, a critical stance must be supported at the institutional level in the institutions' policies and practices (Stenhouse, 2012). Kosnik et al. (2015) argued that if teacher education programs are committed to helping all children, "they must move beyond rhetoric

to practice, so that student teachers are immersed in a teacher-education program with a consistent and overriding philosophy" (p. 17).

This article adds to an emerging body of research documenting how LTEs are reframing their courses and integrating resources from critical literacy pedagogy (Kosnik et al., 2013; Mosley, 2010; Rogers, 2013; Skerrett, 2009; Vasquez, 2013). Rogers (2014) wrote on the importance of critical literacy practices in teacher education courses that

> the intellectual work of designing critical literacy practices provides multiple learning opportunities for teachers to rethink traditional assumptions about literacy, learning, and the role of literacy education in the lives of the children and families with whom they work. This is particularly important because part of teacher learning includes disrupting old patterns of thought and integrating new. (p. 257)

As noted previously, LTEs play a central role in shaping future educators. It can be argued that LTEs are at the cornerstone of literacy educational reform; they directly influence the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of future classroom literacy teachers, while deepening their own understandings of patterns and trends in contemporary literacy practices as researchers of the field. The complex work of LTEs with a critical stance needs to be further encouraged within the institution, and opportunities for collaboration within and across institutions must be supported; however, recognizing and valuing the work of literacy teacher educators with a critical stance is the first step toward better supporting this unique professional group.

Note

[1] During the time of the second interview, a top news story in the country was the fatal shooting of Mike Brown and the protests that occurred afterward in Ferguson, Missouri.

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