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Developing Preservice Teacher Conceptions of Effective Teachers Using Classroom Scenarios to Practice Difficult Conversations

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Abstract: Faculty from three different teacher preparation programs implemented classroom scenarios to help preservice teachers practice holding difficult conversations with students. The goal was to enhance critical reflection and discussion around creating culturally responsive classrooms to change preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers' qualities. Results indicate that preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers shifted from a focus on personal attributes to teaching skills. This study addresses the need for practice-based teacher education that has advanced in parallel with efforts to find new ways to the practical knowledge needed to be culturally responsive teachers.

Introduction

The need to address multicultural education in teacher education programs is paramount in the 21st century as many countries experience increasing social and cultural diversity. For example, in the United States, classrooms are becoming more diverse, while the teaching force remains primarily white (Muniz et al., 2018). This growth in cultural diversity and disparity between student and teacher ethnicity is likewise occurring in Australia where approximately 50,000 people from sub-Saharan African countries have been resettled since 2000 (Baak, 2018), while teachers remain mostly white and middle class. South Korea has experienced a similar cultural mismatch between the student population caused by growth in immigration from mostly Southeast Asian and North Korean. At the same time, 90% of teachers still identify as ethnically Korean (Um, & Cho, 2022). These trends indicate that most educators will interact with students whose experiences are different from their own, increasing the likelihood of potential cultural misunderstandings between students and their teachers.

While beginning teachers regard creating a positive classroom environment as their most serious challenge (Larmer et al., 2016), research suggests preservice teachers are mostly unaware how their actions may create barriers to creating a positive classroom environment where all students can succeed (Welton & Martinez, 2013). These findings point to a growing need for preservice teachers to develop the mindsets needed to understand their students' cultural

differences and the practical knowledge required to establish positive relationships with their students.

Culturally responsive teachers (CRT) understand their students' cultural differences and build partnerships with learners to develop positive learning environments for all students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, PSTs tend to focus on what students don't have (deficit thinking) instead of using asset-based frames that enrich the learning experiences for students of color (Dee & Penner, 2016; Milner, 2012; Shah & Coles, 2020). Additionally, many educators think that cultural responsiveness means "doing something to our culturally and linguistically diverse students without changing ourselves" (Ladson-Billings, 1995 p.52). To address this gap, we contend that developing culturally responsive teaching practices requires pre-service and in service teachers to examine and recognize their assumptions about students to develop the skills necessary skills to enact culturally responsive teaching practices effectively in their classrooms.

In this study, teacher educators from three different teacher preparation programs implemented a series of classroom scenarios that required preservice teachers to have difficult conversations with students. Difficult conversations require preservice teacher to engage with their own multiple identities and develop an awareness of oppression and the myriad ways it can play out in classrooms. We intended to create a space for our preservice teachers to scrutinize their stance and assumptions about cultural diversity. Because racism is considered a "trigger" event that generates powerful emotional responses in students that range from guilt and shame to anger and despair, preservice teachers must have opportunities to engage with, reflect on and analyze how to respond to potential triggering events in the classroom (Obear, 2007). Therefore, we implemented a classroom scenario in which a student approaches a teacher after class to discuss how the teachers' actions make the student feel stereotyped, implying the teacher may be engaging in racist behavior. The classroom scenarios in this study to serve as approximations of practice (Grossman, 2018). Preservice teachers respond to accusations of racial bias and critically reflect and discuss their reactions to improve their ability to create culturally responsive classrooms. The purpose of this study is to examine how engagement with these classroom scenarios may have worked to develop the practical knowledge needed to navigate difficult conversations with students regarding racial bias and thereby change PSTs conceptions of the qualities of effective teachers.

Theoretical Framework

Preservice teachers' conceptions of effective teachers' qualities are well-formed before entering teacher preparation programs (Brown et al., 2008). There is agreement in the literature that teacher candidates enter teacher education programs with predetermined conceptions, visual images, and beliefs about teaching (Kagan, 1992). For example, researchers have consistently found that prospective elementary teachers identify effective teachers in terms of personal attributes such as "caring" and "loves children," and often believe that liking children is a sufficient condition to be an effective teacher (Breault, 2013; Stronge et al., 2011; Walls et al., 2002). Preservice teachers rank personal attributes like "caring" far higher than qualities like "knowledge" and "teaching skills." Believing that personal characteristics such as "caring" are essential appears to be true even for non-traditional and secondary teacher candidates (Cuddapah & Stanford, 2015; Ruzgar, 2021). Although non-academic attributes such as empathy, resilience, and adaptability are necessary for teaching effectiveness, they are not enough (Klassen & Kim,

2019). Effective teachers must also develop finely tuned skill sets that allow them to respond to classroom dilemmas, such as redirecting students who are disengaged or displaying disruptive behavior in ways that create and maintain classroom learning environments of respect and rapport (Donehower Paul et al., 2019).

Research suggests that preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers are difficult to change. Weinstein (1989) found that preservice elementary teachers did not change their images of effective teachers after taking an introductory education course. He concluded that preservice teachers' conceptions of effective teachers are so strong that a single course could do little to change them. Prior research shows that changing or developing preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers is challenging; however, it is imperative because preconceived ideas serve as filters to their learning and influence teaching practices as student teachers and beginning in-service teachers (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Levin, 2015).

Practical Knowledge and Approximations of Practice

Practical knowledge refers to the knowledge teachers use in classroom situations, emphasizing the complexities of interactive teaching and thinking-in-action (Shulman, 1987). They are the rules of pedagogy that are learned by teachers from their formal training and become modified by classroom experiences. As teacher educators, we need to explore our student teachers' evolving practical knowledge to build programs that help them develop, understand, articulate, and utilize that practical knowledge. Teacher education programs are limited in providing preservice teachers with teaching situations that aim to develop their practical knowledge. While valuable, field experiences are unpredictable concerning the kinds of teaching situations preservice teachers encounter. The lack of predictability makes it difficult for teacher educators to prepare for and assess practical knowledge in preservice teacher development. However, approximations of practice can support teacher educators in providing PSTs with opportunities to develop practical knowledge for teaching during their coursework before or alongside field experiences (Kazemi et al., 2015).

Approximations are focused on activities that allow novices to examine teaching features and experiment with different approaches to interacting with students (Grossman et al., 2009). Approximations deviate from actual practice by simplifying situations such as interacting with a single student rather than a whole group and providing extra time to respond to complex problems. These modifications allow learners to rehearse specific skills or reactions and then integrate them into their teaching practices. Because teachers' practical knowledge comes from personal and professional experience, it often remains tacit and is not readily articulated by the teacher (Nonaka & Konno, 1998). Additionally, teachable moments are fleeting, limiting the learning opportunities for preservice teachers. However, approximations of practice thoughtfully constructed can provide preservice teachers with the conditions under which practicing teachers develop and use their practical knowledge.

Several studies found that engagement with authentic classroom scenarios enhanced future teachers' problem solving and critical thinking skills, and how knowledge about teaching and learning informs classroom practice (van den Berg et al., 2008; Wilkerson & Gijsselaers; 1996). These findings suggest that providing preservice teachers with the opportunity to respond to complex authentic classroom scenarios that approximate actual classroom teaching situations can help them develop a more robust understanding of the practical knowledge needed for

effective teaching (Sheridan et al., 2019).

This study examines changes in elementary (Grades Kindergarten-6) and secondary teacher (Grades 7-12) candidates' conceptions of effective teachers' qualities after engaging with classroom scenarios designed to support preservice teachers in holding difficult conversations with students in culturally responsive ways. We did not intend to use these approximations to create rubber stamp teaching that expected preservice teachers to respond in prescribed ways. Instead, we intended to bolster preservice teachers' knowledge in action as they practiced in the moment improvisation (Philip et al., 2019) and responded to written classroom scenarios depicting challenging student behaviors in the classroom. The scenarios selected presented teaching situations where PST's took on the teacher's role in overhearing students making racialized or gendered comments, a student's accusations of racial bias in classroom management strategies and encouraging students to take on more challenging work.

To this aim, we ask the following question: What changes occur in PST's conceptions of an effective teacher's qualities during a semester of coursework focused on culturally responsive teaching and the opportunity to practice having difficult conversations with students?

Research Methods

According to Cook and Campbell (1979), quasi-experiments are often used to evaluate the effectiveness educational interventions. To minimize concerns related to having no control or variable group, we used a one-group pretest-posttest design. This study's focus was to determine how preservice teacher engagement in classroom scenarios about culturally responsive teaching practices change their conceptions of effective teachers. Researchers used a Wilcoxon signed ranks test to determine if statistically significant differences in rankings occurred post-intervention, and a paired *t*-test compared changes between groups.

Participants

Thirty-seven preservice teachers participated in this study from three different teacher education programs. Seven participants were enrolled at *Woodland Hills* (pseudonym), a large research-intensive university in the mid-Atlantic. Three participants were male, and four were female. All participants were seeking certification in Secondary Education (Grades 7-12); one in Science, two in Social Studies, three in English, and one in Spanish. All students identified as white and non-Hispanic. All participants were students enrolled in a Master of Arts with Teacher Certification degree program rather than traditional four-year undergraduate degree program.

Sixteen of the participants attended *Green Valley* (pseudonym), a small Liberal Arts college in the southeastern United States. Thirteen students identified as white non-Hispanic, one identified as black, one identified as Asian, and one identified as Hispanic. Five of the participants were male, and eleven were female. Fourteen of the sixteen were education majors, and two were taking the course as an elective. Of the 16 education majors, six were elementary education majors, and 12 were secondary education. All participants were part of the first course in the program titled Introduction to Education.

A total of 12 participants attend *Bayside* (pseudonym), a large research-intensive institution in the Northeast. Five were male, and seven were female. Five students identified as white, three identified as international students, two identified as Asian American students, and

two identified as Hispanic. Six students were majoring in computer science, two students were biology majors and four students were majoring mechanical engineering. Three of the twelve students intended to continue onto a teaching certificate program. All participants were students in an introductory course called Understanding and Evaluating Education.

Data Sources and Procedures

All 37 participants were asked to identify and describe five effective teacher qualities and then rank them from one to five, with one being the most important quality and five the least important in the first week of the course and then again at the end of the course.

Each of the course instructors was a research fellow with the Innovative New Spaces for Practice and Rehearsal in Education (INSPIRE) Program at the MIT Teaching Systems Lab. This project aimed to support teacher educators in implementing games and simulations designed to serve as practice spaces for PSTs to develop equitable teaching practices related to assessment, eliciting learner knowledge, and classroom management. Instructors met weekly to discuss and design learning experiences using these practice spaces, reflect on effective teaching practices, and redesign future implementations. Although the courses' curriculum varied in terms of course readings and additional assignments, all classroom scenarios were implemented similarly across the courses to address learning outcomes related to becoming culturally responsive educators. Below are descriptions of the classroom scenarios:

Gendered and Racialized Student Comments. Jamika has her head down and is scrolling through her phone. A classmate sitting next to Jamika taps her on the shoulder and says, "Pay attention." Jamika responds by saying, "I'm not paying attention to this whitewashed crap. Where are the black people?"

Darius Racial Bias. A student in your class is Darius Miller, a black male student. He is creative, hardworking, and very social, but he is often talking when he is not supposed to be in class. Darius is not the only student who talks when he is not supposed to, but it seems like you hear his voice more often and louder than anyone else. In class today, Darius walked out, of course, after you called him out for talking when he was not. Darius had always been previously receptive to your efforts to mitigate his talking in class, so you've asked him to come to talk to you after school.

AP is Not for Me. In this scenario, you are a computer science teacher trying to encourage students to take the AP Computer Science Test. You engage in a one-on-one conversation with Emma, a shy student who does not believe she can pass the test. The simulation addresses the underrepresentation of minorities and females taking the Computer Science AP exam. This scenario provides preservice teachers with practice on encouraging students to take the AP exam using an asset mindset.

Noticing Student Belonging. You are an observer in a computer science classroom of a peer who is using small groups to teach programming. You are asked to provide feedback about a series of lessons. There are several gendered and racial bias instances that participants might observe and choose to take up as they work through the scenario.

Institution	Teacher Moments Scenario			
	Gendered and Racialized Comments	Darius	AP is Not for Me	Noticing Student Belonging
Woodland Hills	X*	X		
Green Valley	X	X		X
Bayside			X	

Note. *Incorporated on three separate occasions within the same course
Table 1: Teacher Moments Scenarios Implemented at each Institution

Implementation of Classroom Scenarios

Woodland Hills

The Instructor at Woodland Hills implemented the classroom scenarios Gendered and Racialized Comments and Darius Racial Bias to serve as concrete learning experiences to facilitate reflective observation consistent with Kolb et al. (2014) experiential learning cycle. To this end, participants engaged with the classroom scenarios before reading or discussing the learning objective. After engagement with the scenarios, participants worked in pairs to review each other's responses and discuss the similarities and differences between their responses, what they liked about the responses, and how they might respond differently given another opportunity to practice. Participants watched the Edutopia film festival on culturally responsive teaching featuring Valerie Purdie-Vaughn's works and the Southern Poverty Law Center on Unintentional Bias and Chimamanda Adichie's The Danger of a Single Story before engaging with the classroom scenarios the following class meeting. Participants were provided two more opportunities to practice responding to the scenarios. The final assignment required them to create a list of guiding principles for interacting with students in culturally responsive ways.

Green Valley

The Green Valley instructor incorporated the classroom scenarios Darius Racial Bias, Gendered and Racialized Comments and Noticing Student Belonging over two class sessions focused on learning about unconscious bias. In preparation for the classroom scenarios, participants were assigned Understanding Unconscious Bias and Unintentional Racism by Jean Moule (2009). For each scenario, participants were assigned to groups of three or four and instructed to work together, discuss their observations, and form responses to the reflection questions together.

Bayside

The instructor introduced three iterations of the classroom scenario AP is Not for Me, designed to provide preservice teachers with practice in developing an asset-framing mindset. In preparation, participants read Milner's (2012) Beyond the Test Score. Participants engaged with the classroom scenario to familiarize themselves with the application and took a brief survey to

assess their level of confusion and hesitation during the classroom scenario. They repeated the same classroom scenario for homework, answered three questions about the authenticity and perception of the scenario's goals, and identified what they wanted to discuss in class the following day. In the next class, participants revisited the scenarios, used the asset-framing mindset, addressed the concept in small groups, and created memos to implement asset framing in teaching.

Darius Racial Bias Classroom Scenario Example

Below is a transcript of a typical response from one participant (preservice teacher) working with the Darius Racial Bias scenario. The transcript highlights the way participants often shifted their focus from individual students' concerns and needs, to a focus on whole-class management policies and the need for whole class interventions rather than engaging meaningfully with the students' individual concerns regarding unfair treatment because of his race. Notice how the participant begins the conversation by focusing on the student's behavior (not paying attention). Notice when the student explicitly suggests he is being treated differently than other students because of his race the teacher immediately shifts attention the need to review classroom policies rather than address and discuss the individual student's feelings of discrimination. Notice that when Darius mentions this kind of treatment happens in other classes the pre-service teacher uses the opportunity to distance themselves from the other teachers and seeks solidarity with Darius in vowing to protect him from other racially biased teachers.

Scenario: Darius walks in and sits down and says "So, what do you want to talk about?"

Participant: Hi, Darius. I would just like to discuss with you the importance of paying attention in class and how we can be more mindful so there are no longer any disruptions to the class.

Scenario: I know I'm talking sometimes when I'm not supposed to be, but so are other kids and you don't call them out like you do me.

Participant response: I apologize, it is not at all my intention to make you feel that way. As a matter of fact, I agree with you. I think it is about time to remind the entire class of our policies and do better to shape the way I enforce those policies on everyone in a fair manner.

Scenario: I just felt like there were other students also talking. Why you always gotta call out the Black kid?

Participant response: It was not my intention to make you feel singled out. This is not a matter of race, but the frequency of disruptive behavior. If [insert name of quiet white student] had spoken out of turn in the same ways that you did today, I would be sitting here with them discussing the same things we are now.

Scenario: *For me, the situation was that... say there was five people talking in class and I was one of them and the rest were White people or something else. I mean, the odds of that is just kind of like, Oh, Darius is being singled out.*

Participant response: I can definitely see where you are coming from. But I will reiterate that this is about the degree of disruptive behavior. Yes, the other students were talking too and they have received warnings as you've witnessed in the past. But so have you and yet you still continue to speak louder and more frequently when you're not supposed to.

Scenario: *It feels like this happens in other classes too, and now I'm just the Black kid who's always complaining. Like one day in the lunchroom I was signed out with another Black student for being loud in a group of rowdy football players. Another time this week we were talking about Michael Brown and Ferguson in class and the teacher asked me for the token Black opinion.*

Participant response: Darius, it breaks my heart to hear that you have experienced this and I want you to know that as unfortunate as it is, you are not alone. There are other students who experience that sort of thing every day too. But you know what? You have something many of those other students don't have. Me. I am going to speak with my supervisor about calling a board meeting to ensure that we are efficiently addressing prejudiced behavior in this school. Your name will not be mentioned, don't worry. But in the meantime, I want you to always feel welcome to share those kinds of things with me. I am doing the best I can to provide a fun, efficient, and inclusive learning environment for everyone and I apologize that you have not been able to experience that in your other classes. We will see to it that this gets addressed.

Scenario: *I don't really get what happened and am not sure what I could have done differently other than just sitting there.*

Participant response: In terms of my class, that is all I am asking of you and everyone else. When the I am speaking, I should be the only one who has the floor to talk. Otherwise, raise your hand or wait until I have given the class permission to talk amongst each other. If you follow those rules, we won't have any more trouble. Okay?

Scenario: *Alright, thanks. I have to head home*

Participant response: Okay, Darius. Thank you so much for speaking with me and feeling like you could share those things with me. I want you to know that we'll be wiping the slate clean tomorrow with a fresh start. I look forward to seeing you in class and hope you have a good afternoon!

This transcript clarifies that preservice teachers do not want to acknowledge that they are capable of racial bias toward their students but are quick to defend their students against perceived racial bias enacted by their colleagues.

Data Analysis

We began our data analysis by conducting an inductive content analysis. Inductive content analysis allows researchers to develop theory and identify themes that emerge from the raw data through repeated examination and comparison of documents, recordings, and other printed and verbal material (Patton, 2002). We gathered all the descriptors participants used to describe effective teachers' qualities into one data table, alphabetized them, and collapsed multiple word forms into one word. For example, participants often used both *passion* and *passionate* to describe an effective teacher's most important quality. So, we altered "passion" to read "passionate" as "passionate" refers specifically to a personal quality, while *passion* typically names an emotion. Likewise, when participants used a noun like "communication," we replaced it with an adjective like "articulate" to ensure the words we coded represented qualities rather than actions or skills. We then read and reread the list of words and sorted them into categories.

Researchers then read and coded 100% of the data separately using an interpretational analysis process (Gall et al., 1999). This process included a constant comparative method (Strauss, 1987) to ensure reliability and validity of the identified categories of effective teachers.

After several iterations, we agreed that the three categories Personal Attributes (PA), Professionalism (PR), and Teaching Skills (TS) were the most useful in capturing the kinds of words PST's used to describe the qualities of effective teachers. We conducted a McNemar-Bowker Exact Multinomial Test (Fagerland et al., 2017 & Frey, 2009) to look for consistency in responses across the three categories (i.e., PA, PR, TS) of effective teachers' characteristics. To determine if a statistically significant change occurred in the participant rankings of effective teacher pre-post intervention qualities, we conducted a Wilcoxon signed-rank test (Taheri & Hesamian, 2013) and a paired t-test (Meek et al., 2007).

Results

Analysis of the presurvey data shows a total of 69 novel descriptors out of the 185 words generated by preservice teachers across all three courses. Like previous studies of preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers, Personal Attributes had far more novel descriptors (n=40) than Professionalism, (n=14), and Teaching Skills (n=6) combined. Participants identified *passionate* (n=17) as the most common Personal Attribute, followed by *enthusiasm* (n=10) and *caring* (n=9). *Knowledgeable* (n=10) and *organized* (n=10) were the most common terms identified for Professionalism. Teaching Skills had only six novel descriptors, with *engaging* (n=7) named most frequently.

Analysis of post-course response data showed the number of novel descriptors participants used to describe effective teachers' qualities increased in Teaching Skills, from six in the pre-course rankings to 25 in the post course rankings. New Teaching Skills descriptors used by participants in the post-course responses included words such as "*listening*", "*reflective*" and "*motivate*". Interestingly, the most frequent novel descriptor for teaching skills became *adaptability*, which did not appear at all in the pre-course rankings but was used six times in the post-course rankings. While *passionate* (n=15) and *caring* (n=12) remained at the top of the list for Personal Attributes in the post-rankings, the word *understanding* (n=13) appeared to replace the term *enthusiasm*, which decreased from 10 to four as a quality essential for effective teaching. The result of the Exact Multinomial Test is below (Table 2).

Global test for symmetry	0.111
Pairwise symmetry tests	
PRpresurvey, PApostsurvey : APresurvey, PRpostsurvey	0.453
TSpresurvey, PApostsurvey : APresurvey, TSpostsurvey	0.18
TSpresurvey, PRpostsurvey : PRpresurvey, TSpostsurvey	1.0
Tests	p-value

Table 2: Exact Multinomial Test for Symmetry

The p-value result of 0.113 was not significant. One possible explanation for this result may be the low sample size of the participants who changed their quality one ranking from the pre-survey to the post-survey.

Researchers further analyzed the data using an exact binomial test and re-framed the question to be: "Is there evidence that the course influenced the code a participant will list as "most important?" The answer to this question was "Yes." We calculated the number of participants who changed their "number one quality" code: 18/37, whereas 19/37 had the same code pre and post-course. With a p-value of $< 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$, a 95 percent confidence interval of 0.3439968 and 0.6807859 was calculated, with an estimated probability of success of 0.5135135. This data indicates a significant proportion of participants changed their quality characteristics after working with the scenarios, anywhere from 34% to 68%.

To further inspect this observed shift in participant ranking, researchers next conducted a second-level analysis to discover more details about the change in participant rankings. For this analysis, researchers created a system that assigned numerical values to each ranking instance—using the participant-generated list of five qualities of an effective teacher. Researchers coded each participant's top five characteristics according to the highest rank given to that characteristic. For example, if a participant lists "TS" as the fourth word/quality, TS is scored as a four for that participant. Characteristics were then ranked (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 9 for not mentioned) for each participant. The researchers classified each word into one of three categories: Personal Attributes (PA), Teaching Skills (TS), and Professionalism (PR). An average for each category was computed for both the pre-survey and the post-survey, as seen below (see Table 3).

Category	Pre-Course Response Average Rank	Post Course Response Average Rank
PA	1.78	2.27
TS	5.62	4.22
PR	3.65	5.19

Table 3: Results from the Ranking Scheme: Pre and Post Average rankings by categories

Analysis of this data reveals notable shifts in participant rankings of the characteristics of effective teachers. First, participant ranking of personal attributes (PA) decreased from 1.78 in the pre-course responses to 2.27 in the post course responses. Second, teaching skills (TS) was the only category participants increased their rankings from a pre-course score of 5.62 to a post course rank of 4.22. Figure 1 below provides an additional display of the data showing interesting pre and post response trends. In this display, Personal Attribute (PA) shows a sizable

drop in Q1 rankings from the pre to the post course rankings. Professionalism (PR) shows a large jump in "not mentioned" from the pre course ratings to post. Teaching Skills (TS) shows an increase in both listings and rank. ("9" Green bars= Not Mentioned)

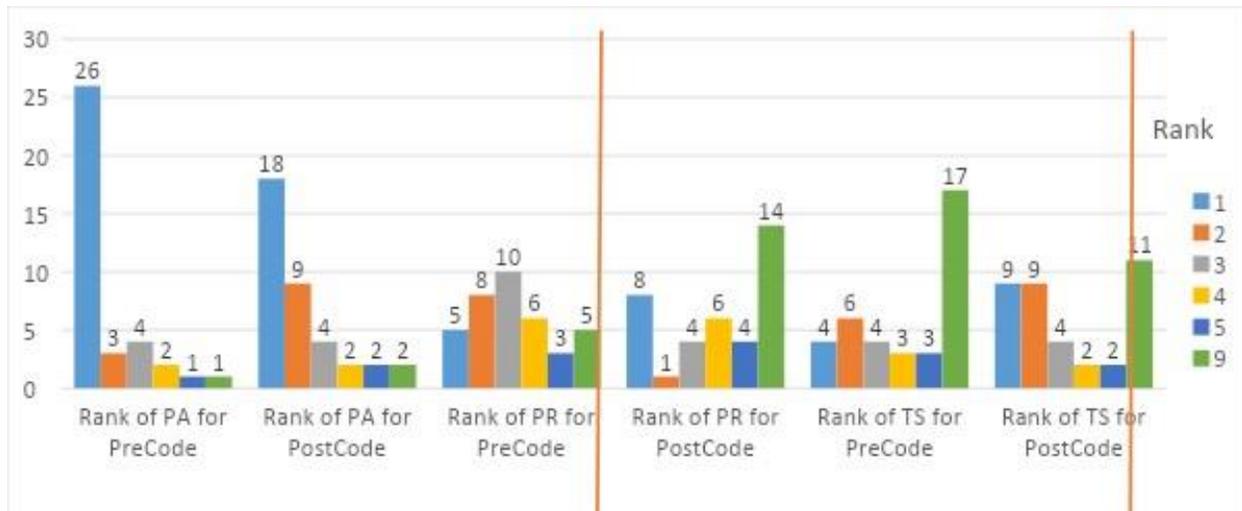


Figure 1: Rankings by Categories Pre and Post Responses

Discussion

This study's findings show a small but significant shift in preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers after engaging in simulated in which they are accused of racial bias. The purpose of this study was to determine if providing PSTs the opportunity to practice having difficult conversations with students regarding racial bias would change their conception of effective teachers. Our findings show that preservice teachers shifted their notions about effective teachers' characteristics. The emphasis on personal attributes (PA) such as "caring" was top ranked in the pre-course rankings and moved to the second position in the post-course ratings. Participants also ranked Teaching Skills sooner and more often than in the pre-course rankings. For example, participants mostly did not list Teaching Sills until the fifth quality, if at all in the pre-course listings; however, in the post course ratings, the Teaching Skills ranking improved to an average of 4.22, meaning students started listing it sooner and more often.

While we cannot claim that implementations of classroom scenarios were solely responsible for these changes, it is interesting that similar changes in PST's conceptions of effective teachers occurred across all three programs. These programs curriculums varied in terms of texts and assignments but collectively prioritized developing preservice teachers' knowledge of culturally responsive teaching. The findings indicate that providing preservice teachers practice with practice in holding a difficult conversation with a student can increase their awareness that teaching skills and not just personal attributes like being kind and caring are needed to create culturally responsive classroom learning environments. This study joins the growing movement for practice-based teachers that explores the affordances of classroom scenarios for teacher education (Thompson et al., 2019).

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. A limitation of this design is that participants were not assigned to random groups, so it is impossible to determine whether and how the difference in how course instructors and course content across the institutions influenced preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers. Therefore, change in the differences cannot be attributed singularly to the implementation of classroom scenarios. Future research should include methods that work to isolate the impact of classroom scenarios on preservice teacher conceptions of effective teachers and the development of the practical knowledge and teaching skills needed to implement culturally responsive teaching.

Conclusion

Approximations of practice in the form classroom scenarios in which preservice teachers can practice the teaching skills need to be culturally responsive can help teacher educators better understand novice teacher thinking and design strategies that enable preservice teachers to develop the practical knowledge needed to enact culturally responsive teaching in their future classrooms. We suggest that approximations of practice in classroom scenarios that center on providing preservice teachers visceral experiences with the complexity of becoming culturally responsive educators can potentially change preservice teachers' concepts of the qualities needed to be an effective teacher.

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