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Classroom Performance Evaluation: Stages and Perspectives For Professional Development of Secondary Teachers in Vietnam

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Abstract

This study examined classroom performance evaluation of secondary teachers in Vietnam. Specially, it sought to determine the possibility of applying supervision into the evaluation for teaching development. Data were collected from interviews with 34 (n=34) participants: ten evaluators and 24 teachers in different school contexts: rural areas, towns, and cities. Data showed considerable impacts: (a) more favorableness on 'evaluation conference' and 'post-conference analysis' among stages, (b) the high appreciation on open discussions—being willing to share ideas co-existing differences in favorableness of feedback of strengths; and (c) being ready to give or receive appropriate feedback while keeping own ideas for a win-win strategy due to the barrier of the perceived power differential. Suggestions were on more emphasis on classroom performance—discussions before and after class classroom observation rather than inspecting teaching dossiers and on feasible strategies for teacher development—supervision should be referred—rather than executing the 'bureaucratic' procedure.

Keywords: classroom performance, evaluation, secondary teachers, professional development.

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Introduction

Recently the highly concerns from the public toward education in Vietnam has become dramatically. Education was considered as the top priority policy since the introduction of economic reform in 1986 (Le, 2009, p. 217). On the other hand, Vietnamese education started connecting with the world. In 1990 Education for All (EFA) was introduced to Vietnamese education. “EFA is considered as a central framework in expanding educational quantities and quality of education in Vietnam” (Kamibeppu, 2009, p. 169). In terms of income levels on student enrollments, when studying enrollment trends in poor and rich provinces by looking at enrollments trends, Holsinger (2009) concludes “there is almost no difference between the rich and poor provinces – a noteworthy accomplishment” (p. 197). In addition, the membership to World Trade Organization of Vietnam in 2007 shows that “Vietnam is now increasingly integrating itself in globalization” (Kamibeppu, 2009, p. 169). As a result, policies in education have been promulgated to improve educational quality. When discussing education reform in Vietnam, Le (2009) states, “various reform measures have been attempted to meet the demand of the labor market in the rapidly changing economy of Vietnam” (Le, 2009, p. 217). However, it is worth noting that only some fields in education have been chosen for a reformation. It as called a stream model in which “policy elites will focus on only a limited number of issues at any given time” and “the focus of decentralization of education in Vietnam was on fiscal decentralization” (Le, 2009, p. 226). Nevertheless, it has been more than a decade since the Law on Education 1998 of Vietnam became effective entire its educational system. There have been tremendous changes in terms of policies on schools, including secondary education.

In K-12 education, standards-based education has introduced and quickly become popular. Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training first promulgated the Standards-based National School in 2001, then amendments were introduced in 2005 and 2010. Its five criteria, including (1) school and its units, (2) administrators, teachers and supporting staff, (3) educational quality, (4) school facilities and educational equipment, and (5) educational socialization, were stated in Amendments Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (2010a), (2005), and (2001). Remarkably, standards for teachers and school principals have been nationwide implemented. Professional standards for teachers and their standards-based evaluation were introduced in Vietnam in order to evaluate teachers of kindergarten, elementary, and secondary school in 2008, 2007, and 2009, respectively. Professional standards for school principals and their standards-based evaluation were promulgated accordingly. The standards were adapted from standards of other countries, including some states of the United States of America and Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, and China (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2010b).

In order to improve evaluation and supervision on performance of teachers, during the period of 2003-2005, the FICEV Project (FICEV - Formation des inspecteurs et cards educatifs du Vietnam), supported by the French government, was formulated in Vietnam. The goal of the Project is to train educational administrators and inspectors in teaching methods and evaluation. Evaluating the performance of teachers was guided for supervisors (Nhan dan newspaper, 2005), (FICEV, 2003). Moreover, one of the commonalities between education in Vietnam and France is that schools share the same calendar. All schools follow a common calendar. This

promised perspectives for supervision in Vietnam in order to serve the fact that “education quality and outcomes remain a serious concern” (Le, 2009, p. 217). The aforementioned urged authors to investigate stages on evaluating or supervising the performance of teachers at secondary schools and perspectives on clinical supervision. Specially, it sought to determine the implications for teaching development.

Theoretical framework

Recent studies have suggested methods to measure teachers’ competencies and promote their subsequent effectiveness. There have been two systems of teacher performance evaluation, namely internal and external evaluation is. Internal evaluation is considered formative, while evaluation is considered summative (Christie, Ross, & Klein, 2004). According to Chrysos (2000), the internal includes evaluators who are principals, directors, employers, inspectors, and consultants. In other words, they are members of the institution. On the other hand, the external evaluators are specialists who come outside of the institution. When studying the system of teacher assessment before suggesting a combination of two supervision systems, Collins (2004) states that the system should aim to offer teachers post-evaluative support rather than stopping at the evaluation process. The author also suggests the results from teacher performance evaluation be used to establish a program that can serve both the teachers’ needs as well as school development. The author points out those teaching methods can be implemented based on evaluative reports.

In addition to Blase and Blase’s (1999) suggestion that evaluation can provide teacher with opportunities for professional development, Fenwick (2001) argues that policies for promoting teacher growth are as important as teachers’ own professional development plans. He suggests “teacher self-direction while increasing surveillance” because he assumes that teacher supervision can be “influenced by the public pressure for greater accountability” (p. 402). Performance evaluation can offer activities for teacher development. Some studies indicate that peer assistance and review, mentoring, and coaching can debunk the fear of expressing teaching experiences (Golstein, 2005). Kyriakides, Demetriou, and Charalambous (2006) advance “working process” model, or effectiveness research in evaluation that is appropriate for conducting both summative and formative. Enhancing portfolios in the evaluation of teacher performance can be the capacity to produce a desired result of fostering professional development (Tucker, Stronge, Gareis, & Beers, 2003).

Some researchers suggest evaluators should split formative and summative to enhance collaboration in giving feedback because of the assumption that summative evaluation may cause teachers to feel uncomfortable. Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon (2007) recommends that formative and summative should be separated in teacher evaluation even though they are very necessary. However, Minlanowski (2005) chose two groups to study: (1) a split group being evaluated by a mentor and an evaluator and (2) a combined group being evaluated by one person with two functions as a mentor and a summative evaluator. The author concluded that “[more] developmental assistance is provided to evaluatees than to split the evaluation roles”. Minlanowski (2005) argues that there are no major differences in generating open

discussion after classroom observation in terms of summative or formative, even it is only one person who is in charge of fulfilling two duties.

The purpose of evaluating classroom performance of teachers, in which the foremost aim is to support students to perform successfully on various measures, such as, standardized tests, is to improve instructional skills of teachers. When discussing supervision for student achievement, Zepeda (2007) states, “supervisors are teachers of teachers – of adult professionals with learning needs as varied as those of the students in their classrooms ... there is little debate on the need for supervisor and others to foster the professional growth of teachers”. Supervising teaching performance effectively is one of the administrative strategies that can enhance teacher competence as well as elicit schools to grow due to student achievement. Snow-Gerono (2005) argues that supervision as support to both administration (surveillance, regulation, and administration) and teacher professional development (guidance, instruction, and leadership). Eventually, supervision must exist to assist teachers and the foremost goal is to for student with high academic achievement. Therefore, supervising teaching performance is a vital issue for both student achievement and teacher development in schools.

Evaluation in Vietnam and Clinical Supervision

Teacher evaluation in secondary education in Vietnam

Recent studies on teacher evaluation in Vietnam have focused on the goal for professional development. Evaluating a teacher’s instruction is to assist, to foster, and foremost to improve quality of teaching performance (T. T. M. Tran, 2005); to improve teaching performance (B. G. Tran, 2005); to provide solutions to the professional enhancement after emphasizing a support rather than a mere supervision; and to make positive improvements amongst teachers (Ha, 2005). In other words, the purpose of classroom performance evaluation of teachers is to provide formative evaluation to the positive improvement of performance. However, it is worth noting that evaluation is one of powerful ways for teachers to improve their instructions together with seeking for learning opportunities required by law. For example, teachers must have responsibility to constantly study and train in order to raise their quality, ethics, professional and specialty standard and set good examples to the learners (§4, Article 72) and to get training to raise their standard and to be fostered in their specialty (§2, Article 73) (Vietnam National Assembly, 2009).

Although most evaluators are aware of the importance of these stages in the evaluating processes, they may not develop them properly. In an article on enhancing effective teaching in secondary schools, B. G. Tran (2005) shows three weaknesses of evaluators when examining teacher performance: (1) examining tangentially rather than overlooking teaching performance history and observing lesson, (2) focusing on teacher activities much more than evaluating student activities, and (3) leading a “one-way” discussion rather than mutual exchange between the observed teacher and evaluator.

In school, a principal and his assistants are in charge of appraising teachers. The principal delegates authority of supervision his assistants to share his administrative duties. These assistants include his vice principals and department

chairs. A department head, who is also a teacher, is appointed by his school principal to manage his team. In secondary schools, teachers are grouped into teams or subject department according to their specialties or the subject areas. Such groups may include teachers of literature, mathematics, foreign languages, physics, chemistry, biology and physical education, geography, history and politics. In addition, evaluators are from the district and provincial levels. These evaluators are experienced teachers, and principals or vice principals) at secondary schools. They are appointed as inspectors of Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) at district level or inspectors of Department of Education and Training (DOET) at provincial level. They are responsible for evaluating teachers' educational activities by visiting school, observing classrooms, collecting data, and giving evaluation on teacher performances. It is required that the performance of a teachers is appraised twice every five years (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2004).

Clinical Supervision

Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) define clinical supervision as “a form of coaching” in which the coach can be either the principal or those who play the role of supervisor. These authors also imply the function of “face-to-face contact with teachers” for the purpose of “improving instruction and increasing professional growth” (pp. 232-233). However, when discussing teachers' “ongoing growth and development,” they promote the use of formative evaluation technique instead of summative ones. They assume that “supervisors rarely change teachers but help them change, a process more suited to formative evaluation” (p. 235).

Goldhammer in his Clinical Model (1969), stated the term “clinical supervision” means, “to convey an image of face-to-face relationships between supervisors and teachers.” Goldhammer (1969) emphasizes that “certain forms of teaching and ego counseling are somewhat similar to clinical supervision, though clinical supervision may involve teachers and supervisors working together in groups” aiming to improve classroom activities by developing “categories of analysis *after* teaching has been observed, rather than beforehand” (pp. 27-28) (Pajak, 1998). In addition, clinical supervision is defined as “the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationship between a teacher and a supervisor from the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to promote the students' learning by improving the teacher's classroom behavior” (Oliva & Pawlas, 2001, p. 389).

Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), and Pajak (1998) introduce five stages of clinical supervision to give more strategies via discussion to improve classroom performance. The stages are (1) “pre-observation conference,” (2) “observation,” (3) “analysis and strategy,” (4) “supervision conference,” and (5) “post-conference analysis.”

Pre-observation conference: According to Goldhammer's Model, a pre-observation conference “provides an opportunity for a teacher to mentally rehearse his or her teaching before acting it” (cited by Pajak, 1993, p. 28). At this stage, a teacher can visualize his or her performance as well as share problems with a supervisor. Setting and discussing teaching standards will make it easier for both the supervisor and the teacher to talk about the goal of the lesson. Caruso and Fawcett (1999)

continue this stage offers “opportunities to discuss serious concerns” (p. 104). For example, the teacher can raise a potential difficulty in his or her coming lesson, that he/she and the supervisor might discuss. Moreover, objectives as well as targets of the lesson that will drive the teacher and student activities offer the supervisor and the teacher a chance better to understand future classroom situations and curriculum as well as instructional issues. These can be considered as “conditions necessary to establish and maintain trust and honest open communication” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 68).

Observation: Observing classroom activities offers the supervisor opportunities to get to know their teachers’ areas of competence. It is classroom activities that reflect the teacher’s competences, such as instructing, managing students, and grading during the teaching process. The supervisor needs to utilize a number of approaches to gather teacher performance data sufficiently. Caruso and Fawcett (1999) consider the observation stage as “the link between the plans made during the pre-observation and actual practice” (p. 104). Therefore, while recording teacher performance, the supervisor should base it upon their agreement on the previous stage. There might be unanticipated events that arrive, however. For example, while most teaching strategies will match the requirements of the instructional guidelines, not all the teaching methods will apply and hold students’ attention.

Analysis and strategy: After the observation, the supervisor must make time to analyze data from classroom observations and to generate strategies for giving feedback. This stage allows the supervisor to take time in the process of “sorting and collating” collected data. In other words, this is a stage for converting “the raw data or information collected from the observation into a manageable, meaningful, and sensible form” (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2007, p. 240). Goldhammer (1969) maintains three reasons to prove the importance of analysis and strategy, namely “the planned pursuit of pre-selected goals,” “the emotional importance of supervision,” and “continuity maintenance;” and suggests that “three principles [should] be applied when selecting specific patterns of teacher behavior for study treatment: 1) saliency, 2) accessibility, and 3) fewness” for the briefest but most sufficient summary (cited by Pajak, 1993, pp. 34-36).

The supervision conference: An honest discussion between the supervisor and the teacher is the main goal of the supervisory conference teacher. Trust is a high component of this phase if truly honest discussion is to occur. At this stage, the supervisor and his or her teacher spend discussion time collaboratively. The teacher will “reflect on the lesson and to share their analyses for the observer to give feedback” (Caruso and Fawcett, 1999, p.104). Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) propose that the information about the performance in the discussion should emphasize both evaluative and descriptive aspects (p. 240). Furthermore, the conference may be influenced by other factors. Teachers may not necessarily feel comfortable discussing their teaching performance due to the supervisor’s style or a perceived power differential. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) indicate that the ways that the supervisors and teachers think and behave towards one another can weaken the benefits from supervising activities, especially during the post-observation conference.

Post-conference analysis: According to Goldhammer's model (1969), this stage provides opportunities for both the supervisor and the teacher to critically review their effectiveness (cited by Pajak, 1993, p. 50). Such consultations must aim to encourage teachers to evaluate their teaching activities, to compare student outcomes with lesson objectives, to analyze their own responsibilities in teaching for improving, and to draw a plan for professional enhancement. Moreover, both the teacher and his or her supervisor have the responsibility to exchange ideas and opinions sincerely and honestly to help both toward professional growth. Additionally, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006) indicate, "Teacher conferencing can be a powerful vehicle for teacher learning if conducted appropriately. Ideally, teacher conferences would take place both before and after the classroom visit" (p. 211).

There are controversial stances on the importance of these stages. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) suppose that a pre-observation conference is considered the most important step among the five. They suggest that before observing classrooms, the supervisor and the teacher should set a conference to discuss the procedures of the lesson, the lesson goals, as well as teaching techniques during the classroom (p. 168). Nevertheless, Pajak cites Goldhammer's ideas that supervision conference is the most vital stage and must not be neglected (p. 38). Though their viewpoints on the importance of the stages are different, these authors ultimately promote guidelines for teachers and supervisors to enhance open discussions.

Four stages of evaluation versus clinical supervision

On fulfillment of the FICEV Project, evaluators utilize standards to appraise teacher performances. Teacher performances must be evaluated objectively and comprehensively to offer consultative advice for promoting their teaching profession. MOET also prescribes steps for evaluating process, such as (1) a preparation for obtaining data about the supervisee's teaching history, current teaching context and observed lessons, (2) an supervision exercise by observing classrooms, examining teaching dossiers, and testing student achievements, (3) a discussion for consulting and promoting teacher competences, (4) a completion by giving a summative appraisal report and suggestions (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2004). The discussing step is considered as the most important of all due to its consultative and enhancing function.

However, since 2006 there have not been any documents or protocol to require evaluators to separate steps to steps to evaluate teacher performance. There are guidelines for evaluators to follow while fulfill their inspecting teacher performance. Evaluators are required to review personnel documents and teaching dossiers. Class observation and consultation for teacher development are highlighted (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2006).

On one hand, the purpose of five stages of clinical supervision—"pre-observation conference," "observation," "analysis and strategy," "supervision conference," and "post-conference analysis." is to "increase self awareness and professional autonomy among teachers." (Pajak, 2006, p. 49). Exploring steps to evaluate teachers to determine the possibility of applying supervision into the evaluation for teaching development is worth studying.

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore how classroom evaluation helped teachers to promote their instruction. The authors used a case study research design to examine how teachers, including new and tenured teachers think about the procedures of evaluation. This research study was conducted in Dong Thap province in the Southern Vietnam where recently high speed internet (ADSL) has been equipped to all computer room of high schools. According to Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (2009)“nearly 24% of Vietnamese (20 million) have computer access, and education and government leaders are exploring how this tool might be used to make secondary education universal in the country” (p. 272).

Table 1. Participants' background information

Participant: (n=34)	
Role	
Evaluators	10
Teachers	24
Gender	
Male	21
Female	13
Ages	
21-29	5
30-39	21
40-49	6
50+	2

There were thirty four participants (n=34), including ten evaluators and 24 teachers. Twenty one of them were male in comparing with 13 female. In terms of ages, the majority were at the age of 30 to 39 (n=21). Participants who were at the age of 21 to 29 and over 40 years old were five and eight, respectively. Teachers were of all subjects, including, literature, mathematics, English language, physics, chemistry, biology and physical education, geography, history, and politics; and were at least once involved in the teacher supervision procedure. They were representatives for different contexts among schools, such as new founded schools and high quality ones. Evaluators were school principals, vice principals, and educational inspectors at schools and the Department of Education and Training where interviews were conducted.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in order to explore how teachers and evaluators think about the stages of classroom evaluation. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) remark, “the purpose of interviewing people is to find out what is on their mind – what they think or how they feel about something” (p. 445). Seidman (2006) indicates, “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). Creswell (2003) shows the benefits of interviews that “participants can provide historical information” and researchers can “control over the line of questioning” (p.186). Data were analyzed by describing and grouping into three categories, steps of assessing performance of teachers, clinical supervision, and professional development.

Results

Stages of teacher classroom evaluation

Participants showed their more concern on observation among the steps to evaluate their classroom performance. The ‘observation’ step helped evaluate teacher performance effectively. Mr. Ta. was a school principal in a rural area. He was an evaluator of DOET. He was in charge of evaluating teachers at his school and evaluating teachers at schools which were managed by DOET. Mr. Ta. said that he never separated these two steps when evaluating. The evaluation conference provided teachers opportunities to analyze their teaching activities. Post-conference analysis promoted teacher strength as well as prevents drawback.

Mr. N. was a department head and a provincial evaluator. He stated the ‘supervision conference’ and ‘post-conference analysis’ offered him chances to oversee strong as well as weak points; then he and his teacher were able to plan for better classrooms”.

Most evaluators agree that, in theory, all of the four stages were applied or enhanced properly. However, they believed that it was essential for evaluators to decide on which stages to focus. Ms. D. was a vice principal at a school in a town. She was also an evaluator of DOET. She claimed that depending on teachers’ competencies and the purpose of the evaluation, summative results of evaluation could be used. At official evaluation, an evaluator was required to generate a judge on teacher performance. At school sometimes a school principal would like to check some teaching skills: managing his classroom, applying computers into his or her lessons, and preparing his lesson. A principal might choose to walk in a classroom to collect information. Either official evaluation or a walk-in, observation was for the purpose of supervision conference and post-conference analyses.

Clinical supervision

Participants agreed that only analyzing the data of teaching performance critically were of great help in improving teacher performance. Both teachers and evaluators were willing to ‘inspect’ and analyze their teaching performances. Mr. Nh. was a teacher in a city. He said evaluator’s advice was very valuable because they had a chance to observe many performances so that they were able to give appropriate

advice for future development. Mr. V. was a teacher of social science. He said it was necessary for an evaluator, either a principal or department head, to have discussion with teachers before class, especially with teachers whose subject area was social science. It happened to both experienced teacher and new teachers in finding teaching materials to relate classroom knowledge to real life.

As a teacher, Mr. H. believed the pre-observation stage promotes effective ideas for following up activities. Teachers should have an opportunity to share with evaluators. However, evaluators should not focus on weak points which were discussed before class at pre-observation. Mr. Ta., who was a school leader, claimed that honest or direct discussion was one of ways to promote teachers' democratic rights at schools. Ms. D., a vice principal and an evaluator, proposed her own way that let teachers to talk about their strengths as well as weaknesses instead of deciding feedback and giving a result of evaluation. Ms. Th., a vice principal and provincial evaluator, preferred to take notes with both outstanding features and weakest points, then compared with lesson objectives while discussing follow-up activities for future lesson.

On the other hand, some participants could not agree with discussions before observing class due to such questions. For example, Ms. D. mentioned that provincial inspectors was not allowed to talk to the teacher before supervisions. There was no time for both an evaluator to set up discussions before evaluators.

Professional development

All of the participants expressed a desire to share data on teaching performance honestly. In addition to assuming the importance of teaching dossiers, such as lesson plans and grade books, and other duties in schools, participants express their high expectation on professional development, especially focused on classroom performance. For example, they expressed the opinion that evaluators must have experiences in teaching and be older than teachers so that they can show their qualifications and disseminate them to other teachers.

Furthermore, being trained in supervision skills is one of the first priorities in becoming an evaluator. Ms. Th. excitedly told her challenging story about her first time evaluating a teacher who was older and had more years of teaching. However, evaluators were willing to express their constructive feedback to teachers. Mr. H. was a school principal and evaluator of DOET. He expressed his willingness to help his teachers via evaluation. He stated toward my teachers [colleagues], he provided hearted-left comments in a wish to help teachers grow. To do this, he had to learn supervision skills, sought new teaching techniques from my colleagues. He also learned from teachers and administrators in his school and other schools in order improving his supervisors.

Ms. Ng., a teacher at a rural school, shared her most current performance for evaluation. Her most current class was at the Monthly Teaching Conference of her subject. At her school, the school principal chose on subject to spotlight every month. For example, during the month of Literature subject, there were more activities to improve teaching and learning of Literature. One of most popular activities for teachers was Teaching Conference where a teacher was assigned to teach for other teachers, a department head, and a school principal to observe and evaluate the

performance. At her performance, the observers were his vice principal who was in charge of teacher performance, her department head, and colleagues of other subjects. She had a good opportunity to review her teaching competence. She was more confident due to strengths confirmed by her colleagues on teaching methods, pedagogical styles, and classroom atmosphere. She also found her weaknesses which were from honest and open comments from observers. Especially, the vice principal showed a mistake which she once believed that it was not in the case. Although she was very breathtaking, she learned a lot for improving her teaching performance.

Mr. Hu., a teacher in a city, shared that he was always open and honest to get feedback from colleagues because he thought none was perfect. Once a provincial supervisor came to observe his classroom, he was very confident to teach; however, when evaluated, he found that his performance revealed many weaknesses. For example, he could not get a good grade on relating the lesson to real life while students were very passive. Since then, he realized that he should prepare some daily knowledge to attract students. Also, he should embed social knowledge in order to help students understand and love life, country, and human being more.

Both supervisors and teachers wish to know the professional development via supervision to cooperate for better performances. Otherwise, teachers agree that facilitating discussion skills might decide the 'atmosphere' of sharing ideas.

Mr. Sa excitedly expressed to share his first observed classroom. He said that he was very impressed by one of because it was his very first one to be evaluated. He was a novice teacher. The observers of the classroom were experienced teachers, including a vice female principal who was in charge of teacher performance. After observing his classroom, the vice principal praised that he had gifted ability in teaching, communicating and attracting students; and the class performance was graded with the highest result. He was very satisfied with the result. Having getting to his teacher dormitory, he still felt joyful in his heart. Then, he was more interested in teaching. To be frank, right after his graduation, when he was assigned to teach in a rural area that was very far from his family, he felt so sad, wanted to quit the job. A teacher dormitory was built for teachers who came to rural areas to teach from other areas. Since then, he devoted more time to teaching methods as well as to my subject area. One year later, he became one of excellent teachers of his department. Therefore, he believed that praising and grading teacher performance was very important.

Teachers preferred to have a comfortable discussion with their evaluators. Ms. Tr., a teacher in a rural area, said that she would like my evaluator provide comfortable discussions so that she did not feel she was being tested. Supervision should be a process of giving and receiving teaching information, then discussing the information rather than examining student achievement within one or two observations. Obviously, bias might be inevitable. Mr. Qu., a teacher in a rural area, sadly shared his story. He had mixed feelings when listening to comments from colleagues when his first classroom performance was graded with a below average. The classroom was observed by his principal and his department head. His principal was so powerful to comments while his department head silenced. He believed his department head should explain to the principal rather than keeping silence. When he got home, he burst to cry while telling his mom. Actually, he admitted he had some

limitations. His classroom ran out of time while some terms were not explained adequately. However, his principal assumed that the classroom was evaluated below average because he gave wrong knowledge. He knew his weakness was that he did not know how to respond nicely. He lost his temper, he kept silence, he got upset; then, he accepted to fail to explain. Absolutely different, a year later, a provincial evaluator came to observe and evaluate his two classroom performances. Although one of his performances was run out of time, the provincial evaluator was satisfied. Importantly, the provincial evaluator showed Mr Qu. his strengths to promote. For example, his voice was clear and persuasive. His analysis on poems and terms was deeply profound. The provincial evaluator also demonstrated his weaknesses and solutions to these.

In summary, both teachers and supervisors highly appreciated open discussions. They were willing to share ideas honestly. However, participants—including teachers, department heads, school principals, and evaluators—had different viewpoints on receiving strengths as well as weaknesses regardless their school areas, gender, and ages. Interviews showed strong evidence of their being ready to give or receive appropriate feedback. Foremost in their thoughts, they would like to keep their own ideas.

Discussion

It is mandatory that all evaluators attend courses on evaluation, including supervision, before performing their duties. Together with the evaluators, the teachers who have been trained in the supervision process could play an important role in spreading understanding the stages of the supervision to others. However, most of the teachers have learned the procedure by observing what their evaluators have done. Therefore, they might not have a deep enough understanding of the stages as well as evaluator activity, including the purpose of the supervision.

In general, the aim of teacher evaluation is to (1) “analyze sound strategies for more effective teaching, (2) suggest fulfilling the teaching regulations, (3) promote professional development as well as achieve training” (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2004). In regards to teachers’ understanding of the procedure or the purpose of the supervision, it is mandatory for all teachers and supervisors to follow the promulgation. Nevertheless, teachers may be willing to get involved in the stages of the supervision when they could be aware of their benefits as well as take advantage of promotions, which they could attain after being evaluated.

Stages of classroom evaluation

Supervising the performance of teachers is utilized for promoting teaching. Both teachers and evaluators pay special attention to the procedures and most of them disagreed with focusing on results or summative evaluation. In other words, participants would like to ‘describe’ the procedures of classrooms aiming for “professional development and instructional improvement,” (formative supervision) rather than judge “all teachers on similar criteria to determine their worthiness, merit, and competence as employees” (summative) (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007). Participants might be concerned about how the teachers perform in their classes rather than to which category the teachers belong.

On contrary with the positive attitudes toward the applying all stages of supervision, two pieces of data are worth noticing. First, it is challenging to utilize all the stages while evaluating. Ms. D. remarked many provincial evaluators could not 'afford' all stages due to many reasons. They just called to check school schedule, then came to observe and discuss the classroom superficially, and leave teachers. Therefore, they might not work on all the stages. Nevertheless, Mr. B., a teacher in a rural area, confirmed that the provincial evaluators play a very important role in disseminating valuable teaching experiences to the others due to their visiting many schools and mastering supervision skills.

Further, the participants agreed that they like to focus on results of evaluation. Mr. L., a teacher, claimed that he was very concerned about the result of evaluation. The result may support his competition in school and prestige. Actually, according to MOET (2004), the result of evaluation is evidence for appointing a promotion and offering training. As a matter of fact, it is inevitable that teachers experience great pressure from summative supervision. Consequently, summative supervision may be one of reasons. Although teachers show they are willing to get feedback as well as comments, teachers in reality would like to know their 'good' result rather than any advice. Teachers not only feel pleased with high results on their performance, but also can get benefits, such as a promotion. Meanwhile, evaluators are not worried about teacher complaints as well as spend time and energy in generating advice to teachers.

In addition, there are different perspectives on selecting stages to pay more concern; most of the participants agree that all of the four stages of evaluation help teachers improve their teaching. Most of them focus on 'the supervision conference,' and 'post-conference analysis' while the others support the observation activity. In other words, the stages of the procedure have served its purpose properly. However, due to the limitation of time and summative supervision and the target of completing the 'bureaucratic procedure' of the results, some of stages have been ignored.

The 'observation' activity provides evidence for the follow-up activities of 'the supervision conference' and 'post-conference.' Participants, who are concerned about 'the supervision conference and post-conference analysis,' think that these activities offer more benefits to teacher development. In this case, it is not necessary to judge which activities are more important, the point is how teachers can perform better after the procedure, however. For instance, the participants chose the 'observation' from the group of two activities: 'observation and supervision.' Otherwise, they tended to combine the two stages of 'the supervision conference,' and 'post-conference analysis' into one.

Clinical supervision and professional development

There are different perspectives on selecting stages to pay more concern; most participants are interested in 'the supervision conference,' and 'post-conference analysis' and some support the observation activity. However, both teachers and evaluators highly appreciate open discussions. They are willing to share ideas honestly. In terms of procedures for assessing performance of teachers, the MOET (2004) promulgates four duty steps. It is notable that it is challenging to a supervisor to complete so many tasks within a very short time. Evaluators could not have enough time and efforts to read every page in the lesson plan to check date of teaching,

columns of the lesson plan, and time of activities. However, examining teaching dossiers is one of the important duties that an evaluator must follow.

On one hand, it is necessary for both teachers and supervisors to look at teacher performance ‘clinically’ rather than ‘inspectorially.’ Setting up pre-observation is added to provide teachers with chances to solve such difficulties before performing. The issues discussed before class are not used for supervision. Although evaluators must follow the four ‘big’ duties, they are able to focus more on teacher performance. In other words, depending on the position of the supervisor, namely provincial or school supervisor, one of the ‘big’ duties should be emphasized more than others.

Interestingly, the high disagreement on accepting ideas of supervisors demonstrate that both supervisors and teachers are willing to discuss the performances. The viewpoints on the clinical supervision is to “improving instruction and increasing professional growth” with “a form of coaching” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, pp. 232-233). Conversely, participants tend to accept the result rather than to discuss feedback. In casual conversations, some teachers show their interest in discussing feedback; however, they might refer to accept while being supervising. It is considerable that teachers should have more opportunity to raise their voice.

Conclusion and Implication

To reach the target of professional development, both evaluators and supervisors need to examine the teacher’s competencies clinically. They should offer more time on classroom performance, emphasizing discussions before and after class, rather than inspecting teaching dossiers. It is mandatory that teachers complete dossiers as a part of their teaching duties. In other words, all teachers have the ability to do. Teachers, however, may not see how they perform as well as their supervisors can. In fact, observing classroom activities offers the supervisor opportunities to know their teachers’ competence. After all, it is classroom activities that reflect teachers’ competences in teaching, managing students, and grading students. Supervisors needs to observe carefully and sufficiently while taking notes on the activities performed, which will be of great help when discussing teachers’ strengths and weaknesses.

Furthermore, while overseeing teacher performances, supervisors are responsible for the ways that teachers help students achieve the curriculum’s desired learning outcomes. While most teaching strategies match the requirements of the instructional guidelines, not all the teaching methods will hold students’ attention. For example, two different teaching approaches of teachers from Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) imply that “memorization or performing lab experiments” method may not interest the student as much as the “inviting students to enter the world of the subject matter” method (pp. 77-78). Eventually, Sergiovanni and Starratt suggest that teachers need to know “knowledge is a dialogue between the intelligences found in the natural and social worlds and the intelligences of individual knowers” (p. 74). Students can achieve academic knowledge from teacher performance via teaching methods rather than teacher dossiers.

On contrast, it is necessary to emphasize that the supervisor may not generate an effective 'teacher development plan' successfully if he misses teacher background information that the pre-observation offers. Before supervising teachers, the supervisor needs to know about his teacher's teaching history as well as his or her current students' data. This pre' stage helps the supervisor visualize the classrooms and the teachers' performances. Viewing regulations as well as documents related to curriculum and instructional issues is also essential for the supervisor to evaluate teachers. Setting and discussing teaching standards will make it easier for both the supervisor and the teacher to talk about the lesson goal.

Moreover, these standards can provide a concrete for the supervisor to review his or her viewpoints and rank teachers into categories (summative supervision) while objectives as well as targets of the lesson which lead the teacher and student activities offer the supervisor and the teacher a chance to know future classrooms and the curriculum as well as instructional issues. These can be considered as "conditions necessary to establish and maintain trust and honest open communication," or "the supervisors need to discuss the ground rules ahead of time" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 68). It is worth noting that following the procedure means to find, to analyze, to discuss, and to generate proactive feasible strategies for teacher development rather than to execute the 'bureaucratic' procedure.

Further, both the supervisor and his teacher should be willing to offer 'real' honest discussions. An honest discussion is the main goal of the supervision. In theory, both the evaluator and his teacher should be willing to share constructive ideas, but their being able to give and receive honest comments is challenging due to the barrier of the perceived power differential. To work it out, both the supervisor and his teacher must understand the goal of honest discussion, or they must be on the same wavelength towards the formative supervision. By understanding the supervision procedure, teachers will know their roles as well as how they may cooperate with their supervisor. Although all teachers were trained with pedagogical skills as well as understanding of evaluating teacher classroom performance when they were students at colleges of education, it is essential for teachers to get to know about the procedure. They can read documents related to the procedure of the supervision; the school principal must introduce the procedure to them.

In addition, supervisors must play key roles in providing open discussion, especially when there are more colleagues observing the class and the conference, because they mastered supervision skills as well as subject areas. Skills to facilitating the conference with many teachers are more important. For example, teachers are more comfortable when their ideas are listened. However, others may prefer teachers evaluate themselves first; then, supervisors gives feed back and the result.

Importantly, some supervisors may choose the procedure: (1) the teacher presents the objectives of the lesson, and his self-supervision; (2) the young teachers with less teaching experiences should be the first to raise ideas, followed by more experienced teachers; and (3) the supervisor should be the last person giving comments. This order encourages the younger teachers to speak up because if the more experienced teachers generate viewpoints first, the younger teachers may not feel they have better ideas to offer. On the other hand, some younger teachers can see more strengths than weaknesses, so they may not start giving ideas easily and point

out limitations to solve. In other words, starting a 'positive climate' and facilitating conference sincerely decides the 'real' honest discussions. Supervisors need to consider teacher age, gender, or years of teaching to invite to speak.

Teachers should have more 'channels' of receiving feedback from their teaching performance. Together with examining teacher supervision from the school principal, reviewing student grade before the supervision, and testing student academic achievement after class observation, asking student attitudes towards teacher performance by doing survey should be embedded into the supervision process. First, the result of the test would report what students would have achieved at the point or the duration of the supervision time rather than the process of teaching and learning. The test may check whether what students had learned before class, or what students have learned when being observed. The survey for collecting student ideas should be an effective channel of analyzing teacher performance. This provides supervisors with more information about teachers.

Although students are considered as 'knowledge receivers,' who, according to traditional Vietnamese culture, can 'learn' rather than 'give' comments; the survey helps students express their learning feedback. Teachers are considered as scholars, whose job is "not to tell the public what it wants to hear, but to 'let the facts speak for them'" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 75). What students expressed in the survey is considered as input from the public. Furthermore, educators agree that the student-centered goals must be promoted in schools so that students have more chances to obtain academic achievement. In other words, all school activities must be for student benefits. Getting feedback from students is one of the pedagogical techniques to enhance that role. In addition, students feel they are respected in their learning process. Teachers may feel ashamed and less respected because students have right to evaluate their teachers. However, the survey supplies extra, valuable data for both supervisors and teachers themselves to see how their teaching performance actually is seen by students. In other words, teachers may wish to use a camera to record their work for own supervision, or school leaders may utilize student surveys to evaluate teachers; however these should not replace the supervisor's roles in the supervision process for professional growth at school.

In conclusion, although "Supervision of teachers' performance is a very complex and imperfect art that, in practice, few have mastered" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 67), with flexible overseeing strategies from the above recommendations, the researcher believes that supervisors can reduce complications, aim to prevent conflicts, and offer teachers skills to enable effective classrooms that will serve better student achievement. Improving student learning and teaching strategies is the aim of supervision. A supervisor can be considered as successful when he/she can enhance his/her professionalism to pursue the goal satisfying the public's high expectation. More important is that both teachers and supervisors must be willing to fulfill their goal: students can learn best when their teachers and supervisors dare to be honest and wholehearted in giving and receiving constructive feedback for better classroom performance.

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Experiences of Faculty of Color Teaching in a Predominantly White University: Fostering Interracial Relationships Among Faculty of Color and White Preservice Teachers

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Abstract

In this study, I recount my experiences teaching elementary literacy methods courses and interacting with my racial Others—my White preservice teachers/students, senior faculty, and administrators at a predominantly White university in the rural Mountain West. Using an ethnographic approach (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995), I analyzed students' course evaluations, anonymous in-class notes, and administrators' annual evaluations for six semesters. The findings show that my White undergraduate students “policed” my English language use and racial characteristics, and resisted authority and expertise. Administration participated in preserving mainstream values and superior White group positions over mine by blaming my cultural values when student complaints surfaced. However, once relationships were established between my students and me, drastically different interactions and teaching/learning occurred. This study breaks new ground in expanding our understanding that: 1) cultural mismatch and racial tensions are still some of the most divisive issues in education; 2) building sensitivity toward and mutual respect among racial Others is the precursor to creating hope and possibility for working with racial Others; and 3) creating racial harmony may not result from changing individual attitudes alone. The responsibility for change in valuing and understanding Others rests critically on university policies and practices.

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Introduction

In the United States, 17 percent of full-time higher education professors are minorities, and the numbers are smaller for tenured and tenure-track faculty, according to the American Council on Education (Hune, 2006). Studies indicated the reasons why there are such small numbers of minority faculty in academia: Minority faculty are socially isolated and lack mentoring (Stanley, 2006) and White students exhibit resistance toward faculty of color (Castaneda, 2004; Housee, 2001; Luthra, 2002; Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, & Frey, 2009). There is racial and ethnic bias against and a devaluation of minority faculty in the higher education workplace (Aguirre, 2000; Hune, 1998, 2006; Smith et al., 2005; Stanley, 2006). The tenure rates and pre-tenure departure rates are disproportionate to White faculty (Aguirre, 2000; Smith et al., 2005).

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to build better understanding when working with racially different “Others” in a university setting. Others is defined as people of different race, culture, and ethnicity (Han, 2011). In this study, the authority figure is an Asian woman teaching White preservice teachers; and 2) to explore my subjective views of young (aged around 21-23) White students’ evaluations of me for a six-semester period. I also examine White administrators’ and colleagues’ formal evaluations related to student evaluations for three years. In this effort, I seek to find ways to work harmoniously with my racial White Others.

Research on Diverse Faculty and White Students

Ethnicity, Race, and Teaching

Presence and status of diverse faculty are both dismal in U. S. higher education and the “glass ceiling” still exists (Aguirre, 2000; Stanley, 2006). Researchers explain that faculty of color stand as outsiders in the historical and political arena of higher education (Collins, 2000). They tend not to be appointed as leaders, are not on decision making teams, and leave professorships due to lack of mentoring and not getting tenure and promotion (Aguirre, 2000). By contrast, White faculty members have more access to their choice of teaching assignments and are in positions of power to maintain their scholarship and the pedagogical status quo (Aguirre, 2000; Holling & Rodriguez, 2006; Smith et al., 2005). There is resistance against accepting people of color as valid and credible authorities in workplaces (Aguirre, 2000; Perry et al., 2009; Turner, 2002; Vargas, 1999, 2002).

White students, the traditional student clientele, are the largest demographic group in colleges, and resist authority and credibility when the professor is the racial “Other” (Vargas, 1999). Most White students from homogeneous neighborhoods attend segregated secondary schools and traditional mainstream colleges (Jayakumar, 2008). In segregated areas outside the university campus, White students often interact with people of their own race before, during, and after college (Braddock, 1985; Jayakumar, 2008). Without much exposure to and interaction with racially diverse people, White students, particularly in the rural predominantly white university (PWU) settings, seem to have negative reactions and resistance toward faculty of color (Braddock, 1985; Han, 2011; Jayakumar, 2008).

Language issues tend to cause communication problems which result in unconstructive comments and negative evaluations (Fong, 2007; McLean, 2007). These problems develop between White students and faculty of color when a faculty member who speaks English as a second language interacts with students more formally and academically rather than jokingly and colloquially (Wei, 2007), and speaks with an accent (McLean, 2007; Vargas, 1999). Moreover, there seem to be culturally and socially incongruent teaching and learning mechanisms among diverse faculty and their White students, especially in these three areas: 1) Sociocultural roles and respect for the teaching profession: Cultural groups in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and other Confucius heritage culture countries form “vertical collectivistic societies” (Aguinis & Roth, 2005, p. 155). This means that individuals are part of various collectives (e.g., family, nation), and individual goals and needs are not as important as family or national goals. As such, individuals are taught to save face and honor their family lineage. Education is considered the most important way to honor the family name. Due to an extreme emphasis on education, teachers/professors from Confucius cultures are regarded as having the same rank as the king or one’s parents (Kim, 2005, 2009; Nahm & Koo, 2007). By contrast, in an individualistic society like the U. S., student and family privacy and individual rights take precedence over the collective importance of education, obedience to authority, or loyalty to families or teachers (Han, 2011). The teaching profession is undervalued socioeconomically. Americans frequently say, “Those who can’t, teach!” Teacher salaries in the U. S. are lower than those of East Asian comparable salaries (Kim, 2005); 2) Classroom relationships: In most Confucius cultures, conformity, uniformity, and group harmony are strongly fostered at home, at school, and in society (Aguinis & Roth, 2005; Kim, 2009). Through educational socialization, Asian professors reinforce authority and expect students to accept their instructions and rules without question and with deference inside and outside of the classroom. Accordingly, teacher-student relationships are based on student respect, obedience, and submission (Aguinis & Roth, 2005; Han, 2011). Students are expected to restrain themselves and not stand out from the group. Thus, Asian students rarely contradict the professor’s instruction/words, initiate communication, or interrupt the professor (Kim, 2005). Western individualism, however, values individual initiative, free speech rights, individual merit and creativity. Euro-American students are taught to think individually and to express their abundant questions freely, to open dialogue that challenges and criticizes authority figures, and even to desire equal standing with their professors through casual relationships including calling professors by their first names and *not* automatically rendering respect to the professors!; and 3) Instructional procedures and practices: In East Asian Confucius cultures classroom practices tend to be rigidly structured and professors disseminate large amounts of information (Aguinis & Roth, 2005). The classroom practices are likely to be formal and teacher-centered: Top-down, one-way from professor-to-student and much less interactive. In the U.S., classroom practices are much more informal and student-centered: Preference is given to discussions and debates, and to inquiry/discovery-based methods rather than lectures. Social interactions, cooperative learning, and group work are strongly encouraged. Many a time, due to disparate cultural roles, expectations and socialization, Asian professors with Confucius as their heritage culture may struggle when teaching in the U.S. particularly in their first several years on the job (Han, 2011).

Gender and Teaching in Academia

In addition to race and ethnic bias, female professors must negotiate their places in academia. Historically known as “normalized as masculine” space, the university climate is often *chilly* and *alienating* to women faculty (Aguirre, 2000; Hune, 1997, p.187). Women faculty must adapt to fit the professoriate authority and credibility of the model image of the White male professor (Fong, 2007). Because of different lived experiences, female faculty of color tend not to enact the model image of the White or male professor—and thus are described as invisible, silenced, and marginalized beings (Aguirre, 2000; Collins, 2000; Hune, 2006; Vargas, 1999). As opposed to other racial groups, Asian women faculty rouse unique reactions from students and faculty/staff due to their petite physical figures and youthful appearance (Fong, 2007). They are stereotyped as “exotic or dragon ladies” (Hune, 2006, p. 31) or their authority is undermined (Fong, 2007). Furthermore, following East Asian cultural virtues of reticence and conformity to seniority and authority, they tend to acquiesce to teaching and administrative demands. This cultural tendency may prevent them from voicing and claiming their expertise (Li & Beckett, 2006). In the classroom, women minority faculty have to engage with students to manage power struggles and discipline to receive positive evaluations (Aguirre, 2000; McLean, 2007; Vargas, 1999). Beyond the required routine duties, female minority faculty have to negotiate their own racial and gender identity. They are involved with power struggles, discipline, and increased emotional and identity crises and are more likely to receive negative evaluations from White students (Aguirre, 2000; Fong, 2007; McLean, 2007; Vargas, 1999). Finally, along with other working women, Asian women faculty in many cases are in charge of household and child care duties more often than their male counterparts; these family duties can be a contributing factor to women dropping out of the demanding tenure track system and resorting to work in part-time positions (Hune, 2006).

At the institutional level, woman faculty members of color are constantly subject to “systematic, institutional suppression of research and teaching” (Lin et al., 2006, p. 74), and have to fight to earn tenure and promotion. Often the research agendas of diverse women faculty center around ethnic and multicultural topics which are analyzed using alternative epistemological perspectives. This work is frequently deprecated as ethnic, ethnographic, unscientific, and “repetitive” (Lin et al., 2006, p. 74). Their minority research agendas and theoretical lenses/analyses are not typically aligned with the mainstream journals and their editors. Therefore, their work tends not to be disseminated and published in the prestigious and top-tier journals. In addition, diverse women faculty’s teaching is often considered marginal. Student evaluations assigns the “poor teacher” descriptor to their teaching performance and administrators tend to affirm this label, thereby granting student evaluation results the power to adversely impact tenure and promotion decisions (Han, 2011; Vargas, 1999). Thus, the process for these women faculty to gain tenure and promotion has almost always been greeted with high levels of fear, anger, and despair (Hune, 2006). The Ivory Tower tends to be a workplace in which diverse women faculty members are often invisible and silenced (Hune, 1998, 2006; Lin et al., 2006; Muhtaseb, 2007).

Benefits of Minority Faculty Presence

Despite racial and gender tensions, an emerging body of literature shows the benefits of having racially diverse faculty in universities (Antonio, 2002; Gurin, 2004; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999; Orfield, 2001; Umbach, 2006; Villapando, 2002). Faculty of color provide support and mentoring for students of color; serve as role models for them (Cole & Barber, 2003; Umbach, 2006); offer diversity in class, gender, race, sexual orientation, and multiculturalism (Smith et al., 2005) to students; and bring multi-faceted perspectives to the curriculum and scholarship (Umbach, 2006) in the academic arena (Collins, 2000; Hendrix, 2007; Hune, 1997, 1998; Vargas, 1999, 2002; Wei, 2007). Research also confirmed that faculty of color benefit both students and institutions of higher education by enhancing cultural and racial diversity in scholarship and teaching (Chang, 2001; Hurtado, 2003; Smith et al., 2005). Absent from the literature is discussion of the uniquely different teaching-learning interactions and power relations when the instructor is a non-White "Other" whose identity is Asian and female. Particularly, studies about interracial relations between female Asian faculty and their White students are extremely limited. In the interest of narrowing the gap in research in this area, the research question that guided this study is: In what ways did the undergraduate White students' and some White administrators' evaluations of and interactions with the female Asian faculty member progress over a six-semester period?

Conceptual Framework

Perceptions of my own college teaching experience can be best framed using the concept of cultural models. James Paul Gee (2002, 2004) defines cultural models as beliefs, values, schemas, and attitudes that people enact (un)knowingly in their talk and actions. These belief systems are situated within a specific cultural group and invoke particular meanings, which are mutually agreed and recognized among the members of that group. Having grown up in Korea, my assumptions, values, and attitudes are shaped largely by the East Asian cultural model, Confucianism, as its values relate to social relations and education. Similarly, the expectations and attitudes of my White students and colleagues towards me emanate from their own cultural norms. To illustrate different cultural models of these participants in teaching-learning transactions, I draw on Confucianism (Koo & Nahm, 2007; Lau, 1988) and the theory of Status Characteristics (Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977; Cohen, 1982) and institutionalized racism (Marx, 2006; Ture & Hamilton, 1992).

Confucianism as East-Asian Cultural Model

Confucianism is a significant cultural norm in Confucius Heritage Cultures such as China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Vietnam (Alon & McIntyre, 2005; Wong & Wen, 2001). Korea, defined as a collectivist society, is based on social values of Confucianism. Briefly, Confucianism is pervasive in all social units in Korea in two major ways: 1) There is a hierarchical social role division based on family background, status, age, rank, and gender (Koo & Nahm, 2007); and 2) Education, as one of the most important doors to higher status, is equated with honoring the family's face (Aguinis & Roth, 2005; Hidalgo, Su, & Epstein, 2004). Relevant to this study are the status of the educator and the teacher-student

relationships. In East Asia, obtaining a teaching position is very competitive, ensures better pay, and carries the expectation of the highest moral standards by educators (Kim, 2005, 2009). Educators have “absolute authority and are treated with high deference” (Aguinis & Roth, 2005, p. 149). In Korea, teachers are called *sunsaengnim*, which literally means an honorable person born before me and figuratively an erudite, knowledgeable master, and their words are considered as authority, “law,” and “truth.” They act not only as instructors, but also as counselors and mentors (Kim, 2005, p. 340). Schools are structured hierarchically and are top-down in both organization and management using the teacher-centered transmission mode (Litrell, 2005; Koo & Nahm, 2007). Generally, students revere their teachers, seldom challenge teachers’ authority, and rarely contradict the flow of instruction because they are taught to respect their teachers at home and society as a whole (Aguinis et al., 2005; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Litrell, 2005). Believing in and advocating for education and respect for teachers, parents reinforce teachers’ academic directions and moral counseling in and out of classrooms (Kao, 2004; Park & Kim, 1999). However, readers need to note that there is diversity within nationalistic groups and they cannot make sweeping generalizations about all Asian individuals or families.

Attitude (Cultural Models) of White Others Toward Racial Others: Institutional and Epistemological Racism

Euro American culture and epistemology have dominated the modern world through “colonialism and territorial expansion” (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p. 7). As such, “the dominant group creates or constructs the world...and does so in its own image” (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p. 7). White epistemological supremacy and racial hierarchy categorization have become established. That is, the White race, its thoughts, and its epistemology have created and normalized worldviews for themselves and for the Others. At the root, White people including White preservice teachers (PTs), have been taught to think that the Euro American epistemology (i.e., their ways of knowing, systems of knowledge) is the exclusively civilized way of knowing. This thinking has been fostered by the canon of Euro American cultural stock and stories (Heath, 1983; Milner, 2007). Particularly in remote regions of a nation, individuals are socialized into a particular kind of thinking, feeling, and acting. PTs grew up and schooled in remote small town are isolated from diverse urban centers where more culturally diverse people and cultures are part of the mainstream life style (Kambutu, Rios, & Castaneda, 2009). Even in relatively diverse social surroundings in the U. S., the Euro American epistemology is reinforced by parents, relatives, and community through cultural tools such as stories, media, and popular culture. In the schools, curricular materials and stories are replete with Euro American-centric perspectives. Our students (all students including PTs) are conditioned to accept that Euro American ways of knowing, that is, Euro American epistemology, are the only natural and normal way of knowing and to exclude all Other ways of knowing in our school system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). James Scheurich and Michelle Young (1997) called this “epistemological racism.” Scheurich and Young (1997) explained that epistemological racism originates from the broad civilizational assumptions that a cultural group (e.g., Mongolians or Euro Americans) constructs as its own nature of the world and experiences in that world. The cultural group assumptions are deeply embedded in how the members think and in what they identify in the world to be true, real, and valued.

The dilemma we face with the exclusive adoption of Euro American epistemology is that it excludes all other ways of knowing. As an agent to perpetuate the dominant group's power base, our schools function as institutions to instill and inculcate the Euro American knowledge system, "the middle-class, Protestant, and Anglo-Saxon" cultural capital (Apple, 2004, p. 67). Schools legitimize the cultural knowledge of the Euro American group as high status, official knowledge. Those who inherited and acquired "the linguistic and social competencies to handle (Euro American) middle-class culture" have experienced the highest academic success (Apple, 2004, p. 31). In turn, this academic success translates into the job market and economy. On the flip side, students of color and ELs who have different epistemological and cultural capital and are struggling academically and socially are placed hierarchically at the lower end of the socio-economic and racial stratification. Basically, schools function to acculturate, sort and select different ethnic student populations.

PTs and administrators in this study are the direct result of this very Euro American school system and are trained to think Other epistemologies and their ways of knowing (via stories, materials, methods, media, and Other cultural stock) are lacking in language and culture, thereby resulting in a deficit view of Others. With the mindset of deficit views, Eurocentric ideology, and being isolated from diverse urban centers, remote White university students/PTs and administrators often offer superior evaluations to the White faculty as compared to other faculty group members (Han, 2011; Vargas, 2002).

As a result, the race-and-culture based disadvantage becomes entrenched in a social reality ("institutionalized") and tacitly limits the educational and social opportunities of the minority person, for this study, woman faculty of color, in what and how she can teach and interact with the students (Marx, 2006; Ture & Hamilton, 1992). At the institutional level, educational decisions and policies are made by the "White power structure" without much reflection on the cultural and racial understanding of the people of color (Aguirre, 2000; Stanley, 2006). At the individual level, well-intentioned White persons and officials will not "stone" (Ture et al., 1992, p. 5) a minority person but they continue to support political officials and policies "that would and do perpetuate institutionally racist policies" (Ture et al., 1992, p. 5). In this fashion, the individual level and institutional level racist attitude "permeates the society" and thus institutional racism prevails (Marx, 2006; Stanley, 2006).

Understanding different cultural models—attitudes, schema, and values among faculty of color (Confucianism) and White Others (viewing faculty of color as inferior to typical, White professors)—is an important socio-cognitive process to promote social justice in three important ways: 1) we (people in education) can reflect on different cultural models, thereby identifying mainstream practices that favor one group over all Others; 2) as we acknowledge Euro American epistemology over Others, we can understand that potential institutional and epistemological biases may inflict negative consequences on Others; and finally 3) we should seek ways to create racial harmony toward enhancing working relationships with Others in all work places.

Method

Participant: The Asian Woman Professor

I am a native Korean speaker, born, raised, and schooled in Korea. I came to the U. S. after completing a B. A. in Korea. While working as a classroom and an ESL teacher/curriculum coordinator on the west coast for over a decade, I received an M. S. and M.A., Ed. S. and a Ph. D. in the U. S. Currently, I am employed as an assistant professor in a state higher-education system.

Study Setting

The university is located in the rural U.S. Mountain West. The university enrolls a predominantly White, homogeneous student body ranging from 86% to 94% in any given year. All administrators and the faculty in the College of Education are White except a few minorities at a remote branch campus. My students are preservice teachers, thus, I interchangeably refer them as students or PTs. They are required to take the elementary literacy/ESL methods class from me in their junior or senior years. Typically, the majority of them are females in their early twenties (21-23), several in their mid twenties, and a few middle-aged. There are approximately 25 students in the class including two to three male students.

Study Design

Autoethnography is the design used for this study. Reed-Danahay (1997) stated that a genre of autoethnography should have two components: 1) “the auto ethnographer is a boundary-crosser,” and takes the role of dual identity (p. 3); and 2) the auto ethnographer should “voice” and represent “authenticity” when writing about life stories and be straight about “who speaks and on behalf of whom” (p.3). Denzin (1989) adds that in this genre of autoethnography, one writes from her own life experiences without adopting the conventional objective researcher stance. In this study, I write about my work experience incorporating my own life experience as an “Outsider” (Collins, 2000) from the mainstream educational setting. Having been in the U.S. as a graduate student and K-12 and college level educator for over two decades, I have struggled not to internalize the oppression stemming from racial categorization which American society hierarchically places on minority peoples (Olsen, 1997). As outsider from this mainstream education, I write about my professorhood as viewed and enacted through a Korean cultural native lens while my racial Others seem to hold a worldview of me as a fully assimilated American professor and judge me by it. These inherently conflicting views fit the single case life experience of a boundary-crosser and a possessor of dual identity. From these situated positions, I speak up to tell my “self-reflexive-field account” (Deck, 1990) of professorhood and my life story dealing with evaluations (and resulting pre-tenure decisions) by White students and administrators. Deck (1990) writes that one’s authentic lived experiences of the culture are adequate to lend authority to her writings.

Data Sources and Data Analysis

I collected data for six semesters (fall 2007 to spring 2010) including: 1) students' formal evaluations six semesters; 2) informal and anonymous in-class notes and comments which I invited them to submit; and 3) formal annual evaluations and comments given by the administrators three years. I analyzed the data using the ethnographic thematic approach (Bogdan & Bicklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I first identified salient themes that emerged from all of the data. Then, I examined the themes to identify common threads, and grouped similar ones thematically to answer the research question, as follows:

When I discerned student comments regarding: language issues such as "Tao's broken English," "accent," "pragmatism," "grammar," I categorized these in a "linguistic mismatch" theme. Physical, cultural, and racial characteristics, such as "you are a small Asian woman" "you always interrupt when students talk..." were categorized under the theme "cultural/racial mismatch." Some comments, particularly the language use, cultural and racial themes were overlapping in student comments and evaluations, thus I combined linguistic and cultural/racial themes.

A second theme emerged involved student resistance toward the multicultural social justice topic, resentment of such information, reporting objections to this content and related classroom activities/assignments to the administrators, and administrators' affirming student comments/evaluations.

Although resentment toward social justice topics, (e.g., "None of us want to hear about poor multiracial students..."), and the reporting it triggered to the administrators and senior faculty members about these topics (e.g., incidents around my being called in to the departmental and Dean's offices and asked to drop such topics/assignments) could have constituted separate themes, I combined student resistance and departmental and college level institutional atmosphere into a larger workplace environment theme.

The final theme (appreciation of my teaching, students' opening to new perspectives on social justice topics, and positive relationships) was distinctly unique in my sixth semester when the students' comments/evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. In the next section, I weave a thematic narrative based on the three themes: a) Linguistic and cultural/racial disconnect; b) Student resistance and chilling workplace atmosphere; and c) Benefits of working with racial Others.

Findings

Linguistic and Cultural/Racial Disconnect

My PTs made negative comments about my accent, language use, grammar, clarity of the assignments, personal traits, and interactional manners. One student wrote:

Teacher confused most of the students a lot and rarely clarified things to make them clear to the whole class until everyone was very confused...with her

language difference and the difficulty it takes for most students to understand her.

On my personal and linguistic traits, many students commented:

Dr. Han is very knowledgeable and willing to share her knowledge with others. There is a bit of a culture barrier that makes some instruction/expectations difficult to understand. But Dr. Han worked very hard to make sure everything was as clear as possible.” As a second language speaker, I did not grow up hearing and using culturally smooth jokes and mannerism. I use more formal, academic, bookish, and polite ways (see Wei, 2007) and my interactional manners were formal and strict as I was accustomed to in my schooling experiences in Korea. Students did not like the way I taught and interacted with them, as one student pointed out. “There is no doubt that she has a very extensive knowledge about the subject matter and is passionate about it, but I did not like the way she taught it.

Many students acknowledged the fact that I know my materials and subject matter but still wrote about their dislike of my interaction with them:

You are abrupt and take over when people are talking. Also I feel that you cut in when we are teaching rather than let us finish teaching and then add what you have to say. It’s rude.” “She [Dr. Han] pointed out mistakes in front [sic] of the entire class and was much of the time very rude.”

Not only did my students dislike the way I interacted with them, but also they commented negatively regarding ethnic/racial characteristics in their anonymous informal notes:

Many students took advantage of professor and didn’t show respect—personal attack instead of constructive criticism,” and “the fact that you are a small and Asian woman makes students sort of look down on you.” “You did not have a good understanding of us,” as one student commented. “It felt like there were two distinct cultures in the room and we [the students and the instructor] did not understand each other.”

It seemed to me whatever I taught, there was a disconnect between us. From fall 2007 to fall 2009, many repeatedly evaluated the course and the instructor very low, as one student summed up at the end of the fall semester, 2009:

There was a disconnect between the instructor and us. She [Dr. Han] is very smart, but I can't say I learn much or anything at all in her class. We were unable to understand some of her directions because of her broken English.

My “accent and broken English,” cultural difference, and my “unprofessional” conduct caused much dislike by my students over the five semesters from 2007 to 2009.

On many occasions, I wondered whether the communication problems were due largely to a weakness in my English language pragmatics and the cultural

difference or, possibly, did a good part of the disconnect have to do with their cultural and epistemological knowledge. That is, do my individual characteristics that I embody within my personal front—“insignia of office or rank, racial characteristics, sex, size, looks, speech patterns,” (Vargas, 1999, p. 367) and non-standard English use—get in the way of my students’ views and evaluations of me? According to one student:

These guys [fellow students] don’t know about other people’s cultures and choose not to know. They are from here and raised with this kind of idea... They are used to the male faculty even if he did whatever in class; he has a control over students. You are small and minority, they [students] look at it and have already thought that they can do that to you.

If the teachers are from our own background, we have similar values and ideas, but when we have different teachers [diverse faculty], we put a guard up or have negative views on them. It is prejudice or racism....They wouldn’t admit it!

As this student mentioned, most of my preservice teachers come from secluded European-American cultural, ethnic, and racial circles. Although this sheltered life was not their own choice early on, they have become accustomed to maintaining their homogeneous European-American academic and social circles (see also Braddock, 1985; Jayakumar, 2009). Students expect the image of the typical (White) professor who uses Standard American English speech patterns, pragmatics, and the model image of the White professor’s persona. It may be natural for them to put their “guard up” when the teacher is a non-White Other and to believe that they can behave in an uncivil and hostile manner. The poignant element in this phenomenon is that they “choose not to know” people different from themselves.

Tao knew her information, there wasn't any doubt on that. But I got this feeling like it was her way or the high way...she was very set in her ways. It seemed like if I didn't conform to the norm of the class and just sit than I wasn't looked at as a "good student."

This norm of a “good student” may be different for my students and me. My ideal “good student” is one who respects, speaks up only to raise intelligent questions/comments so as not to disturb the flow of the class activities, and shows some sign of deference to the authority and their peers in their talk and actions, especially toward the profession, education, and their senior (age) professor (social status and rank). My students, however, expressed in evaluations that what they wanted from me was more “breathing room,” “more free choice for class assignments,” “[Instructors to] be open to students’ ideas and responses and give us opportunities to be independent learners,” “students want to learn on their own, bring their own ideas to the class but they don’t always feel supported in bringing up their ideas,” and there was “not a lot of room to be creative.”

My White students and I were at odds. I may have enacted my values of hierarchical relationships, top-down management, and central control for passing on correct knowledge. I may not have actively promoted individualism that my White students were taught since their birth. That is, coming from a collective society (Kim,

2009), I may not always remember to allow individual creativity through learner discovery methods or freedom for their knowledge construction.

My White students and I were at odds probably due to our distinctively different language use, my interactional manners, my physical presence, and cultural and epistemological perspectives. I received inferior evaluations and treatment. When talking with my White colleagues and graduate teaching assistant who taught similar literacy methods courses, I learned that they receive much higher evaluation ratings close to 4 (1 being the poorest and 4 excellent). I felt vulnerable holding the “outsider-status” in this higher educational setting because I was evaluated more negatively than my colleagues, treated with hostility in manner and language, and rated below average (lower than 3) on evaluations by my undergraduate students and administration (e.g., ratings of 3 but with a comment, “below average teacher” from the department chair). In contrast to my undergraduate ratings, my graduate students praised my pedagogical repertoire, content knowledge base, and interpersonal skills (evaluations averaged 3.8) for three years. The department chair consistently downplayed the graduate students’ high ratings, stating, “these were from a small number of students.” He used the student comments directly from the student evaluation and wrote these very statements in the second and third year evaluations stating, “There were a few instances of unprofessionalism on her [Tao’s] part, which caused a lot of tension in the class,” and “She was also unwilling to answer questions and often blamed our lack of understanding on us being poor listeners not on her not teaching the information.” Without other substantiating documents and hard facts, nor a single observation of my teaching in the classroom, the students’ complaints were the final verdict the department chair recorded; faculty members and other superiors supported him without further investigations. This verdict was based exclusively on student evaluations, and this systematically disadvantaged a faculty of color. The message was clear: Whites (students, faculty, and administrators) remain in the dominant social and political power position vis-à-vis faculty of color (see Marx, 2006) and I had failed in teaching and building relationships with the students.

Student Resistance and Chilling Workplace Atmosphere

The data over five semesters showed that undergraduate students questioned my subject matter expertise and challenged my professorial authority by being unreceptive to how and what I taught in Literacy/ESL classes. Students compared me with White professors; some showed hostility toward me when I included topics such as multicultural, struggling learners, and ELs in the Literacy/ESL methods classes. Reading written evaluations and class notes each semester, I discerned that only a small number of students (two or three) appreciated diverse perspectives and methods I brought to the classroom. Underlining that I was teaching literacy methods inappropriately or repeating them as these were also covered in other literacy classes some students wrote, “I think she [Tao] needs to converse more with Dr. A and B (White professors) because ...she was teaching us reading activities like we had never seen them before.” This student went on to say that I was repeating the same literacy methods even though these “methods were covered better in other classes.” Other students wrote about my class in a similar tone:

We got a lot of the information taught in literacy course [naming White professor] and felt like this is a repeat. However, what we were taught in that course contradicted sometimes with what Tao taught.

Students revolted against the information or suggestions I offered in class saying that White professors were correct and I gave the wrong information even when I was correct. How dare I contradict the students' prior knowledge which they acquired from White professors! Knowing the students' unreceptive and hostile attitudes, I spoke up to tell them the correct version of the literacy method. In this incident, many students overtly refuted my information verbally and showed hostile body language. "The instructor," wrote one student, "pointed out mistakes in front [sic] of the entire class and was much of the time rude." Other students stated, "The [sic] teacher would step in inappropriately when the students were presenting and force her theories upon the class even when the majority of the class felt as if she was the wrong one." "It seemed with a lot of the strategies we were taught something different in one class and then when we came to this one, we were taught something different." Similarly, "The information was things we have already learned and was not taught in appropriate ways...I will not use the materials from this class in the future." Comments like these suggest that no matter what I did to teach them, find the teachable moments, and diplomatically deliver instruction, many students simply disputed my subject matter expertise and credibility. Moreover, one student believed, "This teacher should be looked into and the class should be evaluated." These comments reminded me of the Vargas (1999) statement, "These students might find it difficult to accept" that women of color are their college professors and they may resist "that the university has bestowed on a woman of color the powers of surveillance and discipline over men and over whites" (p. 373).

The most student resistance I received came from the fact that I integrated multicultural and social justice education and ESL methods as part of our integrated literacy methods class. Informing my students that the diverse student population will grow to 50% in the year 2050 as reported by Jayakumar (2008), I integrated multicultural reading materials and discussions after reading articles (e.g., Collier & Thomas, 1989; Gay, 1992; Han, 2010; McKintosh, 1995; Yoon, 2007) using various multicultural children's and youth books. The ESL and social justice topics seemed to ignite tremendous anger and resentment. One evaluation read, "I think that you the instructor is very passionate about subjects that may be irrelevant to teaching a general education classroom."

Another student wrote:

If 50% of the school population will be of the non-white population then how are we going to teach to everyone? There will be people from over 50 nations who speak more than 30 languages and schools will start to segregate the students and put the white with whites and Spanish with Spanish because a teacher will not be able to tailor to all of them if they were in the same class....

Students seemed to abhor my passionate talk about non-White students and their need to be included in the classrooms. I often remarked that we the teachers should be open to multiple perspectives because of the existing cultural mismatches between White

teachers and diverse students. I reiterated the research that schools are failing diverse students because there is a deficient ideology alive out there in the school system (Compton-Lily, 2007, 2011). After these lectures, another student complained:

I know a lot of people were offended by some inappropriate remarks about white people and white males especially. There was a lot of miscommunication and many unhappy people all semester that made this class unbearable and needlessly stressful most days. We are told we need to understand our ELLs culture and integrate it in the classroom.

Apparently, many students thought that I taught about nothing but ESL and multiracial students. “This class was a waste of time and the professor did not teach anything at all. 100% of the time she wasted our time when we should have been learning language arts.” Some students articulated, “All the professor talked about was multicultural activities. That’s not a bad thing, but we are supposed to be learning about language arts, which we learned about an hour of all semester.” Other students angrily wrote, “We are wasting our valuable time talking about ESL or multiculturalism. When are we going to learn about language arts?” “None of us want to hear about poor multiracial students but Tao kept talking about them for the entire semester.” Furthermore, one student thought that I had a “mental block” about White students and was “closed-minded,” noting:

All Tao talked about was the poor multi-racial students. She has a mental block to the fact that there are poor White students as well. She was close minded and judged us as a class, bashing us for not ever thinking about the poor multi-racial students....she was a very poor teacher who was close-minded to a point of reverse racism.

According to student feedback, my “performance fails to achieve the expected standard” (Vargas, 1999, p. 367). Again, the message was clear: My PTs do not want to read about and use multicultural literature and multiethnic authors’ lived stories as part of their teaching repertoires. Some expressed that multiculturalism, and exploration of diverse students’ cultural studies are not relevant to them because they are going to teach in “this area,” and thus, they cannot “waste their valuable time to learn about these things like cultural studies or multiculturalism.”

From these comments, inferences can be drawn that student resentment and resistance came from the fact that the literature topics I chose were not from their European-American topics, materials, and story collections (i.e., “traditional curriculum”) and, thus, diverse topics and materials DO NOT ring true to them. These materials and children’s and youth texts were all about Others and their struggles as immigrant Blacks, Asians, native people in Australia, Persians, Mexicans, etc. Preservice teachers complained to my supervisor and blamed me for focusing too much on social justice and race rather than literacy methods. Student evaluations rated the course and me lower for including many ethnic authors’ texts (i.e., Other ways of knowing and Other lifestyles).

My five-semester data show that students in my classes made it clear that they “do not want to hear” me talking about racial Other’s perspectives, multiculturalism, and exploration of diverse learners’ academic and social needs because they are going

to teach in “this area.” Thus, they cannot “waste their valuable time” learning something like “ESL or multiculturalism.” When the power balance was offset, that is, when the minority became the professor instead of the typical White professor, it counterbalanced the traditional status hierarchy and order. In this setting, the students appeared to defend their rights and values, and blamed me for being different in accent, physical attributes, and worldviews.

One significant incident took place in 2008. A group of students reported their complaints about my teaching, hard grading, and alleged unclear expectations to a few senior professors and administrators. Without any notice to me, or a conference with everyone present, these professors told the students that they are entitled to go directly to the higher ups. The students went to the department chair and to the dean with their complaints. The department chair called me in later and warned me that “students have rights to make their opinions known and their careers depend on the grades they get.” So, I was to “consider students’ liberty and career options” and “give an A if there were a few points short.” On other occasions when I anticipated some dispute about student demands for better grades and other complaints, I had to plead to the department chair not to welcome the students and have student complaint sessions without my presence. I asked that he advise them to first talk to me about their problems before charging to the authorities. After that, since students were told that they have liberty to get good grades and pursue good jobs, students came to me on a few occasions saying, “If you don't agree with me that my writing and argument in my paper is good, I will take it to the department chair and other sources.” Following a few incidents of this sort, I was again called in to the department chair. Having neither observed my teaching, nor ever visited me in the classroom, nor looked into the situation further, the department chair determined my teaching to be “below average teacher” in the annual evaluations. When I refused to sign the annual evaluation form one year, the college dean sent a letter stating that they were supporting the department chair’s decision and that I needed to follow the formal process to refute the decision. I felt I was cornered and did not see any way out. I was the “black sheep” as viewed by my White students, professors, and administrators. No actions were taken to help mentor me even when the senior faculty were supposed to provide mentoring for me. The administrators and some senior faculty were quick to single out the problems as residing within me, specifically that I did not have good relationships with the students and I was not an effective teacher. The department chair stated in my annual evaluation that I was the one who was not able to adapt to the climate at this PWU, since I ascribed “traditional Confucian ‘transmission’ model in her teaching...It is this reversion to the more traditional model that caused more friction between Dr. Han and her students” [instead of a student-centered approach]. This series of incidents brought to my mind the idea of the subtle but painful influences of institutionalized racism that produce a sense of superior White group position (Marx, 2006; Stanley, 2006) over Others, which often lead to keeping Others at the margin.

Benefits of Working with Racial Others

As many researchers have reminded us, faculty of color can bring multicultural perspectives and diversity to the curriculum and scholarship in higher education (Cole & Barber, 2003; Smith et al., 2005; Umbach, 2006). However, only a few students and none of the administrators or senior faculty appreciated my lectures

about ESL and multiculturalism. After repeated readings of my undergraduate students' anonymous notes and evaluations, I realized my students received my talk about multicultural issues as personal attacks on their heritage, forefathers, and past history. A few students articulated this point in the 2008 spring semester:

Many of the reading materials really did not seem relevant to the course. Many were very biased and many of us that are white middle class students felt like we were being targeted and criticized by what ancestors years ago....

Again, the following comment was so poignantly powerful telling me about possible biases on my part that I repeat it here because it is just so opposite to my belief system and practice. "Tao was close-minded to a point of reverse racism."

My good intention to guide my White students to be sensitive about Others was taken as preaching and indoctrinating my world views. It became urgent that we (my students and I) build mutual respect and understanding before *any* of my good intentions about social justice, multiculturalism or, in fact, any learning/teaching could occur in the classroom. After much reflection, I implemented two strategies in my 2009 spring Literacy/ESL methods course with hopes of narrowing the cultural, linguistic, and racial barriers between us. First, I changed from authoritative talk about ESL/Multiculturalism to telling the students to look at the world through the lens of Others. Instead of indoctrination and preaching through lectures, I brought multicultural and multimodal materials using children's literature, films, anime, and manga to help students perceive historical events, Others' life stories, and cultural exploration using popular culture-multicultural-multimodal texts (see Han, 2011).

Students responded drastically differently after these pedagogical and content changes. I had the students view the movies "Crash" and "Save the Last Dance," read the graphic novel "American Born Chinese" (ABC, Yang, 2008), and discuss the article Taking on Critical Literacy (Lewison et al., 2002). After this a few students wrote me notes to ask about my own experience as a second language learner. Readers may remember that previously my students wrote to me, "None of us want to hear about poor multiracial students, but Tao insisted to talk about them the entire semester." To my surprise, after I implemented multi media texts and popular culture, students *asked* me to share my experience! Did I undergo similar discrimination to that of the people of color in "Crash" and ABC? No one accused me of having "broken English," "accent," or engaging in "reverse racism!" Students wrote, "European-Americans think of them [minorities] as lower class, that they are incapable of doing things that are meant for upper class people like become a doctor or lawyer." "As I watched the movie, Crash, it made me wonder how often they [Whites] accuse of minorities with crimes that they didn't do." "We get a glimpse of the hardships that many people of different ethnic origin face, as well as some of their thoughts and opinions of the world." Other students wrote, "These books and movies are reminders on how misconstrued our visions about other people may be, and that we all should take a bigger look at ourselves before we judge Others." "Unfortunately, where we live especially, there is a strong bias against such students and their families since our society is so predominantly run by Caucasian American citizens,...We shouldn't shun Others because they may not be like us. They have a voice and it should be heard." "A lot of the American populations that we think are

immigrants are really American born citizens...there is the need for our society to include minority students to participate in everyday life and its functions.”

Many students accepted the multi media and popular culture materials with open arms and reflected on and questioned general mainstream views of prejudice and stereotyping of Others. However, a few negative views still lingered. One out of 25 students wrote, “the more diverse America becomes, the harder it is going to be for the dominant to control over non-European Americans.” Another student wrote, “Time and again, I see so many illegal citizens. They take advantage of welfare system or minority scholarships....” Despite these two students’ negative views of Others, the rest of them (23 students) acknowledged mainstream society’s prejudice against Others and that they will be the ones in the classroom to make small changes in those students’ lives. Some stated, “Teachers need to know how to deal with different races” and “to learn to see through different eyes and how other people live. Opening my mind up and accepting others, can help me teach my students how to accept or at least respect other cultures.”

The second successful strategy I used was to get to know the students one-on-one academically and socially. I met with them to discuss their papers before submission and made conscientious efforts to give feedback on the exam and papers they wrote. My students responded very positively in all one-on-one meetings. Additionally, I joined in my students’ social events outside of class for cultural reasons. I did not always understand their talk about some topics (e.g., when they talked about TV jokes or cultural rituals commonly practiced at the Sorority and Fraternity houses), but I tried to understand my students’ jokes, laughs, and worries outside the classroom. After I incorporated these strategies in spring 2010, the student evaluations showed overwhelmingly positive results: 3.8 out of 4 (compared to 2.9 fall 2009; 2.3 spring 2009; 3.1 fall 2008; 2.4 spring 2008; 2.8 fall 2007). Almost all students wrote that they learned a lot and will use the methods and materials in their future classrooms. Many students emphasized the importance of the relationship between the teacher and students in the 2010 spring student evaluations:

I think she [Tao] did an excellent job of helping the class to build a cohesive relationship. We all easily worked together and I loved all of the different learning activities presented... I think sometimes cultural barriers can be formed and often times people can get offended on things that were not meant to offend. Although, I think that this year we welcomed this professor with open arms and absolutely enjoyed every class.

My White students were finally accepting the purpose of the ESL/multiculturalism/social justice component of my Literacy/ESL course as our relationships became amicable. To narrow that linguistic, cultural, and racial divide between my students and me, I sought to change my ways and went out of my comfort zone to reach out to my racial Others —my young White preservice teachers. And they too were connecting with me saying, “I now have a better eye for minority and struggling students.” Many wrote, “I loved your enthusiasm and desire to get to know your students.” One student summed it up:

Tao worked really hard to incorporate a lot of different literacies into this class, her enthusiasm really made it easy to come to class everyday. She was

awesome at relating well to the students...She taught us how to teach, and gave us some amazing advice and strategies to use as teachers. It was also nice that she taught us about her culture, it was really fun to participate in a new culture when we came to class.

Additionally, one student touched my heart:

At first I didn't know what to think about Tao. Honestly, I thought she was a little strict and not very understanding of others views. I am happy to report that she changed significantly throughout the semester, noticing she needed to build a relationship with students for them to respect her and be involved in the classroom discussions. I will always remember her as being a very significant teacher in my life, because I now realize I will need to adapt to my students as well.

By the sixth semester, our efforts to get to know racial Others (Asian professor and White undergraduate students) finally overcame the cultural models and habits, and linguistic/racial barriers that stood between us! On a personal note, I cleared the shame of being labeled "a below average teacher," the stigma inscribed in my annual evaluations by the department chair. For the first time in my three years as a college professor at this PWU, my White students seemed open to adopting a new and different attitude about Other peoples' voices and cultures and to considering this significant enough to change and adapt to their future students.

Discussion

In this paper, I examined the pedagogical practices of a female Asian faculty member as reflected in administrator and student evaluations and anonymous, informal class notes over six semesters at a remote Mountain West University. Throughout the paper, I recounted my self-reflexive story about working as a solitary faculty of color in a homogeneous White classroom and work environment. Three points worth further discussion are: 1) the overarching and persistent student resistance to a cultural mismatch and the racial tensions that surface when people of color are their professors (i.e., in positions of power); 2) the university as a chilling workplace atmosphere for junior faculty of color; and 3) the role of awareness and understanding among racial Others as necessary for positive relationships and successful learning to occur.

Regarding the first point, one persistent phenomenon is that a cultural and racial mismatch between diverse faculty and White students seems to be the most divisive factor when faculty of color hold positions of power within PWU classrooms. The resistance white preservice teachers showed to the faculty of color stems from epistemological racism. PTs at Mountain West University were not open to acknowledging Other epistemologies as relevant ways of knowing or for adoption as curricular materials. Nearly unanimously they believed and communicated to me that their epistemology, their own system of knowing, using Eurocentric content and methods provided the most viable curricular and pedagogical tools they needed to be effective teachers. They disliked ESL, multicultural and social justice content and their related methods and materials. These PTs were clear that they were not comfortable accepting diversity. Thus, they hold on to what they believe to be

superior epistemology, Euro American systems of knowledge, even though this strategy can result in social practices that have direct negative effects on immigrant families that deviate from the dominant norm. The students/PTs did not ponder larger sociopolitical issues that benefit one group at the expense of Others.

As I continue to adapt to American culture and ways of knowing, I know this deeper level of internalizing American cultural models does not come overnight. In fact, it takes tens of years or even a lifetime (Cummins, 1986, 2001; Gee, 2004). As a result, I may not have always granted opportunities for my students to be creative and independent learners and let them discover knowledge on their own. While this is one area where my students have to accept my diverse linguistic/cultural/racial background, I also acknowledge and recognize the way I enact my identities through language/literacy and teaching practices connected to my situated identity when working with my White students. As I need to reflect and shift my thinking and values to consider my White students' cultural identities, I strongly feel that they also need to meet me half way and be open-minded about Others' epistemologies. As I critically check my language/literacy use, interactional modes, and teaching practices, my preservice teachers should also check their biases against diverse Others. However, as I have learned, students do not easily acquire cultural awareness and global citizenry naturally on their own (nor do administrators and faculty for that matter). This responsibility belongs to the University educators (Jayakumar, 2008; Han, 2011).

The second point concerns higher education as a chilling work place for junior faculty of color. "What kind of cultural/racial services and policies are in place at the institutional level?" is a key question. As I have worked in three different American universities, I have asked senior faculty and administrators if they consider cultural and racial factors when it comes to tenure and promotion decisions for faculty of color. All three groups informed me that they do not. What does it mean to have multicultural awareness at the institutional and individual level when there is a racial Other? At the institutional level, universities should consider implementing culturally sensitive policies to help balance the unconscious cultural and racial biases of senior faculty and administrators, particularly when it comes to the tenure and promotion process. How much do student evaluations count when assessing good teaching? How can young developing minds such as college students evaluate cultural and racial Others and how much weight do they carry? There should be measures that place the cultural/racial biases against Others in perspective. Similarly, to what extent do White senior faculty and administrators have an interest in multicultural and global education and a desire to work with the faculty of color?

If we acknowledge that student and peer evaluations are legitimate forms of faculty assessment, then it seems that we need to consider basic assessment principles. The context in which these assessments are applied to faculty is crucial, particularly for faculty who are non-native English speakers (NNES) and faculty of color. If the student and peer evaluations are used to help faculty grow, consistent with the idea of formative assessment, evaluations become constructive and meaningful to the NNES faculty or faculty of color. However, if student evaluations are used in the spirit of summative assessment and become decisive in merit pay increase and/or promotion and tenure decisions, then the student and peer evaluations can be pernicious. A summative assessment context for student and peer evaluations

has a chilling effect on the ability of faculty of color and NNES faculty to deal with controversial issues in college classrooms, such as those relating to class and gender, or asking students to go through painful processes of academic skill building or professional self-criticism or self-reflection. A summative mindset also empowers department chairs and other administrators to take superficial and short-term actions when they do not have the skill sets to help junior NNES faculty and faculty of color. Just as in a k-12 classroom where it is tempting for a frustrated monocultural-monolingual teacher to refer a struggling NNES student for “special education” services, so is it tempting for a university department chair from a monolingual-monocultural background to use student and peer evaluations as a way to justify what they might feel to be the merits or demerits of a junior faculty of color or NNES faculty member. So care must be taken to apply student and peer evaluations in an appropriate context. Perhaps if there are patterns across classes and groups of students or faculty (e.g., across undergraduate and graduate), conclusions about an NNES faculty or faculty member of color can be made more confidently. It seems to me that universities follow a factory model when it comes to multicultural education and internationalization. They recruit diverse faculty to show “we have our multicultural person.” The factory model of recruitment tends to result in political rhetoric and may backfire on the diverse students and faculty because it is they who pay the consequences of institutional and epistemological racism. To ensure actual pro-multicultural attitudes and policies, new policies and practices should be established such as faculty mentoring, multicultural group conversations, tenure and promotion steering committees, workshops, teaching of critical media literacy and New literacies in teacher education programs (Han, 2011). For example, a mentoring system should be in place on a regular-basis that includes multicultural group conversations with the faculty of color regarding teaching, scholarship, and service. Mandatory and frequent workshops and dialogue around the topics of ESL, multicultural, and social justice issues can be helpful. Without a change in middle-level and top administration, individual level awareness of Others and supportive practice for Others are not often practiced in day-to-day teaching/learning situations. Without a change in institutional and individual attitudes and policies, current practices often mirror the racism of the larger society.

Finally, this study demonstrates that working with racial Others benefits all involved. The role of awareness and understanding among racial Others can help build successful teaching and learning relationships. In my case, using multimodal and multicultural texts seemed to be very effective to teach PTs about diversity and social justice. Also one-on-one and small group academic and social gatherings with my students and changing pedagogy from dogmatic lecture to discovery was crucial for relationship building. When we finally became on friendly terms, it appeared that we could overcome racial and cultural barriers, learn to accept Others’ experiences and go to the next level for enhanced self-understanding and greater awareness of social justice and intercultural issues. In this study, my goal was to help my preservice teachers see the world through the eyes of Others and develop critical consciousness about diversity. This goal reached a higher level of success in the sixth and last semester before I left the University. After incorporating multicultural and multimodal tools and reaching out to understand my White students in and out of the university classrooms, I was finally achieving my goal! My students indeed admitted the need for global education to adapt and modify their attitudes and practices to help their future students. This successful teaching/learning occurred only when mutual

understandings and positive relationships were built between racial Others—my White preservice teachers and myself.

Unfortunately, I left the University without apparently increasing that same level of respect and understanding in administrators and senior faculty. As a cultural/racial outsider, I have reason to believe that it is crucial for the administrators and senior faculty in education to take part in creating equity, hope, and possibility when working with racial Others. The cause of building positive relationships at the lower level of hierarchy (at the student and junior faculty levels) can be subverted if we, as educators, do not get buy-in from middle level administrators and top management teams. Without the active participation of administration and senior faculty in creating more equitable higher educational practices, “All that is required to maintain it [institutionalized racism] is business as usual” (Tatum, 1999, p.11). In so doing, the system further perpetuates an institutionalized practice of excluding Others. Universities must listen to the voices of faculty members of color.

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Fostering Conversational Leadership: A Response to Barnett's Call for an Ontological Turn

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Abstract

This article examines Ronald Barnett's notion of an ontological turn in higher education as a language for framing the current existential demands and emerging learning needs of young adults. After presenting different interpretations of ontology, I make a case for how contemplative approaches can be applied to communication-based higher education classes to support ontological learning processes and outcomes. I then introduce a case study, drawn from a graduate course entitled *Dialogue Processes*, that I have taught over the past seven years at University of Massachusetts (Boston). Here I illustrate how a contemplative approach to instruction helps develop conversational leadership, a central learning objective of the course.

Key words: ontological; higher education; contemplative learning; conversational leadership

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Introduction

Traditional, teacher-centered university instructional methods focus on having students acquire the concepts, theories and knowledge of their particular field of study from a “functionalist model of education, a model whose dominant epistemology emphasizes the expert transmission of a non-negotiable curriculum of concepts and facts to relatively-passive students via highly-didactic pedagogic strategies” (Badley, 2000, p. 245). Within this prevalent model of higher education, there is a tendency to conclude that these problematic aspects of university instruction can be traced back to the breakdowns of transfer and acquisition of knowledge. However, as this chapter develops, a blindspot of the functionalist and technocratic epistemology with its instrumental view (Higgins, 2011) is its emphasis on content mastery to the diminishment or exclusion of pedagogies that support (a) the ontological development (Eryaman, 2007) and transformation of students and (b) the cultivation of individual and collective wisdom as *fundamental processes* of learning. In this article I take inspiration from Blatner’s (2005) more holistic process-oriented definition of wisdom:

Wisdom is an activity, something one does, rather than a fixed state, as if it were a possession or social status. It is a broad category of component activities including, for example, seeking wisdom; balancing different kinds of wisdom; discerning the optimal amounts or degrees of various efforts; exercising compassion and interpersonal sensitivity; appreciating; re-evaluating tradition and accepted knowledge; integrating information and skills; developing deeper understanding and integrating also one’s personal ideals; becoming alert to self-deception and the temptations towards foolishness; practicing humility and self-questioning; opening to intuition and imagination; and even weaving in a measure of playfulness (p.33). By overlooking ways to support these core interior dimensions of our student’s learning, as instructors we risk endorsing “trends whereby we increasingly instrumentalize, professionalize, vocationalize, corporatize, and ultimately *technologize* education’ (Thomson, 2002, p. 124; emphasis in original).

As a way of addressing the blindspot of the functionalist paradigm, in the sections that follow I take up Ronald Barnett’s (2005) notion of an ontological turn, which addresses a fundamental challenge of learning in our present era characterized by general conditions of uncertainty and complexity. I then build on Barnett’s use of ontology as qualities of being, as a set of assumptions informing our worldview, and as existential ways of being in uncertainty. Following my discussion of ontology, I introduce contemplative approaches to learning that I believe are essential to the ontological tasks of leadership development today across disciplines, which in my own course I frame as central to the aims of “conversational leadership” (Hurley & Brown, 2010) or cultivating forms of collective intelligence through conversational means. Finally, I introduce a case example of my experience in applying an ontological approach to communications with my students in a graduate course that I teach in *Dialogue Processes* at the University of Massachusetts (Boston).

Re-Visiting Barnett's Ontological Turn

When knowledge acquisition is pursued in university settings to the exclusion of wisdom cultivation, as instructors we invariably fall short of preparing our students for thriving in an era that is becoming increasingly marked by pervasive change and an “inner sense of a destabilized world. It is a destabilization that arises from a personal sense that we never can come into a stable relationship with the world” (Barnett, 2004a, p. 251). As the moorings of their institutional, professional and personal identities are called into question under such conditions, students are confronted with a fundamental inner challenge of uncovering a viable basis for being and orienting not only effectively, but *wisely* among these emerging life-world conditions where the new world is quickly emerging from the cracks of the old. Lacking a foundational clear-cut sense of certainty about what the “right thing” is and how to go about doing it has brought about a pervasive global climate of uncertainty and contingency that touches upon deeper philosophical questions of morality, identity and meaning.

Inquiring into the forces of change and uncertainty that characterize our time, Barnett (2004) points out, “the changes are characteristically internal. They are primarily to do with how individuals understand themselves, with their sense of identity (or lack of it), with their being in the world.” (p.248). Instead of acquiring further knowledge or skills, Barnett (2004) proposes the importance of learning to be disposed ontologically towards uncertainty in a manner of, “carefulness, thoughtfulness, humility, criticality, receptiveness, resilience, courage and stillness” (p.259) through what could be construed as an orientation to our learning, one another and our changing world that is helpful in fostering wisdom. Yet, Barnett does not specifically prescribe recommendations about how to go about cultivating such qualities of being, a task this article aims to explore, particularly within curriculum focused on leadership and communication practices.

Proposing the need to learn ways of being for flourishing with uncertainty, Barnett points out the importance of cultivating certain practical wisdom dispositions for working with uncertainty over knowledge and skill acquisition. Barnett's discussion of ontology focuses on fostering constructive relationships with our changing world through renewed attention to the quality and intentionality of our *ways of being*. Barnett does not advance a particular ontological conception, but rather leaves the conversation open for interpretation. For some readers, this will involve entertaining several competing ontological conceptions of one's self that embody multiple if not at times contradictory ways of being in our professional and private lives. For others, this will require holding onto and aspiring to embody a particular ontological ideal in one's work—as an example, a facilitator aspires to model relational ways of listening and speaking in their way of co-ordinating group processes, pausing periodically to sense into the learning needs of others. Still for others, there may be interest in integrating multiple ontologies as a means for discovering the synergistic and creative possibilities of abiding in what appear to be conflicting experiences of being as an ideal basis for working with the supercomplexity at play in our working lives.

Barnett (2000) describes our age as one of supercomplexity; a time marked by a multiplicity of competing and often incompatible knowledge frameworks that have

brought about conditions of conceptual overload, making it increasingly challenging to inhabit multiple perspectives or advance a comprehensive epistemology that can address the diverse epistemological challenges at hand. To the extent that knowledge is, broadly speaking, increasingly susceptible to change due to its shortening life expectation (Bauman, 2000), such a world of supercomplexity is bringing about an “age of conceptual and, thereby, emotional insecurity” (p.416). This epistemological complexity influences and dwarfs the significance of the interplaying relationship with ontology, which has been overlooked in the scholarship of teaching and learning particularly.

Wheelahan (2007) criticizes Barnett’s portrayal of supercomplexity as resembling a kind of super-relativism, insofar as Barnett does not offer a basis for evaluating or choosing between knowledge descriptions amidst increasingly unstable self-life-world context(s). Wheelahan raises an important point insofar as not all knowledge contains the same half-life of uncertainty, nor is all knowledge equally fallible or incapable of enduring or serving our needs as in the case of the humanities or world wisdom traditions. And so the challenge might be framed as: how to engage with the highly complex situations we encounter in ways that acknowledge the limitations of attaining certainty of knowledge of the world or ourselves without accommodating a goofy relativism (Midgley, 1997) that deems all forms of knowledge as uncertain and changing? Put in another way, how might we work with both the dynamic and relatively stable features of knowledge and our identities in the interests of embodying some helpful combination of both in our work? Further, how can our instructional practices serve to develop students in meeting this pervasive challenge?

Wheelahan’s point notwithstanding, in contrast to previous historical periods of relative stability, given how the epistemological climate of our time is increasingly pervaded by uncertainty and instability, the nature of the pedagogical challenges we currently face can be construed as one of *being* as Barnett (2000) elaborates:

If knowledges are proliferating, if any account of the world is contestable from all manner of directions, if our sense of who we are and our relationships to each other and to the world are insecure (as they all are), *being* overtakes knowledge as the key epistemological concept... Translated into educational terms, pedagogies are required that provide the capacities for coping with supercomplexity; which encourage the formation of a human being that maintains a purposive equilibrium in the face of radical uncertainty and contestability (p.419).

By emphasizing ontological considerations here, I do not take Barnett’s emphasis to be displacing epistemological considerations, but rather to deepen our understanding of how our knowing-in-the-world is shaped by our *being-in-the-world*. Learning to constructively work with the sources of ontological destabilization in our lives and to intentionally cultivate and model certain qualities of being that are needed for thriving in a highly complex and changing world is becoming increasingly urgent. In a way, Barnett’s call for an ontological turn is reminiscent of existential philosopher Martin Heidegger’s (1962; 1998) reflections that “the real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it” (p.167). To forestall the

proliferation of educational practice that denies the soul and leads to an oblivion of being, alternatives are needed.

Contemplative approaches for developing ontological renewal

Consistent with Barnett's ontological turn, in recent years a strong interest in contemplative practices such as mindfulness and meditation have been explored within higher education settings as a means to engage the ontological capacities of students. This growing interest in contemplative approaches to instruction and learning has emerged across a wide variety of disciplinary fields including education, psychology, philosophy, business, among many others (Brady, 2007; Gunnlaugson, 2009; Seidel, 2006; Thurman, 2006; etc). This has given rise to a new field of contemplative studies (Duerr, M., Zajonc, A., & Dana, D., 2003; Roth, 2006) as well as a number of academic conferences on contemplative education. Contemplative practice, in invoking a shift from mental-reflective modes of knowing and egoic self-identification, facilitates a shift towards more intentional awareness-based modes of knowing and expanded forms of self-identification (Duer et. al, 2003). Roy (2006) speaks to the deeper quality of being that is cultivated through contemplative practice:

Relative to the experience of "moving mind," the ontological dimension, by contrast, has the feeling/aspect of stillness. However, this "stillness" is not to be construed dualistically (that would be an epistemological reduction); rather, it is a dynamic stillness—like the axel of a cartwheel rolling down a hill. (p.133)

Contemplative practice offers the prospects for ontological renewal through this dynamic stillness and other interior ontological qualities of being (i.e. calmness, awareness, peace, compassion), both individually and collectively in the classroom. Additionally, contemplative practice can assist us in befriending the uncertain, unpredictable and highly complex situations we meet in the world by befriending the uncertain, turbulent and complicated realities we encounter within. Insofar as the world wisdom traditions (i.e. particularly eastern ones) encourage cultivating a fluid, creative relationship to uncertainty, our minds then become acclimatized to being with the complex interpenetrating flow of relationship that arguably characterizes existence itself. Through non-conceptual contemplative practices such as mindfulness and meditation, grounds for cultivating a wisdom-based relationship with reality gradually begin to take form. Contemplative approaches offer the prospects of transforming our psychological relationship to uncertainty by helping us see through problematic assumptions such as (a) what is beyond our understanding is of little consequence, (b) what is unknown or cannot be know is not worth our time, or (c) that uncertainty is necessarily a fundamentally threatening and overwhelming aspect of reality. Under certain conditions, contemplative practices offer a basis for unlearning such problematic beliefs and moving towards a more friendly and co-creative relationship with reality that accepts and embraces uncertainty or the unknowable as a fundamental aspect of our experience (Gunnlaugson, 2009). Cultivating wisdom and compassion by gently dispelling our selfhood illusions of fixity and separateness through contemplative practice also helps develop a "trans-traditional identity" (Sarath, 2003, p.229) that is less fixed, rigid and more contingent, interwoven and capable of living optimally with the uncertainties that increasingly define our complex emerging world.

Uncovering the ontological dimension of conversational leadership through *Dialogue Processes*

To illustrate my argument for using contemplative approaches within higher education classrooms to develop ontological capacities, I now turn to my online graduate course, *CrCrTh616 Dialogue Processes* in the *Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program* at the University of Massachusetts (Boston). In my course, students come from a wide array of academic disciplines and professions seeking tools and approaches to become more effective dialogue leaders and as agents of change in education, organizational and social justice settings. In addition to developing internal capacities of wisdom, my course enables students to recognize their power to reconstitute social, educational and political life through more skillful and engaged means of communication, which in turn influences their decision-making ability and personal-social-political awareness.

As an example of this later teaching objective, a core course objective of *Dialogue Processes* is to cultivate practical know-how and theoretical knowledge of dialogue facilitation processes with a particular in-depth focus on Otto Scharmer's (2007) account of the four fields of conversation as well as presencing within a variety of contexts of applied learning. I also draw upon Isaacs' (1999) research from the MIT Dialogue Project, David Bohm's (1996) conception of dialogue, in addition to my research in dialogue processes (Gunnlaugson 2006, 2009, 2011).

The course not only provides theory and opportunities for practicing dialogue as a class, it also has students explore their personal and professional experiences in relation to dialogue facilitation as a means of challenging and transforming their ways of being in conversation. I have designed the course in a way that helps student's become aware of their ontological disposition as a way of influencing and leading in conversation. Within the course, through group-based forms of inquiry and peer-coaching exercises, students explore the relationship between ontology and leading different fields of conversation—listening from stillness, speaking from presence, among others. In addition to imparting theoretical knowledge about dialogue, I encourage students to closely attend to their experiences in conversation in terms of identifying and listening from the distinct qualities of being that distinguish different fields of conversation. In the next two sections, I describe in more detail how my own students develop their ontological capacities through two contemplative approaches: meditation and presencing (Scharmer, 2007).

Setting the stage: Introducing meditation as a first-person contemplative practice for opening up interior ontological horizons

In the interests of supporting the conditions for student's transformation in relation to the dialogue practices that shape their sense of self and their capacities for different forms of conversation, I have introduced dialogue practices with a contemplative orientation as a means for engaging the deeper ontological dimension of their learning. More recently, I have worked with Ed Sarath's (2010) heuristic of first-, second- and third-person approaches for distinguishing contemplative processes. Concerning the distinctions of first-person, second-person and third-person educational approaches, the academic world is arguably dominated by third-person forms of education (Roth, 2006) where analysis, investigation and critical

discussion of knowledge prevail. Within Sarath's (2006) integral pedagogical heuristic, first-person forms of education involve learning that is drawn primarily from our individual experience through modes of journaling, introspective reflection, among other approaches. Second-person forms of education are more process oriented, generally including collective forms of learning and discovery in group work, community-based learning and so forth. In the upcoming section I outline the first-person method of meditation, which serves as a foundational practice for the second-person method of presencing—a creative approach to conversation that draws on contemplative processes. As Sarath points out, our pedagogical methods “contain first-, second- and third-person aspects to varying degrees” (in press, p. 2).

Early on each term I introduce a basic awareness-based practice of sitting meditation to help students cultivate the capacity for deepened attention and mindfulness in their conversations. The discipline of sitting meditation involves a practice of taking time out from their normal day-to-day activities in order to discover an inner source of stillness, attention and ontological renewal. Sarath (2003) elaborates on the benefits of meditation from his experiences of teaching in the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz and Contemplative Studies degree program at the University of Michigan:

Descriptions of contact with this core as instances of extraordinary clarity, insight, and inner calm can only approximate this awareness state; it ultimately can be understood and appreciated only by the experience itself. In fact, the coexistence of levels of wakefulness and profound calm that exceed ordinary experience, which makes these states so difficult to convey to others in words, is perhaps what renders them so transformational. As one invokes these states on a regular basis, they promote the development of these values in everyday life in a way that, as noted above, most other experiences generally cannot match. However, this is not to devalue other activities, or suggest meditation should replace them, whether they are undertaken with contemplative aims or not. Rather, silent meditation can be thought of as a kind of anchor and means for enriching whatever activities one pursues. (p. 219)

Midway in the course I introduce mindfulness meditation exercises to strengthen their connection to stillness and attention through exploratory practices of becoming aware of breath, body, emotions and thoughts. I generally encourage everyone to work up to 20 minutes of daily meditation practice and to document their learning in the context of course themes and assignments of dialogue processes on their coaching blogs. A number of students have reported the benefits of meditation in helping them slow down to experience how the state of their body, emotions and mental attitude influences their capacity for effectively engaging in dialogue and presencing conversations.

Despite its importance to learning (Duerr, M., Zajonc, A., & Dana, D., 2003), *intrapersonal* awareness, a learning objective of the course, is rarely if ever practiced or cultivated in most higher education settings. It is ironic that in spite of the increasing importance of self-knowledge, colleges and universities tend to give minimal to no attention to the development of ontological capacities such as self-awareness and self-understanding, at best assuming this to be a natural by-product of

the program. Insofar as meditative practice strengthens student’s capacities for observing their internal, cognitive-emotional processes, including biases, beliefs, and mental perspectives, through this process, self-awareness and self-understanding are developed as students have reported in their blogs. Students have also reported that meditation has helped them work less reactively in conversation and more closely with the challenges they face in their studies, employment, as well as collegial and personal relationships.

Engaging being: Exploring presencing as a second-person contemplative practice of conversation

There is often a struggle to unlearn old habits as one brings forth new ways of being to the extent that customary preconceptions and patterns generally stand in the way of authentic dialogue, at least initially. In our online and skype conversations, I encourage students to become more aware of how their accustomed habits of listening and speaking reflect and depart from the characteristic dynamics within each of Scharmer’s four fields of conversation (figure 1).

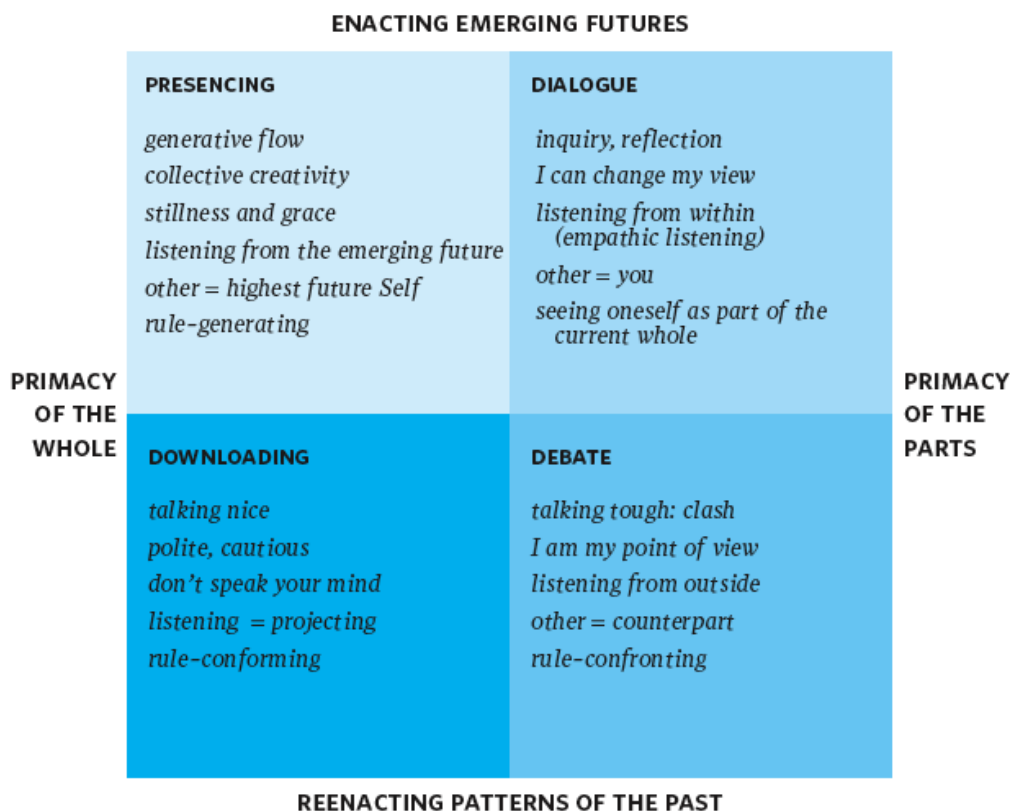


Figure 1: The four fields of conversation (Scharmer, 2007, p. 274)

In this heuristic, Scharmer describes how conversations move counter-clockwise through the fields of downloading, debate, dialogue and finally presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2007). For Scharmer, each field builds from the earlier habits of listening and speaking that characterize the previous field of conversation. In teaching the course, I dedicate a course week to exploring each of the four fields of conversation. Generally this involves introducing the characteristic habits and

practices of attention that distinguish downloading from debate, debate from dialogue and dialogue from presencing, as well as the habits of listening, speaking and patterns of engagement that give rise to these field-specific dynamics. We then explore alternatives for facilitating groups and teams from the field of downloading to debate, debate to dialogue and dialogue to presencing.

When teaching the four fields of conversation, I have found more advanced students tend to relate to dialogue and particularly presencing conversations through the discoveries made in their meditative practice, which sensitizes them to the subtle phenomenological processes that shape conversations and collective processes of knowledge creation. Presencing especially provides a context of conversation where deeper meanings and new experiences of one's self and the group arise. Where meditation offers a passive *intrapersonal* rejuvenation of the ontological dimension of student's learning through a renewed contact with their deeper being, presencing actively engages the ontological dimension *interpersonally* in conversation. In *Dialogue Processes*, I have adapted Scharmer's account of presencing primarily in the context of conversation, thus emphasizing the interpersonal context. However, Scharmer (2007) has also developed *intrapersonal* practices of presencing for different creative purposes. Along the lines of how Senge and Wheatley (2001) have explored the significance of meditative and contemplative practice within the context of dialogue processes in learning communities, I introduce presencing as a creative practice of conversation with a contemplative means for uncovering the *collective* ontological dimension of student's experiences. Emphasizing the contemplative aspect of presencing helps students learn to draw upon the ontological qualities of being that individual meditation practice invokes. Also, by framing presencing as a contemplative practice, students tend to be more attentive to the subtle dynamics of listening and speaking that distinguish presencing from dialogue.

Overall, presencing helps students develop a new appreciation for the creative possibilities of speaking and listening from a shared place, a common ground as it were, that is aligned more with a deeper existential and participatory sense of who they are individually and as a collective. Presencing then as a field of conversation offers a permission for everyone to listen for and be informed by the subtle ontological dimension of our experience in relation to whatever the subject or topic happens to be.

Closing thoughts

Barnett's call offers a compelling visionary response for transforming conventional higher education instructional and learning practices. In my CrCrTh616 Course, this has involved inviting students to work with the core interior dimensions of their experiences through learning the skills and dispositions of conversational leadership. Working with practices of contemplative learning has offered my students an effective approach for stimulating fundamental ontological and creative dimensions of learning and knowing consistent with Barnett's vision, in addition to empowering students to thrive amidst the increasing uncertainty, complexity and deep existential and social challenges of our time.

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Little Rascals in the City of God: Film Reflection and Multicultural Education

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Abstract

Research has highlighted the factionalizing of pre-service teachers into two groups: Ethnic Minorities who understand diversity, and Whites who do not. In an exploration of the relationship of this distinction to the resources pre-service teachers actually bring into diversity courses, this study utilizes an innovative instructional strategy, “Film Reflection And Multicultural Education” (FRAME) to access the cultural assumptions in pre-service teachers’ understanding of “others.” Using FRAME, data analysis of 133 pre-service teacher reflections revealed distinctions that fell within expectations related to pre-service teacher ethnicity, but also uncovered variations within ethnic groups. Findings suggest that bifurcating pre-service teachers along ethnic lines, therefore, does little to advance our understanding of the resources with which students enter teacher education programs. Assuring diversity instructors recognize the capacity of all their pre-service teachers to understand diversity is critical to protecting the rights of students (of all ages) to an equitable education. The results of this study show FRAME can help us achieve this goal.

Keywords: diversity, teacher education, equity, reflection, film

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Little Rascals in the City of God: Film Reflection and Multicultural Education

Recent studies suggest that although diversity instruction is predicated on recognizing that preservice teachers (PSTs) enter the field with different types of experiences and understandings of diversity (McAllister & Irvine, 2000), “difference” often becomes a codeword for “deficient” when used in conjunction with White PSTs. According to Lowenstein (2009), statistics detailing the “demographic imperative” and the homogenization of “White” PSTs serve to reduce them to an undifferentiated mass – the same type of homogenization process that diversity research opposes. Other researchers have also noted the irony of diversity instructors who jockey to recognize the resources ethnic minorities bring into classrooms while neglecting to see that White PSTs also bring in resources of their own (Reganspan, 2002). When PSTs of any ethnic background find their beliefs denigrated or ignored (at the very moment when diversity instructors want them to be open and consider other perspectives), appreciating diversity can be difficult, and assuring equity for their future students, perilous. Instead of assuming that White PSTs enter teacher education programs with no resources, Lazar (2004) advocates finding out what these teachers really do bring into classrooms.

Valuing what PSTs come into classrooms with is not without precedent, of course. Multiple researchers have identified the significant role experiences and understandings play in shaping student learning (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2005; Dewey, 1938/1997; Freire, 1970/1993; Lowenstein 2009; Saffold & Longwell-Grice, 2008). In relation to diversity instruction specifically, researchers have highlighted the importance of acknowledging what students bring in as a resource (Lowenstein, 2009), as a filter for how they subsequently consider new material (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Kagan, 1992), and as a key mechanism for diminishing resistance to diversity instruction (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2005). Even though the literature is mixed as to how much growth is possible in a single diversity course (Garmon, 2004; Brown, 2004), researchers agree that the likelihood of growth increases and resistance decreases when students interrogate their beliefs and confront their biases (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Banks, 1994). Some researchers have even gone so far as to identify reflection as the critical component for assuring equity, charging that “if programs fail to address teachers’ personal beliefs, particularly those related to diversity and diverse others, it is unlikely that schools will ever meet the challenge of equity and excellence for all students” (Pohan, 1996 p. 67). Consequently, really understanding diversity is contingent upon instructors recognizing the distinct cultures, discourses, and experiences *all* PSTs bring into the classroom (Weedon, 1999).

Problematically, however, diversity instruction is not generally offered in a way that resonates with those described as most in need of this instruction – middle and upper middle class, White PSTs (Lowenstein, 2009). In other words, diversity instruction can be as “foreign” as diversity interaction for those who make up the bulk of the entering teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000; Shrestha, 2006; Woolfolk-Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006). Asking these students to reflect upon issues related to diversity can prompt intellectual and emotional dissonance as individual biases, stereotypes, and prejudices are challenged by the personal nature of the inquiry process. Merely introducing these concepts can prompt discomfort as students struggle to locate themselves on a cultural spectrum they have not “needed” to think about previously; many White PSTs who are unfamiliar with diversity have

never really considered themselves as “raced” or “cultured” (LaDuke, 2009). Instead of engendering educational growth, dissonance prompted by reflecting on diversity can result in “emotional fallout” manifested in feelings of guilt and despair that hinder rather than facilitate development (Boler, 2004).

In an effort to better understand how teacher education programs can build upon the resources all PSTs bring into diversity instruction while avoiding the sort of dissonance that hinders rather than helps learning (Erikson, 1968), this study examines reflections from two groups of students (White and Ethnic Minority) on the subject of diversity itself. Using a new instructional strategy – “Film Reflection And Multicultural Education” (FRAME) – built upon viewing the “other” in films produced outside the student’s country of origin, this study looks at what PSTs see when asked to view difference. Film’s simultaneous function as document and representation, its symbolic richness, and its accessible familiarity make it a useful tool for prompting such reflection (Bluestone, 2000; Summerfield, 1993). Indeed, the very openness of films provides for a range of interpretation, evaluation, and reflection (Kuzma & Haney, 2001). Given these general parameters, the use of “foreign films” can push the educational envelope even further, providing exposure to narratives, experiences, and cultures otherwise unavailable to many students in a way that is both familiar and, well, *foreign*.

Review of Literature

According to Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002), diversity instruction works best at the college level because college students are at the right place developmentally to understand their relationship to the world and thus to tackle the complexities of issues related to diversity and equity. The fact that college students are developmentally well suited for this work is important because for many PSTs, diversity instruction is an unfamiliar experience. White students often have limited interaction with those from other racial backgrounds before college (Gay & Howard 2000; Orfield & Kurlaender, 2001), and when they enter diversity courses they inevitably encounter gaps – interactions, scenarios, or activities – that do not align with what they have experienced in the past.

How students handle these gaps reflects what they have learned (Lundqvist, Almqvist, & Östman 2009), as well as their openness to new ideas and willingness to consider the unknown. More importantly for teacher education, the ways in which PSTs approach these gaps will impact not only how they understand diversity instruction, but potentially “diversity” itself. Habituated to particular ways of learning, we extract from and build upon past experiences in the construction of new experiences in new contexts (Lundqvist et al., 2009; Packer 2001). PSTs exposed to a broader range of educational experiences and instructional modes will enter new scenarios with a more diversified repertoire of resources for understanding these encounters (Brown, Reveles, & Kelly, 2005; Wenger 2006). But because many classrooms offer only a narrow range of transmission-oriented instructional experiences (Florio-Ruane, 2001), the likelihood of PSTs negotiating diversity issues with an open perspective will be restricted to situations that are more familiar to them or that somehow parallel their experiences. Researchers recommend, therefore, that teacher education programs design and provide educational opportunities (like reflection) that support PSTs’ expression and analysis of their own beliefs about

students and schooling processes, and that facilitate their understanding of others' beliefs and worldviews (Banks, 1994; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Gurin et al., 2002; Sleeter, 1995).

The Role of Reflection in Understanding Diversity: Categorizing & Framing Difference

Fostering expression, providing opportunities for considering difference, and scaffolding directed reflection have all been highlighted as mechanisms for identifying and building upon the resources of pre-service teachers (Brown, 2004; Chizhik & Chizhik, 2005; Easter, Shultz, Neyhart, & Reck, 1999; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Saffold and Longwell-Grice (2008) refer to this as "unearthing the heterogeneity of 'traditional students'" – collecting and considering their stories from their perspectives and their experiences. Yet generating opportunities for meaningful diversity reflection is a complex endeavor (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Regenspan, 2002). Meaningful reflection must simultaneously scaffold and support students' capacity "to probe assumptions, to seek multiple sources of evidence, to consider different perspectives, and/or to challenge dominant (and, thus, typically taken for granted) viewpoints" (Hyttén & Bettez, 2008, p. 179). In order to avoid the potential pitfalls inherent in asking PSTs to reflect upon complicated, personal, and often unspoken constructs (e.g., dissonance that closes rather than opens thinking), reflection should be constructive and contextualized, both responsive and responsible to the past as lived experience.

According to Milner (2006), this type of reflection can be achieved by asking PSTs to reflect on their own lives concurrently with what he calls *relational reflection* – comparing and contrasting what is known (in this case, one's worldview) with what is not, the unknown or the "other" (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). This will also help keep reflection substantive and meaningful, grounding reflection in practice, concrete situations, particular contexts, and real life experiences (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Designing reflection activities that prompt consideration while buffering student anxieties, or creating reflective exercises that generate dissonance in ways that consciously and constructively consider students' apprehensions going in (Erikson, 1968) will facilitate individual student development and increase instructor awareness (Duckworth, 1996). Sharing PST beliefs via reflection also expands the likelihood of the construction of collective understandings or *intersubjectivity* (Wertsch & Polman, 2001), between teacher and student. Cultivating such a shared discourse widens the possibilities for learning, while narrowing the likelihood of resistance (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2005).

With these aims in mind, this study investigates the resources PSTs bring into diversity courses. Using foreign films as a proxy for the "other" in the construction of relational reflections (Milner, 2006), this study looks at the elements in foreign films that illuminate and/or problematize PSTs' understandings of identity and diversity. Specifically, this study asks, how do PST's conceptualizations of what they see in foreign films reflect their epistemological orientations regarding diversity? And what sort of challenges might these reflections prompt in a field that characterizes some of our PSTs as "learners who bring little or nothing to their learning about diversity" (Lowenstein, 2009, p. 167)? It is anticipated that addressing these questions will influence the ways we think about and teach PSTs, as well as aiding in the

development of diversity instruction that better responds to all of our students' real needs, as opposed to their perceived deficits.

Methods

Building upon diversity instruction tenets – exposure to distinct cultures and critical reflection – this study employs a new instructor-designed strategy, “Film Reflection And Multicultural Education” (FRAME), to examine the cultural assumptions PSTs bring into teacher education programs. Designed by the author to introduce students to international perspectives, FRAME supports the development of relational reflection (Milner, 2006); films produced internationally offer access to distinct communities, as well as the opportunity to consider one's worldview in relation to those represented in global cinema. Structured around reflection (cinematic and personal), FRAME provides both Ethnic Minority *and* White PSTs (Brown, 2004) with a means to approach diversity that is engaging, emotionally resonant, and accessible (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Florio-Ruane, 2001). Most particularly, however, FRAME acts as a mechanism for reflecting upon culture absent travel opportunities or exposure to distinct ethnic enclaves.

Developing FRAME

FRAME was developed for a cultural diversity general education course (that is also a prerequisite for the teacher credentialing program) in a large California university. The goals of the course include bolstering students' capacity to: 1) appreciate their ethical obligation to develop greater understanding, appreciation, and sensitivity toward the cultural heritage, community values and individual aspirations of all people including those with different linguistic experiences, sexual orientation, and/or physical and learning abilities; 2) reflect critically on their own beliefs, biases, and expectations relative to diversity; and 3) demonstrate an understanding of cultural patterns and community values and their impact on individuals and student learning. The course meets these goals through readings, activities, and assignments that support students' exposure to and understanding of those individuals and groups traditionally marginalized from educational opportunity.

Scaffolding FRAME

Students in the course have multiple responsibilities. Besides the requisite written assignments, students must also create outlines for all of the course readings, locate and summarize an international news article each week, attend a cultural event, and participate actively in class (the syllabus is explicit about the hierarchy of participation, the need to refer to readings in oral contributions in class, and the right of all students to be heard). Before the FRAME exercise, student expression is cultivated in a series of interactive classroom discussions in which students learn how to express their ideas, build upon or counter others' ideas, and use the readings to challenge or support particular lines of inquiry. Class discussions are set up to show consistently that student responses are supported and not denigrated – and students are regularly reminded that only by sharing our thoughts can we learn what we do not know.

Prior to participating in FRAME, PSTs must complete a variety of assignments intended to increase their exposure to “others” and their ability to view films critically. Beyond class discussions and small group activities in class, there are three assignments in particular designed to scaffold PSTs’ interrogation of difference. First, they are required to attend a cultural event representing an ethnic group distinct from their own. For example, Latina/o PSTs might attend an event celebrating a Lithuanian holiday, while White PSTs might participate in a Tet Festival. In an explicit effort to make PSTs “feel like square pegs in round holes,” this assignment aims to give PSTs a glimpse of what students from outside the dominant culture here in the United States experience upon entering new classrooms. PSTs regularly describe the benefits the assignment provides (e.g., exposure to unknown aspects of particular cultures), while also identifying the costs (e.g., feeling awkward because they didn’t “look like” anyone else at the event).

Second, in order to cultivate PSTs’ understanding that how we experience life in the United States is influenced by our multifaceted identities, PSTs must interview someone who is different from them in at least two ways (sexual orientation, gender, or ethnicity). Although one might imagine that this task would be relatively easy in the culturally rich and diverse state of California, a majority of students express difficulties finding someone who meets the assignment requirements. This is their first challenge with this assignment. The second is in analyzing their respective experiences (the interviewee and the PST’s) with cultural diversity. Few of the PSTs who enter my university classrooms have a firm grasp on what constitutes analysis, and thus making and developing arguments is supported with explicit assignment direction, in class scaffolding (in which, e.g., students use course readings to make oral arguments about the processes of assimilation and pluralism in the U.S.), and detailed evaluation of their work. These joint efforts make clear that although PSTs can stake a claim on any worldview, they must support (with specific examples) whatever position they take.

Finally, in order to bolster students’ awareness of global issues, students are required to read and summarize an international news article each week. Students are instructed to find an article (at least four paragraphs in length) that was filed in a location outside the U.S., highlight key points, and write a brief summary. This activity is often an introduction not only to details about events outside of the U.S., but to reading the newspaper; few of the students who enter my classes read a daily paper (online or in print). Fewer still enter the course aware of anything but the most headline-grabbing stories unfolding in other countries. This activity exposes students to events as they occur in other parts of the world, temporarily transporting students beyond their local communities.

Getting FRAME into View

FRAME builds upon the three activities described above by asking PSTs to view films from countries with which they have little experience, in languages they do not understand. Moving pictures engage people deeply and intensely, “submerging” them in the action and characters of the film. Indeed, film can provide a means of understanding course concepts that is more accessible, emotional, and realistic than what is presented in textbooks (Bluestone, 2000). Since at least the 1940s, films have been used for sociological study, methods analysis, and race or

ethnic studies (see Valdez & Halley, 1999 for a comprehensive list). The use of films in college classrooms can make course foci more comprehensible, resonant, and meaningful for students (Fleming, Piedmont, & Hiam, 1990; Lovell, 1998), and films can be examined to discover course themes, or course themes can be used to analyze films (Fleming, et al., 1990). The plots and storylines in films can prompt students to go beyond merely identifying course concepts to engaging in critical analysis of a range of perspectives (Summerfield, 1993).

Given the promise films hold for instruction, FRAME was constructed to give PSTs opportunities to question their understandings, to probe how these understandings are structured, and to independently discover connections between academic concepts and their own experiences (Chandler & Adams, 1997) without constraining or pushing them toward any particular response. According to Shi-xu (1995), how we organize experience (e.g., what goes into which category, how things are connected and/or distinguished) comprises a “sociodiscursive” resource, a mediating mechanism that facilitates understanding in new scenarios. This resource is then used for a range of purposes including, for example, establishing affiliation with or opposition to others (Choo, Austin, & Renshaw, 2007). Analyzing what PSTs *see* when watching foreign films can highlight these affiliations and oppositions; the way PSTs frame (Goffman, 1974) difference can provide insight into their cultural assumptions and epistemological orientations regarding diversity, and thus influence how we teach them.

Few of the PSTs involved in the study had seen a foreign film before, let alone traveled out of the country beyond those countries easily accessible by land from the United States (i.e., Canada and Mexico). Thus, for many, FRAME reflected a threshold of opportunity for considering other ways of being. In order to further increase their exposure to difference, PSTs were instructed to select a film in a language they did not understand. Students were given a course meeting to view the film (which they could select and watch at the university library, or rent on their own and watch outside of school) and grading was credit/no-credit (with no emphasis on grammar – an element of writing that takes up a lot of attention in every other assignment) in order to facilitate open reflection and to diminish the “subtitle” anxiety that many people experience the first time they watch a film while also reading subtitles. These components were built into FRAME to serve as motivating mechanisms for PSTs who had never watched a subtitled film before (they needn’t come to campus or class). But based upon student response, these efforts did not completely mitigate anxiety that they were “missing something” by reading subtitles as they watched, and some chose to watch their selected film more than once to better coordinate reading with watching.

In FRAME, films are selected based upon the presence of the following criteria (a) children as the center of the storyline; (b) education, either in formal, informal or nonformal modes; (c) a focus on issues of ethnicity, gender, class, and/or sexual orientation; and (d) availability. PSTs are told to consider film reviews on the internet before choosing a film, and films are made available for viewing at the university library, free of charge. In this study, the films selected for course viewing are listed below (a brief summary of the films is provided in the Appendix):

- 400 Blows (France – director: Francois Truffaut)
- Au Revoir Les Enfants (France – director: Louis Malle)
- Central Station (Brasil – director: Walter Salles)
- Ciao Professore (Italy – director: Lina Wertmuller)
- City of God (Brasil – director: Fernando Meirelles)
- El Norte (Mexico – director: Gregory Nava)
- Ma Vie en Rose (France – director: Alain Berliner)
- Not One Less (China – director: Yimou Zhang)
- Salaam Bombay (India – director: Mira Nair)
- Small Change (France – director: Francois Truffaut)
- Together (China – director: Kaige Chen)
- Turtles Can Fly (Iran-Iraq joint production – director: Bahman Ghobadi)

Beyond viewing the film, the FRAME assignment requires PSTs to reflect upon a general prompt designed to allow them maximum flexibility in determining their understanding of the film: “What can foreign films teach us about education?” Three questions follow, aimed at gauging previous exposure to foreign films (i.e., How many foreign films have you seen previously? List any examples; How did you select this film?; and How did you like this film, as a movie?). Given that the goal of this study was to collect PST perspectives not create them, the general prompt was intentionally broad and open-ended; terms used in the prompt were not defined by the researcher (Freire, 1985). Thus, PST responses reflect their “personal, idiosyncratic definitions of these terms” (Easter, Shultz, Neyhart, & Reck, 1999, p. 214).

Data Sources and Analysis

Film reflections were purposefully sampled to achieve a balance of Ethnic Minority and White PST responses (White PSTs are more prevalent in the data, as they were in the classes) from five classes the researcher taught over a period of one academic year in a large public university in California. The majority of students in the course (95%) are juniors and seniors who intend to enter a teacher credential program in order to become elementary school teachers. Most are child development or liberal studies majors, and few have taken any diversity course before the one in which this study was situated. Based upon their attention to the prompt, the rich and holistic provision of details, and the depth and substance of response (Miles & Huberman, 1994), 133 film reflections ultimately were included in this study. PST reflections that primarily summarized the films, or otherwise neglected to reflect upon the relationship of the film to their understandings of education, were excluded from consideration (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). To protect student confidentiality, identifying student markers (names and email addresses) were excised from the reflections during analysis of the complete sample, and pseudonyms are used in the results below.

Analysis of the reflections was social and relational (not linguistic), and focused on patterns of meaning. Initial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) revealed that student reflections generally focused on the values or practices of the cultures they viewed in the films. Subsequent coding efforts showed that within this general divide students tended to identify similarities or differences between the cultures they viewed and U.S. culture. If a response did not fit easily into a category (e.g., initial coding distinguishing between values and practices), all of the data were reviewed

again, and assignments were modified to assure the code reflected a preponderance of the responses. These two levels of binaries (values and practices; similarities and differences) were then further analyzed in relation to the ways in which divisions were conceptualized and characterized in student's responses (Allard, 2005). These multiple reviews of the data highlighted nuanced distinctions in the ways students supported their reflections, and resulted in a stronger level of support for coding decisions. Once coding was complete, given Lowenstein's attention to biases against White students in diversity education (2009) and the general divide in the literature that distinguishes Ethnic Minority from White students, the reflections were divided into two groups: Ethnic Minority responses (n = 64), consisting of Latina/o, Asians, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and Black students; and White responses (n = 69). Ethnic affiliation was based upon student self-reporting.

Findings

Earlier assignments in the course had revealed that few of the PSTs involved in the study had seen a foreign film before; fewer still had traveled out of the country (beyond Mexico or Canada). These two factors meant that for most of the participants, sociodiscursive resources (Shi-xu, 1995) were culled from their experiences with diversity within the United States; few had any exposure to "worlds" outside the U.S. borders (except as filtered through U.S. representations). This lack of familiarity appears as a key variable in "locating" the participants. With little to no awareness of "unfiltered" global perspectives or out-of-country experiences prior to FRAME, participants self-identified as being culturally and experientially restricted. The FRAME exercise encouraged them to look outwards, quite literally, as "innocents abroad."

Given that the literature tends to focus on students as representatives of particular (and often singular) variables related to ethnicity/race, gender, or social class, these are the primary distinctions identified in the data below. Given also that many believe religious and/or political affiliations influence perspectives on diversity (e.g., liberals support equity issues, conservatives do not) or influence their epistemological orientations, representative reflections below also include the respondent's, religion, age, and political affiliation, as well as specifying the particular film viewed. All demographic information was self-reported by the PSTs, thus PST "identities" are determined by the PSTs themselves.

All We (all) Need is Love – Similarities in Values

One of the largest areas of congruence across both White and Ethnic Minority responses was in a focus on values and feelings. Although the groups varied as to whether they identified values as similar or different from those in the U.S., more students across both groups brought up values than any other variable. Of the many PSTs who said that watching a foreign film made them think everyone is the same (40% total PSTs; 23% of White PSTs; 56% of Ethnic Minority PSTs), most described these similarities as "universal." Susan, a 22 year old, middle class, White, Christian woman (who identifies as a Democrat), explains:

Foreign films remind us that even though they were created miles away in another country, the people in them still experience the same emotion and human wants (film selected: *Together*).

Even though Susan has never been outside of California, she saw things in the Chinese produced film, *Together*, that tapped into her understanding of a “universal” human condition, and her description of this universality mirrors the rest of the responses in this category. PSTs who saw similarities were explicit about things being the “same” everywhere. Furthermore, PSTs who identified similarities in feelings or values in their reflections generally expressed a sympathetic understanding of the culture represented in the films. This may have been because by identifying similarities they could more easily process difference as something recognizable, and thus benign – making connections with what is known to that which is unknown. Below, Josie, another young (21 years old) middle class, White, Christian woman (who identifies as a Republican) provides a representative understanding:

The most important thing a foreign film can teach us is we are similar....This movie, in particular, taught me that children’s needs are universal and that teachers need to be responsive....Watching a film like this shows that education is a useful tool in uniting people, finding acceptance, and overcoming barriers (film selected: *Ma Vie En Rose*).

Josie connects what she sees in *Ma Vie en Rose* to her future career goals, and highlights the role teacher responsiveness plays in assuring educational advance. Yet her attention to the need for teachers to be responsive is undercut by her assurance that needs are “universal.” Beyond recognizing needs, being responsive means acknowledging difference and seeing needs in relation to particular experiences, lives, and understandings (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 2005; Patchen & Cox-Petersen, 2008).

Yet, in general, whether viewing films from the eastern or western hemisphere, responses in this category emphasized commonalities between cultures, overlooking or not “seeing” any difference that could not be resolved by parent or teacher attention. Indeed, in this category of reflections, PSTs said that issues addressed in the films (whether illiteracy, abandonment, poverty, or violence) could be resolved by “love,” “care,” or understanding on the parts of the adults in the films. These PSTs saw no difference that couldn’t be mitigated by love. Melissa, a 23 year old middle class, Latina, Agnostic woman (who identifies as a Democrat) explains:

Teachers can benefit from such films because it [*sic*] helps them realize that all children need love and support, regardless of their differences. Children may act one way on the exterior due to the influence their unique cultures have had on them, they may expect different things from their learning experience and may have overall different views on the world, but all children have the need to be accepted and supported in order to be successful (film selected: *Ma Vie En Rose*).

Above, Melissa oversimplifies complex issues of gender identity and homophobia into a familiar trope with a distinctly Beatles-influenced melody. This tendency has been identified in previous research as “the ‘love-is-enough’ misconception”

(Garmon, 2004). Of course, love is not *all* you need. Gender identity violence, homophobia, poverty, abandonment, illiteracy, and neglect persist in the face of furious love, regularly constraining opportunities in ways many U.S. college students cannot “see.”

The More Things Change – Similarities in Practices

A much smaller subset of PSTs (less than 1%) saw similarities between practices depicted in the films and life in the U.S. Statistically insignificant, these responses warrant consideration -- if only because the six PSTs who identified similarities in practices would be hard to group within any particular demographic. PSTs in this subset differ by ethnicity (White, Japanese, Korean, and Hispanic), religion (Christian, Mormon, Buddhist, and Catholic), and film viewed (*Together*, *City of God*, *Ciao Professore*, and *Small Change*); the only thing all six have in common is their age (they are each between 20 and 22 years old) and gender (they are all women). In light of how the alignment in responses by this diverse set of students contradicts the sharp ethnic demarcations in the literature, it merits consideration.

Unlike all the other PSTs, these six identified commonalities between the practices of the cultures portrayed in the films and those of the U.S. In contrast with the larger subset that saw similarities between values, these PSTs focused on practices that had to do with educational access and schooling opportunities. Even though the elements PSTs identified in this subset do reflect values (funding provided to schools, for example, can reflect the importance society places on education), responses clustered in this subset did not explicitly discuss values. Instead, they focused on what they saw as practical problems.

Emily’s analysis below reflects the general themes that appeared within this category. According to Emily, a middle class, Japanese, Mormon 20 year old woman (who identifies as a Republican):

Foreign films give another perspective on education. I think the general public sometimes forgets that the problems that the United States faces also occur other places as well...I think the most important thing I learned from watching this film was no school system is perfect. Every school has its own problems and obstacles to overcome (film selected: *Small Change*).

At first glance, responses like Emily’s above appear to ground their reflections in “concrete situations” (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Yet, giving too much traction to this distinction would be misleading. Instead, what is most notable about this category is that although PST responses identified similarities in general structural elements between cultures, they avoided specifics. As in Emily’s response above, the closest PSTs in this category came to specifics was in identifying a general resource (e.g., time or money) as important in education. Thus, fundamentally, they did not differ much from those students who identified similarities in values. Appearing to focus on practical conditions while keeping the lens *out of focus* on any actual practice allowed these students to define, or at a minimum to justify their definitions of, other cultures as being the same as the U.S. Staying general may have facilitated finding accord between the culture represented in their select film and the U.S., but it did not push PSTs in either of the above categories to deeper critical analysis.

The Little Rascals in the City of God – Different Values

In an examination of the responses in which differences were noted, fully one-third of all White and Ethnic Minority PSTs (37%) saw differences in values between the U.S. and the cultures represented in their films. Again, as stated earlier, more students focused on values than any other category. But in identifying differences between values, the affiliations noted above reversed. In this category, White students identified more differences in values and Ethnic Minorities, fewer. In their discussions of difference, these PSTs (31% Ethnic Minority and 42% White) identified variables as diverse as education, morals, parental attention, and respect for the law as reflective of the difference in values they perceived in their foreign film.

In contrast with the ways in which PSTs discussed similarities, when differences were identified, distinctions were infrequently articulated as innocuous. In almost every case, "other" cultures were found lacking in comparison with the U.S. Differences tended to mean "not as good as," the same type of "deficit" model Lowenstein noted was being used to categorize White PSTs in diversity courses, and the same kind used historically to categorize Ethnic Minorities. Additionally, in almost one-third of these responses, PSTs decried the lack of parental involvement and with a complete disregard for the realities of many children's experiences in the U.S., argued that such "neglect" would never happen here. Kathy, a 21 year old middle class, White, woman (neither religiously nor politically affiliated) elaborates on this perspective below in a way that was typical of those who saw a difference in values related to parents and child rearing:

In *City of God*, I do not remember seeing many parents. This movie actually reminded me of a movie called *The Little Rascals*. In both, there were very few parents shown....Parents were not involved in the children's lives, which gave them the freedom to do whatever they wanted....Education was even frowned upon....What is important in a country like that is what gang you're going to join or how you're going to take over the drug business. What is important where I live is going to school and having a job and not killing people (film selected: *City of God*).

Kathy's linking of the lives revealed in *City of God* to *The Little Rascals* is particularly trenchant. The madcap, freewheeling childhood agency depicted in *The Little Rascals* is a far cry from the gun-toting, Hobbesian existence led by the children in the *favelas* of Brasil in *City of God*. Across the responses in this subset, moreover, PSTs revealed a decidedly ethnocentric perspective – no matter their individual ethnicity; the identification of a difference in values was regularly and repeatedly understood as a deficit. When PSTs identified a difference in values, it generally reflected poorly upon the other culture, not on the U.S., even though there are many areas in the U.S. in which children also worry about what gang they are going to join, or grapple with whether they should sell drugs to help make ends meet.

There were, however, three examples within this category that deviated from the tendency to see difference as an absolute deficit. These PSTs identified a difference in values, but noted that such observations could reflect their own biases. Tina, a 21year old middle class, Cambodian woman who says she has "no" religion (and identifies as a Democrat) explains this perspective:

We tend to think of education purely in the academic sense – reading, math, history, science. This is the mark of a privileged culture. It is easy to forget that not everyone in the world has the luxury of attending school. Foreign films can help put things in perspective....By watching foreign films, and assuming they are a fairly accurate depiction of the culture(s) it [*sic*] portrays, we can get a sense of what education means in other parts of the world. Some films may remind us that we Americans are a lucky bunch, and should be thankful for the opportunities we have while others may even point out our shortcomings and spur us to do better for ourselves and our children (film selected: *City of God*).

Indeed, even as almost every student in this subset detailed negatives in their comparisons between the films' cultures and the culture of the U.S., it was also in this category that PSTs highlighted the risks such identification could bring. For example, Ana, a 31 year old, middle class, White, Christian woman (who identifies as a Republican) counseled:

We must be cautious that we do not create stereotypes and prejudices based on the limited views presented by a film. This would cause more damage than good in our interaction with people of different backgrounds (film selected: *Salaam Bombay*).

Like other PSTs in the class, Ana's perspective did not appear bound by ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation. Moreover, given research that identifies problems associated with teaching White PSTs in diversity courses (LaDuke, 2009; Saffold & Longwell-Grice, 2008), Ana's reaction to the film isn't what some might expect from a White, Christian, middle class Republican woman. And Ana was not the sole outlier; PSTs on both sides of the "ethnic divide" (approximately 25% from both sets) regularly confounded PST stereotypes (for a comprehensive overview of these, see Lowenstein, 2009).

Different Practices – Trying on Others' Shoes

Although some of the PSTs who identified differences in practices between the cultures they watched in foreign films and the U.S. culture were chastened by what they saw in the films, few of the responses in this category diminished or denigrated the individuals represented in the films they viewed. Instead, in contrast with all of the categories mentioned above, and most particularly those who saw differences in values, the majority who identified differences in practices substantively considered the distinct practical realities that shape lives and force choices. As a group, these PSTs argued that the decisions characters made in the films seemed inevitable given the desperate conditions in which they lived. For example, even as PSTs in other subsets appeared to blame children or adults for violence, poverty, or limited education, White (33%) and Ethnic Minority (< 1%) PSTs within this group found fault in social forces, the government, or elites. Tiffany, a 29 year old middle class, White, Christian woman (who identifies as a Democrat) provides an elaborated response below that is representative of this group:

By introducing your students to foreign films, you are opening their eyes to ways of the world. You know [sic] the fact that all people do not live the

way we do. It is easy to recognize that Americans have an easy life but it really puts it into perspective when you see a film like this.... It was hard to think that poverty could play such a tremendous role in this society. Poverty seemed to be the number one problem causing the society to collapse. I know that some people have a better start in life than other [*sic*] but I did not realize how drastic those starting points can be. Since we do not all have the same starting points in life, I think it is important not to treat people as though they had an equal beginning (film selected: *City of God*).

Tiffany is specific about what prompts the problems presented in the film, and unlike variables identified by those PSTs who saw similarities in practices or values, she does not attribute responsibility to the characters or their culture. Instead, Tiffany identifies poverty as the “number one problem.” She also acknowledges that watching the film gave a substantive form to the abstract ideas she possessed but didn’t really understand. Her willingness to identify systemic issues that result in inequities far exceeds what Lowenstein argues is the dominant narrative of White PSTs (2009)

PSTs whose responses coincided with this category were also the most explicitly conscious of the responsibilities – ethical and practical – for future elementary school teachers. They detailed how important it is for teachers to more comprehensively consider diversity. One of the few men in the classes, Frank, a 22 year old, middle class, Mexican, Christian, man (who identifies as a Republican) explains,

Many teachers go into the teaching profession with little knowledge of different cultures and backgrounds.... Foreign films go much deeper into the problems that other people of different countries might face. Many future teachers read textbooks where they talk about problems that children of other countries might face, yet they really do not understand it....Foreign films are good examples of being able to step into other’s shoes. Knowing what other people go through in their particular environments is helpful when teaching....Teachers can use the information acquired from a foreign film to change their teaching styles, if needed, to better suite [*sic*] the needs of children of different cultures (film selected: *Ciao Professore*).

Frank pointedly identifies the usefulness inherent in the viewing of foreign cinema in diversity classes. He recognizes that many PSTs enter the teaching profession with limited diversity experiences or knowledge, and foreign films can serve as introductions to other worlds, prompting empathy and allowing students to go into subjects more deeply than readings alone.

One other dimension that the group of PSTs who identified differences in practices focused on was language. For many of the PSTs in this group, hearing another language, watching people interact in another language, and having to read subtitles in English pushed them to more pay more attention to the relationships they observed in the films. According to Jessica, a 22 year old middle class, Chinese, woman who says she has “no” religion or political affiliation:

Watching a foreign film – especially one in a language I don’t understand, gets me to pay attention to how everything differs compared to what I

know.... Education in this film was portrayed as a rare and precious tool that few people had access to (film selected: *Central Station*).

Such attention reveals an awareness of one of the very real implications of contact with diversity: real difference requires attention to the ways we understand and live our lives, and to the ways others understand and live their lives. Viewing a foreign film in an unfamiliar language allows PSTs to briefly experience the difficulties English Learners face in trying to learn what they cannot understand because of a lack of familiarity with the language of instruction.

Discussion

Across all of the groups, whether they perceived what they saw as good or bad, there was a preponderance of comparisons in PST reflections. Even though the assignment did not ask PSTs to compare anything (the specific prompt was “What can foreign films teach us about education?”), most of the reflections were based upon what PSTs knew: their experiences in the United States. In discussing the relationship of foreign films to education, PSTs identified either a country’s values or its practices as being the key factor in determining how “we” were the same as or different from the culture represented in their selected film (Turner, 1999). In this way, the majority of PSTs crammed complex issues into simplistic, binary codes, comparing and contrasting “us versus them” (Milner, 2006; Turner, 1999) in ways that were then reified in the data analysis (e.g., “similarities versus differences”). Indeed, what PSTs found appeared to reveal what they were looking for (Fischman, 2001). Although such simplistic bifurcation may have been expected given the introductory nature of the course and the limited exposure most of the PSTs had with foreign films or foreign cultures, it was still initially disappointing. The majority of PSTs were not seeing much beyond the most basic of things: characters in foreign films were either just like us, nothing like us, or in need of a big hug.

The simplicity of the ways PSTs framed issues, however, did force a deeper analysis of PST responses (Allard, 2005). Looking more closely at the data revealed distinctions across the data that both fell along and deviated from expectations, and particularly in relation to PST ethnicity. White and Ethnic Minority PSTs did privilege certain perspectives: White PSTs saw more differences than similarities, and Ethnic Minority PSTs saw more similarities than difference. But a substantial percentage of each group (28% and 25% respectively) identified the opposite: Ethnic Minority PSTs saw differences, and White PSTs saw similarities. This was the most important finding, and beyond bolstering Lowenstein’s contention that White PST stereotypes do not adequately reflect either capacities or variations within that population (2009), this finding holds the most potential to influence the ways in which diversity educators perceive and teach PSTs, White and Ethnic Minority. The list below briefly outlines additional findings:

- A majority of PSTs likened the viewing of a foreign film to the opening of a window onto another culture;
- More PSTs saw differences in the films than saw similarities;
- Whites saw more differences than similarities; while Ethnic Minorities saw more similarities than differences;

- Yet, a substantial percentage of each group deviated from their ethnically affiliated majority positions: 31% Ethnic Minority PSTs saw differences, and 23% White PSTs saw similarities;
- When PSTs from both groups saw similarities in values, they tended to find fault with the other culture for not doing as much to rectify things as the U.S. does (e.g., in relation to their perceptions about access to or support for education).
- When PSTs saw differences in practices, they tended to attribute difficulties to systemic issues (e.g., poverty)
- The “effort” involved in reading subtitles prompted one-fourth of all the PSTs to link their experiences watching a foreign film to English Learners’ experiences in schools in the United States.

While countering conventional stereotypes, however, the fact that at least 25% of each ethnic group deviated from the majority reflects the heterogeneity of resources in each group merits attention. Yes, oppositions between White and Ethnic Minority PSTs were revealed, but the diversity within ethnic groups also shows that bifurcating students or PSTs along ethnic lines does little to advance our understanding of the resources with which students enter teacher education programs. These layers of findings complicate the notion that differences between ethnic groups preclude differences within them, a reality that bears further exploration.

Implications

Analysis of PST data revealed that viewing foreign films provided PSTs with an opportunity to consider difference in a way that, while “foreign,” still made sense to them. In general, PSTs found that viewing a foreign film helped them to better understand the culture of the people portrayed in the film, particularly for PSTs who said they had limited exposure to individuals from different backgrounds (Gay & Howard, 2000). Foreign films, simultaneously accessible and unfamiliar, not only help PSTs “see” diversity, they just as importantly provide a means for teacher educators to explore PSTs’ perceptions of that diversity (Lowenstein, 2009). PST perceptions of difference, conceptual slivers of their deeper understandings of who they are and where they fit into the larger world (i.e., their worldviews), were in evidence in their film analyses. Interesting, too, was the variety of meanings PSTs extracted from the same films. The range of responses to the films suggest that while the selection of films is important to orienting students’ focus on a particular topic (in this case, education), the scaffolding of instruction preceding FRAME is just as important. Instructors must provide relevant course readings, critical analysis development, and open and supportive class discussions about difference in order for FRAME to prove beneficial.

Given the scarce interaction White students have with those from other racial backgrounds before college (Gay & Howard 2000; Orfield & Kurlaender, 2001), teacher education may be one of the few places PSTs encounter cultural diversity, pluralism, and/or multiculturalism. Thus, the ways in which diversity instruction is presented is as important as what is taught (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Reflections that reveal how students understand course topics provide instructors with a means to respond more accurately to student needs and concerns as they approach new

concepts. Using FRAME establishes an opportunity for identifying and recognizing the perspectives of all PSTs, while allowing them to take in and respond to what they see without worrying about how others (beyond the instructor) will perceive their responses. But it will not benefit student or PST development in isolation.

In order to further develop the potential of FRAME, instructors would be wise to assure course readings detail the socio-economic realities of other countries and cultures. Augmenting readings with in-situ ethnographic studies would provide students with a means to compare cinematic representations to more than just their own experiences. Even better, building in a question that asks students to discuss the film relative to a particular reading, as well as to their lives in the U.S., would facilitate the structuring of more balanced perspectives in FRAME.

FRAME is only one step in scaffolding students' understanding of difference, but it is an important one. Providing college students (whether PSTs or not) with an opportunity to consider internationally produced films exposes them to other worldviews and perspectives, however briefly. Collecting and reviewing student responses to these films subsequently gives instructors a much more concrete *picture* of what students think about what they see. Knowing what students see means instructors can better fit the lenses they want students looking through before the course ends. Instructors can use what they discover to build upon students' understanding of difference by expanding simplistic binaries to more accurately reflect the complexities of schooling and educational processes, and blowing out stereotypes by following up film viewing with instruction that exposes students to the contemporary realities of diverse populations, in and outside of their home countries. Neglecting to ask students to share their perspectives, in contrast, results in the propagation of stereotypes and deficits – from the instructor's as well as the student's position.

Once they enter the field, new teachers must rapidly adapt to a rocky terrain of state standards, federal mandates, and increasing workloads – all in the midst of growing changes in student demographics and shrinking budgets. Attending to issues of diversity is a key element in these struggles and is, moreover, central to good teaching (Irvine, 2003; Banks & Banks, 2004). Although limited in scope, FRAME does expose students to the ways in which people from other cultures understand and represent their lives. This is particularly crucial because schooling processes continue to marginalize ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities; students are left out or pushed away from educational opportunity because of the way they look, talk, smell, communicate, live, pray (or don't), and love. Assuring we provide all preservice teachers with open, responsive, and responsible diversity instruction before they enter the workforce is critical to protecting the rights of all students to an equitable education. Recognizing the range of diversity experiences and understandings with which pre-service teachers enter teacher education programs is central to these aims, and FRAME can help us achieve them.

Appendix

400 Blows (France – director: Francois Truffaut)

In this classic of French cinema, Antoine Doinel, a neglected and misunderstood 13-year-old boy, begins to rebel against traditional societal constraints. When he gets into trouble at school, he runs away, hiding out with his friend, René. The two boys steal a typewriter from the office where Antoine's father is employed, but when his attempts to sell the typewriter fail, Antoine tries to smuggle it back into the office. When he is caught in the act by the night watchman, Antoine's parents determine that he should go to a home for juvenile delinquents. Antoine escapes, however, and flees to the seashore, where the film ends with one of the most powerful scenes in all of cinema.

Au Revoir Les Enfants (France – director: Louis Malle)

In yet another classic of French cinema, an adolescent boy, Julien, is evacuated from his home in Paris to a rural Catholic boarding school during the Nazi occupation of France. Earnest in his studies, he suffers the derision of other students as he garners attention for his efforts from his teachers. There is, however, another student who suffers more than he does -- Jean Bonnet, similarly quiet and focused, is harassed and teased for reasons that are not immediately obvious to Julien. Although the two boys do not initially get along, over the course of the film they become good friends. But Jean has a secret that Julien eventually uncovers: Jean is Jewish, one of a number of refugee boys sheltered by the school. When Nazi police arrive at the school, the lives of both boys are altered irrevocably, Jean by the knowledge that he cannot escape and Julien by the grim realization that society can allow such atrocities.

Central Station (Brasil – director: Walter Salles)

This film highlights the role of literacy in establishing and maintaining relationships, and illustrates the power exerted by those who can read over those who cannot. Dora writes letters for the illiterate; every day, she symbolically folds people's futures into slim envelopes which she then either delivers or doesn't. When one of her customers is killed by a bus, Dora begrudgingly takes the woman's orphaned son into her apartment because he has nowhere else to go. Eager to get the boy, Josue, off her hands, Dora hands him over to people who say they find families for orphaned youth. Alarmed when she discovers that they are actually engaged in criminal activities, Dora rescues the boy. She persists in her efforts to find him another place, all the while growing more and more attached to him.

Ciao Professore (Italy – director: Lina Wertmuller)

This film centers on the struggles of a northern Italian teacher who, due to a bureaucratic mix-up, is sent to work in a poor elementary school outside Naples. His new students are unlike those he has worked with in the past; these children have trouble with attendance, delinquency, and literacy. Despite their stubborn (and often amusing) resistance, the teacher's third-grade charges soon welcome his dedication and attention. Both sides benefit; teacher and students alike recognize that learning – about concepts *and* people – can illuminate possibilities, create opportunities, and build understanding.

City of God (Brasil – director: Fernando Meirelles)

A riveting and violent portrayal of life in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, *City of God* pulls out all the stops in its examination of the struggles of adolescents and

children to survive in a world where drug running, guns, and gangs rule. Rocket, the camera-toting protagonist, tracks the twenty-year struggle of those who live in the *favela*. Rocket's efforts to stay out of the gangs parallel the rise to power of the gang leader, Li'l Ze. These two stories demonstrate how good and bad persist in spite of a system that does little to support the former or diminish the latter.

El Norte (Mexico – director: Gregory Nava)

Gritty and realistic, this film follows the efforts of two teenagers to get to the United States from Guatemala. Ever fearful of deportation, the two find themselves trapped within a web of exploitation and hardship. Scathing in its depiction of the oppression and discrimination on both sides of the border, *El Norte* illustrates the multiple struggles of immigrants to travel north and find employment in the United States.

Ma Vie en Rose (France – director: Alain Berliner)

A sweet tale of gender identity struggles, *Ma Vie en Rose* centers on the aspirations of young Ludovic, who intends to be a girl when s/he grows up. When his family has a house-warming party to celebrate their move into a new neighborhood, Ludovic causes a sensation when s/he enters the festivities wearing a dress, jewelry, and make-up. More problems ensue when Ludovic develops a crush on the son of his father's boss. At this point, his parents worry he has gone too far, and determine they must do something to "cure" his attraction. Ludovic, however, has other plans – s/he remains convinced that s/he will be a girl some day.

Not One Less (China – director: Yimou Zhang)

This film focuses on a new teacher who has been promised a bonus if she can keep her class of students intact. Her challenge begins when one student goes missing. In an attempt to find her young charge, the teacher, Wei, travels to the city, where she encounters multiple challenges. *Not One Less* highlights the struggles of a new teacher working in a difficult situation; it demonstrates that teachers, even those working under harsh conditions for inadequate wages, inevitably become attached to their students, and their students' struggles frequently become their own.

Salaam Bombay (India – director: Mira Nair)

Shot on the streets and alleyways of Bombay, this gritty slice-of-life depicts the struggles of impoverished Indian children. Our focus is Krishna, a teenaged ex-circus employee who has been abandoned by his family; the film highlights the desperate measures street children must take to survive in a world which hardly sees, much less cares for them. Like other street children with no options and fewer resources, Krishna gets a job delivering tea, trying to save enough money to get home. His job puts him into contact with the city's pimps and prostitutes who, while they may have roofs over their heads, still live with as much instability as their peers on the street.

Small Change (France – director: Francois Truffaut)

Tender and troubling, this film focuses on the daily experiences of a group of school children in a small town in France. Because of the range of youthful perspectives, we see how students experience school and life, often without much influence or attention from adults. Issues of sexual attraction, trust, neglect, and abuse are illustrated through the, at times, bittersweet interactions of the children.

Together (China – director: Kaige Chen)

Suffused with classical violin music, *Together* highlights the intersection of education, personal commitment, responsibility, and individual capacity. The film centers on the efforts of a young adolescent boy and his father to gain recognition of the boy's musical talent. The father does everything he can to assure his son's music is heard, sacrificing his own well-being, livelihood, and ultimately even his relationship with his son. The film is a touching tale of the lengths a parent will go to nurture their child's talent and support their success.

Turtles Can Fly (Iran-Iraq joint production – director: Bahman Ghobadi)

Lyrical but unblinking, this film delves into the desperate and often unbearable lives of Kurdish children growing up in the shadow of war. All they know is a blasted landscape riddled with land mines, where every step may mean death or dismemberment. Led by Satellite, a charismatic teenager, the children (who are maimed, orphaned, and/or abandoned) struggle to stay alive in the face of continuing violence and neglect.

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The Moral Dimension of Teaching, Affectionate Schools and the Student Drop Out: The Case Study of a Mountainous Community in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study explored the perceptions, perspectives and viewpoints of the students about the reasons for turning the schools into uninteresting and unaffectionate places for the students eventually leading to the increased drop out ratio. This qualitative study was conducted in four secondary schools, which provide education to the children in four different educational systems of Gilgit- Baltistan, Pakistan. A number of six students from each school and altogether twenty four students were selected as the primary participants of this research. Semi structured interviews were the main tools of data collection. The findings highlighted the ethical, moral and behavioral aspect of teacher's personality as the most prominent feature for determining the degree of likeliness and affections of the students with their schools. The improvement in the ethics and moral aspect of the teacher's personality has all the potentials to improve the other aspects of the unattractive school environment.

Keywords: Drop out, moral dimension of teaching, affectionate schools, Pakistan

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Introduction

Education is the process of discovering and nurturing the innate talents of a child in a learning conducive environment. This process of discovering and nurturing occurs when children demonstrate their desire to learn and are virtually involved in rigorous academic and other learning endeavors in the school. In this sense the schools are the premises which ignite a spark of energy and passion in children to learn and succeed in academic and life pursuits in the initial stages of their life. Highlighting the vitality of primary school education, the world community in Dakar Framework of Action 2000 reaffirmed to expand and improve the comprehensive early childhood care and education. This framework further ensured to have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education by 2015 to all children and reiterated that the learning needs of all young people will be met. Correspondingly, emphasizing on the significance of school education, in the one of the overarching priorities of widening access and raising quality, the National Education Policy 2009 of Pakistan endorses that provinces and area governments shall affirm the goal of achieving universal and free primary school education by 2015 and up to grade 10 schooling by 2025.

Contrarily, the statistics of the education department of Gilgit Baltistan Pakistan which is the context of the study indicates a drastic difference in enrolment from primary to middle grades evidencing the declining interest of teenagers and increasing drop out ratio in the region. According to EMIS 2008-09 Gilgit Baltistan Education Department statistics, the enrolment 82071 at primary level slides to 33431 students at middle level in the region. Similar diminishing condition prevails in Karakoram International University Examination Board (KIUEB) 2010 Secondary School Certificate examination, where only 28% of 10107 grade 9 regular students passed the examination and only nine students were able to secure A+ grade. Of these 28% successful students, about 50% students passed in grade C and D. In SSC part two only three students could secure A+ and out of 7995 and 3903 students failed. Similarly, in KIUEB 2011 Secondary School Certificate examination, out of 10640 candidates only 3211 remained successful which makes 30% pass percentage. Only five candidates could secure A+ while 1141 and 1455 passed in C and D grades respectively. It means that a major fraction of successful candidates fall in grade C and D which is below expectations. This data highlights the displeasure of the students for their studies and schools ultimately leading to the mounting drop out ratios in the region.

Beacham (1980) indicates that lack of interest in school is one of the major reasons for student drop out. Perhaps, in this kind of situations, schools turn into unpleasing and uninteresting places for the students who gradually develop disliking and even resentful feelings for their schooling leading to the end result of increasing ratio of student drop out. Indeed, many would further argue (Barr and Knowles, 1986; Brophy, 2004) that school experiences are the important influence in a student decision to leave the school. The unexciting and passive classrooms and a boring school environment contribute to the student demotivation and displeasure for their studies and the schools eventually facilitate the students to discontinue their education. Highlighting this vitality of the school environment Brophy, (2004) argue that students will not respond positively to the motivational attempts by the school if there is a fearful and resentful feelings prevailed in the school environment.

For the cultivation of an attracting and student friendly environment Harmer (1991) suggests that the teachers have to be aware of what the learners are doing and how they are feeling. It means being able to move around the class and getting the level of proximity right. It means making eye contact with student, listening to what they have said and responding appropriately. Hence, the behavior of the teachers has to play a significant role to make the schools attractive places for the students and build an affectionate relationship between students and schools.

A plethora of research studies have placed a high premium on the teacher's unfriendly and disciplinary behavior as one of the major causes of student's displeasure toward learning and school. Christophel, (1990) noted that, "Using threats only stimulates students to become frightened and resentful of the threats and the person using them. The long-term outcome is student avoidance of the teacher and the subject matter". (p. 324). Perhaps, teachers may be able to achieve the immediate objectives in terms of higher scores in tests or timely accomplishment of homework tasks by creating a sense of fear in the child but in the long term it leads to the creation of alienation from studies and the school. Therefore, in order to furnish an attractive and affectionate environment for the children Dornyei, (1994) signified the vital role of the teachers by maintaining that, "the teachers who love their subject matter, show their dedication and their passion, they would rather be doing are the most influential ones" (p.32).

Influencing from the Maslow's work, Woolfolk, (2008) has identified the survival, love, power, fun and freedom as the basic needs of the students and argued to the fulfillment and satisfaction of these basic needs will become contributors for keeping students interested and happy. In other words they need to be noisy and excited rather than always avoiding or suppressing these needs. Correspondingly, Child, (2004) argues that when students are provided the opportunity for interesting learning activities it will enable them to engage with the learning have some fun and develop a sense of belonging into a cohesive group. Indeed, if the basic needs and expectations of the children are fulfilled at the school, they will feel the school as an engaging, interesting and affectionate place and eventually evince an enhanced belongingness with the school. However, it is vital to explore the types, kinds and the nature of the basic needs to be fulfilled to cultivate an engaging, affectionate and interesting school environment. Perhaps, as the direct and fundamental partakers, the students themselves are in a better position to perceive and reflect on the kind, types and nature of their basic needs if fulfilled will become instrumental for the cultivation of an engaging, affectionate and interesting school environment.

Hence, it is within the milieu of this academic thought that, this pioneering study in the context of the Gilgit Baltistan Pakistan intended to explore the perceptions and views of the students as the ultimate partakers in the prevailing educational conditions in the region. Deeming the student as the fundamental stakeholder of the school community, this study strives to explore the reasons for turning the schools into uninteresting and unaffectionate places for the students eventually leading to the increased drop out ratio. Therefore, the study entered the exploration with the main question of why the children feel the schools unattractive and unpleasing places leading to the cultivation of an unaffectionate and imposing relationship between the students and their schools in the particular context of Gilgit Baltistan Pakistan.

Literature Review

The contemporary literature highlights variety of perspectives relating to the students' motivation towards school and learning. A number of viewpoints have been perceived which, directly or indirectly influence on students' level of motivation or demotivation towards their schools and studies. However, there is a growing propensity of consensus among many researchers to consider the school environment as the vital feature for attracting the students towards their schools and studies. In elaborating the school environment Dornyei, (2001) argued that the classroom environment is mainly of two categories. The physical environment is the charts, wall papers, displays, setting arrangement and all physical settings whereas, the psychological environment is all about the web of the relationships of the students with the teachers and others in the school. This psychological environment focuses on encouragements, praising and sense of feeling an important part of the school life. Both kind of the environment play a pivotal part in establishing the kind and nature of overall relationships of the student with the school. More closely to the context of the study, Rehman, Jumani & Basit (2010) signify the need to create a learning environment that promotes students' motivation. To create such a motivating and learning environment, the teachers play vital role as students give higher priorities towards teachers' instructions. They further argued that if teachers want students to become motivated to learn, they have to create an environment where students find learning to be exciting and rewarding. One prominent feature of this type of exciting and rewarding school environment is mentioned by Good and Brophy (1994) who state that "students should feel comfortable taking intellectual risks because they know that they will not feel embarrassed or criticized if they make mistakes" (p.121). These studies were further supported by Renchler (1992) arguing that if school leaders expect students to become motivated to learn, they must first sustain their own motivation to create a schools environment where students discover that learning is an exciting and rewarding activity. In order to make the environment rewarding Sweet, (1986) highlighted the importance of the co-curricular activities and reported that extracurricular activity participants had achieved higher grade points as compared to the students had no participation.

Gorham & Christophel, (1992) argue that negative teacher behaviors are perceived as more central to students' demotivation than positive behaviors are perceived as central to their motivation. Regarding the negative behavior, Spaulding (1992) noted that a teacher who believes that the student is not competent enough to succeed is likely to communicate to the student his belief that the student is incapable of completing the assignment. So this teacher behaves in a different way which is not normally positive and student friendly. Reeve, et.al (2004) after studying the motivation and emotion of the students, came to a conclusion that the more teachers used autonomy-supportive instructional behaviors, the more engagement their students showed. Even sense of humor by teachers is an important factor, yet often ignored in theoretical writings on motivation (Dornyei, 1994). In the same way Carpenter (2006) suggests that faculty teaching large classes should attempt to include constructive, active teaching methods in their courses whenever possible. The reason is that most students prefer to be active in their learning process and expect to feel that the teacher pays personal attention to them (Liuoliene and Metiuniene, 2006).

When they are active in their learning processes they will be more motivated and consequently school will become an attractive place for the students.

Certain other studies highlighted that the motivating and de-motivating features depend upon the academic achievements of the students. Deci & Vansteenkiste (2003) maintain that trying to win competitions and competitively contingent rewards is becoming more and more prevalent in modern culture, yet it appears that a focus on winning may indeed be counter-productive at least with respect to intrinsic motivation for the target activities. They suggest that if, instead of emphasizing winning above all else, participants in activities and observers of the activities focused more on good performance than on winning, the results for the participants' motivation is likely to be far more positive. To create such performance-based approach, certain traits such as cooperation, collectivity, and interdependence are important in motivating students for academic achievement. Normally the schools mainly rely on the achievement of the students only in terms of grades. The students are ranked as per their achieved grades while the other important aspects are ignored. Such approach seems a demotivating factor among other learners who remain underachievers in grades though they possess strong capacities in other intelligences. To reduce such practice and to motivate the learners, Zimmerman (1990) recommends that the instructions that focus on only one or two processes are unlikely to promote long-term effects. Instead attention must be directed towards developing all three dimensions of self-regulated learning in students: metacognitive, motivational and behavioral.

The literature highlights variety of perspectives, features and factors that contribute to the cultivation of an engaging, affectionate and attracting relationship between the school and the student. However, as the pioneering study in this particular context of Gilgit Baltistan Pakistan has the potential to capture the uniqueness of the contextual factors. Additionally, this study has intended to explore the perceptions, perspectives and viewpoints of the students considering them as the fundamental stakeholders in the cultivation of the types, kinds and nature of relationships with their schools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study intended to explore the perceptions, perspectives and viewpoints of the students about the reasons for turning the schools into uninteresting and unaffectionate places for the students eventually leading to the increased drop out ratio in Gilgit- Baltistan, Pakistan. Therefore, the qualitative method was adopted by this research to explore the reasons for the growing unaffectionate relationship of the students with their school and studies, and schools gradually turning to uninteresting places for the students. Thus, the study focused on gathering descriptive data from the natural context and meaning making through participant perspectives of the participating students (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Yates, 2004). Qualitative approach through intensive semi structured interviews endow with the opportunity to cultivate a long term interaction with the research participant students and their respective school contexts to acquire rich and in-depth data about the focus of the research.

Research Context and Participants

Gilgit Baltistan, of Pakistan is the remote region which is situated in the middle of the world's mightiest mountain ranges of Karakoram, Himalaya and Hindukush, consequently making life difficult and remote for the local inhabitants. The population resides in the scattered villages alongside the various glacier waters and pastures lands and makes their living from subsistent farming (Baig and Shafa, 2011). This study was conducted in four secondary schools, which provide education to the children in four different educational systems of Gilgit Baltistan Pakistan. Keeping in view the system wise diversity, one school from government system, one private school, one Non- governmental welfare organization school and one premier school was selected as the study participants. From each school two students from grade 8, two from grade 9 and two from grade 10 were taken as the primary research participant of this study. Hence, six students from each school and altogether twenty four students were selected to participate in the research. In order to gain rich and in-depth data, two teachers from each school who had an experience of working at the same school for at least three years, were selected as secondary participants.

Following is the brief profile of the research participants and the schools.

The School 1

The school 1 is a traditional government boy's school following the principle of "free education for all". Under this principle the school is bound to provide admission to every child irrespective of his social, communal, regional and economic background. As a traditional government school it is not reputed for quality education ultimately, it is not the first priority of all the students and parents. However, it provides free education charging no fees from its students. Majority of the students including our participants come from economically low income families. These low income background children come from almost every social, communal, regional and dialectal affiliation thus constituting diversity in the school environment.

The school 2

The school two is a community based private school aimed at providing standard education to the local youth. This is a boys school owned and operated by the local community through an annually elected board of the governor. This school charges a reasonable fee from its students and follows the procedure of admission test to ensure the quality of education in their school. Majority of the students including our research participants come from middle class economic backgrounds that have the ability and willingness to pay fee for the quality education of their children. These middle class income background children come from almost every social, communal, regional and dialectal affiliation thus constituting diversity in the school environment.

The school 3

The school 3 is a boy's school and it is the part of a centralized educational system aimed at providing standard education to its students. The major policies, rules regulations, syllabus and examination are provided and controlled by the system. This system is a nongovernmental organization owned and operating more than 80 schools in the region. This school charges fee from its students and follows the admission test to ensure the quality education. Majority of the students including our participants come from middle class economic backgrounds that have the ability and willingness to pay fee for the quality education of their children. These middle class income background children also come from almost every social, communal, regional and dialectal affiliation thus constituting diversity in the school environment.

The school 4

The school 4 is one of the premier schools reputed for its high quality education and provision of good quality educational facilities for the students in the region. The school has a modern purposefully built building, good quality furniture, computer center, library and playground. This school is owned and operated by a nongovernmental organization. This school is for only boys, charges the students a comparatively high rate of fee and follows a strict admission test and interviews for the induction of the new students. Under these circumstances, majority of the students including our participants come from economically high middle class income families. (Remission system) These high middle class income background children come from almost every social, communal, regional and dialectal affiliation thus constituting diversity in the school environment.

Data Generation

This study employed semi-structured interviews as the main tools of data collection. In order to ensure that the interviews comprehensively collected the perspectives of the participant students, this study employed two rounds of specifically designed sets of semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted around one hour and the interval between each round was between seven to ten days. Similarly, a two round semi structured interview was conducted with each of the eight secondary participant teachers of this study. The audio taped data was personally transcribed by the researchers.

Research Methodology

The process of organizing, general sense making, coding, drawing themes, and, finally, interpreting and making meaning out of the collected data (Cresswell, 2003) was followed in this research. The details about the nature, purpose, time and methods involved in the study were provided to the participants before the data collection and the participation of these participants were entirely on voluntary bases. In addition to that the participants enjoyed the right to see the interview transcripts for

any clarification or adjustments to the views they expressed in the interview. For confidentiality, pseudonyms for each research participant, and their respective school related data, is used.

Data Analysis and Discussion

As a qualitative study the data analysis employed the procedure of organization, analyzing, coding and meaning making of the data. This pattern of analysis is influenced by Mariem (1998) in which through reading and rereading of the data the sub themes are extracted following the color coding. The below chart demonstrates the respondents, the sub themes highlighted, the frequency of the responses and the broader themes were grouped together.

The Respondents	Frequency responses	The sub themes highlighted	Broader Themes
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 3	4	Teachers punish us for late coming	Ethics and Morality of the Teachers
Student, A of class 10 th of school, 2	3	Clean the school as punishment	
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 2	1	Clean the school as punishment	
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 1	2	Punish for homework	
Student, B of class 8 th of school, 2	3	Punishment for small mistake	
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 3	1	Physical punishment for late coming	
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 3	4	Discourage the weak students	
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 4	3	They have some favorite students	
Student, B of class 9 th of school, 3	3	They mentally torture us	
Student, A of class 10 th of school, 3	2	Teacher behavior is bad	
Student, A of class 10 th of school, 4	3	Teachers beat the students	
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 2	1	Teachers behavior is poor	
Student, A of class 10 th of school, 1	1	Students love good teacher behavior	
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 1	2	Students love good teacher behavior	
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 4	1	Teachers should not beat us	
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 2	3	Teachers should be caring	
Teacher B of school, 3	1	Some teachers give punishment	

The Respondents	Frequency responses	The sub themes highlighted	Broader Themes
Student, A of class 8 th of school, 3	2	Boring Teaching methods lead to students resentment	Teaching strategies and practices
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 4	3	Poor teaching leads to students lack of interest	
Student, B of class 9 th of school, 3	1	Lack of conceptual understanding due to poor teaching	
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 3	2	Imposed teaching disliked by the students	
Student, B of class 8 th of school, 3	3	Boring teaching methods reduce the student interest	
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 1	1	Students should be free to learn in their preferred style	
Student, A of class 8 th of school, 3	4	The daily syllabus is boring	
Student, A of class 9 th of school, 3	1	Always focused on learning no sports and competitions	
Teacher B of school, 1	1	The imposed teaching reduces the student interest	
Teacher B of school, 3	2	Teacher's content is an issue	

The Respondents	Frequency responses	The sub themes highlighted	Broader Themes
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 1	1	All the time we are busy in homework. No time to play	Heavy Homework
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 4	3	The heavy home work eat up all my time at home	
Student, B of class 8 th of school, 2	1	We come home late so it is very difficult to complete the huge homework	
Student, A of class 10 th of school, 1	1	The homework should be short and creative no laboring	
Teacher B of school, 3	2	Many teachers give too much homework	

The Respondents	Frequency responses	The sub themes highlighted	Broader Themes
Student, B of class 9 th of school, 2	4	No games for us so we become frustrated. No plays and fun	Co-Curricular activities
Student, B of class 8 th of school, 1	1	School is boring because	

		there is no games
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 3	1	No games no library no music, it is so dry in the school
Student, B of class 9 th of school, 1	1	Everyone has different interest there should be something for everyone.
Teacher A of school, 3	2	In many schools there is no co-curricular activity which makes it a boring place for the students
Teacher A of school 4	1	Students need some extra activities which keeps them connected by their schools

The Respondents	Frequency responses	The sub themes highlighted	Broader Themes
Student, A of class 10 th of school, 1	2	The strict rules and regulations keeps us under continuous pressure	School policies and rules
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 3	3	We dislike the many restrictions in the name of discipline	
Student, A of class 8 th of school, 1	1	The strict rules are frustrating	

The Respondents	Frequency responses	The sub themes highlighted	Broader Themes
Student, B of class 9 th of school, 1	1	New comers are being teased by the other students which are frustrating.	The school environment
Student, B of class 10 th of school, 3	1	I feel loneliness in the school, I have no friend	
Student, B of class 8 th of school, 3	3	The noisy and overcrowded class rooms make me headache	
Teacher B of school, 1	1	There is a lot of pressure on students such as the examinations, deadlines of assignments. It makes the environment tense	
Teacher A of school, 4	2	There should be drama, dance class, music and sports to make the environment attractive for	

The Ethics, Morality and Teacher Behavior

All of the participants from the four schools placed a high premium on the ethical dimension and desirability of the teacher's behavior as an influencing element for student's likeliness towards the school. The foremost reason for disliking the school was chiefly attributed to the harsh behavior and intolerance of some of the teachers in the school milieu. In this connection, the student A from Grade 9 of School 3 stated that, "due to long distance when we come to school a bit late, teachers punish us. So I do not feel happy to be at the school". Likewise, the student A from Grade 10 of school 2 pointed towards another disappointing feature of even asking the children to clean the school environment as punishment. In using the words of the student; "sometimes if we are late for school, we prefer to go back home from the school gate because teachers make us clean the school as punishment". Same remarks were given by the student A from Grade 9 of School 2 saying "when we come to school late with small children, they make us clean the school".

The students frequently, pointed towards the usage of punishment given by the teachers for improving the regularity in home work and enhanced student achievements in tests. In this regard student B form Grade 10 of School 1, maintained that "when students do not do their homework, teachers punish them. In such cases we feel bored and lose confidence". Similarly, the student A from Grade 8 of School 4 maintained that, "If there is any test and punishment, students do not want to go to school". Correspondingly, the student B from Grade 8 of School 2 commented that, "when there is a test, we feel fear to come to school. On tests when we make a small mistake, our teachers punish us".

Some of the participants pointed towards the injustices on the part of the teachers which exerts an adverse effect on the motivation level of the students towards their studies and their schools. In this regard the student A from Grade 9 of School 3 claimed that, "there is injustice in our school. When teachers are late, they are not punished while students are punished for the same mistake. In reaction, students sometimes are absent from school". Similarly, the student B from Grade 10 of School 3 was of the opinion that, "the teachers discourage weak students and ignore them. They do not develop their confidence". In the same way, the student A from Grade 9 of School 4 commented that, "most of the teachers have some favorite students. They do not even talk with other students. Therefore, different questions arise in our mind and cannot concentrate on studies".

The participant students considered the ethical personality and behavior of the teachers as the most prominent feature for cultivating affections and luv's of the students with their school. The student B from Grade 9 of School 3 maintained that, "when a teacher tortures a student mentally, the student does not like the school. When a teacher uses unspeakable words in the class, students are disturbed and dislike their school". Additionally, the student A from Grade 10 of School 3 commented that, "if the behavior of the teacher is not good and he/she does not behave students in a good manner, students hate the school and learning". Similarly, student A from Grade 10 of School 4, is of the opinion that, "sometimes teachers beat

students for poor performance in tests and not doing homework. In such situations children hate going school". The student B from Grade 10 of School 2 expressed identical views saying, "When teachers' behavior is not good and always intimidate students, they dislike their school".

The participant students suggested for many kind of teacher behaviors which will enhance the student motivation, connections and affections to their schools. In this regard, the student A from Grade 10 of School 1 maintained that, "if teachers teach the students in a friendly way and make the environment student friendly, students will love the school". Likewise, the student A from Grade 9 of School 1 commented that, "if teachers avoid punishment and adopt soft and candid behavior, everyone will love the school and learning". Correspondingly, student B from Grade 10 of School 4 suggested that, "when students fail in tests, teachers should not beat them. Instead of that they should find the reasons for the failure". The student A from Grade 9 of School 2 recommended that, "teachers should pay attention to us. When we ask any thing, they should not scold us".

Even some of the research participant teachers openly admitted the teacher's behavior as one of the decisive feature for creating affectionate relationship between school and the students. In this connection the Teacher B of School 3 maintained that, "in my opinion, most of the students are tortured by teachers in the school. That is why they hate or dislike school and learning". Similarly, teacher B of School 2, commented that teachers' harsh behavior is normally the end result of student resentment from the school therefore it should be avoided by the teachers"

Teaching Strategies and Practices

The traditional way of teaching, predominantly emphasizing on lecture method and expecting the students to achieve high marks in tests and examinations have been considered as one of the prominent reason for demotivating students towards their schools. The participant students from three schools out of the four schools pointed the tiresome and lecture focused teaching methodologies as the reasons for student's resentment for their schooling. In this connection, the student A from Grade 8 of School 3 maintained that, "boring teaching method of teacher make student bored and students hate the learning. Teacher should do new activities". Likewise, the student B from Grade 10 of School 4 commented that, "poor teaching method makes students annoyed of the school". In the same way, the student B from Grade 9 of School 3 is of the opinion that, "when a student cannot understand anything in classroom or they cannot give answers to the teacher, they feel shy and lose interest for learning and school".

The participants showed their resentment for the teaching strategies that are imposed on them which are of little interest to them. In this connection, the student A from Grade 10 of School 3 commented that, "Students do not like teaching method which is imposed. They want new method, which involves students". Likewise, the student B from Grade 8 of School 3 was of the opinion that, "due to boring teaching method by some teachers children do not like the school".

The students suggested variety of interesting teaching strategies which they expect from their teachers to make the classrooms lively and attractive places. In this regard, the student A from Grade 9 of School 1 maintained that, “If different learning styles are applied in school, learning becomes enjoyable and students like to go to school regularly”. Similarly, the student A from Grade 8 of School 3 commented that, “daily reading of syllabus only is also a cause of student hatred to learning and school”. Also, the student A from Grade 9 of School 3 said, “Our school is always focused on studies and lack of other competitions. As a result students become bored”.

Some of the participating teachers also mentioned poor teaching strategies as one of the prime inducing factors for the demotivation and unaffectionate relationship of the students with their schools. In this regard, the Teacher B of School 1 maintained that, “whatever is imposed on them is taught conventionally which lack fun, whereas, most children want to learn through fun and game”. Likewise, the Teacher B of School 1 was of the opinion that, “teaching and learning processes may take place in a traditional way and a number of things are imposed on them”. The Teacher B of School 3 pointed to the content expertise of teachers saying, “Teachers are not updated with their subject content. That is why students do not like school”.

School Policies and Rules

The participant students from two schools out of the four highlighted the strict rules and regulations of the schools as one of the prime factor for prompting students demotivation and lack of affections with their schools. In this connection, student A from Grade 10 of School 1 showed his irritation in the following words, “there are so strict rules and regulations; sometimes it looks like a prison. If a student raises voice, is threatened to expel from the school. To attract students toward school, there should be a balance of curricular and co-curricular activities”. Similarly, the student B from Grade 10 of School 3 commented that, “there are restrictions on the name of discipline’. In the same way, the student A from Grade 8 of School 1 maintained that, “students do not accept strict rules and in reaction they make a noise in school and prefer to be away from school”.

Heavy Home work

The participant students from three schools out of the four nominated heavy homework load and its boring quality as one of the prime feature for enhancing student’s lack of affection and connections with their schools. Commenting on the heavy homework load, the student B from Grade 10 of School 1 maintained that, “All the time we are busy with homework which is given at school and at coaching center. There is no time for learning and playing”. Likewise, the student B from Grade 10 of School 3 stated that, “Some students dislike school and feel burden because of a lot of homework and tests in schools”. In the same ways, the student B from Grade 8 of School 2 showed his problems in the following ways, “After school, we arrive home late and it is difficult to do heavy homework every day. When we do not do our homework, teachers punish us by pulling our hair”. The student A from Grade 10 of School 1 commented on the quality of the homework. She maintained that, “Home work should be creative which excites student interest and curiosity so that they enjoy the work”.

Even the teacher B from School 3 also expressed identical views about the issue of the homework. She maintained, “Sometimes teachers give a lot of homework. Due to shortage of time they are unable to complete their homework”.

Co-curricular Activities

The participant students from three schools mentioned the lack of co-curricular activities as one of the demotivating factors for the students to cultivate an affectionate relationship with their schools. In this regard, the student B from Grade 9 of School 2 stated that, “there is no game period in the school so only reading makes students frustrated. Our school has no computer period, no color period or sports week”. Likewise, the student B from Grade 8 of School 1 commented that, “students find school a boring place when there is lack of co-curricular activities. They also expect co-curricular activities to fresh their minds”. In the same ways, the student B from Grade 10 of School 3 was of the opinion that, “there are not sports activities like tennis, cricket and football. There is no library, computer, and music or sports period in the school”. The student B from Grade 9 of School 1 expressed her views by saying that, “Different students have different interests like singing; sports etc. So school must provide such opportunities to attract students’ interest toward school and learning”. The Teacher A of School 3 also agreed with the student’s point of view and commented that, “in many schools there are no co-curricular activities for children so there is no charm for them”. Correspondingly, the Teacher A of School 4 stated that,

Actually, in our society we take studies as do or die sort of thing. Students are expected to be with books all the time, reading or writing. Art, music and entertainment are not given space in daily life. If we involve our students in such healthy activities, the result would be opposite to the given question.

The School Environment

The participant students from two schools highlighted the vitality of the school environment for cultivating an affectionate relationship of the students with their schools. In this regard, the student B from Grade 9 of School 1 maintained,

If a student has recently joined the school, he has no or very few friends. He feels alone in the school. Some students who are in majority tease him only for regional difference. This kind of environment further alienates such students who come from far flung villages.

Similarly, the student B from Grade 10 of School 3 commented that, “some students’ especially new comers do not have friends in the school. They feel shy and do not participate in classroom activities. So they do not want to come to school”. Correspondingly, the student B from Grade 8 of School 3 commented that, “there are overcrowded and noisy classrooms in our school, which cause headache”.

Also, the teachers emphasized the importance of friendly environment for student’s connectivity with their schools. In this regard, the Teacher B of School 1 stated that, “schools may not be attractive places for students. Strict schedules, courses, examination, uniform all are imposed on them by adults as teachers, parents

and education authorities”. Similarly, the Teacher A of School 4, maintained that, “according to my view point, school environment should be made attractive by introducing drama, painting, dance, music in our school syllabus. Similarly sports competitions, hiking may change the student attitude toward school and learning”. Also, both Teacher A and teacher B of School 2 endorsed the importance of cultivating an appealing school environment for student comfort.

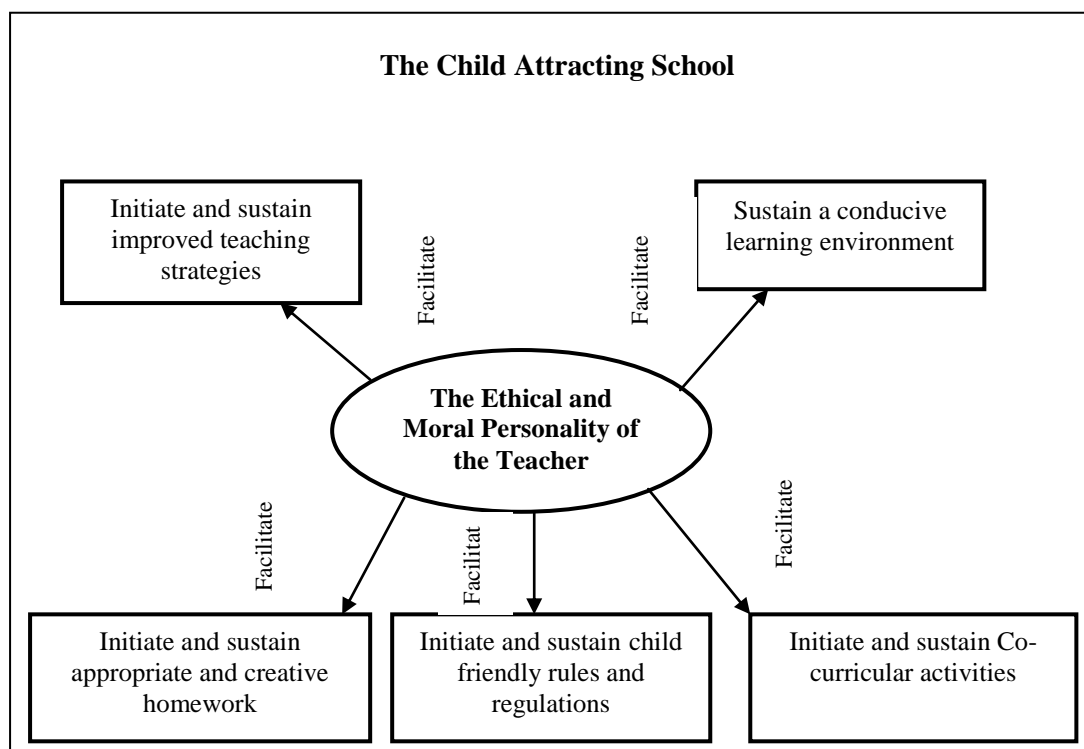
Discussions

The teacher’s ethics, morality and behavior emerged as the most prominent influencing feature in determining the nature of relationship between the students and their schools. All of the participant students considered positive teacher’s ethics, morality and behavior as the prime instrumental feature for the cultivation of an affectionate and positive relationship between the students and their schools. In this regard Hansen, (2001) considers teaching itself as a moral art and activity and maintained that at the extreme, teaching that has negative effects on students may be considered immoral. Arguably, teaching has to employ a positive effect on the student in order to be a moral activity and this positive effect will help classroom and the school as a pleasant and affectionate location for the students.

Sherman, (2004) maintained that moral teaching practice requires teachers to enter a student’s personal learning space and capture the qualities and recognize the individuality of that space. Knowing the strengths, interests, personal experiences, and cultural background of a student enables the teacher to more accurately predict the possibilities for the future achievements of the child. A teacher endeavoring to enter the personal learning space of a child, has to design and strategize the kind of teaching practices which are attractive, friendly and fabricated with the student motivating activities. Perhaps, the moral teaching has to reflect in the teaching strategies and practices which help to generate an affectionate relationship between a student and the school and in turn the schools become the most favored, adored and attractive places for the students. The moral dimension of teaching is the art of engaged listening and passionate observation by teachers. Teachers have to be fair, right, just, and virtuous. They rigorously reflect on the ability of the students to understand a concept, monitor the emotional states and the frame of minds (Noddings, 1984; Manen, 2002). Arguably, a moral teacher embraces the appropriateness of the amount of homework, embedding attractive co-curricular activities and the assurance of a friendly and conducive learning environment in the school.

The students highlighted the ethical, moral and behavioral aspect of teacher’s personality as the most prominent feature for determining the degree of likeliness and affections of the students with their schools.

Figure 1



Indeed, the improvement in the ethics and moral aspect of the teacher's personality has all the potentials to improve the other aspects of the unattractive school overall environment, lack of co-curricular activities, loaded homework, strict school policies and boring teaching methods and strategies noted by the participants of this study. Therefore, the data in the light of the discussion, leads us to propose the model which places the ethical, moral and behavioral personality of the teacher in the core which facilitate all other aspects that influence the determination of the kind and degree of affectionate and attractive relationship of the students with their schools. Canfield and Hansen, (1993) quoted a sociology class follow-up study on the boys in Baltimore where one hundred-eighty of the participants were contacted and one hundred seventy-six of the boys had become successful doctors, lawyers or businessmen. When asked what happened to turn their lives around, they answered, "There was this teacher." The teacher was still in Baltimore, so the researchers contacted her. They asked what her secret was for motivating students. She replied, "It's really very simple. I loved those boys." This is an example of the power of ethics and morality of the teacher which becomes instrumental in making a difference in the life of hundreds of students who at all times acknowledge the teacher for their achievements.

Likewise, in the context of this study, the policymakers and teacher educational institutions may focus on the development of the ethics, morality and teacher behavior, and expect to experience an appreciable improvement in all other aspects of the school life. The firm belief and commitment of the teachers to the moral dimension of teaching will eventually help to improve other aspects of the school life such as the improvement in teaching strategies, conducive learning environment, creative and appropriate homework, student friendly rules and

regulations and attractive co-curricular activities in the school. Hence, the simultaneous improvement in all aspects will help to develop the schools into the stimulating, attractive and interesting places for the students. Such kind of attractive and interesting schools may become instrumental for cultivating an engaging and affectionate relationship between student and the school leading to the reduction of drop out ratio.

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Communication Disorders and the inclusion of newcomer African refugees in rural primary schools of British Columbia, Canada

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Abstract

In Canadian public primary schools, newcomer West African refugees like other ethnic immigrant students are a visible minority group, often referred as Linguistic and Culturally Different (LCD) students. In the province of British Columbia, newcomer immigrant students are subjected to a battery of tests, as soon as they enroll in the primary public school system. These tests are the provincial Standardized Assessment Tests (SAT) and classroom Teacher Assessment of Learning (TAL) that aim at obtaining data for diagnostic purposes of students' learning and teaching purposes. Specific to LCD refugee and immigrant students, they are also assessed on English Language Communication Proficiency (oral and written), Social Skills amongst others, regardless of the degree of proficiency in English language as members of the Anglo-phone Commonwealth countries whose curriculum and medium of instruction is British related. More often, the African immigrants and refugee students of the Anglo-phone African countries are most times diagnosed with English Language Communication Disorders (ELCDs), which has been questioned by some Canadian researchers of Learning Disabilities (LDs) and Multicultural Education (ME), especially with regards to the cultural compatibility of the assessment process/diagnostic tools, and criteria used to assess these LCD refugee and immigrant students. The article discusses the above discourse, with the support of findings of a qualitative ethnographic research findings and related literature.

Keywords: Communication Disorders; Primary Education, Learning Disabilities; Multicultural Education, Refugees, Canada

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Introduction

Canada's current international refugee policy and practices are based on the 1951 United Nations' Refugee Convention (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2004; Dirks 1977). Many refugees across the world are provided political asylum in Canada, with many coming from the West African war torn countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia (Hoffman, 2006). In recent years, the education of these newcomer refugees has ignited educational policy debates which have encouraged policy modifications on the current inclusive educational paradigm on curriculum, and classroom management adaptations. The discourse has also included criticisms and calls for the refinement of the systems of accommodation that are meant to address the socio-cultural learning needs of new immigrants (Winton, 1989; Wolfgang, 1975). Despite the implementation of policy modifications, and in some cases innovations, various Canadian research reports and other empirical texts have contributed to ongoing criticisms concerning the teaching-learning implementation practices that address, meet, and accommodate the learning needs of ethnic minority immigrant and refugee students. The students are still also classified as Linguistic and Culturally Different (LCD) students (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1997; 2004; 2006).

Across northern British Columbia, new West African refugee students are visible minorities within the minority population of the public school system. As new students, their classroom teachers subject them to a battery of academic tests to assess their learning readiness, English language proficiency in reading, writing, and general communication. In addition, there are tests that are conducted which are related to social communication, skills and behavior. As a result of the tests, the students are diagnosed with Communication Disorders (Ashforth, 1975; McIntosh, 2000; Samuda, 1995). The teacher based assessments and diagnosis of newcomer refugee students and most ethnic immigrant students have been challenged by some Canadian antiracist, intercultural, and communication and LD researchers and theorists. The researchers and theorists challenge the premise of the test items, management and the reliability and validity of the test outcome and results (D'Oyley & Carl, 1998; Samuda, 1995; Rockhill & Tomic, 1995). In addition, some Canadian multicultural educationists and researchers have criticized the language content of standardized and teacher made test items as well as general learning assessments. According to the researchers, the tests have a Eurocentric middle class language and culture context. As a result of the context, the the learning heritage and cultural capital of ethnic minorities such as the refugees and immigrants, aboriginal students, lower class white students, and female students across Canadian primary and secondary schools are overlooked (Dei, 1996a; Rockhill & Tomic, 1995). Within the ongoing discourse many groups believe that mainstream teachers' inter-subjectivity and stereotypes of LCD group of students often influence the results of English language and communication proficiency assessment (ELCPA) results of ethnic minority students, thereby compromising the reliability and validity of the results (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000; Dei, 1996a).

The article examines teachers' diagnosis of communication disorders, and the pedagogical approaches in dealing with the misdiagnosis of the West African refugee student participants of my study. Vygotsky's theories regarding the Socio-Cultural Language Development (SCLD) of children's learning (Crain, 2000; Vygotsky,

1956), and Bandura's Social-Learning Theory (SLT) on vicarious learning in social communication (Bandura, 1977; Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000) are used as the theoretical framework of my discussion. Furthermore, the theoretical discussion supports my prescriptive, and effective teacher practices for promoting inclusive classroom practices for all students, regardless of their learning and cultural background.

The concluding section reiterates effective classroom and pedagogical practices teachers may adopt to not only ameliorate the misdiagnosis of the students (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Winton, 1989), and to provide professional instructional and learning remedies that meet the learning needs of the students, and inclusive involvement of the students' parents as partners to the teachers.

Research Procedures. The study orientation was based on an educational qualitative research, and the ethnographic design. Student participants were studied as an ethnic group, considering their socio- linguistic commonalities and experiences, and their official status as Linguistic and Cultural Diverse (LCD) learners in the provincial diversity educational programs (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1997). Purposeful sampling procedures (Creswell, 2005) were used to select ten grade three and four refugee children from the West African countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia as primary participants. All student participants had primary and nursery [kindergarten] education in their home countries and at the African refugee camps prior to their immigration to Canada. The students' prior education provided an insight on their previous formal and informal teaching-learning experience, nature and types of curricula that accommodated their linguistic and cultural settings. Taking into account the past learning experiences of the students allows the students and their parents to compare with that of the Canadian system. Selecting the student sample and background also enabled me to make a comparative assessment of the learning and teaching experience of the students, which helped me identify the major themes present in the socio-cultural learning heritage/background of the students. After collecting the data I was able to recommend effective teaching and learning support/accommodation for the students in diverse classrooms and promote inclusive education ideas that are in line with provincial educational policy.

Secondary participants were female parents of the students that had at least a high school level of education, and the teachers of the students. All teacher participants did not have any academic training or certification related to learning and diversity/multicultural education for inclusive classrooms. The teachers revealed that they did not have any social interaction with the children of minority learners prior to having them as students in their classrooms. My decision to take a sample of teachers facilitated teacher objectivity, and the measurement of their pedagogical accommodation and adaptations during whole-class instruction. Research sites included two rural public elementary schools, homes, and play ground of the students.

The written consent of the students was obtained from their parents, while separate written consent was obtained from the parents and teacher participants. In addition, I revised the terms of participation in the study with all the participants prior to collecting the social 'soft' data (Creswell, 2005); while the question of anonymity was addressed by concealing or masking the identities of all participants during data analysis, and reporting the research findings in this article.

Data collection techniques involved active face-to-face interviews with all the participants (Holstein & Gubrieum, 1997). Non-participant observation (NPO) was used to gather data on the students' performance and self-initiative in oral English communication at school, home and the playground. The process provides information on peer linguistic interaction that enable an understanding of the students efforts, and other participants' communication matrix in English language with the children. Informal discussions were held with the parents and their children at home to assess the frequencies of symbolic interaction using English language at home; and to compare similarities and differences with school experiences. Furthermore, the process allowed me to observe, and collect information on parents' involvement with students' homework in reading English literacy books, as well as examine the genre of books at home. The strategy enabled me assess the socio-cultural environmental impact on the children's' English communication, and the degree to which they 'co-switch' from the mother tongue to English language, a major focus of Vygotsky's theory on social and historical impact of language development in children (Crain, 2000).

Interview data was analyzed through transcription, a process that engages the conversion of oral interview data into textual data. The data was also categorized and converted to identify ideas as major codes. The merging of major codes with major themes are identified in my discussion of the students' linguistic and communication heritage, perspectives of teachers' diagnosis of students Communication Disorders (CDs), and the effective teacher approaches in dealing with CD diagnosis and prognosis. A content analysis approach was used to review and interpret the students' report cards from two terms in the school year. The process enabled me to assess teachers' remarks on the learning progress of the students in English language and communication areas.

The research process was very active on both sides considering the voluntary participation of all the participants, and my familiarity with the geographic settings of the research sites which made my access to all participants easier.

The Students' Socio-Linguistics and Communication Heritage

Prior to immigrating, the student participants of my study had informal education that was grounded on the African Indigenous Knowledge System (AIKS), with language and communication skills reinforced in the mother tongue for daily conversations, the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for communal survival, and for effective social communication and general socialization praxis (Fafunwa, 1987; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986). The AIKS communication learning process begins at birth, with parents or significant adults of the infant whispering prayers and blessings (in the mother tongue) into the ears of the new born (Fafunwa, 1987). The process familiarizes the new born with the tribes' language of communication, with the cultural belief that children 'hear', and 'listen' to sounds at an early age, and the belief that it facilitates their early language and speech development in the mother tongue. The belief system is synonymous to the modern behaviorist theory on environmental reinforcement of stimulus as a pathway to facilitating language learning behavior in children, and described as the "babble-luck" theory of the Skinnerian view of language learning (Crain, 2000, p.351).

In addition, AIKS reinforces mother tongue language skills acquisition through family and peer pedagogies at home and in the community level. Communication is also extended and reinforced by teachers in primary schools, with the mother tongue and English language used as medium of instruction at the nursery, first grade and lower primary school grades; while the later language is used in higher primary school grades to reinforce a higher comprehension level for the of learners. The incorporation of both languages for classroom communication is instrumental in the educational policy reforms being put in place for de-colonizing the school curriculum, and promoting cultural continuities in schools across Sub-Sahara Africa (Fafunwa, 1987; Thiongo, 1986).

Theories of Interpersonal Communication and Culture (ICC) show how communication schemata are embedded in verbal and non-verbal communications in High Context Cultures (HCC) DeVito, Shimoni, & Clark (2008 p.198). Since ethnic tribes of Sub-Sahara Africa belong to the high context culture, younger members practice active listening, observation, and repetition of phonics, voice, and speech in the mother tongue, as communicated to them by adults or persons older and as role models. The communication practices move from the family units to school communities. This mode of teaching and learning is relevant to Vygotsky's concept of speech and internal dialogue, which allows a child to "internalize social interactions that [begin] as an interpersonal process, occurring between the parent and the child" (Vygotsky, 1931a, p.45). The theorist further ascertains its operational origin and practice to cultural and historical environment of children (Vygotsky, 1956). The impact of children's use of the mother tongue, as well as modeling significant others as adults, and peers through observation and imitation is considered the bedrock of socialization and communication of Social Learning Theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977). The frequent use of the mother tongue has a greater impact on children's oral communication, hence, their use of English language in schools is affected by voice, and accent interference of the mother tongue, especially in English language conversation, and general classroom discussion.

In addition, communication in the mother tongue is often accompanied with non-verbal communication. Various gestures and a system of body language are used across ethnic tribes of Sub-Sahara Africa (Fafunwa, 1978). More often, age determines the type of behavior and body language pattern displayed by people during communication. For example, children are not supposed to have direct eye contact with elders, or older persons, especially those considered authority figures (i.e. teachers) during the course of conversation in public and private discourses (Razack, 1998; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009). Such elder-youth/child communication praxis demonstrates the role of age, a central practice of respect to elders in social gerontocracy, [common to high context cultures as that of ethnic tribes of Sub-Sahara Africa] (van der Geest, 2001).

African refugee children arrive with the aforementioned communication behaviors into Canadian primary classrooms, especially when communicating with their teachers. They are often perceived, assessed, and labeled as having communication disorders and social skill deficits, by some of their mainstream teachers, especially those of them with no prior information or knowledge of the students' cultural communication practices (Hutchinson, 2007; Razack, 1998).

Prior to immigration, my student participants had formal primary education that was based in the British English language, and with classroom discourses that accommodated mother tongue and colloquial 'pidgin English' languages as medium of teaching and learning at the lower primary grades and nursery. Since learners and teachers are from the same ethnic background, they are able to accommodate each other's voice and accent during classroom teaching and learning communication. As reiterated in the narrative of two of the parents in my research interviews-Case Study #1.

Before immigrating to Canada, the family sought refuge in The Gambia refugee camp. Because the country medium of instruction is English, the refugee camp teachers were made up of teacher refugees from our country (Sierra Leone) and from Gambia. The teachers are all Africans and speak the West African lingua franca "Pidgin" and English language. They taught the kids in both languages, as well as ensured that instructional materials such as literacy books were culturally related as the Gambian government provided most of them. The children interacted more in the classroom, considering 'sameness' of the students population in the refugee camps, which is different from the Canadian classrooms where they are seeing and interacting with mainstream children and teachers for the first time, it was very challenging for our children in the first few weeks. 10209/PRI)

In contrast to Canadian classrooms, mainstream teachers are not familiar with the children's English language communication dynamics of voice and accent in the production of speech as "voice disorder-as vocal quality, pitch, loudness, and resonance- that gives the voice a unique characteristic that identifies the speaker" (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow, 2003, p.304), as a result students are recognized as having a communication disorder in the area of speech during learning. The teachers' misunderstanding of the students' English language communication background and heritage leads to not only a misdiagnosis of the students communication, but a prescription of classroom adaptations, accommodation and modifications that the students may not require. Such unnecessary modifications would include the school based 'segregated' or 'pull out' ESL classes (Rockhill & Tomic, 1995; Stotsky, 2002). Other Canadian studies such as the one detailed by Andrews & Lupart (2000, p. 97) identified how some immigrant ethnic minority students have been referred to intellectually disabled programs on the recommendation of their mainstream teachers. Errors of academic judgment, and assessment shortcomings of the teachers' misdiagnosis of the affected students' will not cause students to learn in the 'normal' classroom environment and progress along their peers in the formal curriculum and learning outcome, but will instead live with the stigma of negative learning.

In addition, the students' traditional experiences of teacher-student communication praxis of complete listenership, quiet, attentive, and active observation of teacher directed instruction and modeling in the formal and informal settings (Fafunwa, 1987), are in conflict with the Canadian classroom discourses. AIKS and in the primary schools require the younger ones not to speak to an elder when the latter is speaking, only when called upon to do so. In addition, the learners or children are expected to display non direct eye contact with the elder (i.e. teacher) as part of nonverbal body language in cultural interpersonal communication. To show observance in the culture of the children or students means showing respect to elders, this includes teachers and parents (Fafunwa, 1987; 1978). As my study participants

arrive in Canadian primary school classrooms with these non-verbal communication practices, these practices are at times perceived by the mainstream teachers as communication 'baggage' and a liability. The participants are also considered lacking in 'appropriate' communication skills (Razack, 1998).

Refugee West African children arrive in Canadian public elementary schools with those orthodox teaching-learning experiences, which are different from the Canadian pragmatic classroom communication that is student directed, and with teachers encouraging students to question authority (i.e. the teacher), and to express their opinions as part of the student-teacher communication and learning style. The newcomer refugee students find the Canadian teacher-student learning interaction to be different and in direct contrast to their cultural heritage process and values of communication with elders such as teachers. The differences affect classroom communication dynamics with teachers and peers, especially in the first year of their school enrollment.

The differences of classroom communication dynamics between the students previous classroom experiences and the new Canadian classroom are challenging for the students, which often are not understood by the mainstream teachers, and eventually affects their judgment and assessment of the children's English language communication, and social skills in the classrooms. Such teacher formal and informal assessments in these areas, especially those with little or no background in ESL and cultural education often result in LD misdiagnosis of the refugee children, and other new immigrant students. The preceding discussion elucidates the specific areas of the teachers' English communication and language disorders with the sample refugee study participants under discussion.

Teacher's Diagnosis of the Students' Communication Disorder

Various literature on inclusive education have explained the relationship between communication and learning in children. Hunt & Marshall (2005) stated that "Communication, language and speech are related terms that constitute the foundation of teaching and learning in schools" (p. 313). In another dimension, the concept communication is described as the exchange of ideas, information, thoughts, and feelings (McCormick, Loeb, & Schiefellbusch, 2003, cited by Hunt & Marshall, 2005, p. 313). The process of communication involves words, or silence that are encoded with message values, which often are subject to interpretation by the persons communicating (Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 2002). It is the subject of interpretation that defines the acceptance or rejection of the mode, and message communicated, which often are relative to cultural descriptions and representation across diverse people and ethnic groups.

Communication exceptions in teaching and learning are explained as a disorder in speech (articulation, voice and fluency) and subjects are described as having a lack of expressive or receptive components of language (Hutchison, 2007, p. 83). Other facets of the disorder that are related to speech impairment are in most cases associated with neurological, physical or sensory factors (Andrews & Lupart, 2000; Winzer, 2002). With the case of the LCD West African refugee children of my study, the teacher diagnosis of their communication disorder centered on speech, voice, phonology or articulation, and fluency in the Canadian English language.

Specific diagnoses are made on the students notation on 'Voice Disorder' some teachers state that the "student speaks slowly and softly in a husky voice, does not speak with normal pitch, loudness, duration or quality [and] is shy about expressing ideas" (Hutchinson, 2007, p. 85).

The quote may be interpreted and associated with an inter-subjective approach, self fulfilling prophecies, and stereotypes of immigrant and racial diverse learners, often expressed by mainstream teachers' in public Canadian schools (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000). Most of the teachers pay more attention to the affected students' 'voice' during conversations in Canadian English, rather than making sense of their grammatical expressions. The findings were reiterated in one of the teachers narrative- Case Study #2

Teaching minority students for the first time was daunting to say the least. I had neither prior background nor report cards on the three LCD students in my class. To be honest, the first few weeks of my interaction with them was more in writing than oral, considering they were grade four students with visible writing skills. My oral conversation with them in the early weeks of the semester was more when I provided them with the extra English language tutorials after school, or immediately after recess. I used the private time to get used to their high tone and pronunciations of English words. I also held brief meetings with their moms when they came to pick them up afterschool, so I can get used to the accent of the students and parents, with the latter providing me a helping hand whenever I am unable to understand the student's expressions. It was challenging but I eventually was able to pull through. (Interview # 11209/TSI)

Additionally, as children with their mother tongue, the West African refugee students linguistic expression in terms of voice, has undue interference in their attempts at speaking the Canadian English language, thereby reinforcing the 'husky voices' of low or high voice expression that is referred as 'voice disorders' [in spoken Canadian English language] (Hutchinson, 2007, p.83).

In general classroom discourse teachers are perceived as role models or 'significant others' by their students (Bandura, 1986) or 'elders' in the African context of schooling. The latter school practice expect students to communicate with teachers as elders, and by demonstrating complete listening skills, being less vocal, except when stated otherwise by the teacher/elder to speak or respond to a question (Fafunwa, 1987). In addition, the culture expects require the West African refugee students to display respectful behavior through what may be perceived as shyness and quietness when communicating with an elder i.e. teacher. These orthodox teacher-student communications are brought and exhibited by the newcomer West African refugee children in Canadian classrooms, which are misunderstood by mainstream teachers as social and communication deficits of the children. Hutchinson (2007) noted that immigrant students are "shy about expressing ideas" (p.85). The lack of cultural compatibility of the children's learning heritage by mainstream teachers is misinterpreted as a shortcoming of learning exceptionalities in communication disorders (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002). Such cultural assumptions are also tied to teachers' expectations and these children (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000); with teachers often prescribing the administration of more standardized English language tests

(McIntosh, 2000) (even when they do not require it) which leads to official prognosis of communication disorders on the students. For the most part, the children's academic communication labels are wrong, and this has an adverse effect of not only learning progression with their mainstream peers, but may affect the social learning of the children in the future. Canadian inclusive education observers have faulted quick assessments and diagnosis of such children, and considered the current approach as a reinforcement of the public school based tracking system, which often places visible minority children in schools at a disadvantage (Dei, 2000; Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000).

Mainstream teachers often label African refugee children with Canadian English communication speech and language disorder on the basis of poor "receptive language" - which is described as when a "student fails to understand oral instructions, even when given individually" (Hutchinson, 2007, p.85). While some of these communication diagnoses may be experienced by the refugee children, the causes may not be far from the fact that most teachers diagnosis are related to the perceived low expectation of the students, and related pedagogical deficits that are related to area of reading images, and grammar on visual language for effective communication (Frieberg, 1997). Others include mainstream teachers' lack of use and reinforcement of non-verbal cues and symbols to provide clarity of communication and instructional procedures that will enable the children learn, and follow the teachers sequence of "receptive language" approach (Andrews & Lupart, 2000), which were identified during my classroom observations in my study. Diagnosis of the new learners' communication skills in the Canadian English language by their classroom teachers is too early, as most of them have yet to adapt not only to the curriculum, but the social environment as new comers, a factor identified in the study of Samuda (1995) on standardized provincial assessment and immigrant learners in public schools of Ontario, Canada.

Teachers school based assessment procedures on English language communication with refugee and immigrant new comers the West African students are faulted due to differences of perception and understanding between the affected students and their mainstream teachers. As a result the students are classified as LCDs. Teachers in my study expressed difficulties in understanding the verbal expression of the children due to their mother tongue interference or accent, while at the same time the students also express to me how their teachers have an accent that is unfamiliar to them (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Kissen & Carr, 1997), thereby making it more challenging to follow their instructions and learning procedures. In addition, Samuda (1995) encourage mainstream teachers to provide more time before administering standardized and teacher made paper and pencil assessments, and more time opportunities to adjust to the accent of their immigrant students; especially in the situation where ESL teachers are not available. In another discourse, McKibbin (1995) reiterated the lack of distinction between language differences, and language disorders by teachers of the dominant culture on immigrant children in early classroom interaction, and also contributing to misdiagnoses of the children's learning outcome, which subsequently leads to prescriptive remedies that are dysfunctional to the child's learning. There is the need for mainstream teachers, and ESL trained teachers working with such children to inquire and posses some basic information or knowledge on the learning heritage and identities of these children (Ogbu & Matute-

Bianchi, 1986), before undertaking any diagnostic procedures that may involve tracking the children.

It is noted that the lack of a culturally relevant curriculum reflecting the diversity of a pluralistic classroom affects not only classroom participation but learning outcomes of minority children (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002). In a research survey of Black minority public school students in Ontario, Canada, Dei (1996a) reported how the participants expressed concern of not 'seeing themselves' in Canadian history or literature and allied public school formal curriculum, which affected their reading motivation in school. As a result there were calls for text resources that can facilitate their language communication skills and literacy. The reactions of the students are congruent with similar findings in the US context with immigrant newcomer students on literature for academic transition (Rader, 2003). The flexibility and availability of such text, especially in the lower elementary classes will definitely provide incentives to English language development, should the affected students require such a learning progression (Stotsky, 2002; Meir, 2004).

On mainstream teachers stereotypes of immigrants/refugee students English/French language proficiencies in Canadian public primary classrooms, Hutchinson (2007, p. 152) cited the childhood learning experience of a Canadian Asian teacher, who described her experience as a student. The former student's elementary teacher assumed from her appearance she could not speak English. Such teacher stereotypes with immigrant and refugee ethnic minority learners are common in most Canadian and US classrooms (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002; Kissen & Carr, 1997; Young & Young Jr, 2001). The stereotypes are referenced in Schulz's theory of "inter-subjective reality or knowledge accumulated through personal experiences about others, as well as knowledge that has been transmitted to 'us' by teachers and parents" (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000, p. 96). Indeed, knowledge about 'others' are prone to biases, which may lead to an error of judgment of students' English language communication skills with minority children, as noted in the case of West African refugee children in Canadian public primary schools. In addition, Hargreaves et al (1975 cited by Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000) explained further the major dilemma of mainstream teachers' assessment of minority pupils' over time as "typifications of individual pupils ... as teachers speculate on language ability..." (p. 97). If mainstream teachers' 'learning prophecies' are manifested in assessment procedures of LCD children (Winton, 1989), then West African refugee children will fall short of their teachers' expectations, and may erroneously be diagnosed with English language communication disabilities, regardless of their previous learning knowledge and proficiency in British based English language curriculum, prior to immigration.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the analyzed data, major findings revealed that mainstream teachers' perception, assessment and diagnosis of the student participants on communication in Canadian English language were influenced by the mainstream teachers assessment and diagnosis of the students LCDs related to personal assumptions and opinions. The assumptions were reinforced by limited or no information on the previous formal teaching and learning style of the refugee students; and the teachers had no previous information and social experience with the student's ethnic or native language and cultural information in the community and in schools as also noted in the study of

Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, (2007). The study identified the central control of mainstream teachers' diagnosis of the refugee students was based on disparity of cultural knowledge on communication, as teachers considered and expected the students to speak Canadian English with no accent, while the students also expect to hear their new teachers speak in the British English accent they are familiar with prior to immigrating to Canada. The teachers expectation also lead to pedagogical application of coaching the students to adopt the Canadian English language accent, thereby losing the 'accent' that relates to their mother tongue as a mark of their identity, and losing their British English language writing format i.e. spelling to a Canadian (American) perspective (Stotsky, 2002). The findings also revealed that most mainstream teacher participants and indeed in the part of the province lack the proper amount of ESL formal training, knowledge, and practices in multicultural education to properly assess the students' English language proficiency, skills and knowledge, which makes it difficult for them to differentiate between mother tongue accent, voice, and deficiency in English language. Teachers' communication and language assessments were also based on teacher made classroom tests, which are subject to errors and personal biases, due to a misinterpretation of the students' 'voices' and mother tongue accent which leads to the diagnoses of students as having communication disorders. Many teachers of the study penalize the students more on oral expression in the Canadian English language in the area of "voice impairment, impaired articulation, omitting sounds i.e. 'p' for 'f', caused by mother tongue interference, and the substituting sounds of English words [i.e. 'ztaa' instead of 'the'] (Andrews & Lupart, 2000, p. 142). The oral communication disorders identified are not applicable in the written communication of the students' essays or sentences as observed in their note books and work sheets during my participant observations. The students wrote perfectly, but with little acknowledgement of the teachers, as they are categorically labeled to have complete written and oral communications, which I consider an error of assessment of the teachers.

Further communication diagnoses of most main stream teachers label immigrant ethnic students with poor oral English language difficulties. Students are identified as "not following directions [of the teacher], de-centre take another view points, initiate and sustain communication as well as repair communication breakdown" (Andrews & Lupart, 2000, p.105). This was part of the diagnosis of the student participants of the study by their teachers. My classroom observation findings revealed that the students did follow teacher directions, but on a slower pace as compared to their mainstream peers. The inability to sustain communication with peers and teachers in academic learning tasks with literacy subjects, were attributed to teachers' non use of effective instructional images, signs, and related content visuals that will connect and motivate the students interaction. The course content is also meant to connect meanings during communication in the Canadian English language. Body language communication such as non- eye contact mannerisms of the refugee children were reiterated by the teacher participants of the study, which they consider as 'inattention; and disrespectful' (in their own words). These comments arise as a result of a lack of knowledge of the students' cultural background, which can be acquired directly from their parents. Due to little or no contact with the parents of the students, as gathered from the teachers who assume the parents of the refugee students of the study have limited English proficiency, and may have 'no answers' to questions regarding their students display of learning deficiencies on verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication in the classroom. The teachers' assumptions

of the parents limited their collaboration with the parents, and limited the accuracy of their assessments of the students based on personal observations and assumptions/opinions; thereby leading to error of communication diagnosis of the affected students, described in Shultz theory of teacher intersubjectivity (Schultz, 1973).

In addition, part of the study findings reveal how teachers have limited exposure to cultural relevant curriculum materials such as fiction books that will incite more participation of the refugee students in reading, and storytelling in oral English language classroom discourses (Rader, 2003; Razack, 1993). In addition, observational data revealed that the children's English language literacy reading homework was always based on teachers' selected literature, which were all Eurocentric content based, despite the ethnic diversity population of the students. The lack of access and use of multicultural readers or story books by the refugee students, and indeed other immigrant students outside the mainstream culture limits their ability to connect to their previous knowledge, and interest in English language readers they are familiar with, thereby controlling their ability to orally engage in classroom discourse with teacher and peers of the mainstream culture (Rader, 2003). The teacher approach of selecting English based Canadian cultural content not only limits students ability to diversify their linguistic knowledge of literature, but their ability to improvise from their personal resource, and to share such books with their peers, which creates variety of curriculum content for all learners (BLAC, 1994). Additionally, the teacher's role of selecting these books narrows effective home-school collaboration on improvising readers related to children heritage (Rader, 2003); and limits parents awareness of what books their children are reading, as well as parents role of assisting the current dearth of school resources experienced as a result of financial cutbacks for public education in the recent economic recession (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Trumbull, 2001).

The study noted that the lack of multicultural literacy books limit the pace of interest in reading amongst West African refugee children, thereby, limiting their participation in oral conversation on reading narratives commonly used by teachers in lower primary classes across the province. A grade one teacher participant of the study expressed thus; Case Study #3

Because of the rural geographic location of our school and the demographics, the children's literacy book collections with ethnic orientation in the School District resource center and the public library are scarce. However, a few books on First Nation storybooks are available, so I use those books to provide something close for the immigrant and refugee students in my class, but that is not enough. I sent letters to the Prince George School District for African based literacy books, but received only a few, and some videos that I incorporated in my Social Studies class. It is frustrating is one cannot get these resources, I believe teachers in the cities have more access than we do here. (Interview # 12209/TSI).

Teachers' scaffolding process of correcting of students group and peer reading method facilitates meta-cognition, but creates a feeling of inadequacy and low self esteem with the upper refugee West African primary students, as most of

them felt embarrassed, which further reinforces 'withdrawal' from in-class oral peer interaction for fear of being bullied for their reading shortcoming.

Documentary and textual analysis of the students' report card of teachers' qualitative remarks of refugee student's English language communication skills performance tallied with my observation data on the progress of the students in acquiring English language communication at the same time retaining their versatility and behavior while speaking the mother tongue or pidgin English to their parents, members of their ethnic community, and to me as the researcher. The students are able to not only distinguish the learning style demands on language communication in Canadian English and the mother tongue, but are able to 'co-switch' and retain their heritage linguistic identity, a position that describes the acculturative approach in the discourse of language and culture (Katz, 1999; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986). Both children and parents appreciated teachers' positive comments of the learning progression of the students, thereby facilitating more homework engagement. The process of students and parents' engagement increases social responsibilities for making sure that homework is completed, and reviewed constantly to ensure mastery and recall whenever requested by the teacher.

The children's individual family based reading practices involved reading texts related to their interest as they read daily religious text and story books written in their mother tongue, and Pidgin English. The children's personal reading commitment enables them to compare what they have read in the native written books to that of English with parents' scaffolding. The home reading culture enables them practice the 'co-switching' approach using the Canadian thesaurus during literacy classes. In short, using text of personal interests provides motivation and better understanding of language adaptation and communication orally and in writing in school. Teachers fail to acknowledge the student's reading motivation interests, as well as liaise with their parents to know the types and forms of interests and motivation that will assist the students into effective English language communication adaptation, rather than assessing them with the disorders, and recycling books that are not related to their interests.

Peer play interaction at home and school had higher impact on the refugee student's growth and adaptation of Canadian English language and communication skills that are considered exceptionalities by the teachers' diagnosis. Playground observational data revealed how refugee students accommodated and accepted peer 'correction' or the re-phrase of unclear English language oral words for clearance and understanding, thereby making the impact of peer 'tutoring' more effective than the teachers' oral public correction during oral reading practice in the classroom, as many of the older refugee students felt embarrassed and sense of humiliation with the teachers method.

The findings conclude with a notification of mainstream teachers' limitation of communicating with parents of the West African refugee students and indeed other ethnic immigrant students based on the assumption that the parents are unlettered, which tallies with personal opinions of the children as having English language communication deficits, thereby having and experiencing disorder. Lastly, teachers' classroom discourses are preconceived with personal opinions on such students, and teachers do not allow and commit more time to study the students' communication

dynamics in relation to their ethnic backgrounds before making their assessments and labeling them as having Canadian English language communication disorders. The preceding discussion relates to literature based on effective classroom approaches that the study teacher participants and indeed other teachers in the rural part of the province with similar student participants or ethnic new immigrant learners may adopt for a more inclusive classroom, as well as minimize miss-diagnosis of the students on issues around learning communication disorders.

Effective Classroom Praxis for Teachers

Special attention on the academic achievement of immigrant and refugee students in the Ontario public school systems have led to the implementation of at least a two year teaching-learning experience before administering the students with the provincial standardized tests for learning diagnosis (Samuda 1995). The Ontario strategy should be considered in the province of British Columbia, as this will allow West African refugee students, and indeed other new comer ethnic immigrant students to adjust to the curriculum processes and policies as well as the urban and rural Canadian English language and communication knowledge and skills, which are often cited in some language based test items as identified in the studies of Samuda (1995) in the Stanford-Binet standardized test items in written English. To achieve a higher dividend of the students written communication in the Canadian English language the students should be provided more time to adjust to the curriculum which will definitely minimize misdiagnosis of some of the students' assessment of the LDs. In addition, curriculum review and standardized test experts should reflect diverse cultural representation across the province. Studies revealed that few, and in extreme cases no ethnic minority test experts are represented or included in the design, implementation and interpretation of standardized tests across Canadian public schools (McIntosh, 2000; Samuda, 1995; Winton, 1989). Considering the mosaic population of most Canadian public schools in recent years, there is every need for a 'multicultural' team of test experts, as this will provide equity and balance of test items, especially in the linguistic phrasing, as well as minimize biases that may likely affect immigrant or LCD students as the African refugee minors, and other minority categories as white low class, first nations and females in public schools across the province.

Most school districts in northern BC lack ESL trained teachers, hence, most teachers adopt conventional or 'normal' assessment process to evaluate English language communication skills of not only the student participants of the study, but other ethnic newcomer refugee and immigrant students, and with little or no supervision by school principals or any agency familiar with assessment of Linguistic and Cultural Diverse Learners (LCDL) in the province. The teacher assessment practices often result in assessment errors of the students that lead to formal labeling of the affected students. In other words, there is the need for effective supervision of the teaching practices of teachers on issues of assessment of learning diagnosis as 'disorders' and the cultural learning diversity of students in the classroom. The supervision will not only minimize errors of diagnosis of the newcomer refugee students, and indeed immigrant ethnic students but ensure balance of theory and practices on inclusive education in the rural schools of the province.

To remedy teacher diagnoses of the students' Canadian oral English communication disorder that are central to miss pronunciation due to mother tongue interference (regardless of the students writing the correct English words), especially common words as 'szaa' for 'the' or 'another' pronounced as 'onoda' can be remedied through individualized self corrective learning with the use of audio language technological gadgets (Frieberg, 1997; Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2006) commonly found in language laboratories in urban schools (which can be borrowed by teachers through inter-library loan). Some of the equipment as audio tapes, two way receivers amongst others can be used for students by teachers for reading, or recording sentences or stories, and replaying it to listen to and correct the students' performances, which are vetted by the teachers to facilitate progress of learning and to provide the students extra scaffolding. Teachers should encourage and allow the affected students to use personal tape recorders from home to engage in the oral English language practice, and from time to time create extra time in school or visit the students to review student centered learning initiatives. In doing so, parents will also be more involved, thereby making home and school learner support more effective. The self-learning method provides privacy and individualized learning for the affected students with true LCDs, especially those in higher elementary classes that have a higher desire for privacy.

Teachers and principals should practice a permissive approach that gives students the opportunity to select English reading literacy books that are related to their interests, cultural background and previous knowledge as pragmatic knowledge and student based approaches (BLACK, 1995; Rader, 2003). The resource choice will motivate reading culture as well as provide refugee students the opportunity to confidently re-tell the stories of such books, especially those related to their heritage to their peers. The students peer re-teacher process facilitates their oral communication as active participants in conversations related to learning, especially at the lower elementary level. The issue of refugee students displaying learner communication behavior of quietness and non participation in classroom conversations and discourses as referenced by comments of most Canadian mainstream teachers stated by Hutchinson (2007) will be minimized and possibly eradicated. The oral presentation of their interest based readers will facilitate their active classroom discourse with their mainstream peers, thereby facilitating collaborative student centered learning, and higher language achievements and interest of all students (Ashworth 1975; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Meir, 2004).

The management of school districts across the rural area of the province should involve and sponsor teachers to attend ESL training organized by Immigrant and Multicultural centers in cities closer to them, and should be held within the districts professional development week (Usman, 2006). Engaging teachers will not only expose them to the classroom dynamics of language and communication process on ethnic refugee and minority immigrant students, but access to the center's resources as instructional ESL videos, cultural dynamics and workshops on body language communication of ethnic groups such as the African refugee and immigrant students will assist the mainstream teachers to remove stereotypical cultural assumptions on language and communication competencies of the racial minority children in their classrooms.. Furthermore, principals should encourage teachers to collaborate with refugee parents on resources by borrowing parents culturally based English textbooks to be used for the entire classroom based learning, as well as invite

refugee parents as guest speakers to acquaint mainstream teachers and students with the English accent of their ethnic group and knowledge based of the parents as done with other mainstream parents (Meier, 2004; Trumbull, 2001).

Conclusion

Schools are constantly sorting, categorizing and labeling students into “learner fit” and those with challenges otherwise referred as disabled or disordered learners. The school based pupil assessment of learning identity approaches have constantly been debated by researchers and educators, with some believing the practice is reinforcing ‘segregation’ rather than inclusion of students. Others are of the opinion that the educational practice not only discriminates against learners with challenges but that most of them do not have the adequate learning resources they require to assist them into ameliorating their challenges. While such points may mean different things depending on which side one reflects, the truth is that classroom diversity is inevitable, as nature had set in existing differences i.e. gender as well as reinforced by movement of people in Canada. Regardless of what side of the debate one holds, individual learner difference and needs require professional support and attention as not only the right of education for a child, but a means of addressing equity and social justice for all students, which in my opinion is the praxis of inclusive education in Canadian public schooling.

The discussion has specifically addressed the learner difference and challenges of ethnic West African newcomer refugee students’ learning and teaching challenges on communication disorder by the student participants of my study. Canadian English language and culture in classroom communication was discussed with regards to types and causes of the students’ communication disorders/labels by their mainstream teachers. The facets of cultural linguistic differences and practices of general communication perceived by the refugee students and their mainstream teachers were reiterated to examine the ‘true’ diagnosis of the students learning labels on communication. The concluding part provided a synoptic professional and effective approach schools that teachers may adopt to ensure the understanding of learner’s previous cultural knowledge and interpretation on communication, and the challenges in the new Canadian learning environment ,so as to minimize error of diagnosis. In addition, teachers should be able to adopt a more effective style of assessment and addressing the disorder with those students properly identified with some forms of communication disorder in the Canadian English language and culture in the classroom.

As much as Canadian public schools reflect the cultural mosaic of Canadian society, more school home/community collaboration with refugee families and communities is required to ensure that refugees can participate effectively in society. While the ethnic centers in immigrant and multicultural organizations in the part of the province should frequently be visited as school trip venues. The initiative will improve teachers’ information, understanding and instructional direction of the affected students cultural learning heritage on communication in the classroom and accompanied behavior for their learning success. The teacher or school initiative can be applied to similar minority student population of students across public elementary schools across rural area of the province and the country in general.

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Recruiting, Retaining, and Fairly Compensating Our Teachers

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Abstract

This article examines three interlinked problems facing public schools today: how to recruit, retain, and pay our teachers. The article begins with an overview of the current situation in the United States, paying particular attention to schools in areas where minorities are the majority. It goes on to examine some of the causes of teacher attrition, with a special section on charter schools, which have a unique set of problems. Finally, it looks at the effects of in-school policies such as teacher pre-service and in-service programs, and then discusses several successful programs around the country, including the TAP model and the Missouri Career Ladder.

Keywords: Recruitment, retainment, fair compensation, teacher pre-service and in-service programs

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Recruiting, Retaining, and Fairly Compensating Our Teachers Staffing Schools with Committed and Competent Teachers

In order for school reform in the United States to be successful, we must recruit, train, retrain, and fairly compensate teachers. School districts are continually engaged in the complementary processes of recruiting and retaining teachers. The current economic downturn, however, has forced many states to make painful reductions in their public education expenditures—which in turn impact the ability of school districts to hire and sometimes to retain high-quality teachers. It makes sense, then, for districts that are able to hire to proceed with the most prudent policies available that relate to teacher recruitment, and to implement effective strategies to retain excellent teachers.

We will first take an overview of the teacher attrition situation, and look at some of the root causes of attrition and the problems associated with retention, before turning to programs that have proved successful in retaining teachers.

Teacher Entry, Mobility, and Attrition

The highest proportion of new teachers in any given year is female, with white women accounting for higher numbers than women in ethnic minority groups. There is evidence, however, that in the early 1990s the number of new minority educators increased. At the same time, college students graduating with high academic achievements are less likely to enter teaching than other graduates. Teachers, both those in their early years of teaching and those nearing retirement, show a similar trend in high turnover and drop-out rates, producing a pattern related to age or experience. Higher attrition rates have been noted in whites and females in the fields of science and mathematics, and in those who have higher measured academic ability.

Location of teaching position also impacts mobility and attrition rates. Most studies demonstrate that suburban and rural school districts have lower attrition rates than urban districts. Public schools, on average, are found to maintain higher teacher retention rates than private schools. Not surprisingly, higher salaries are associated with lower teacher attrition, while dissatisfaction with salary is associated with higher attrition and a waning commitment to teaching (Guarino et al., 2006).

Compensation and Working Conditions

The patterns discussed above seem to indicate that teachers are seeking increased salaries, greater rewards, and improved working conditions. Educators tend to transfer to other teaching posts – or even to non-teaching posts – that may meet their desired criteria. It is well established that higher compensation results in lower attrition (see, e.g., Borman and Dowling, 2008). These findings lend support to the notion that teacher recruitment and retention is dependent on the desirability of the teaching profession in relation to alternative opportunities. The inherent appeal of teaching depends on the supposition of corresponding “total compensation,” this being a comparison of the total reward to be gained from teaching, both extrinsic and intrinsic, with possible rewards determined through other activities.

Urban schools and schools with high percentages of minority students are harder to staff, and teachers tend to leave these schools when more attractive opportunities become available (Guarino et al., 2006). Lower turnover rates among beginning teachers are found in schools with induction and mentoring programs, and particularly those related to collegial support. Teachers given greater autonomy and administrative support show lower rates of attrition and migration. Better working conditions, intrinsic rewards, and higher salaries remain the most compelling elements of concern to teachers.

Research conducted by Mathematica Policy Research for the U.S. Department of Education examined the compensation process for public school teachers, an element of teacher recruitment and retention that has been relatively ignored for many years (Glazerman et al., 2006). The traditional system, whereby teachers are paid based solely on their years of experience and level of education, has caused many critics to claim that it does not promote good teaching, or is not as fair as other systems that pay based on performance, ability in certain skills, or willingness to teach in areas of high need. Proponents of the traditional system argue that teachers' experience and education are crucial indicators of their performance. To reach an optimum balance, educators and policymakers have created numerous methods for revising how teachers are compensated, each seeking to adjust teacher incentives differently. As the scientific evidence on these methods' effectiveness is extremely limited, it is difficult to choose among them. Historically, implementing any pay reform, let alone directing a critical study of one, can be a demanding issue. A number of ambitious and interesting reforms have folded, often within a few years, under opposing political pressure or from fiscal restrictions. Attempts to study the few surviving reforms have yielded little usable data to date.

Causes of Teacher Attrition

Almost half a million teachers leave their posts each year. Only 16% of this teacher attrition is related to retirement. The remaining 84% is due to transfer of teachers between schools, and teachers who leave the profession all together (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). In New York City alone, more than 5,000 teachers left their posts in 2005. Eight percent transferred to a different school, and 10% moved out of the New York City school system. Current studies are drilling down to better understand the complexities of teacher turnovers. For example, they distinguish between permanent and temporary exits from teaching, and make distinctions among transfers within districts, across districts, and exiting teaching completely (DeAngelis & Preseley, 2007; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). Generally, previous research on teacher retention has either dealt with the parallels between the turnover and teachers' characteristics (types of teachers more likely to leave), or between turnover and school characteristics (types of schools affected by greater teacher turnover rates).

According to the report *The Influence of School Administrators on Teacher Retention Decisions Across the United States* (Boyd et al., 2009), when given the opportunity, many teachers choose to leave schools that serve greater percentages of low-income, low-performing, and minority ethnic group students. While this phenomenon has been well documented by substantial research literature, far less research has been put into understanding which specific features of the working conditions in these schools might result in this elevated turnover rate. Extremely high

teacher turnover rates can be financially draining and are damaging to schools' educational cohesion. Therefore, in an effort to interrupt teacher attrition in schools with high turnover rates, mentoring programs and teacher retention bonuses have been initiated. These initiatives will prove less effective than anticipated at reducing damaging attrition unless schools have a clearer understanding of why teachers leave.

Reasons behind teacher turnover can be highly complex. Rather than lumping all exits from schools into one group, it is more useful to differentiate between those who move to another school district, those who transfer to another school within the district, and those who move to another profession entirely. The 2009 Boyd et al. report endeavored to delve beneath the topography of racial and socioeconomic factors that are usually offered as primary reasons for departure. Issues they looked at included teachers' power and leverage regarding school policy decisions, relationships with the school administration and other staff-members, student behavior, and the state of school facilities.

They found that teacher effectiveness is a high predictor of teacher retention: those whose students perform well are more likely to stay in their jobs. In New York City, for example, first-year teachers from schools that perform at a low level have a 27% attrition rate, as opposed to a 15% attrition rate for those at high-performing schools.

The 2009 Boyd et al. study, which focused on teachers in New York City schools, certainly showed the expected correlations between working conditions and socioeconomic and racial factors. Schools with a higher prevalence of students who qualified for free lunches, for example, tended to have worse reported working conditions. The same was true of schools with higher proportions of Hispanic and African American students. However, when all factors were controlled for by statistically checking for multicollinearity, the only highly predictive factor indicating the likelihood of a teacher leaving was perception of the administration. A teacher who had a problem with the administration increased the likelihood that he or she would leave the school by 44%. Another relatively consistent predictor of turnover is found in teacher characteristics and their work experience. Turnover is greater among young and old teachers compared to middle-aged teachers, and among less experienced teachers in comparison to their more experienced peers (Ingersoll, 2001; Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, & Morton, 2006). Previous research that links teacher gender, race, or ethnicity to turnover proves less consistent (see Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). Teachers' pre-teaching experiences and pathways into teaching also reflect attrition behavior. It appears that, generally, teachers appointed via early-entry routes (e.g., Teach for America and the New York City Teaching Fellows) show a greater tendency to leave posts than teachers entering via more traditional routes (Boyd et al., 2006).

In the above-mentioned studies, attrition patterns and teacher quality measures have been shown to be linked, but not consistently. Teachers with stronger qualifications as measured by self-test scores, and who received their degrees from an undergraduate institution with a strong reputation, show increased tendency to leave teaching (Boyd et al., 2005). Teachers who are measured as more effective by their

students' test score gains show less likelihood of leaving teaching (Boyd et al., 2007; Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2007; Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin, 2005).

Research performed on the interplay between teacher retention and school characteristics has primarily investigated measures relating to the student composition of the school. Schools with greater concentrations of students from low-income groups, non-white and ethnic minority groups, and with low-achieving students are predicted to experience greater teacher turnover rates (Boyd et al., 2005; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2005).

The relationship between teacher turnover and certain district or school factors is evident in certain state databases. Imazeki (2005), assessing data from Wisconsin, determined that higher teacher retention is directly related to higher salaries. Loeb, Darling-Hammond, and Luczak (2005) extrapolated data from California to determine that, although a school's racial makeup and the proportion of low-income students may predict teacher turnover, pay rates and working conditions are clearer factors in forecasting high rates of turnover. These factors include increased class sizes, problems in facilities, multi-track schools, and shortage of textbooks. Allensworth, Ponisciak, and Mazzeo (2009) found that low student test scores in elementary schools were an indicator of low teacher retention from year to year. Their study transcended student make-up by also taking into account measures of school working conditions such as teachers' reports regarding how they interact with their principal, parents, and other teachers. The researchers discovered that school working conditions assist in explaining a great degree of the variability in decisions relating to teacher retention. The researchers used administrative records from over 50,000 teachers, plus survey responses from a sample of teachers and students.

Allensworth et al. took a comprehensive look at the Chicago public school system in 2009. Around a hundred of the schools they looked at showed drastic turnover rates (about a quarter of the teachers left each year). This meant that enormous effort was expended in recruiting and training new teachers. While all of these schools had predominantly African American or Hispanic student populations, the study showed that racial and socioeconomic conditions were by no means the only factors in teacher attrition. Teachers cited teacher-parent relations as a major factor in overall working conditions. A sense that parents were partners in their child's education played a major part in encouraging teacher stability. A second issue was school size, which the study showed to be highly predictive of teacher attrition: smaller schools tended to have lower rates of stability. A supportive administration was another factor cited by teachers who remained in their positions.

Helen Ladd, in a 2009 study, investigated administrative and school-level responses to surveys of school climate data in schools in California and North Carolina. She notes that previous studies had tended to fall into two categories: those that focused on easily quantifiable data such as racial or economic factors, and those that looked at teacher surveys or other ethnographic data in an attempt to understand the underlying causes of teacher attrition. Ladd developed a more highly refined mechanism, based on wider teacher samples and more carefully honed questions, to pinpoint the precise reasons behind the teachers' decisions to leave.

Ladd's analysis of her results tended to support more recent studies such as those of Loeb, Darling-Hammond, and Luczac (2005), in showing that simple racial demographics are not enough to fully explain teacher attrition. For example, teachers' perceptions of their working conditions are an often-overlooked factor in the mix. She mentions two commonly cited ideas to bolster teacher retention: spreading students from disadvantaged backgrounds more widely throughout the school system, and paying teachers higher salaries. However, based on the results of her teacher surveys, she floats a third option that she feels has not been adequately tested: to work within schools to ameliorate working conditions. Among the issues of most concern to teachers were the lack of teacher empowerment, inadequate school leadership, lack of viable school facilities, and inadequate opportunities for professional development. However, the results of her survey suggest that lack of teacher empowerment is only a factor in teacher attrition at the high school level. On the other hand, teachers' perceptions of school leadership, Ladd found, is highly predictive of the teachers' decisions to remain at that school or seek alternative posts. This, of course, is identical to what the 2009 Boyd et al. report discovered.

Because of the similar conclusions of the Boyd and Ladd studies, and, to a lesser extent, the Allensworth study, suggesting that a negative perception of the school administration is a key factor in the departure of teachers from public schools, it is clear that new studies are warranted to decipher the nature of the detrimental relationships at these schools. In particular, it would be interesting to examine the role of racial and socioeconomic factors in that interplay.

In the spring of 2011, Violet Nichols, a teacher in the Virginia public school system with twenty-one years of experience and a reputation for building relationships with students, was fired for perceived failures to adapt to changing teaching methods. The story gained national attention when the *Washington Post* published an extensive article, looking at all sides of the issue. The performance of Nichols's students was on par with that of other students in the school, and she was highly valued by students and parents, suggesting she, as well as other teachers, are judged by quick glances by the administration that may not offer a complete picture. Nichols is African American; the principal who fired her, Terri Czarniak, is white. Though Nichols filed a racial discrimination case against Czarniak, this was dismissed by the school system. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to place this case in a wider context: how often do racial and socioeconomic factors come into play in cases of this type? Who is being fired, and who is doing the firing?

The Importance of Teacher Quality in the Recruitment and Retention Process

Goldhaber's (2006) work, which reviews education research that dates back to the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966), demonstrates that of all the school-related factors affecting student achievement, the most important is teacher quality. This is confirmed by more recent micro-level findings (Rivkin et al., 2005; Rockoff, 2004), which also suggests that quality varies considerably among teachers. Therefore, there is a great deal of interest in understanding teacher quality and the ways in which it may be affected by the various education policies.

In an attempt to guarantee a minimal level of teacher quality, a primary screen used by all states is the teacher licensure system (commonly referred to as “teacher certification”). Those wanting to become public school teachers have to meet certain requirements. All states, for example, require teachers to hold a bachelor’s degree and have had some training in pedagogy to be licensed to teach. Most also require teachers to have had training in the subject they teach, as well as some type of student teaching experience. Teachers also have to pass background checks and state-mandated tests before they can work in a classroom (Rotherham & Mead, 2004). States deem candidates ineligible to teach if they cannot meet or exceed a “cut score” on a licensure test. Despite the popularity of teacher testing as a policy, there is much uncertainty about using these tests as an indication of quality. In general, licensure is not a guarantee of service quality and there is relatively little empirical work that links teacher test scores to student achievement. The pass/fail cut score for teacher content or other licensure-related exams varies by state and is typically set by expert consensus panels, not by empirical evidence. In the absence of evidence about the relationship between teacher tests and measures of teachers’ classroom effectiveness, there is no means of judging the extent to which states’ use of these tests allows ineffective teachers into the classroom or screens the potentially effective teachers away from the workforce.

Evidence demonstrates that states face significant tradeoffs when they set particular performance levels as a precondition to becoming a teacher. In spite of testing, many teachers who might not be desirable in the teacher workforce, based on their contribution toward student achievement, nevertheless become eligible based on their test performance. Conversely, many individuals who would be effective teachers become ineligible due to their test performance. This does not necessarily mean that states should not be demanding these tests; they may provide important information for local hiring authorities to assess along with other teacher attributes in making their hiring decisions. However, it does indicate that in the hiring process, there are other factors that should be considered in hiring decision-making process. It is this category of “other factors” that school districts must find ways to tease out, as they hire new teachers and endeavor to retain effective teachers.

Attrition in Charter Schools

Charter schools form an interesting subset in the school system, and attrition rates at these schools may throw some light on the system as a whole. According to Miron and Applegate (2007), while several other studies have researched the reasons teachers seek employment in charter schools, few have actually asked why teachers leave these schools. There are considerable performance differences among charter schools, both among and within states (Gill, Timpane, Ross, & Brewer, 2001). The quality and stability of the teaching force is one factor increasingly viewed as important to charter school success, but research about charter school educators remains limited.

In addition to providing more choice for families, charter schools intend to offer new opportunities to teachers. Teachers are able to assist in inaugurating a new charter school, they can choose to work in one, and often they have the freedom to teach using a method they prefer. The charter concept assumes that managing value conflicts among personnel will be notably reduced when teachers’ beliefs and

interests approximate those of the schools' educational missions. Additionally, charter proponents often use the argument that charter schools encourage teachers to innovate, providing a better match between teachers' preferences and the school's desire to be innovative. Innovation is influenced by teachers' satisfaction with facilities, autonomy, and opportunities for professional development. Literature on organizational innovation strongly suggests that people innovate when they have sufficient resources, appropriate incentives, and professional autonomy (Mintrom, 2000).

Substantive frustration with working conditions, dissatisfaction with salaries and benefits not meeting expectations, and disappointment with the administration and governance are all issues that almost universally contribute to teachers leaving their posts. This erosion of the teaching force each year is an indication that many charter schools will experience difficulty establishing professional learning communities that can propagate a difference in children's education. Consequently, a high rate of teacher attrition in charter schools is one of the greatest barriers to successful charter school reform.

It can be argued that a certain amount of attrition can be positive, as it corrects a mismatch between teacher and school. On average, charter schools' attrition rates are between 20% and 25%; however, for new teachers, the attrition rate is nearer to 40% annually. This extensive attrition is disturbing. School resources (human and financial) are consumed by high attrition that undermines comprehensive staff training programs, and efforts to consolidate effective, stable learning communities. It is likely to undercut the legitimacy of the school as viewed through the parents' eyes.

Age is the primary background characteristic that strongly predicts teacher attrition. In charter schools, younger teachers are more likely to leave than older teachers. There are no significant attrition differences noted between the sexes, or among teachers with various ethnic or cultural backgrounds. The grade level taught is also a strong indicator, with attrition rates being greatest in upper grades, particularly grades 6, 7, 10, and 11. There is a slightly greater chance of special education teachers leaving charter schools than regular education teachers.

Teachers with limited experience are significantly more likely to leave charter schools. Many of these inexperienced teachers are presumed to have moved to teaching jobs in other schools. Certification also carries significance: attrition is higher for non-certified teachers and for those teaching outside their certification areas. This factor may be related to pressure on schools from NCLB to ensure that their teaching staffs meet the definition of "highly qualified."

Other prominent teacher attrition factors include teachers' relative satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the school's mission, their perception of the school's ability to attain that mission, and their confidence in the capacity of the assigned school administration to lead the cause of the school's mission. Most teachers who leave are routinely less than satisfied with school curriculum and instruction, available resources and facilities, and salary and benefits.

Proponents of charter schools would be well advised to focus their efforts on reducing teacher attrition, particularly the excessively high turnover of young, new

teachers. Discrepancies between teachers' expectations for charter schools and those schools' realities should be identified, and strategies for reducing the gaps should be designed and implemented. Strengthening teachers' sense of security should be paramount, as it will increase their overall satisfaction with working conditions, salaries, benefits, administration, and governance.

We have looked at some of the causes of teacher attrition, and showed that the issue is more complex than it is normally perceived to be. Now we'll turn to some policies and programs that have been put in place to alleviate teacher attrition, and evaluate their efficacy.

Pre-service and In-service Teacher Policies

Literature on the influence of pre-service policies on teacher recruitment and retention is limited; however, two important points should command the attention of school districts. One of the recommendations of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) in its report *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* was that teachers be licensed based on demonstration of knowledge and skills. This edict led states and teacher education programs to require teachers to pass a battery of tests before they exited teacher education programs and/or before they were licensed by states. These actions resulted in a reduction of the number of minority students entering and completing teacher education programs. Therefore, school districts seeking a more diverse teaching staff will see a limited number of minority candidates available for recruitment.

A second pre-service teacher policy to which districts should attend is the difference between candidates completing traditional teacher education programs and those completing alternative route programs. According to the Guarino et al. (2006) review of literature, teacher candidates completing alternative-route teacher education programs tend to be older and more diverse. In addition, they tend to have higher retention rates than candidates completing traditional programs. Recruiting teacher candidates from these programs could address both the needs for more diverse teaching staffs and the desire to retain good teachers.

Districts wanting to retain their best teachers should strongly consider what matters to teachers who remain in their teaching positions. Mentoring and induction programs tend to matter to in-service teachers, as do class size, autonomy, and administrative support. It is also interesting to note that state accountability practices impact teachers' decisions to remain in their positions (Guarino et al., 2006). Financial circumstances notwithstanding, districts have control over some of these issues. They should consider publicizing situations favorable to in-service teachers, as a tool for both recruitment and retention. As districts develop their reform agenda, they should put at the forefront a vision for the type of teaching force needed to support their plans for reform, and use empirical studies such as those reviewed by Guarino et al. as a guide to recruit and retain teachers.

Teacher Enhancement Programs That Work

It is often easy to focus on the negative aspects of the educational system, but there are a number of exciting new programs that have produced demonstrable

changes. One of the most promising of these new initiatives is the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). The TAP's goal is to attract skilled and talented individuals into the teaching profession and retain them by promoting the availability of higher salaries and career advancement without the need to leave their classrooms. The TAP model sets teacher pay and their further advancement to correspond to student achievement growth, noted classroom performance, qualifications in high-demand subjects, and willingness to contribute to mentoring duties. This model also seeks to enhance teacher quality through ongoing professional development and performance accountability.

In the late 1990s, the Milken Family Foundation in Santa Monica, California developed TAP as a comprehensive school reform model. This school-wide program provides teachers with opportunities for enhanced pay for performance (calculated through expert observers and analysis of student test data) and future career advancement with related pay raises and continued professional development, simultaneously holding teachers accountable for student learning. TAP's strategy for recruitment, motivation, and retention of the most effective teachers promoted four principles: Multiple Career Paths, Ongoing Applied Professional Growth, Instructionally Focused Accountability, and Performance-Based Compensation.

The Multiple Career Paths principle offers classroom-based teachers the option to remain "career" teachers, or seek promotion to a mentor or master teacher post. In conjunction with the principal, mentor and master teachers comprise the school leadership team overseeing all TAP activities. Both master and mentor teachers receive enhanced compensation for assuming any additional responsibilities, including supporting professional growth of other teachers and liaising with their principal in order to plan and set achievement goals and teacher evaluation. A competitive, performance-based selection process exists for the promotion to mentor or master teacher posts; the final promotion decision is made by the principal based on input from administrators and a teachers' committee.

Ongoing Applied Professional Growth provides for time to be built into the school week, using TAP, for school-based teacher learning that can address identified student needs. Mentor or master teachers lead weekly "cluster group" meetings for teachers. An individual growth plan with specific goals and activities is determined for each teacher. Mentor and master teachers provide other teachers with ongoing classroom support.

Instructionally Focused Accountability provides certified and multi-trained evaluators to assess each teacher four to six times per year. Teachers are evaluated both individually (based on a given teacher's students' learning growth achievements) and collectively (based on the learning growth of the total number of students in the school).

Performance-Based Compensation allows teachers to earn annual bonuses related to both individual teaching performance (as determined by multiple teacher evaluations), and growth in student achievement. Classroom-level and school-level achievement growth both impact performance pay. Districts are encouraged by TAP to pay competitive rates for teachers working in high-need subjects and schools.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina applied TAP principles to their Pay for Performance pilot program in order to improve student achievement in low-performing schools by rewarding staff based on their attendance, professional development, and student performance. All staff members working in the pilot schools were eligible for participation in the program, and received cash bonuses for reaching certain goals. In the first year (2004–2005), the bonus was contingent on staff members attaining individualized goals for student achievement. Teachers' goals were based on raising student test scores on North Carolina's End of Grade and End of Course testing, in addition to local tests. Non-teaching staff members were assigned goals related to student outcomes in their area of expertise. For example, social workers were expected to reduce dropout rates for their students. If their achievement goals were met, they had the opportunity to earn a bonus of \$1,400. They could earn an additional bonus of \$600 if they missed four or less days during a school year, and attended at least thirty hours of teacher professional development. An average of 200 certified teachers were paid the bonus in the first year, which amounted to approximately 25% of educators participating in the program. Approximately 50% of these received the student achievement bonus only, and did not qualify for the added attendance/professional development bonus.

Another successful program, the Cincinnati Evaluation and Compensation System, seeks to enhance teacher professionalism and boost student achievement levels by relating teacher pay to teacher skill and performance as measured by classroom observations and teachers' portfolio reviews. Cincinnati has now replaced the traditional teacher salary structure of regular automatic advancements based on teachers' experience and graduate degrees with a system tying promotions to teacher evaluations. The assessments are based on sixteen criteria encompassing four domains: preparation for student learning, creating a suitable environment conducive to learning, instruction for learning, and strict professionalism. To determine the teachers' ratings, evaluation teams review lesson plan portfolios and observe classroom practices. Annual ratings then provide formative guidance to teachers. "Comprehensive" reviews, generally occurring once every five years, grade teachers into one of the five decreed mastery levels, thus determining their salary range.

The program design seeks to replace the uniform salary schedule, tying permanent pay increases to career advancement where this would not be automatic, rather than offering bonuses in an existing seniority-based salary schedule. It also rotates annual and total reviews, which consist of a complete review in all four domains for each teacher. Once the teacher has advanced past the Apprentice level, the review takes place every two to five years. These are "high stakes" reviews to determine a teacher's mastery ranking, and therefore his or her salary range. "Low stakes" annual reviews are conducted in two of the four domains in years when a teacher has no comprehensive review. Annual reviews determine teachers' proficiency and provide them with constructive criticism to further their improvement. Teachers must meet set proficiency standards in order to qualify for experience-based pay step growth within their mastery rankings, independent of student test scores. Teacher performance is assessed by peers, evaluating the extent to which they are following professional pedagogical norms deemed to contribute to student learning.

The Missouri Career Ladder program is unusual in that it combines teacher performance, tenure, and extra responsibilities to determine monetary incentives. It seeks to enhance student achievement levels by providing opportunities for teachers to earn extra financial rewards for completing increased work and furthering professional development. Eligibility for participation in the program is determined by teachers' noted performance and portfolios. Policymakers anticipate that by incentivizing educators, academic services, programs, and learning opportunities for all students will be improved. The program began in the fall of 2004, with the anticipation that it would be piloted for at least three years.

In theory, teachers advance along the Career Ladder based on their position and progress in classroom performance as rated by observers; in reality, however, the bonuses are directly related to increased responsibilities. Progress in the Career Ladder is determined solely by increased responsibility and the rate at which any extra work is paid. Teachers meeting statewide and district-level performance standards become eligible to receive pay enhancement for Career Ladder responsibilities. This can be in the form of increased work, or involvement in professional development programs. The program does not replace teachers' regular salary schedule. Career Ladder responsibilities must be of an academic nature and directly related to improvement of programs and services for all students.

There are three stages of the Career Ladder, based on years of experience and other criteria. Progression up the Ladder involves teachers being assessed at each stage via periodic observations and evaluations of documentation. Each successive stage offers an opportunity to acquire extra pay enhancements for taking Career Ladder responsibilities. In Stage I, teachers are eligible for up to \$1,500; Stage II, \$3,000; and, Stage III, \$5,000. Out of more than 65,000 teachers in 524 statewide districts in Missouri, over 17,000 teachers (26%) in 333 districts (64%) participated in the Career Ladder program during the 2005–2006 school year. This represents a remarkable inclination toward improvement on the part of the teachers, and demonstrates that a clearly defined, step-based approach can have a dramatic effect on teacher involvement and interest.

Conclusion

An analysis of the literature shows that several issues come to the forefront when looking at the causes of teacher attrition. Teacher quality is clearly an important factor in teacher stability. However, more work needs to be done to understand precisely what goes into creating a stellar teacher who is willing to go the extra mile.

A supportive administration has been shown in study after study to be a key factor in retaining teachers. Teachers who feel they are bullied by their superiors, or who feel that their efforts are undervalued, are much more inclined to leave. More in-depth research into this area is warranted, to tease out the factors involved. As the Violet Nichols story demonstrates, racism, ageism, and a lack of quality observation may all play a part in the teacher-administration relationship. Teacher empowerment is intrinsically related to this issue, and school administrators should ensure that their teachers are given ample opportunities to introduce opinion and participate in the growth of the school.

Finally, a highly structured environment, such as the Career Ladder system in Missouri, in which teachers are given incentives to improve their teaching and stay in their jobs, has been successful in promoting the retention of teachers. A greater effort on the part of administrations to come up with similar creative endeavors will save time and money in the long run, as well as increasing the quality of education for students.

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CORRECTION STATEMENT

Dr. Mustafa Yunus Eryaman
Editor, International Journal of Progressive Education

Dear Dr. Eryaman,

Sean Lennon and I recently published an article in the journal, International Journal of Progressive Education. It was pointed out to us by another colleague that there was a typographical error in the article. The number "N=167" should have been "N=67." This was published in volume 7, no. 2 in June 2011.

We sincerely apologize for any misunderstanding or misreading this may have caused. We would ask that you publish a **correction** in your next issue, if possible. If you decide to print the **correction**, please let us know the date of the issue, so we can keep this for our records.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Smith
annmsmith@valdosta.edu
Sean Lennon
smlennon@valdosta.edu

Miscellany

Scope of the IJPE

International Journal of Progressive Education (IJPE) (ISSN 1554-5210) is a peer reviewed interactive electronic journal sponsored by the International Association of Educators and in part by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IJPE is a core partner of the Community Informatics Initiative and a major user/developer of the Community Inquiry Laboratories. IJPE takes an interdisciplinary approach to its general aim of promoting an open and continuing dialogue about the current educational issues and future conceptions of educational theory and practice in an international context. In order to achieve that aim, IJPE seeks to publish thoughtful articles that present empirical research, theoretical statements, and philosophical arguments on the issues of educational theory, policy, and practice. IJPE is published three times a year in four different languages; Chinese, Turkish, Spanish and English.

The IJPE welcomes diverse disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological perspectives. Manuscripts should focus critical pedagogy, multicultural education, new literacies, cross-cultural issues in education, theory and practice in educational evaluation and policy, communication technologies in education, postmodernism and globalization education. In addition, the *Journal* publishes book reviews, editorials, guest articles, comprehensive literature reviews, and reactions to previously published articles.

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All submissions will be reviewed initially by the editors for appropriateness to IJPE. If the editor considers the manuscript to be appropriate, it will then be sent for anonymous review. Final decision will be made by the editors based on the reviewers' recommendations. All process -submission, review, and revision- is carried out by electronic mail. The submissions should be written using MS-DOS or compatible word processors and sent to the e-mail addresses given below.

Manuscript Submission Guidelines

All manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the form and style as outlined in the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (5th ed.). Manuscripts should be double-spaced, including references, notes, abstracts, quotations, and tables. The title page should include, for each author, name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address and a brief biographical statement. The title page should be followed by an abstract of 100 to 150 words. Tables and references should follow APA style and be double-spaced. Normally, manuscripts should not exceed 30 pages (double-spaced), including tables, figures, and references. Manuscripts should not be simultaneously submitted to another journal, nor should they have been published elsewhere in considerably similar form or with considerably similar content.

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*There are two kinds of members - voting members and nonvoting members. Only the members who pay their dues before the election call are called Voting Members and can vote in all elections and meetings and be candidate for Executive Committee in the elections. Other members are called Nonvoting Members.

*Dues will be determined and assessed at the first week of April of each year by the Executive Committee.

*Only members of the association can use the University of Illinois Community Inquiry Lab. In order to log into the forum page, each member needs to get an user ID and password from the association. If you are a member, and if you do not have an user ID and password, please send an e-mail to the secretary: secretary@inased.org .

For membership information, contact:
International Association of Educators

c/o: Dr. Alex Jean-Charles
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