

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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