

RADICAL INITIATIVES WITH CASE STUDIES IN THE PREPARATION OF MULTICULTURAL TEACHERS

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Abstract

Research points to particular problems in the experiences of White teachers teaching children of color and diverse backgrounds because often they are unfamiliar with their students' backgrounds and communities. Additionally, research points to the educational value of linking students' lived experiences to their classroom learning. This paper presents the research-based findings of faculty who implemented a field-based "pedagogy lab" in an urban teacher preparation program. The lab offered teacher candidates opportunities to develop a deeper and a broader understanding of content and pedagogy, which resulted in enhanced specific content-pedagogical knowledge. The findings suggest new ways of preparing urban teachers.

Keywords: Field-based studies; multicultural education; pedagogy

Introduction

Research suggests that teachers should use their knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds to inform their pedagogical and curricular decisions so disciplinary-based learning opportunities are accessible to everyone in the classroom (Banks et al., 2001; Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2003; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Sleeter, 2005; Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000). Yet Hollins and Guzman (2005) reported that "barriers to [teacher] candidates' increased knowledge growth about cultural differences and ways of providing appropriate and responsive pedagogy to students from cultures other than their own included positivistic thinking, dualistic thinking, a belief in one right answer, and relying on personal biographies as guides to how to teach others" (p. 512). Given this situation, what if teacher educators used those barriers as points of departure for radically different pedagogical experiences so education-intended students could unpack the complexities of teaching children different from themselves? This paper shares research supported by the Teachers for a New Era project that explored a unique and radical intervention in how we prepare teachers for children

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historically underserved in public schools.¹ The findings direct teacher educators to the notion of a “pedagogy lab” where students of teaching can (a) unpack beliefs about children unlike themselves and (b) grapple with ways to integrate culturally-relevant pedagogy into disciplinary-based instructional activities.

Context of the Study

Preparing Multicultural Teachers at the University of Lake City

As teacher educators at the University of Lake City (ULC), our mission as an urban institution of higher education permeates our work with, and our expectations for, teacher candidates. The mission’s core guiding principle forefronts our commitment that educators licensed through our ULC certification programs “will demonstrate an understanding of the unique characteristics of diverse urban contexts, and issues of race, class, culture and language are kept at the forefront of equity considerations” (ULC - School of Education, 2003). This means that candidates completing our learning-to-teach programs “will have substantive knowledge about the varieties of urban cultures, the forces that maintain poverty, and the powerful historic and contemporary beliefs and traditions that support discrimination in society. They must understand how poverty, racism, and cultural traditions affect learning” (Section 1, para. 1).

Given these principles, our Learning-to-Teach Professional Sequence should offer teacher candidates bold experiences that provide opportunities to learn about, and push on, the structures that limit children’s learning. But the majority of teacher candidates are “White and middle-class, female, from suburban or rural backgrounds...[and] enter preparation programs with negative or deficit attitudes and beliefs about those different from themselves” (Hollins & Guzman, 2005, p. 511). In our state, like other states that require teacher candidates engage in some form of multicultural education coursework prior to licensure, the critical attributes of that knowledge-base are not specified (Akiba, Cockrell, Simmons, & Han, 2007). As a result, “many public school teachers who enter urban districts with more students of color, tell stories about their negative experiences with such students and also express sincere frustration about their teaching ineffectiveness” (Gibson, 2004, p. 1).

At ULC, all education-intended students must complete a 3-credit, field-based, course titled, "Introduction to Teaching" before they are admitted to the School of Education and their selected certification program. In that course, students explore teaching and learning in an urban context. They attend weekly class seminars and have a 50 hour, school-based experience in a Lake City Public School classroom. Three guiding questions shape the Introduction to Teaching course design: What does it mean to be a teacher for all students in urban schools? How do the multiple and often-conflicting purposes of schooling affect what teachers do and what students learn? What assumptions do I hold about urban schools, students, teachers and communities? We use this design because “exemplary teaching is more than a list of skills and methods [and] much of a teacher’s own personality goes into the lesson as well as her/his beliefs about the students, and beliefs about her/his ability to teach” (Ellison, 2007, p. 12). Journal writing, discussions,

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simulations, video tape analysis, and field assignments, help students unpack their future roles as teachers in urban schools. We assumed this curricular and pedagogical arrangement in our preparation program supported our mission.

Erroneous Assumptions about What Students Learn in the Introduction to Teaching Course

Students applying to the School of Education have to complete an admissions essay, which we thought revealed dispositions about how they perceived their role as a teacher in urban schools. We discovered, however, that students' admissions essays, regardless of the certification program they were applying to, offered pedestrian views of teaching and learning in urban schools. More often than not, their essays failed to reveal any awareness of the social and political structures that bear down on the children attending urban schools, any interrogation of their privilege within those same structures, or any insights on how their roles as teachers might re(shape) children's opportunities to learn. In fact, their exit portfolios often confirmed the tenuous relationship between teacher preparation programs and one's ability to teach in urban school; a situation well, documented in the literature (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Grant & Gillette, 2006; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Clearly, creating cogent links between preparation theories and teaching practices continued to challenge us as ULC.

As Valli (1992) warned, "All too often images of good teachers and knowledge about good teaching are left unarticulated, presumed to be part of a shared, but tacit, understanding" (p. xi). As such, preparation programs should offer candidates opportunities to reflect upon theoretical issues and examine their relationship to practical classroom application. More importantly, teacher educators must be mindful of how these opportunities to learn are presented because teacher candidates are active participants in the learning process and mediate the transfer of new knowledge through their past experiences (Lortie, 1975; Sikula, 1996; Zeichner & Gore, 1990).

At the same time, Hollins and Guzman (2005) have noted, students of teaching continue to seek "expert" answers. This was particularly true with the Introduction to Teaching students, who often essentialized every classroom observation and used their own schooling experiences to frame a "correct" response to every pedagogical debate and discussion. They had difficulty contextualizing any given situation and struggled to understand both the developmental nature of learning to teach and the process of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1987). Given their entrenched understandings about teaching and learning in urban schools, we needed to create a safe space where education-intended students could work through the knowledge and dispositional barriers that kept them from becoming the pedagogues we wanted for the city's children.

At the same time, we needed to work through our own programmatic barriers. Like most teacher preparation programs, ULC candidates traditionally acquire discipline-specific content knowledge and the historical and cultural foundations of diverse groups during their liberal arts and general education course experiences. Then they focus on attaining pedagogical expertise through their professional preparation experiences. The gap in this learning-to-teach structure forces pre-service teachers to bridge the two, more often than not without support from faculty in either arena. This gap in the learning-to-teach professional sequence is commonplace in most teacher-preparing institutions and has a long-standing history.

Two goals of the Teachers for a New Era (TNE) project address this learning to teach disjuncture. The first goal puts forward the need to explore how programs help candidates learn to engage with families and develop a repertoire of teaching strategies so children with a range of learning styles, abilities, and cultural backgrounds have effective access to schooling. The second goal addresses helping program faculty re-conceptualize the relationship between Letters and Science and School of Education course work and experiences so teacher candidates gain an integrative knowledge of the nature of a discipline (its premises, modes of inquiry, and limits of understanding) and how candidates can translate this knowledge and ways of thinking into learning opportunities for K-12 pupils (TNE, 2004).

With these conditions as context – the ULC mission, our teacher candidate population, and our position as a TNE site –we asked the question: What if students interrogated their ethnicity, gender, and social class then used their new ways of knowing to explore how culturally-relevant and responsive pedagogy could be used in the teaching and learning of history, mathematics, science, and English? Our response was to design and implement a 1-credit pedagogy lab, where students could make earlier and deeper connections between their Introduction to Teaching coursework and the disciplinary-based learning opportunities they would eventually offer children in the city’s schools.

The Intervention

The Pedagogy Lab: The Theoretical Foundations for a Radical Intervention

Banks et al., (2001) suggests that teacher educators provide learning opportunities that help students of teaching:

- (1) uncover and identify their personal attitudes toward racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups;
- (2) acquire knowledge about the histories and cultures of the diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups within the nation and within their schools;
- (3) become acquainted with the diverse perspectives that exist within different ethnic and cultural communities; and
- (4) understand the ways in which institutionalized knowledge within schools, universities, and popular culture can perpetuate stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups. (p. 6).

Thus, the first purpose of the Pedagogy Lab (henceforth referred to as ‘Ped Lab’) was to help students unpack their beliefs about children unlike themselves. Then we needed to provide opportunities for them to use what they were learning about culturally-relevant and responsive pedagogy in Introduction to Teaching to rethink disciplinary-based, instructional activities. Given the powerful influence of teacher candidates’ socialized beliefs about children of color and the need to fundamentally alter their teaching trajectory, we drew upon the theory of conceptual change to ground their pedagogy lab learning.

Conceptual change learning theory in the Pedagogy Lab.

Conceptual change learning theory puts forward the idea that people hold to their beliefs and understandings until they recognize discrepancies with new ideas and must reconcile any dissonance between the two. Learning then, involves an interaction between new and existing

conceptions with the outcome being dependent on the nature of the interaction” (Hewson, Beeth, & Thorley, 1998, p. 251). In teacher education, this means candidates must: (1) have an opportunity to consider why new practices and their associated values and beliefs are better than more conventional approaches; (2) see examples of these practices, preferably under realistic conditions; (3) experience such practices firsthand as learners; and (4) incorporate new ideas with ongoing support and guidance (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996, p. 23-24). This theoretical framework supports the use of case-based instruction.

Case-based instruction in the Pedagogy Lab.

Drawing from the students’ understanding that a *‘lab’* offers space to experiment and practice a field of study, we used teaching cases to frame our instruction in the 1-credit course. Research supports using cases to solve problems in education (Lundenberg, Levin, & Harrington, 1999). Case-based instruction asserts that a teacher’s pedagogical knowledge is contextual, interactive, and speculative (Clark & Lampert, 1986). In other words, a teacher’s pedagogy is situation specific, is informed by and informs their interactions with students, and, as a result, involves uncertainty. Cases then are a powerful pedagogical tool. In other words, case methods ~~help~~ candidates bridge the gap between theory and practice and develop skills of reflection and close analysis by engaging them in the process” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 103).

Teacher educators use teaching cases to bring the complexities of a classroom into focus and offer students an opportunity to connect theory with practice in a supportive environment. According to McDade (1995) the most important purpose of a teaching case is to create *‘realistic laboratories’* in a classroom so candidates can apply research techniques, participate in a critical analysis of the cases, and utilize their problem-solving skills. Cases that involve realistic classroom events and focus on issues of gender, ethnicity, race, special needs, and language provide students with opportunities to identify and analyze the hazards and potential instructional benefits of whitewashing students’ ethnic, gender, and social class. Applied to these types of cases, students of teaching can (1) develop critical problem solving skills, (2) engage in reflective practice, (3) analyze and make decisions in complex situations, (4) participate in active learning, and (5) develop as a community of learners (Merseth, 1991).

Cases become a more powerful pedagogical tool when coupled with an online learning environment like BlackBoard, Desire 2 Learn, or WebCT. In these environments, instructors can offer video or online cases then create resources so students can ~~access~~ relevant information as [they] need it and apply it to solving conceptual and theoretical problems” (Stenaas, 1999, p. 12). An online environment also allows highly verbal students as well as those less prone to speak, an opportunity to engage in a threaded, asynchronous discussion about particular scenes. Students’ responses, because they are posted and recorded, are now open to scrutiny by their peers.

Studying the Pedagogy Lab

The Participants

Nine students from the Introduction to Teaching class volunteered to participate in the Pedagogy Lab during the Spring 2008 semester. The 1-credit Lab met every other Friday

morning from 8:00-10:40am. The eight females and one male represented typical students of teaching – white, middle-class individuals from suburban or rural backgrounds. Two were parents of children; seven were under 25 years of age.

The Research Design, Data Sources, and Analysis

Our investigation of this pedagogical innovation was mixed-methods research. We examined how and what education-intended students experienced through the pedagogy lab course and how it affected their ability to develop culturally-relevant content and pedagogy. Data were generated through a document analysis of the newly created course syllabi, student and instructor interviews, and participant-observations during the lab. Data were also generated from students' work samples – their responses to each teaching cases in the course and their reflective writings about what they observed in their classroom-based field experiences. Interviews were digitally-recorded. Interview data and the participant-observer's field notes were entered into NVivo and then coded. In addition, students also engaged in a pre- and post-lab case analysis. Here students were asked to examine a particular teaching case and generate a pedagogically-based response at the beginning of the course. During the last lab meeting, these same students were asked to respond to the same case. Pre- and post-lab scores were compared.

Data from these multiple sources came together in patterns that allowed us to analyze what the students of teaching learned and experienced because of their involvement with the pedagogy lab. We used the analytic process of abduction (Agar, 1996) to structure our coding and analysis of the data. We started coding with broad sweeps across the generated data drawing on the theoretical tenets of this particular pedagogy lab model – the four foundational beliefs regarding teacher preparation put forward by Banks et al., (2001), conceptual change, and case-based instruction. Preliminary patterns emerged. A secondary analysis of these data revealed additional patterns tied to the students' learning and development as teachers. Three themes emerged from this process: (1) students' pedagogical content knowledge was strengthened through a deeper understanding of culturally relevant course content; (2) case based teaching and learning strategies enhanced preservice teachers' clinical reasoning skills; and (3) an increase in student pedagogical confidence. Themes were resituated in the data where we looked for connections, similarities, and negative examples. This process revealed three, radically new levels of teacher candidate learning.

The Findings

Three findings emerged from our analysis of the data. First, students made cogent links between the Introduction to Teaching course content and their fledgling pedagogical content knowledge across a variety of disciplines. Second, the value of case based teaching, noted in the literature, was confirmed; students developed more complex, clinical reasoning skills and, as a result, made more thoughtful and culturally-relevant responses to the cases. The third finding addresses the new levels confidence students experienced in their ability to think like a teacher because they were able to make connections among their Introduction to Teaching course, the cases used in the Ped Lab, and what they observed in their field experiences.

Radically-New Levels of Candidate Learning

The first finding addresses teacher candidates' richer and more contextualized links between their pedagogy and the diverse needs of pupils and how they used these links to develop science, mathematics, social studies, or English/language arts pedagogical content knowledge. In other words, this particular group of teacher candidates came to know the disciplinary-based content more broadly because they had a concurrent eye on how they might translate it in ways that drew upon children's ethnicity, gender, language, and social class. Students noted, for example, that reflection went beyond a cursory review of 'the lesson'. They began to ask questions like:

How are my actions in the classroom linked to my deep-seeded beliefs about a child's ethnicity? As their teacher, have I been a cultural anthropologist?
(Student AB, CRLab Field Notes, 3/07)

Am I being fair? Are students struggling with the lesson because I haven't made connections to their lives? (Student QR, CRLab Field Notes, 4/07).

Because students had different disciplinary-based majors, our discussions about teaching helped them see how they could adapt and expand a lesson to include multiple subject areas. Two students commented on this during an online, asynchronous posting:

I really liked the apartment hunting case that we looked at in class today. I could easily see how the project could be a great math lesson but I never even thought about how it also could lend itself to talking about issues of social justice.
(Student NW, CRLab Online Posting, 4/07)

I agree with you. When we talk in CURRINS 100 about integrating subject areas, I always thought that was something that would be easier in a Language arts classroom. In the lesson that we did today, I could easily see how talking about where students decided to live based on the budget that they were given could go into a discussion about poverty or inequities that exist in our society. (Student LB, CRLab Online Posting, 4/07)

The academic importance having teachers draw on students' lived experiences and make connections with disciplinary-based knowledge is well documented (see for example, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Doherty, Hilberg, Epaloose, & Tharp, 2002; Greeno, 1997; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson Billings, 1995; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; National Research Council, 2004, 2005; Sleeter, 2005). Thus, this finding suggests that students' pedagogical content knowledge was strengthened through a deeper understanding of culturally relevant, subject-specific, course content.

The Power of Case-Based Instruction to Foster Culturally-Relevant Teaching Practices

The second finding affirms the powerful pedagogical tool of case-based instruction. Each case helped students bring the complexities of a classroom into focus and helped each student connect theory with practice in a supportive environment. At the same time, each case had a

different intended learning outcome and each scaffold students to more complex thinking. The following passage highlights the instructor's careful selection of the cases:

The first teaching case was designed to explore teacher candidates' beliefs about children who live in poverty. Written using the guidelines put forward by Wasserman (1994), (1) Drawing the reader into the story during the opening; (2) Building the case around an event of consequence; (3) Elevating the tension between conflicting points of view; (4) Writing the story so readers grow to care; and (5) Making sure the case is believable, the first case asked students to evaluate a classroom and determine whether a white teacher was justified in preventing her class of African American and Latino students from presenting creative speeches in their own voice, which included swear and slang words not usually appropriate in public spaces. The intended goal was to have the all white group of ped-lab students engage in rich dialogue about teaching students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds and to explore boundaries and standards in teaching. The instructor kept the discussion on track with focus questions and made sure students attended to pertinent urban issues. During their online discussion, students demonstrated high levels of complex thinking as they integrated course content and their field experiences with their current thinking about being multicultural educators. A sample of this discussion is presented below:

When I think about nonstandard English in the classroom, I don't think it should be a practice that is used without guidance toward correct English. In our book by Pugach, there is a story about a teacher named Ms. Secret from Oakland, California. "Ms. Secret seems comfortable addressing issues of language use in a direct, upfront, and consistent manner with her students. She has set clear expectations for the use of AAVE and for the use of Standard English, and she expects her students to learn and use Standard English well so that they have the skills they need to be successful in the cultural world of education and work. At all times she is respectful of the students' first language." (Pugach, 2009, 228). I think that Miss. Secret has a great way of structuring her classroom with respecting other languages and embracing them, but also being honest with the students and teaching them that the language that is used in the working world is standard English, but to still embrace AAVE because that is an important part of who they are. There is a lot of controversy about accepting AAVE in the classroom, and you have heard my stance on it, what is your stance on the issue? (Student CD, Online Posting, 4/07)

This post elicited several responses. One student posted:

Before my field work, I would have said absolutely no slang or ebonics only standardized English in my classroom. But, when I was volunteering at a school there was a paraprofessional in our kindergarten class, she was your typical intimidating teacher from you know where. She would punish the children when they used any language other than what she called "proper English" she would tell the 4 year olds that they sounded like "thugs". I clearly remember one of the 4 year old boys asking her "Can I go use it?" which meant "can I use the bathroom", the teacher would not allow the student to go to the bathroom until he spoke "proper English", the child was near tears after repeating the same phrase

time after time, until the lead teacher overheard and stepped in and allowed the student to use the bathroom. That paraprofessional is no longer employed at that school. Understandably AAVE is not accepted in the “business world”, because Standard English is the primary language spoken, but there is a time and a place to use it, and it needs to be preserved and valued as any other language. (Student JM, Online Posting, 4/07)

Another student added to the conversation:

I see both of your points in this topic, AAVE is going to be present always, and we shouldn't discourage our students from abandoning their cultures. I like the way Miss Secret went about it in her classroom. Culture is to be respected and present. It needs to be welcomed and incorporated into the culture of the classroom. Like Miss Secret's classroom, there is a time and a place for home culture, and a time and place for classroom culture, and going right along with her example AAVE is accepted in the classroom and on rough drafts, but when it came to the final paper--well formed English needed to be used. This is an awesome way of including both cultures. We need to look at it like two different languages. If Susie speaks Spanish, it will probably help her to write in Spanish on the rough drafts and work out things in her head in Spanish, which is what she knows well. That's comfortable for her, but the teacher's goal is for the child to write a well formed English paper--to better prepare her for the world she will one day be out in. And that's a great teaching opportunity--to connect that home culture, what she knows, to the classroom culture, what she's aspiring to know. We are trying to teach, and we're trying to teach well. In order to do that, we need to respect our children. I haven't had categorically "tough" experiences as far as children and their home culture, but I have had instances. I don't want them, to completely throw away any part of their culture to the wayside in order to fit in better with society, as a whole. That's their roots--what has been instilled in them and they should cherish that, and furthermore they should be taught to celebrate that, and right along with that celebration we need to discuss with them the time and the place it should be used. (Student AB, Online Posting, 4/07)

The second case was a video case in which ped-lab students learned how to draw upon students' assets to better support their academic progress. The video, “What to do about Raymond,” was part of a comprehensive multimedia kit produced by teacher-development.com specifically designed for schools who face the challenges of students at-risk. The *Becoming a Star Teacher* series is designed to provoke discussion and analysis of Haberman's (1995) star teacher qualities. In this case, the star teacher quality that was being observed and evaluated was persistence in problem solving. Throughout the case, ped-lab students followed a teacher as he struggled to understand the nature of Raymond's behavior and find a workable solution. Ped-lab students got an opportunity to react to the teacher's actions or the actions the teacher failed to take and were able to make suggestions about what they thought should be done in the situation.

I pushed them to think about the classroom situation more critically as we viewed the video together. For example, in the first scene, the social studies teacher is giving a lecture on the prohibition era. Raymond has his head on his desk and appears to be asleep. At this point, I

paused the tape and asked the preservice students to talk about what was happening in the video. Immediately, students started to give responses that would explain why Raymond was sleeping in class. *–Raymond might have lots of responsibilities at night and he may be very tired when he gets to school,*” one student responded. *–Social studies could be a hard subject for him and he doesn’t like it,*” said another student. No one even considered the fact that the teacher’s instructional style could have been a factor in Raymond being disengaged.

I had the students step away from the video for a moment and we talked about our favorite classes while we were in school. After this discussion, we went back to the video and talked about the teacher’s lecture on the prohibition era as an instructional strategy. I had the students come up with alternative ways that same lesson could be taught and if that might make a difference in how students respond to it. The students came up with some very interesting, interactive ideas for the lesson. By the time we finished watching the video, students were able to look at student and teacher interactions and understand how both contribute to the learning environment.

The third scenario was an interactive case. Students seemed to like that case best, perhaps because it had internet hyperlinks, where they could tap additional information. As they read about this young, first grade, Hispanic student and his struggles in school, they made predications about what they would do if they were the classroom teacher. Then they could click on these links and access information about his home life and his background so they were better prepared when they talked with the parents. Other links let them talk with his other teachers. As they progressed through the case, you could see them saying, *–Oh, well that kind of changes things.*” It was a way for them to uncover their assumptions about this student, and his home life, and the school; assumptions they don’t necessarily know they have. (Ped Lab Instructor, CRLab Interview 5/2007)

The instructor went on to explain her pedagogical decisions using this particular case:

Unpacking these assumptions is critical in their development as multicultural teachers. Only then, could they make predictions about the outcome of the case. At each step, they wrote down what they were thinking. So when they talked to the parents and found out that neither spoke English, they changed their initial thinking and took a very different approach to the case. And because the focus teacher doesn’t have a link, and therefore can’t share the reasons surrounding her decision-making, it leaves a pedagogical space for the Ped Lab students to reconcile their original beliefs with their new thinking. (Ped Lab Instructor, CRLab Interview 5/2007)

The online environment allowed students to compare their thinking about the case with their classmates’ and school-based professionals’. It was as though students had superficial and temporal understandings of the concepts in their Introduction to Teaching course but their simultaneous participation in the Lab and their fieldwork brought their learning experiences together. One student highlighted these connections during the group interview,

I always got more out of the lab than just our Introduction course. In class, it was like, „here is the chapter’ and in lab we had really deep conversations about what

it means to be an effective teacher. Now I have an example for everything we covered in Intro. You really get a chance to see how the theory we are learning works in the classroom. (Student CD, CRLab Student Interview, 5/07)

This metacognitive thinking about these connections points to the third finding – new levels of confidence in learning to think like a teacher.

Developing Confidence and Learning to Think like a Teacher

Students developed a noticeable degree of confidence in their ability to think like a teacher because the vignettes mirrored what is observed in their classroom-based field experiences and underscored the application of the theories they were learning in the Introduction to Teaching course. As one student shared, *“It was eye-opening to realize how little some teachers do to try and level the playing field for all of their students. That realization made me feel much more confident in my own newly acquired skills”* (Student JM, CRLab Field Notes, 5/07). Students’ confidence levels became clear through their online discussion as they worked through the interactive case study. Their postings revealed high levels of complex thinking as they challenged each other’s postings and defended their own responses.

Unlike earlier class sessions, where students were anxious to find out the ‘correct’ answer, this last case provided them with opportunities to be confident in their own analysis and response. In their analysis, they determined that school personnel had failed the student. More importantly, they detailed their reasoning for that decision. For example, one student commented:

*I think my partner and I seemed to do a better job assessing Andres than the actual school officials. They took a 'wait and see' approach in order to take care of the situation. This approach will probably end up working as well as the “if you ignore the problem it will go away” approach that Andres classroom teacher seemed to be using. Everyone that was involved in Andres case just needed to be involved. I mean really involved. The parents were never fully-brought into the loop and they should have been. Just because they did not speak English was not an excuse. **Get a translator already** (emphasis in speech). (Student AB, CRLab Online Posting, 3/07)*

When asked to share thoughts about what they were learning, one student used his classroom-based field observations to highlight both his increased confidence but also the complexities in teachers’ pedagogical decisions:

Now when we are looking at a case and I’m asked to think like a teacher. I think, „yeah I know what I would do.’ But then I think, „I don’t know. Because when I was in Mr. Joe’s classroom and you have 35 kids, it is a little different.’ Or in Intro, we’re talking about our role with parents and at this site I am not even seeing where the parents are welcomed in the school and now, in this case, you are asking what I would do? (Student FB, CRLab Student Interview, 5/07)

This type of thinking highlights what they experienced in the case-based Ped Lab and suggests an increased depth in their learning to teach reasoning skills. Through their Introduction

to Teaching coursework, their participation in the Lab, and their field-based classroom experiences students developed the confidence needed to interrogate their beliefs, consider why new practices and their associated values and beliefs are better, experience such practices as learners, and develop new ideas with ongoing support and guidance (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). As such, in this study, linking a pedagogy lab to the foundational Introduction to Teaching Course, with its concurrent field experience, offers the potential to radically transform the way we prepare teachers at ULC.

Conclusions and Contribution to the Teacher Education Knowledge-base

This collaboratively designed pedagogy lab takes what we know about effective teaching practices for diverse learners and works backward to the learning-to-teach professional sequence (Sleeter, 2001). The findings from this project suggest that a pedagogy lab course structure develops a teacher candidate's awareness about the complexities of teaching and the need to use culturally-relevant practices. Institutionalizing the Pedagogy Lab structure provides a safe, pedagogical space to help students of teaching move beyond essentializing their own experiences with diverse students and offers them opportunities to develop the skills needed to work with multicultural learners.

The Pedagogy Lab, as a radical innovation in learning to teach, addresses many of the well-documented barriers in the preparation of multicultural teachers. The study's findings challenge us to (re)view teaching and learning across our programs and explore better ways of helping teacher candidates gain an understanding that there are cultural and worldview differences and commonalities between themselves and *other students*. Having this knowledge of others can surely facilitate communication between teachers and students of other cultures, which might lead to healthy relationships, student satisfaction, and positive learning climates for both teachers and students (Gibson, 2004, p. 2). In doing so, we better prepare teachers who reflect our mission and uphold our commitment to the children attending Lake City's public schools.

Documenting the effects of Pedagogy Labs and these changes in teacher candidate learning informs the development of future labs and contributes to the knowledge base on how best to prepare teachers for today's children. The findings also extend our understandings of "the conditions under which different conceptual and structural arrangements within programs are connected to various outcomes" (Zeichner, 2005, p. 748). By continuing this project in the coming academic year, and linking it with our TNE colleagues' work at other sites, we strengthen the teacher education research- and knowledge-base. These types of dialogues are particularly salient given the very public focus on preparing teachers who can offer culturally-relevant learning opportunities that support each child's academic achievement.

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