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Teaching for Diversity in Teacher Education: Transformative Frameworks

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Teaching for Diversity in Teacher Education: Transformative Frameworks

Abstract

This paper examines the practice and professional development of teacher educators engaged in diversity pedagogy in Canadian teacher education programs. Using a reflective inquiry combined with a self-study of teacher and teacher education practices (S-STEP), three educators discuss the complexity of their research and teaching experiences through the lens of Egbo's (2009) seminal text, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools*. These critical reflections provide the basis to contextualize praxis-oriented teacher education practices in rural and in urban contexts. Specifically, the discussions focus on how diversity pedagogy informed curriculum development and promoted trans-disciplinary educational praxis. These transformative frameworks provided the teacher educators with the necessary knowledge base and knowledge mobilization to introduce marginalization, oppression, and alienation of underrepresented populations to preservice and service teachers.

Cet article examine les pratiques et le développement professionnel des professeurs formateurs d'enseignants qui sont engagés en pédagogie diversifiée dans les programmes canadiens de formation des enseignants. À l'aide d'un examen de réflexion combiné à une auto-évaluation des pratiques d'enseignement et des pratiques de formation des enseignants, trois éducateurs discutent la complexité de leur recherche et de leurs expériences d'enseignement à travers le prisme du texte de référence d'Egbo (2009), *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools*. Ces réflexions critiques présentent une base pour mettre en contexte les pratiques de formation d'enseignants orientés vers la pratique dans des contextes ruraux et urbains. Plus particulièrement, les discussions se concentrent sur la manière dont la pédagogie diversifiée a informé le développement des programmes d'études et favorisé la pratique éducative transdisciplinaire. Ces cadres transformatifs ont donné aux professeurs formateurs d'enseignants la base de connaissances et la mobilisation des connaissances pour introduire la marginalisation, l'oppression et l'aliénation des populations sous-représentées aux enseignants en formation ainsi qu'à ceux qui ont déjà pris du service.

Keywords

teacher education, culturally relevant pedagogy, scholar-practitioner, scholarship of teaching and learning, self-study of teacher and teacher education practices

Cover Page Footnote

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Recognizing the steadily increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations in educational contexts, teacher education programs (TEPs) have responded by integrating multicultural education and culturally relevant teacher education pedagogy into curricula (Gay, 2000, 2003; Johnston, 2003; Kea, Campbell-Whatley, & Richards, 2006; Ragoonaden, Cherkoswki, Baptiste, & Desprès, 2009; Shariff, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, teaching a diverse, sustainable and globalized curriculum requires not only culturally relevant resources but also culturally literate teacher educators. For example, being a culturally responsive pedagogue is not just an issue of relating instructional techniques and/or adapting instruction to integrate assumed traits or customs of specific culture groups, it is acquiring a mindset that consciously seeks out and promotes diversity in the learning experience.

Within the scope of TEPs, transformative scholar-practitioners can offer a vast array of varied cross-cultural experiences, thereby directing preservice teachers to modify and to adapt the content of instruction and teaching styles to the historical and socio-cultural realities of their students. With proper training, curriculum, methodology, and instructional materials can address the existing diverse values and cultural norms of contemporary society.

As a response to this complex situation, this paper examines how two teacher educators and a doctoral researcher approached the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in their own respective teacher education programs. Using a self-study methodology, the authors from Western Canada and Eastern Canada explored the impact of their teaching and research experiences with Benedicta Egbo's (2009) seminal text, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools*. Karen and Awneet paid specific attention to the professional practices and ensuing development of teacher educators engaged in diversity pedagogy in TEPs. Victorina, who was working towards her doctoral degree, explored the theoretical impact of Egbo's transformative frameworks relating to her research in an urban-based TEP. In particular, discussions surrounding culturally responsive teaching and transformative praxis were undertaken followed by a foray into concepts of social justice, culture, and identity in a pluralistic society. Furthermore, focus was on understanding the multiple identities of Canadian students by promoting the development of culturally relevant materials which examine the impact of marginalization, alienation and isolation on cultural minorities, including Aboriginal populations. An ancillary aim was to analyze ways in which contemporary methods of teaching and learning could be transformed into a diverse, sustainable and global curriculum, inclusive of multiple perspectives which inform Canadian realities.

Recognizing and Respecting Multiple Cultural Identities in Canada

Culture is an extremely complex term, and the capacity to comprehend cultural diversity depends on understanding the concept of culture itself. Egbo (2009) defines culture as the knowledge, values, customs, attitudes, language, and strategies that enable individuals and groups to adapt and survive in their environment (p. 3). Fleras and Elliott (as cited in Egbo, 2009) define culture as encompassing a range of beliefs and values that define and generate behaviour, contribute to the security, identity, and survival of community members, and impart meaning and continuity during periods of social change. Since personal identity, shaped by historical and societal realities, is fluid and malleable, it allows us to make sense of who we are, the places we come from, and our relationship with others (James & Shadd, 2001). As an individual's identity is in a continual process of construction and reconstruction, the impact of negotiating one's identity is a significant and sometimes, traumatic experience (Dwyer, 1999;

Mogadime, 2011). For example, describing the collision of heterogeneous cultures, Bhabha (1994) used the term Third Space, as an in-between state of mind where an individual is in a “liminal state,” between and betwixt two cultures, belonging to neither one nor the other.

In keeping with Canada’s particular historical, social, political and cultural attributes which focus on multiculturalism, Egbo (2009) expands on Bhabha’s (1994) “liminal state,” state by identifying two types of cultures in Canadian society: primary culture base and secondary culture base. Most often seen in recent neo-Canadian families, she states that primary culture base is the world-view or cultural capital, including the first language (L1) that is acquired through home socialization. Secondary culture base is the dominant culture, including mainstream language (L2), that minority students must acquire through immersion in the school culture in order to survive in greater society. Researchers recognize that minority and Aboriginal students often negotiate these two culture bases in the classroom (Claypool & Preston, 2011; Shariff, 2008). Despite the fact that research emphasizes the validation of students’ backgrounds (primary culture base and L1), minority populations in educational contexts are still expected to adapt to a dominant culture reinforced by schools. This subtle imposition of the secondary culture base inadvertently devalues the primary culture base, thereby minimizing the value of the maternal language (L1) of the students (Egbo, 2009).

In keeping with the dichotomy between the primary and secondary culture bases, Kanpol (1991) focuses on establishing similarities within differences in order to gain a more empathetic understanding of the Other. Similar to Bascia (1996), Gay (2003) and Mogadime (2004), Kanpol posits that teachers’ histories and their relationship to race, class, and gender need to be acknowledged and considered within the educational sphere. In a prescient reference to twenty-first century issues, Kanpol’s focus on similarities within differences can be advanced as culturally relevant pedagogy for urban schools grappling with the complexities of heterogeneous populations.

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is representative of an approach that distances itself from mainstream practices by introducing multiple perspectives into educational practice (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Gay (2000) defines CRP as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 29). In this way, didactic materials can draw upon students’ heritage and identity, thereby validating their primary base culture.

In keeping with the perspective of promoting cultural responsiveness by emphasizing *sameness* as opposed to *otherness*, textbooks and lesson plans which incorporate intercultural and critical perspectives are necessary in a multicultural, multilingual, pluralist educational system. If a textbook presents a single perspective, that of the dominant group, minority students are likely to be underrepresented and their realities minimized in an educational environment. The classroom is where young citizens learn about the values and mores of their country. Hence, if only dominant values are taught, a devaluation of the linguistic and cultural mores of minorities occurs and marginalization persists. Thus, the ultimate challenge for TEPs is to prepare reflective practitioners with sophisticated understandings of diversity and culturally relevant pedagogy who can connect, commit, and practice an ethos of care with heterogeneous students and their families.

Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP)

Tracing its roots back to teacher inquiry, action research, and reflective practice (Kitchen & Russell, 2012; LaBoskey, 2004; Samaras & Freese, 2006), the emergent methodology of Self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP) examines the role of the self in the research project and “the space between self and the practice engaged in” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 15). Acknowledging Shulman’s (2004) concept of pedagogical content knowledge, self-study methodology promotes intersections between pedagogy, self and reflection in ways that generate particular meanings about phenomena. The resultant perspective considers knowledge to be context and culture sensitive.

Recognizing the primary emphasis on analysis of personal practice, self-study methodology recognizes how the “self in research design...can contribute to our understanding of teaching and teacher education” (Hamilton, Smith, & Worthington, 2008, p.17). LaBoskey (2004) states that “Self-study researchers are concerned with both enhanced understanding of teacher education in general and the immediate improvement of our practice (p. 818). According to Pinnegar & Hamilton (2009), a self-study of teacher education practice allows the researcher to “experience (..) practice in a holistic way constantly aware of the layers that our historical, cultural, personal and professional lives intertwine” (p. 47). This systemic approach in S-STEP facilitates the exploration of relationships between concentric circles of society, education and the self and others. Similar to the SoTL, S-STEP internalizes theory and practice through a systemic and cyclic process of inquiry that involves observing, analysing and action. In this manner, S-STEP progresses away from the *confessional* to valid, qualitative research which emphasizes how the SoTL impacts on practice and research (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Hubball, Clarke, & Poole, 2010).

Reflective Practice, SoTL, and S-STEP

The value of reflection and reflective practice has long been recognized in educational circles (Clandinin, 1998; Loughran, 1996; Schön, 1987). Reflection is an integral component relating to professional growth. In particular, narrative and reflective writing provide the ability to unpack hidden narratives by analyzing daily activities in the classroom. Gay (2003) states that stories are fundamental for understanding our approaches to teaching and learning, as “narratives are essential to the purpose of communicating who we are, what we do, how we feel and why we ought to follow some course of action rather than another ” (p. 5). Shulman (2004), a renowned SoTL scholar, hypothesized that pedagogical content knowledge is imperative for the creation of a knowledge base of teaching generated through research, experience, and reflection. His concept of signature pedagogies emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments that engage learners in personal change. Shulman (2004) suggests that place-based, contextualized, trans-disciplinary content that integrates the intellectual, moral and practical imperatives of society transforms teaching and learning from the mundane to a dynamic, engaging activity. The authors of this paper postulate that this type of transformative praxis impacts on the SoTL in diverse educational contexts.

This paper is a culmination of a long, three year story. By happenstance, the authors met each other at an academic conference in 2011. Realizing the similarities in their teaching (Karen & Awneet) and their research (Victorina), they decided to document their journey as they navigated the concepts of diversity in their practice. Despite the geographical distances, they

kept in touch via e-mail and, when possible, at conferences and professional meetings. Each author adapted the concept of reflective thinking to better meet her own individual needs. For example, Karen's previous work included writing about how personal history impacted on professional practice (Ragoonaden, 2010, 2013, 2014). In this instance, she kept detailed reflections of her practice and often referred back to her journal to understand and recognize the similarities in her personal and professional lived lives. Awneet employed a curriculum inquiry methodology (Short, 1991), in the form of theoretical inquiry, as a way to reflect on Egbo's ideas and the use of her text in a teacher education course. According to Short (1991), curriculum inquiry can take numerous forms, including ethnographic, narrative, and aesthetic forms, and is based on three basic principles: (a) it requires developing salient questions (asking), (b) engaging in inquiry (doing), and (c) constructing knowledge from this inquiry (thinking). Theoretical inquiry involves "creating and critiquing conceptual schemes by which the essential nature and structure of the phenomena can be better understood" (Grove & Short, 1991, p. 211). As a doctoral student, Victorina kept detailed reflective notes about how the analytic lens provided by Egbo's transformative frameworks informed her research about the practice and praxis of diversity pedagogy in TEPS.

Methodology

Part of the challenge of writing this paper across geographical distances as well as similar yet different conceptual frameworks, was aggregating the data collected by the three authors. Self-study by virtue of its focus on reflective inquiry provided a suitable methodology in which to situate this qualitative examination. Qualitative research situates moral discourse in the social sciences and the humanities by providing parameters for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, and class (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007).

The authors had been using Egbo's textbook since 2009 respectively. Then, at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education 2011 in Fredericton, they met at a paper presentation on critical race pedagogy. Recognizing the similarities in their practice and research, the authors decided to document their experiences with Egbo's critically infused *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools* using a collaborative self-study. In self-study research, faculty become participants, and "problematize their selves in their practice situations" (Feldman, Paugh, & Mills, 2004, p. 971). The collaborative self-study took place during September-December 2011 and January-August 2012. Karen used Egbo's textbook to teach a graduate course EDUC 526 Education and Diversity in the Winter term (January –April 2012); Awneet used Egbo's textbook in a pre-service course EDUC 410 Schooling in a Diverse Society in the Summer Term (July-August 2012). Victorina was using the textbook as part of the conceptual framework for her doctoral thesis. Data was comprised of self-reflective journaling, memos and notes with specific reference to Karen's and Awneet's practices as well as Victorina's research.

During the course of the 2011 and 2012 academic years, using an inductive approach guided by ideas about grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), documentation stemming from journals, notes and memos were thematically coded. Using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the authors' experiences with teaching and research in urban and rural contexts were used to generate plausible categories which characterize existing literature relating to culturally relevant pedagogy, curriculum inquiry and self-study. By constantly comparing their writing, the researchers were able to inductively develop categories. Data was coded according to categories that emerged from the journals, notes and memos. By virtue of this

process, the authors explored the connection between their life experiences, teaching, and learning. Furthermore, the self-reflective component provided a forum in which to examine their own power and privilege as educators and researchers. Through the lens of self-study with its focus on improving practice, researchers engaged in generative self-reflection, constructivist perceptions, and to move on a continuum towards awareness and acceptance of similarities within difference (Kanpol, 1991).

In phase one of the research (September-December 2011), the researchers generated data with an initially purposive sample to clarify the context of the self-study. In order to do so they individually answered the questions below:

- 1) What brought us, as researchers, together?
- 2) How did we use the textbook?
- 3) What are the observable and documented reactions, perceptions and disruptions encountered by teacher candidates and graduate students who use the text in practice and in research?

To begin, the initial coding was conducted within the first set of data coming from Karen's journal, memos, and notes. Through initial coding, *in vivo* codes (verbatim quotes from data) and/or important words or groups of words were identified: urban, rural, micro-aggression, practice, research and praxis. Once *in vivo codes* were identified, the constant comparative method was applied to the other authors' responses and the following categories emerged:

- 1) contextualization of practice and research in urban/rural environments (personal and professional stories),
- 2) microaggressions in practice and in theory ("I didn't realize" and privilege), and
- 3) transformative praxis (practice and research).

In phase two (Winter-Summer 2012), the authors kept detailed journals, notes and memos relating to their teaching and research experiences.

Finally, in phase three (September-December 2012), to decrease researcher bias, the authors came together and served as critical friends by reviewing each other's writing. A critical friend is essential if self-study is to involve critiquing existing practices and rethinking and reframing practice (Loughran & Northfield, 1996); a critical friend also provides essential support and maintains a constructive tone. (Denzin, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Schuck & Russell 2005; Strong Makaiau & Reilley Freese, 2013). The authors collaborated via e-mail to review, to code, to review, to refine, and to revise the data through an inductive process of constantly comparing the journal, memos, and notes. In this way, the researchers drew upon concurrent data collection and analysis by being actively engaged in a constant comparison of the data. This resulted in summary of their experiences.

The divide between rural and urban contexts was acknowledged. Through thematic coding of reflections and theoretical inquiry into experiences with Egbo's textbook, three salient themes upon which to build this research were identified: (a) contextualization of practice and research in urban/rural environments, (b) microaggressions in practice and in theory, and (c) transformative praxis (practice and research). In keeping with a reflective practice steeped in a self-study of teacher education practices, excerpts of each author's experiences and ensuing reflections are presented below.

Contextualization of Practice and Research in Urban/Rural Settings

Karen. Reflecting on my context in an urban/rural environment, I recalled that during my second year in a tenure-track position, my Dean informed me that I would be teaching a graduate class entitled Education and Diversity. Considering that I had been hired to conceptualize and to develop the French Education stream in the secondary teacher education program, I asked him why? His response: You are the most diverse person in this faculty, you are the best choice. As an individual of mixed heritage, Irish/Mauritian, I immediately embodied, as Bhabha (1994) rightly stated, the collision of heterogeneous cultures. In my liminal state, I recognized that I was being racialized and was powerless to counteract this subtle bias. Cognizant of Egbo's (2009) definition of primary culture base and secondary culture base, I reflected on how my eclectic cultural capital could inform the dominant mores, assumptions and biases of my professional and personal contexts.

As I methodically collected a series of articles written by American researchers like Banks (1997), Gay (2000), McIntosh (1990), and Nieto (2004), it became apparent that, in the literature, a Canadian perspective was sorely lacking. Finally through Egbo's textbook, I found the necessary juxtaposition of conceptual frameworks relating to critical diversity pedagogy and the ensuing application to Canadian realities as discussed by Fleras and Elliot (1999), Henry and Tator (2002), James and Shadd (2001), and Mogadime (2004). In effect, this textbook provided cultural relevant resources to preservice and service teachers, in many cases, introducing them to the growing cultural diversity and emergent Aboriginal epistemology in Canadian educational contexts.

Awneet. As a teacher educator in a distinctly rural TEP, which has as one of its guiding values, Social justice¹, I was prompted to reflect on and inquire into my own conceptions of social justice. I began to reconstruct, from a personal and professional perspective several stories, to borrow Clandinin's (1998) notion, which shape and continue to shape my perspectives on social justice in teacher education. These personal and professional stories relate to what Pinar (2004) calls the "autobiographical curriculum," which states that subjects of schooling must be centered on the individuals who undergo them. This meant that my own life experiences and histories as a first generation immigrant, who consistently negotiates identity in the hyphen between Indian born and Canadian raised, are essential to my understanding and teaching of social justice in a course within the program. The personal story of navigating identity, in what Bhabha (1994) refers to as the interstitial spaces of cultural plurality, informs in a powerful way my teaching of this course. First, it affirms for me the importance of situating learning within an autobiographical curriculum where the life histories and negotiations students undergo *become* the curriculum. The question of "who am I?," both for myself and for the students, becomes central and integral to the education of prospective teachers. Second, navigating identity reinforces the importance of disrupting preconceived notions of "identifying" others by refocusing on self-identification as a critical shift in the way that a social justice view is cultivated. A professional story which resulted in this work was related to two areas: the absence of a social justice perspective in my own teacher education and professional practice and the

¹ Social Justice is one of five program values in the TEP included in this self-study. Faculty members define social justice as a value where: Educators must be open to and respectful of diversity and difference. Educators require the ability to see beyond their own ways of defining the world and to be advocates of social justice and the inclusive classroom. A high value is placed on the ethical responsibilities of educators. (TEP Handbook, 2007/2015)

overt marginalization of groups and individuals due to the prevalence and persistence of hegemonic schooling structures. My professional experience of transitioning from teacher to teacher educator gave me the opportunity to examine my own practice as a teacher and recognize that I had little opportunity to express my passion and vision for a socially just classroom. The biggest challenges were the need to “fit in” with the professional norms of practice and follow government (majority) mandated structures and curriculum. I had little opportunity or space in the professional landscape of schools and classrooms to examine social justice issues and raise questions about decisions that were made, yet I strove to include, recognize, and affirm the students I taught. Schools, structurally, also presented limitations to enacting a socially just pedagogy. Timed classes, grade specific grouping, ministry mandated curriculum and assessment and a neo-conservative agenda around teacher effectiveness related to well-managed classrooms, non-controversial curricula and “providing” knowledge to students were all indicators of this very unjust kind of system in which I was trying to find my socially just self.

Reflecting on these stories, I turned to Egbo’s text as a guide for my teaching of social justice to preservice teachers. Of the many points Egbo offers, what resonated most was her focus on affirming identity and her examination of the hegemonic structures of schooling, specifically the “hidden curriculum” (p. 23). These points formed the basis of the course and provided the pillars of a social justice curriculum that responded to my own professional and personal journey. Furthermore, in the context of the rural setting of this TEP, these points provided effective prompts for raising questions about students’ experiences in schools as members of dominant groups.

Victorina. As a new doctoral student in an urban-based university, I searched for specific Canadian-based conceptual frameworks relating to diversity and teacher education. Egbo’s (2009) work on inclusive knowledge base, transformative frameworks for teaching for diversity and discussion of teacher self-knowledge, Cochran-Smith’s (2003) discussion of the multiple meanings of multicultural education, as well as Galluzzo and Pankratz (1990) studies on teacher education knowledge base, were among the works that I examined at that time. However, I found that Egbo’s work related the most with the research that I was planning to undertake: a study that examined the practice and praxis of diversity pedagogy in teacher education programs in Canada. A second research theme examined how this professional training prepared teachers to address the needs of the increasingly diverse student population in schools. Apart from the fact that Egbo’s work was steeped in Canadian realities, the textbook also addresses the challenges of teaching for diversity:

First, teachers and other educators at the front line of implementing progressive policies are not knowledgeable about the various theoretical and practical frameworks that can help them provide inclusive learning environments for their students. Second, more often than not, those who are familiar with these frameworks acquire only a cursory knowledge of a benign framework such as mainstream multicultural education, which provides only superficial solutions. Moreover, because such knowledge is limited in scope, the effects are typically minimal. What teachers need is access to an array of potent tools to enable them to meet the need of diverse students. (p. 96)

In light of the above stated, Egbo (2009) proposes not one but “an array” of potential frameworks for responding to diversity in Canadian schools. Acknowledging the limited impact of mainstream multicultural education, Egbo introduces the interrelated concepts of *negotiable*

and *non-negotiable knowledge* as authentic inclusive knowledge. *Non-negotiable knowledge* is “essential knowledge that all students must acquire in a diverse society” (p. 97) and has its fundamental objective to affirm diversity and people’s identity. This concept differs from other frameworks that advocate inclusive knowledge in pluralistic societies in that it recognizes that shared macro-values in contemporary society shape and mediate communications between and across cultures. The non-negotiable knowledge, as described by Egbo, has the following dimensions: critical multicultural/intercultural education; critical thinking skills; culturally relevant academic knowledge; information and communication technologies; global awareness; and indigenous knowledge. *Negotiable knowledge*, as opposed to the non-negotiable knowledge, is “context driven and is geared towards promoting specific local epistemologies and values” (p. 97). Its purpose is to teach students what they must know about their immediate communities. Egbo proposes the following dimensions of negotiable knowledge: community-centered values; local ecosystems; local history; community make-up, culture, and religion; and heritage, community language.

The concepts of negotiable and non-negotiable knowledge, as critical frameworks for inquiring into the “teaching self” are useful paradigms in educational contexts in pluralistic societies like Canada. As stated by Shulman (2004), they provide the necessary pedagogical content knowledge to inform practice and theory. These frameworks have the potential to provide the necessary guidelines to “empower (...) students, particularly those from non-mainstream backgrounds” (p. 96) and to transform curricula in higher education.

Microaggressions in Practice and Theory

Karen. Within a graduate environment, the critical pedagogy perspective put forth by Egbo (2009) provided the necessary parameters to examine and interrogate power and privilege in society. In keeping with Kanpol’s (1991) direction, my practice focused on similarities within differences in order to gain a more empathetic understanding of the Other. Like Gay (2000), Kanpol posits that teachers’ histories and their relationship to race, class, and gender need to be acknowledged and considered within the educational sphere. Consequently, I would begin my course with my own story. Yet, my voice was not the only one present. By telling my story, I also encouraged my graduate students to relay their own personal and professional stories. In order to facilitate this autobiographical inquiry, each student completed the Identity Wheel in Chapter 1 of Egbo’s textbook. Reminiscent of the Medicine Wheel of Learning (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, & Lane, 2004), the Identity Wheel asks respondents to reflect on the multiple facets of identity: gender, sexual orientation, age, education, religion, community, spirituality, etc. This proved to be a transformative experience for many.

Despite this shared autobiographical experience, as I lectured about race and equality focusing in particular on privilege and power, I began to recognize the overt and the subtle presence of microaggressions in my class. Banks (2012) describes these as the subtle, daily, and cumulative forms of marginalizations that negatively impact the mental and physical health of minorities. In my case, I noticed when discussing equity and parity, in particular McIntosh’s (1990) *White privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, that some of my students adopted a defensive posture, displaying subtle microaggressions, like the rolling of the eyes, cold stares, and folded arms. In some cases, overt macroaggressions, like shaking of the head, low whispers and once, a walk out by several dissatisfied students, were evident. Inevitably, these reactions culminated in teaching evaluations decrying my narrow-minded, rigid, inflexible points of view.

Awneet. Egbo's (2009) text provided numerous opportunities to engage students in connecting personal stories with their development as future teachers. While the Identity Wheel and "personal journey" activities led to self-identification and reflection, it became apparent that these activities also indicated those whose identities were affirmed by a set of dominant cultural norms. One student presented her family as "messed up" and not fitting the two heterosexual parent family constellation. This activity also revealed a majority Christian faith based population in the cohort. Within this dynamic, I was challenged to bring forward a criticality to the dominant group's understanding of cultural difference. For many students, their experiences with marginalization were viewed through the lens of mission work where privileges could be shared with the communities they visited as part of their faith based experiences. Through discussions and readings from Egbo's book, in particular the vignettes at the beginning of each chapter, I noticed in many students a shift I termed "I didn't realize" where students confronted their own privileged view of the Other which was unknowingly seeping into their view of their present colleagues and future students. This shift meant, for many, the realization that what they thought was an appropriate (and dominant) view of cultural difference only served to further oppress and marginalize cultural identities, relegating them to the realm of those who needed their help. In reading Peggy McIntosh's (1990) seminal paper, "Unpacking the White Knapsack," students expressed their realizations through tears, silence and reflective writing while others simply did not face or acknowledge how privilege blinded them to a sensitive and pluralistic view of the cohort in which they were a part and the future students, parents and communities in which they would find themselves as teachers. What became apparent was the recognition and the hard realization for some that dominant culture base needed to be problematized, deconstructed and repositioned if they were to effectively teach from a social justice, inclusive world view (Gay, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Furthermore, as a teacher educator in this study, I acknowledged the challenge of shifting the "mindset" of my TEP students to viewing difference as a strength rather than as a deficit.

Victorina. As I progressed through my research on Diversity Pedagogy, I recognized that the literature focused on the dire need to provide parameters to discuss cultural diversity in higher education particularly in TEPs. Within the scope of the salient concepts of *Non-negotiable knowledge* and *Negotiable knowledge*, Egbo (2009) suggests several progressive pedagogical frameworks that teacher educators can adopt when introducing diversity to students: diversity pedagogy, critical pedagogy, peace education, and transformative learning. Egbo maintains that good knowledge of several frameworks can enable teachers to adopt those that are best suited for their particular context and can help them comprehend and respond to microaggressions in class. For example, *Diversity pedagogy* is an emergent theory that puts emphasis on the interconnectedness of culture, cognition and schooling. *Critical pedagogy* has multiple strands, such as libertarian, radical, liberationist. One of the common threads of these conceptual frameworks lies in the acknowledgement that in order for change to occur, schools need educators who are reflective practitioners, who adopt democratic practice, and who are culturally literate. One of the reasons why *peace education*, another framework discussed by Egbo, has become part of the discourse about diversity, multiculturalism, and intercultural understanding is that the strategies presented support negotiated meanings in heterogeneous contexts.

Egbo (2009) positions *Transformative learning* as another useful framework when teaching for cultural diversity. The author maintains that the cumulated knowledge found in the above pedagogical frameworks would lead to a negotiated desire to bring about change on a personal and professional level culminating in transformative teaching and learning. There are

different conceptions of transformative learning, but the idea of a profound change in consciousness or perspective in the learner is a theme that is common to all these approaches.

The pedagogical frameworks mentioned above support the premise that teaching and learning about diversity requires an understanding of multiple perspectives. Furthermore, teaching in contexts of student diversity requires educators and students to take critical actions to change, modify and revise educational practices. This can be achieved by understanding and changing the “self” as a situated being. These discussions informed my research and impacted on my conceptions of teaching and learning about the complex challenges of diversity in teacher education programs in Canada.

Transformative Praxis (Practice and Research)

Karen. As I progressed through my teaching and my research, Egbo’s (2009) textbook provided me with a better understanding of the complex historical layers of Canadian society, starting with the acknowledgement of the “unique position of the First Nations Peoples as premier inhabitants of the land” (p. 48), followed by First Contact in the 16th century, the ensuing French and British Imperialism and consequently, the colonial and post-colonial immigrant realities of the 21st century. Teaching in this globalized, diverse cultural and linguistic demographic of Canadian society, I recognized not only my liminal state but the liminal state of all the students enrolled in the courses I was teaching. In many cases, varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds were brought to the forefront of the class discussions relating to identity and culture. These historical artefacts were juxtaposed with the cultural and linguistic diversity present in the Indigenous cultures of Canada. Furthermore, Chapter 2 of this textbook aptly interweaved the traumatic experiences of First Nations Peoples, detailing the impact of colonialism, the quest for self-determination and just educational and societal policies. Egbo refers to Pierre Trudeau’s “seminal proclamation” (p. 44) in the Statement of the Canadian Prime Minister to the House of Commons, October 8, 1971, that Canada is a country with two official languages but no official culture (pp. 44-45) and, most importantly that, within this cultural mosaic, Canada’s diverse First Nations Peoples represent a distinct societal demographic.

The culturally relevant historical facts and critically based frameworks introduced in the textbook promoted and facilitated the necessary knowledge base and knowledge mobilization to introduce and to discuss marginalization, oppression and alienation of underrepresented populations in schools and communities in Canadian society. In particular, these discourses made allowances for, and facilitated reflections on identity and relationships to the Other in rural/urban educational contexts.

Awneet. In Chapter 5, Egbo (2009) presents the transformative framework of culturally responsive pedagogy by including a checklist for culturally relevant curriculum. The activity focuses on two dimensions of diversity pedagogy as outlined by Egbo: teacher pedagogical behaviours and student cultural displays. The checklist addresses the first dimension by providing students a framework for reviewing, assessing and rationalizing the use of children’s fiction and non-fiction texts according to four categories: message, authenticity, language, and illustrations. In utilizing the checklist, preservice teachers confront the subtle and sometimes explicit portrayal of stereotypes and cultural dominance conveyed to children through language, images, and assumed norms commonly found in curriculum materials. Egbo encourages preservice teachers through the use of this checklist to challenge institutional hegemony and

disempowerment of individuals and groups by interrogating texts and curriculum resources for hidden messages, misrepresentation, and overt stereotypical images.

A critical “space” emerged as a result of this activity which allowed me as the instructor to position diversity focused pedagogy at the *center* rather than as an “add on” or in the periphery of what teachers ought to do (Nieto, 2004). Building a repertoire of culturally relevant literature and resources was viewed as critical in constructing and designing lesson plans for practicum. As MacDonald (2005) suggests, promoting a social justice view in future teachers is effective only insofar as it can be applied in the practical work of teachers. I found, through observing students’ shifts as they worked through this activity, that a constructive and critical discourse emerged about how curriculum plans and materials could better reflect race, ethnicity, First Peoples, sexual orientation, language, culture, class, and religion, and, more importantly, why this was necessary. Within this space, I also recognized reluctance in some preservice teachers to include diversity focused curricular materials in their practicum, with one student stating that if there were no First Nations students in the class, she could not see the relevance of including First Nations stories in her teaching.

Victorina. As a doctoral researcher, Egbo’s (2009) book provided me with a contextualized overview of diversity in Canadian schools and in particular the controversy surrounding multicultural education. In an effort to add dimension to multicultural education, Gérin-Lajoie (2008) states that “when we look at the situation that currently prevails in schools, it is important to consider the history of racial, ethnic, and linguistic homogeneity and heterogeneity” (p. 14). In fact, Moodley (1995), like Egbo, discusses the dichotomy of multicultural education:

What is understood by the term multicultural education is indeed varied, both in terms of theory and practice. Since its inception, it has evolved through a range of interpretations as to what it is and what it should be. Multicultural education has been said to have the potential for reinforcing or challenging hegemony (Sleeter, 1989). It has also been extolled as a practicable alternative to current educational practices or dismissed as a palliative for the cultural and social inequalities in Canadian society. (p. 808)

It is clear from the above definition, that progressive educational literature is seeking a critical approach to multicultural education representing the more complex and multilayered realities of contemporary society. In keeping with this train of thought, Jacquet (2008) emphasizes that multicultural education is usually viewed from one of two basic and contrasting perspectives: the social-pathological and anthropological. The first perspective views the cultural background of minority students as the sources of a “problem” that needs to be fixed. The second, to which Egbo adheres to, puts emphasis on equal respect for all cultures, based on the anthropological notion of relativism. Within my research, I noted that teacher candidates are often called upon to negotiate several different meanings and levels of interrelatedness of conceptual frameworks on diversity in the Canadian context. Egbo’s book, by introducing a plethora of frameworks (critical pedagogy, diversity pedagogy, transformative pedagogy and anti-racist pedagogy) in TEPs provides multiple direction and epistemological approaches to explore the meaning of the self, society and the Other in a variety of educational landscapes.

Conclusion

In this new millennium, Canadian society is undergoing a rapid transformative process. The emergent and increasingly diverse racial and ethnic demographic has important implications for defining what it means to be Canadian (Ungerleider, 2009). Since evidence of discourses of cultural protectionism is apparent from the East coast to the West coast of Canada, it is of vital importance that questions pertaining to cultural diversity be addressed in Teacher Education programs. Post-secondary programs share the responsibility of ensuring that policies, practices, and structures are equitable and responsive to the specific needs of the distinct populations of Canadian schools. TEPs are natural sites to develop coherence around transformative pedagogy which support teachers as they navigate the challenges of inclusive and diverse environments (Banks 1997; Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell, & Middleton, 1999; Nieto, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). As Mogadime (2004) explains, “transformative pedagogy aims to redress the experience of marginality which students of colour experience in mainstream school curriculum which overlooks or undermines the histories of people of colour” (p. 1). In this way, transformative pedagogy brings the margins to the centre of the curriculum (Mogadime, 2011; Nieto, 2004) emphasizing an autobiographical curriculum (Pinar, 2004), thus facilitating the conceptualization and the development of culturally relevant critical discussions and didactic materials in TEPs.

Within the framework of a S-STEP practices, culturally relevant pedagogy can provide scholar-practitioners and students with the opportunity to reflect on power and privilege in contemporary society. For two teacher educators and a doctoral researcher as well as the students they were teaching and researching, Egbo’s (2009) *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools* provided the necessary culturally relevant capital and habitus to interrogate and examine the normative perspectives of education. These critical reflections provided the basis to contextualize praxis-oriented teacher education practice and research in rural and urban contexts. We stipulate that Egbo’s text emphasizes the intersection of theory and practice, research and pedagogy, the self and the Other with the intent to discover the hidden personal and professional narratives about education, school and education. Educators need to be sensitive and aware of other perspectives which are possible, legitimate and representative of a heterogeneous society. In this respect, self-examination and reflection become tantamount to understanding and accepting difference and Otherness in educational contexts.

On a last note, the authors acknowledge the impact of Egbo’s (2009) *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools* on the creation of pedagogical content knowledge infused with intellectual, cultural and moral imperatives (Shulman, 2004) informing the “complicated conversations” of curriculum (Pinar, 2004) leading to the transformation of the scholarship of teaching and learning in Teacher Education programs (Hubball, Clarke, & Poole, 2010).

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