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IDEOLOGICAL BECOMING: INTERN TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF
BECOMING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHERS

By

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B.A. University of Louisville, 1995

M.A.T. University of Louisville, 1997

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

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A Dissertation Approved on

July 22, 2015

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the students
of color and teachers of color who have been
marginalized by our educational system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking my advisor and Chair, Dr. Lori Norton-Meier, for all of her support and guidance for the past five years. It was Lori who first introduced me to ideological becoming and my thinking has forever been changed. She also never gave up on me and she consistently pushed me to share my experiences through this process. I would also like to thank my committee members: Dr. James Chisholm, Dr. Shelley Thomas, and Dr. Kathy Whitmore. I really appreciate all of the feedback and resources you have provided me and for working around the awkwardness of Skype and email communication. Also, I cannot express how grateful I am for all of the support my partner, Dr. Milton Brown has given me over the years. He has been my rock, keeping me grounded and providing a listening ear and advice when I needed it. In addition, I want to thank my son, Patrick Mooser for his unconditional love and support and for simply being proud of me. Another key person I would like to thank is my friend and colleague, Dr. Marjori Krebs. Marjori has been another source of inspiration for me and encouragement. She was not about to let this opportunity slip me by and I cannot express how much I appreciate all that she has done for me. I also want to thank my dear friend, Lillian Santos for so beautifully recreating my model of Ideological Becoming for Culturally Responsive Teaching from a sketch I had drawn. It looks truly amazing! Finally, I want to send a sincere heartfelt thank you to all of the teachers who participated in this study. They gave up a lot of time in order to share their experiences with me and it is because of all of them that I do this work.

ABSTRACT

IDEOLOGICAL BECOMING: INTERN TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHERS

Sonya Burton

July 22, 2015

This dissertation explored the ways that teachers on an intern license who have been recruited by a Teacher Recruitment program experience ideological becoming into culturally responsive teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States. Bakhtin's theories on ideological becoming and authoritative and internally persuasive discourses frame this study with emphasis on the experiences that caused intern teachers tension and helped them make culturally responsive teaching practices an internally persuasive discourse. I used narrative inquiry methodology to discern intern teachers' stories and experiences.

I interviewed 5 intern teachers teaching in elementary classrooms in the Four Corners region of the United States. Data collected in this study included interview transcripts, artifacts, and two surveys. Findings indicate that ideological becoming into culturally responsive teachers starts long before intern teachers decide to join an alternative licensure program and intern teachers who were experiencing successful becoming had a range of experience with diverse groups of people and coursework on diversity and social justice issues. Also, intern teachers of color brought many of the discourses for culturally responsive teaching with them as internally persuasive

discourses because of their own experiences being marginalized by the educational system. This study demonstrates the need for recruiting more teachers of color as well as requiring diversity coursework and experiences for admittance into teacher education programs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Why can't you see me?
I'm standing right in front of you.
You say you stand for me and
In the same breath you ignore me-
By breaking me-
Down
Down to a single set of statistics
Test scores
And generalizations
You don't know me
You choose not to know me
Because knowing me
Would be too difficult
Knowing me would mean
That you are doing things all wrong
That maybe I belong
To a different song
A tune
Not so subdued
A tune with music that has nothing
To do with you
I am not your next article
Or your next book
I am not your next experiment
"let's see what happens to the poor
kids if..."
You talk of my survival
While killing me
Slowly
Silently
Stripping me
Of my culture,
My self-esteem and most
Important, my humanity.
Why can't you see me?

You talk of building community and then
you teach me
To assimilate
And participate
In multiple systems you have in place
Hoping I won't recognize
That hidden under your disguise
is not democracy and I am not free-
This is your legacy-
Built on whiteness
Sameness
& difference as a deficit
because difference is dangerous.
You are capitalism
Dressed in a suit
You determine what I need
Just by looking at me
On a piece of paper
Non-white- check
Below the poverty line- check
Illiterate- check
Your answer w/out
Even knowing the question
Is to feed me a one size fits all
Program
My indoctrination
To a schooling where there
Ain't no mental stimulation
So I ask, "When do I get my education?"
I'm not talkin' about education in a box
Where textbook publishers decide
Whose values are worthy
And whose are not
To the point that these values
Are stuffed down my throat
Day after day, until I choke

on my own tears
because everything I know has been
obliterated
has disappeared

So don't act like you know me
You only know what you want me to
be
I am your dutiful soldier
Following orders
never questioning
The reality you bestowed on me
The world on my shoulders
You train me to believe
if I just work hard
I too, can achieve
the American Dream!
Dominant culture's most effective
Strategy
Depositing in us all-
"the national myth of
Equality, democracy"
In the land of the free
Yes, I too have the opportunity
To exploit the poor

And give to the rich
A backwards
Robin Hood
A "kleptocratic" witch
But what you did not bank on
In this misguided system
Is me
Finding knowledge
My own re-invention
A knowledge
From experience
A Dialogue
With others
Transformation of an unjust world
With love and
Humanity at the center

Love so strong
Cultures come together
My goddess to your god
sisters and brothers
a multi-cultural celebration
A beautiful truth
So, why don't you see me?
Because I see all of you!

"Why Can't You See Me" was written as a response to the disconnect I experienced between university life as a Teacher Educator in Louisville, Kentucky and the reality the children from the community in which the university was situated were engulfed in on a daily basis. Conversations about what is best for children living in poverty and those marginalized by the system took place consistently within the walls of the university in which I taught. However, I noticed that theory was not followed by praxis; and we were more often than not, ignorant to the real issues and concerns of the students and their families in the community. Culturally responsive instruction and multi-cultural education was reduced to "taco night" or something similar as a celebration of diversity; and my students frequently shared their frustrations around the inconsistencies

of what was being taught and what was being practiced. In fact, through the critical service learning components included in the framework of my courses, students were learning how the most marginalized in Louisville's West End felt about the structures in place which claim to work for them in order to create more equitable conditions but more frequently, worked against them by using a deficit lens to describe why they were not successful within the system. The narratives of these families were very different from the truisms my colleagues and most of my students, who were predominantly white and Middle class, purported to understand about them. Although my context has changed since the writing of "Why Can't You See Me?," the disconnect that existed in Louisville permeates my work in the Four Corners region of the United States as well.

I currently work in the Four Corners region of the United States as a Teacher Educator at the University of Four Corner's branch campus that is located there. The Four Corners region consists of four states that meet at a quadripoint where the Four Corner monument is located. These states include the southwestern corner of Colorado, the northwestern corner of New Mexico, the northeastern corner of Arizona, and the southeastern corner of Utah. This area of the United States is occupied and in most cases belongs to Native American nations. Tribal lands that exist in the Four Corners region include the Dine (Navajo), Hopi, Zuni, and Ute. It is a beautiful area in terms of the natural landscape of desert and red rock and the rich, diverse culture that its people embody. This beauty, however, is contradicted by the historical oppression that has plagued the Native American within the borders of the United States since the white man encroached on their lands hundreds of years ago and continues to be perpetuated and normalized to this day. There are layers of injustice to peel back and examine but this

dissertation research will focus on the institution of education and its role in maintaining the status quo and continuing to cripple indigenous peoples and their culture.

The Native American people in this area feel a deep sense of pride toward their language and traditional cultural practices but because of forced assimilation to Western culture and beliefs, including the usage of the English language, many of these tribes are facing a real fear of extinction or what Gabriel Horn (2003) coined cultural genocide.

Horn's description of cultural genocide fits well in this context. He writes:

I know that genocide remains the most perverse human act. It eradicates entire peoples. It annihilates whole cultures. It rips beauty, wisdom, and understanding from the world and robs a people of its identity. Thus, when it comes to the act of genocide, I also know there can be no alternative to finding ways to fight for life.

As long as there are those among us who believe in the old ways of seeing and being, there can be no surrender to genocide. Ever! (p. 75)

The "fight for life" is a real way of life for the indigenous people living in the Four Corners region of the United States. Although there are real efforts at the revitalization of language and culture within these tribes (McCarty, 2002); the educational institutions that serve their children at every level are struggling to provide an education that builds on these efforts and at the same time prepares students to live in a global world. At a national level, the state in which this dissertation study takes place is one of the lowest performing states in the United States, with Native American students falling below all other racial/ ethnic groups (NAEP, 2013). The area of the state where the intern teachers in this study teach is one of the lowest performing areas in the state on

standardized tests, including dismal performance in reading, writing, and math (NMPED, 2013).

Students' low performance on standardized tests can be attributed to many factors. Two of those include a high turnover rate of teachers and a consistent teacher shortage which leads to the recruitment of teachers from all over the country in order to fill positions within the schools. The Dine County School (DCS) district currently has 44 teaching positions sitting vacant and they are well into the third month of school. The teacher shortage has created the need for Dine and the surrounding school districts to hire a large population of teachers on an intern license, which will allow teacher candidates to teach without teaching credentials for up to two years while taking coursework in an alternative teaching program for licensure. The teacher shortage has created the opportunity for organizations such as Peace Corps and Teach For America (TFA) to become permanent fixtures in the Four Corners region educational system landscape with their recruitment and placement of teachers. One such Teacher Recruitment Organization (TRO) has a partnership with the University of Four Corners and most of their intern teachers apply to UFC's Master's with Alternative Route to Licensure Program, if they live in close proximity to the campus.

The recruitment of teachers from outside of Four Corners region produces additional challenges and issues because a majority of these teacher candidates are similar to my students in Kentucky: white and middle class. They often do not know much, if anything at all about the students and communities in which they will be teaching. The trend of hiring white, middle class teachers is not new and it has produced a demographic imperative in the United States (Garcia, Arias, Harris-Murri & Serna

2010). The population of students in the public school system has become more and more diverse. The diversity described in most research is often synonymous with race, ethnicity, and/or culture (Grant & Gibson, 2011). Although the student population continues to diversify, the demographics of the teachers who teach these students remains homogenous, with an overwhelming number of Teacher candidates coming from a white, middle class background (Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Gay & Howard, 2000; Milner, 2006; Sleeter, 2008). In 2000, Gay and Howard analyzed figures reported by the U.S.

Department of Education on the demographics of teachers and found:

86% of all elementary and secondary teaches are white / European Americans.

The number of African American teachers has declined from 12% in 1970 to 7% in 1998. The number of Latino and Asian/ Pacific Islander American teachers increased to 5% and 1%. Native Americans made up less than 1% of teachers.

(pp. 1-2)

2007- 2008 demographics continue to demonstrate similar patterns with very little change. The National Council of Educational Statistics (2009) published teaching demographics in public elementary and secondary schools which demonstrated

83% of elementary teachers and 84% of secondary teachers are white / European Americans. Black and Hispanic teachers each make up approximately 7% of the teaching population. Asian teachers continue to represent only 1% of the teaching force; and Native Americans and Pacific Islanders less than .5%.

This data is alarming but even more troubling are the projected demographic data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau that indicates by the year 2040, nonwhite students will make up more than half of the population in K-12 schools, continuing the

“demographic imperative” (Banks & Banks, 1993; Cross, 2003; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Howard 2003; Nieto, 2000) of an increasingly diverse student population and a predominantly white teaching force.

The issue of the demographic imperative continues to be one of great importance as researchers and educators analyze the poor educational attainment of students of color and students with diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Many researchers contribute the low performance of students of color and low socioeconomic backgrounds to the cultural mismatch between the teacher and the student (Villegas, 1988). The culturally constructed teaching and learning practices in schools provide greater access to academic learning for the privileged than for those from disenfranchised cultural and ethnic groups (Hollins, 2011). Children who are English Language Learners may be at a bigger disadvantage due to the disconnect between the use of language in the home and the use of language at school. For example, children who have similar language patterns at home as they do school bring this background knowledge with them. This group of students, who are typically white, middle class, and Anglo American, experience less miscommunication from differences in language and have far greater success academically (Jordan, 1985). Cultural mismatch is of great concern to teacher- educators as they undertake the work of training white teachers to work with a diverse student population. This is a challenge for many Schools of Education because Professors and Lecturers at the university level often mimic the same demographics that concern them in K-12 education.

My work in the Four Corners region is problematic for a couple of reasons. First, I am a white Teacher Educator working in an area of the southwest that is predominantly

Native American. Second, the student population within the Dine County public school system and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools on the reservation is predominantly Native American but the population of students graduating from UFC's Teacher Education program in Dine is predominantly white. So, in essence, I am a white woman, teaching mostly white teacher candidates to teach Native American students. These facts I do not take lightly, especially in an area where historical trauma is an open wound that needs much more time to heal.

Purpose of This Study

In their book, *Widening the Circle*, Klug and Whitfield (2003), emphasize the need for teachers to know all of their students. This background knowledge is extremely important for non-Native teachers teaching Native students due to the cultural dissonance often experienced by Native students in their classroom. Using "one size fits all" programs will not work. "We can only accomplish this if we understand and respect the cultural values, mores, and ways of knowing of our native students...we must be aware of and sensitive to the strengths, needs, and potentialities of our Native American students" (p. 13).

Culturally responsive pedagogy has been offered as a solution to the disconnect or "cultural dissonance" experienced by Native students in the classrooms of non-Native teachers. According to Ismat (1994) there are eight characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive pedagogy (1) capitalizes on students cultural backgrounds; (2) is good for all students; (3) is integrated and interdisciplinary; (4) is authentic and child centered; (5) develops critical thinking skills; (6) incorporates cooperative learning and whole language strategies; (7) is supported by staff development

and preservice preparation; and (8) is part of a coordinated, building-wide strategy. The actual implementation of these characteristics often have a lot to do with teacher perceptions and expectations (Carter, 2005), and for many schools, Sousa (1998) points out, “teaching and schools have changed little as old practices die hard” (p.1). The importance of teacher perceptions and identity cannot be overemphasized here. Hollins (2011) discusses the importance the role of culture and socialization play in teacher education. She states,

Teaching and learning are cultural constructs influenced by social norms, values, and practices that are evident in the curriculum and everyday social discourse in formal education from preschool through graduate school...during the socialization process some students are prepared for positions of power and privilege and others for positions of subordination” (p. 105).

In order to break the cycle of perpetuation and preservation of the dominant ideology in learning to teach, teacher educators need to implement strategies that help preservice teachers and intern teachers develop teacher identities that support diversity and culturally responsive teaching practices. This process should involve providing experiences that allow teachers to struggle with ideology different from their own because it is this struggle that will help teachers wrestle with ideas of difference, power, and privilege and form new understandings about the world (Bakhtin, 1981).

There is a plethora of research studies describing culturally responsive pedagogy and more and more research is surfacing that helps Teacher Educators understand how to teach preservice teachers to become culturally responsive teachers (Ball & Tyson, 2011; Gay, 2000; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). There is also some

research that describes how intern teachers feel about their university coursework (Carter, Abrein-Beardsley & Hansen, 2011). What is not as clear is how non-Native teachers, and in this case, intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive teachers. More specifically, what experiences do intern teachers find most beneficial to their development. For example, those that produce the most struggle, and what do they perceive as obstacles to providing an education that is culturally responsive? Intern teachers in New Mexico receive training from a number of institutions during their 2 year time commitment, including the TRO Summer Teacher Training, university training, ongoing professional development through TRO, and mentoring and professional development through their school districts. This information would be useful to all of the institutions that work with these teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States.

Research Questions

My dissertation research hopes to provide insight on how Teachers Educators can support intern teachers as they learn to implement culturally responsive teaching practices. The questions that follow will guide my study:

1. How do intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States?
 - a. How do intern teachers understand the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy?
 - b. What factors, beliefs, and experiences contribute to this understanding?
2. What are the challenges that intern teachers face in the Four Corners region as they learn to implement culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms?

- a. How do intern teachers negotiate struggle/ tensions between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses in their work as teachers?
3. What experiences have been most beneficial in their growth in becoming culturally responsive teachers?

Conclusion

My work in the Four Corners region of the United States has helped me experience the world in a way that deepens my understanding of systems of oppression and the role that education plays in silencing and marginalizing students of color and those living in poverty. As a white Teacher Educator, my privilege becomes clearer to me every day as I work with teacher candidates and diverse student populations. My responsibility to work against these factions and to “see” others also becomes clearer.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“What you believe influences how you teach and why you teach particular things.” Chin

Ee

This study draws on three theoretical perspectives to shape the framework for studying the experiences of intern teachers as they learn to be culturally responsive teachers: sociocultural theory, Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory on ideological becoming, and critical perspectives of education.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory is an appropriate framework for this study because it “focuses on how the various settings in which teachers learn- university courses, student teaching, schools and classrooms, mentoring relationships- enable and constrain their adoption and use of new knowledge and practices and their ongoing learning” (Feiman-Nemser, 2008 p 700). Intern teachers in the Dine area receive teacher training in a variety of settings and sociocultural theory will allow for the examination of their experiences in each of these settings.

Sociocultural theory emphasizes that teaching and learning are processes that occur in a social, cultural, and historical context where people create and negotiate meaning together (Vygotsky, 1986). This process is not neutral or value-free because it is rooted in cultural ideas and beliefs (Gee, 2012) and it is mediated by language and other symbol systems in which we have access (Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Additionally,

Borko and Putman (1996) describe learning as “an active, constructive process that is heavily influenced by an individual’s existing knowledge and beliefs and is situated in particular contexts” (pp.674-675). Thus, Vygotsky (1986) argued that the context must be investigated in order to understand a person’s individual development. This is an important consideration when training teachers for a couple of reasons. First, teacher candidates enter schools of education with fully formed ideas about the world based on their previous experiences. Second, it is through this already developed lens that they will view and interpret new ideas, negotiate and modify their beliefs, and possibly synthesize them with the old.

Building on Vygotsky’s work, Lave and Wenger (1991), advocate for a model of “situated learning,” that is connected to a social “community of practice” from real experiences in the world. “Situated learning” requires coparticipation in the making of meaning within a specific setting. Gee (2005) finds the use of the term “community of practice” to be problematic in that it paints a picture of “belongingness” or “membership” among the people participating, which is not always the case. “Community of practice” brings up questions of inclusion and exclusion; who is included in this community? Who is excluded? Are there varying degrees of inclusion and exclusion? Gee offers “semiotic social spaces” as an alternative term to describe situated learning. Learning is indeed social and it takes place in different situations but the participants are not always a member of the community. Learning, therefore, is a “continuous, life-long process resulting from acting in situations” (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1988).

Ideological Becoming

Consistent with sociocultural theories, Mikhail Bakhtin's theory on "ideological becoming" will be used to examine the experiences at work in the lives of intern teachers as they learn to teach and develop culturally responsive identities. Originally intended for use in critiquing literature, Bakhtin's theories have found a home in other disciplines and Western scholarship as a tool to analyze the influential discourses that help people develop new ideologies about the world. Bakhtin, like Vygotsky, believed that it is through a social process that humans develop their ideas about the world or what Mikhail Bakhtin calls, "ideological becoming." The process of "ideological becoming" takes place in what Bakhtin calls an "ideological environment" (Bakhtin, 1974, p. 14).

"Ideological becoming" is the development of an idea system not about individual ideas and concepts in isolation (Ball & Freedman, 2004). It is constant and never ending; it involves conflict and struggle with different points of view, values, and voices (Gomez, Black & Allen 2007). Bakhtin emphasized the concept of struggle,

"The importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's coming to ideological consciousness, is enormous. One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse." (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 348).

This struggle for teachers can help them identify and compare their own ideologies to the lived realities of their students who are marginalized by dominant society.

Bartolome (2004) refers to the tension as “ideological clarity.” She writes, “The juxtaposing of ideologies should help teachers to better understand if, when, and how their belief systems uncritically reflect those of the dominant society and thus maintain unequal and what should be unacceptable conditions that so many students experience on a daily basis” (Bartolome, 2000, p. 34).

Bakhtin’s theory of “ideological becoming” requires that we struggle with multiple viewpoints in order for learning to take place. He writes, “Our ideological development is an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological viewpoints, approaches, directions, and values” (p. 346). Applying this concept to the context of this study, it will be important to discern what viewpoints, experiences, and/or “ideological discourse” that intern teachers have been exposed to and which were internally persuasive in awakening their consciousness.

In order to be clear before moving to the concept of “discourse,” the terms “tension” and “struggle” are not used synonymously. Tension refers to the mental or emotional strain one feels when experiencing a situation or idea that appears contradictory in nature to what we have been provided. Struggle, on the other hand is the process one goes through to understand and negotiate the tensions they experience. Struggle may occur through the conversation an intern teacher has with others in order to make sense of the tension. It also may occur through the actions taken as a result of their meaning making. For example, struggle may be seen in changing one’s perspective, resistance to the tension, and/or the rejection of the tension.

Discourse

At the heart of Bakhtin's theory of ideological becoming is the concept of discourse. The "ideological becoming" of a human being can only take place through the process of selectively assimilating the words of others within "contact zones." Bakhtin (1981) developed two distinctive categories for social discourse: (1) authoritative and (2) internally persuasive (p. 341).

Authoritative discourse is a discourse that is infused with authority. Authoritative discourse cannot be changed and it determines how we will interact in the world. Bakhtin describes authoritative discourse as a "prior discourse" that is "organically connected with a past." He adds, "It is therefore not a question of choosing it from among other possible discourses that are its equal...it demands our unconditional allegiance" (p. 342 & 343). Authoritative discourse is the discourse of mainstream society; that of the oppressor. Examples include religious dogma, government policies, societal norms about class, race, and gender, and teaching using the transmission model of teaching.

Internally persuasive discourse, on the other hand, has no authority or privilege and is often not recognized by mainstream society. It is in opposition to authoritative discourse. Internally persuasive discourse is flexible and open.

It is affirmed through assimilation tightly interwoven with one's own word . . . it is half-ours and half-someone else's. . . . It's creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain isolated and static condition . . . it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts (Bakhtin 1981, p. 346).

The internally persuasive discourse is where our struggle occurs in our ideological development. Our internally persuasive discourse(s) will struggle with authoritative discourse as well as other internally persuasive discourses for hegemony among the plethora of ideas, values, and viewpoints in which we are exposed. Ideological becoming takes place when a person can claim authority over one's own voice while continuing to negotiate with the voices of others:

Consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself: the process of distinguishing between one's own and another's discourse, between one's own and another's thought, is activated rather late in development. When thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse, along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us (p. 348).

Critical Perspectives of Education

Culturally responsive pedagogy originates from critical perspectives of education and is a key theoretical lens in understanding the importance of this study. As previously discussed, teaching and learning are a social process that takes place in "semiotic social spaces." Critical theorists believe that this process is political-economic and that these spaces are full of issues of power that help reproduce and perpetuate dominant assumptions and ideologies about the world while marginalizing and oppressing students by class, race, and gender (Giroux, 2001). Education, from a critical perspective, is directly tied to the marketplace with the privatization and commercialization of schooling

in order to create the next generation of unthinking consumers. These hegemonic forces determine what knowledge is worthy of being taught, which identities are to be valued, and whose ideologies will be disseminated and validated. Giroux (2001) argues for radical pedagogy that treats education as a “form of political intervention” which leads to “possibilities for social transformation” (p. xix).

Pierre Bourdieu describes education as a means in which society “reproduces itself mechanically identical to itself, without transformation or deformation, and by excluding all individual mobility” (p. viii). Anyon (1980) offers support of this argument in her article, “Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum.” Anyon found in her study of five elementary schools that there is a “hidden curriculum” in place that prepares students, depending on their social class, for particular roles in society. She writes,

Differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thus contribute to the development in the children of certain potential relationships to physical and symbolic capital, to authority, and to the process of work...In the contribution to the reproduction of unequal social relations lies a theoretical meaning, and social consequence, of classroom practice (p. 90).

Apple (2004) argues that the curriculum is “never a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation...(it is) the decision to define some groups’ knowledge as the most legitimate, as official knowledge” (p. 222). Issues of power are apparent by looking at what counts as knowledge, how it is organized, who is empowered to teach it, what are the most appropriate ways of demonstrating it, and who is allowed to ask and answer questions about it (Apple, 1993).

The hidden curriculum or hegemonic curriculum goes unquestioned and becomes normalized by the “basic rules and tacit assumptions” that are reinforced as students move from one grade level to the next. These rules are socialized into us as “an organized assemblage of meanings and practices” (Apple, 2004, p 4) which represent and perpetuate the dominant group and are reinforced by institutions such as church, school, family, and government (Gramsci, 1978; Fairclough, 1995). Johnson (2006) describes these issues with power as “systems of privilege, power and oppression” and argues that they exist only through social systems and people’s participation in them (p. 90). These systems are “dominated by privileged groups, identified with privileged groups, and centered on privileged groups” (p. 90). An important point to note here is that even the dominant group or oppressor does not perceive this system of power and dehumanization and their representation in society and having more is merely “an inalienable right” (Freire, 1970, 1993, p. 59).

The dominant method used in the United States to teach the “basic rules and tacit assumptions” is the transmission method or what Paulo Freire coined as the “banking concept of education” (Freire, 1970, 1993, p. 72). According to this method, a more knowledgeable teacher “deposits” information into the unknowing student for regurgitation (withdrawal) at a later time. Freire writes, “The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them” (Freire, 1970, 1993, p. 73). Cajete (1994) echoes Freire’s concerns about

education, specifically American Indian education and the crisis that has followed its conception. He states,

Those who identify most with the bottom line often suffer from an image without substance, technique without soul, and knowledge without context. The cumulative psychological result is usually alienation, loss of community, and a deep sense of incompleteness. (p. 26)

Conclusion

As Chin Ee suggests in the quote at the beginning of this section, teachers make pedagogical decisions based on their beliefs about the world. These decisions can be problematic for students who do not fit nicely into the teacher's ideological mindset. This dissertation study hopes to discern what experiences help intern teachers develop into culturally responsive teachers so that they may provide a humanizing and empowering pedagogy to Native American students (and all students) in the future (Shor, 1992).

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived,
And if faced with courage,
Need not be lived again.

-Maya Angelou

Despite Maya Angelou's words, history continues to be lived and relived by many of our students every day in the United States, especially for students of color and low socio-economic status. The disparate inequity that exists in our world between people of difference, including race, ethnicity, sex, age, and socio-economic standing continues to increase, leaving larger numbers of people every year fighting to live a humane existence. This trend of inequity also exists in our school system among the same groups of people. As Howard (2003), states "An examination of school achievement along racial lines underscores clear racial divisions about who is benefiting from school and who is not" (p. 196). This dissertation study is concerned with the inequity that exists for Native American students in schools in the Four Corners region of the United States and how intern teachers working with a predominantly Native American population learn to use culturally responsive pedagogy. In particular I will be exploring how the intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive. In order to paint a clear portrait of this study and why it is important, this chapter will provide background information that helps support the story I want to help tell. I begin the conversation by addressing the

demographic imperative that plagues the United States' teacher education programs and school districts because it is the demographic imperative that creates the need for culturally responsive teaching practices. Next, I provide an overview of one teacher recruitment organization Teach For America and the support and critique it has received since its inception. Finally, I end this chapter by describing the history of Native American education in the U.S. because the aftermath of this ugly history is still a fresh wound trying to heal and scar in the Four Corners region of the United States.

Demographic Imperative: Does Teacher Background Matter?

In the United States, the population of students in the public school system has become more and more diverse. The diversity described in most research is often synonymous with race, ethnicity, and/or culture (Grant & Gibson, 2011). Although the student population continues to diversify, the demographics of the teachers who teach these students remains homogenous, with an overwhelming number of Teacher candidates coming from a white, middle class background (Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Gay & Howard, 2000; Milner, 2006; Sleeter, 2008). In 2000, Gay and Howard analyzed figures reported by the U.S. Department of Education on the demographics of teachers and found

86% of all elementary and secondary teaches are White/ European Americans.

The number of African American teaches has declined from 12% in 1970 to 7% in 1998. The number of Latino and Asian/ Pacific Islander American teachers increased to 5% and 1%. Native Americans made up less than 1% of teachers.

(pp. 1-2)

2007-2008 demographics continue to demonstrate similar patterns with very little change. The National Council of Educational Statistics (2009) published teaching demographics in public elementary and secondary schools which demonstrated

83% of elementary teachers and 84% of secondary teachers are White/ European Americans. Black and Hispanic teachers each make up approximately 7% of the teaching population. Asian teachers continue to represent only 1% of the teaching force; and Native Americans and Pacific Islanders less than .5%.

This data is alarming but even more troubling are the projected demographic data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau that indicates by the year 2040, nonwhite students will make up less than half of the population in K-12 schools, continuing the “demographic imperative” (Banks & Banks, 1993; Cross, 2003; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Howard 2003; Nieto, 2000) of an increasingly diverse student population and a predominantly white teaching force.

The issue of the demographic imperative continues to be one of great importance as researchers and educators analyze the poor educational attainment of students of color and students with diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Many researchers contribute the low performance of students of color and low socioeconomic backgrounds to the cultural mismatch between the teacher and the student (Villegas, 1988). Children who are English Language Learners may be at a bigger disadvantage due to the disconnect between the use of language in the home and the use of language at school. For example, children who have similar language patterns at home as they do school bring this background knowledge with them. This group of students, who are typically white, middle class, and Anglo American, experience less miscommunication from differences

in language and have far greater success academically (Jordan, 1985). Cultural mismatch is of great concern to teacher-educators as they undertake the work of training white teachers to work with a diverse student population. This is a challenge for many Schools of Education because Professors and Lecturers at the university level often mimic the same demographics that concern them in K-12 education.

Another issue faced by teacher-education programs in the United States is the lack of a clear definition on what is and is not multicultural education and how it should be incorporated in education programs that prepare future teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2003). Although colleges and universities report the implementation of strategies, processes, curriculum, and recruitment efforts that promote and support diversity, studies conducted over the past three decades demonstrate that teacher preparation has changed very little (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Grant & Secada, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Colleges and universities are not alone in their concerns for educating students with diverse backgrounds. The government has also had a hand in the debate over what makes a good teacher and teacher certification is an important piece to their argument. As a result, the No Child Left Behind Act was passed and states began to use the descriptors “qualified,” “highly qualified,” and “highly effective” to describe teacher qualifications and ensure that every classroom has a certified teacher who has completed a teacher preparation program and is providing quality instruction (NCLB, 2002). Although well intended, many school districts found it difficult to meet or maintain compliance to the mandates of NCLB, especially districts located within poor, minority populated communities. These districts often have no other choice but to hire candidates who have not earned teaching credentials from the State Department of Education because licensed

teachers are not available. Keller (2007) points out that “in the poorest areas of our cities students are considerably more likely to have classes taught by teachers who haven’t met the standard (p. 1). According to Education Week (2007), rural school districts often face greater desperation than urban school districts with hiring and retaining “highly qualified” teachers. One Superintendant from a rural district in Louisiana lamented that “for seven years she dismissed maybe a score of able teachers with several years’ experience because they had not passed the teacher-certification exam. Because teachers could find much better-paid and sometimes easier jobs in nearby districts, including Baton Rouge, finding and keeping educators in the largely poor, African-American district was always a problem” (p. 1).

The state of New Mexico is not immune to the shortage of qualified teachers. In fact, this summer (2014), two Request For Proposals were issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department for innovative, alternative teacher preparations programs. One proposal was specific to preparing teachers to work with Native American students.

Teacher recruitment. In light of issues of inequity faced by students of color, low economic status, and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the emphasis on hiring teachers with the right academic qualifications in every school as well as retaining effective teachers has become a priority for many school districts. The focus on academic qualifications, however, leaves out important considerations about what a quality teacher looks like. Little and Bartlett (2010), report limitations to this focus because “teacher qualifications must be distinguished from the quality of teaching, as teachers with equivalent formal qualifications may achieve quite different levels of instructional effectiveness. In addition, the focus on teacher qualifications reflects and reinforces a

predominantly individualistic frame of reference that tends to obscure or overlook the role of institutional and organizational processes, including the growing prominence of market-based solutions for reported problems of teacher recruitment and placement” (pp. 287).

Teach For America

In this section I will describe one specific national teacher recruitment program in the United States, Teach For America. In the center of the debate around teacher recruitment, training, and attrition is the Teach For America (TFA) program. TFA is a non-profit organization created in 1990 in order to recruit high-performing college graduates from top universities to teach in high-needs areas throughout the United States for two years with the vision that “one day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education” (www.teachforamerica.org). Teach For America describes their selection process as “rigorous” and the selection criteria as “predictive of successful teaching in low-income communities” (Teach For America, 2013, p. 3). According to TFA (2013), the selection criteria were created in collaboration with experts from the field of education and business and places emphasis on the following:

- Leadership and achievement in academic, professional, and/or extracurricular settings
- Perseverance in the face of challenges
- Strong critical-thinking skills-analyzing and utilizing data; problem solving
- The ability to influence and motivate others, especially across lines of difference
- Organizational ability-planning well, meeting deadlines, and working efficiently

- Respect for student and families in low-income communities
- Understanding of TFA’s mission and the desire to work relentlessly toward achieving it (Teach For America, 2013).

Candidates are selected after several rounds of evaluations based on these characteristics. The corps members who are selected, spend five weeks in the summer receiving intensive teacher training through what TFA calls “Institute.” For example, one location in which corps members are assigned to receive their Institute training is Arizona State University (ASU) in Tempe, Arizona. During this 5 week period, corps members are provided with teacher education coursework and student teaching (in a summer school format) in collaboration with universities and school districts around the country. The training provided during Institute stretches across six curriculum strands: (1) teaching as leadership, (2) instructional planning and design, (3) classroom management and culture, (4) diversity, community and achievement, (5) learning theory, and (6) literacy development.

Once they have completed their summer training, corps members interview for teaching positions in the area of the U.S. in which they were accepted by TFA. These areas are both rural and urban and have historically faced challenges with teacher recruitment and retention. These areas also have high rates of poverty and are home to students with diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. During the two-year commitment required by TFA, corps members enroll in teacher education coursework, in order to work toward alternative licensure and for some, a Master’s degree. Corps members also receive ongoing support and professional development through TFA support staff, who act as coaches/ mentors, as well as any professional development

offered by the school districts and schools in which corps members are employed. For example, in the Dine County School (DCS) district all new teachers are assigned a mentor for the first two years and are required to complete a new teacher training program with the support of this person.

TFA has been the center of controversy since the date of its inception. TFA's extensive marketing plan has helped bring national attention to their concept which has been both positive and negative. Researchers and educators have conducted numerous studies around the effectiveness of TFA's implementation in order to determine the extent to which the program is successful in terms of student learning. The conclusions are mixed.

Support of TFA

TFA has many supporters in the field of education and beyond. In the field of education, support can be found at every level. Across the U.S., TFA has a presence in 37 states, with 48 regions in which corps members may be assigned. In 2013-2014, the school districts in those regions hired 11,000 corps members to work in their schools. This number has grown significantly over the past ten years and it is apparent that TFA is a popular choice for many school districts and principals as a means to recruit teachers. According to Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (2013), principals indicated on the 2013 National Principal Survey developed by TFA that they have a positive view of TFA teachers in their schools. 91% of the principals who completed the survey reported to be "somewhat satisfied to extremely satisfied" with the support offered to corps members by TFA (McCann, Turner, & White, 2013, p. 1). 78% of principals surveyed chose

“somewhat agree to strongly agree” to the statement, “The typical Teach For America corps member has a greater impact on student achievement” (p. 2).

In addition to local school districts supporting TFA, universities have also developed partnerships with the organization to help corps members obtain a state-issued license, certificate, or teaching credential in order to be considered “highly qualified” by federal law. Many universities also provide the option of taking graduate level coursework that will allow corps members to earn a Master’s degree during their two-year time commitment. The University of Four Corners (UFC) is an example of one of these universities. UFC offers a Master’s in Elementary and Secondary Education with Alternative Route to Licensure. Intern teachers have the option of completing a course rotation designed specifically for them which will allow them to complete all of their coursework for a Level 1 teaching license and the Master’s Core within a two-year time frame.

TFA has received positive attention in the national spotlight from the media as well. In 2008, for example, TFA was lauded by several major news organizations including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Time Magazine (June, 2008). The *New York Times* reports in an editorial published in May 2008 that TFA teachers are the answer for helping students in the U.S. achieve higher performance in math and science. The editorial stressed the need for TFA and other programs like it if the U.S. wants to continue to be a world power and described traditional teacher education programs as “little more than diploma mills” (http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/16/opinion/16fri4.html?_r=1&ref=opinion&oref=slogin). Adding to the praise, former *Newsweek* correspondent, Donna Foote, published

Relentless Pursuit: A Year in the Trenches with Teach For America, which chronicles the experiences of four first-year corps members assigned to the Los Angeles region. The editorial reviews for the book offered great praise to the TFA organization. For example, Walter Isaacson stated, “This book beautifully conveys the spirit, dedication and heroism of Teach For America and shows why it is such a valuable experience both for its corps members and their students.” TFA has also been touted as one of the best organizations to work for by Fortune magazine and listed as the 7th best place to work by *Business Week* in 2009. Labaree (2010) called TFA, “one of the most successful efforts at social entrepreneurship in recent history,” and a place where one can “do good and do well” (pp. 48-49). It is not by accident that TFA had 57,000 applicants in 2013, a record high for the organization with an 18% increase from the previous year (Sanoski, 2013). More and more college students see TFA as an attractive way to build a career path, which might not have considered education as a profession otherwise (Labaree, 2010).

In terms of teacher effectiveness, there are a plethora of research studies that support TFA’s model of teacher training; concluding that TFA corps members are often more effective than other first-year teachers, from both traditional and non-traditional programs (Noell & Gansle, 2009; Patterson & Bastian, 2014). In 2002, *Education Next* published a study conducted by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) on the effectiveness of TFA corps members in Houston, Texas, the 7th largest school district in the U.S. at the time. The study focused on teachers in grades 3-5 as the comparison group. First, the study compared TFA to non-TFA teachers, and then TFA teachers to other newly hired teachers seeking alternative certification with the similar years of experience. The analysis performed looked closely at annual student gains on the

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills in Reading, and Math. The results of this analysis indicate that students of TFA teachers scored higher in Reading and Math than students of non-TFA teachers in alternative licensure programs with similar years of experience as well as veteran teachers who attended traditional teacher education programs (Raymond & Fletcher 2002).

Critique of TFA. TFA's popularity does not come without criticism. After over twenty years of developing teachers, TFA has faced many critics over what many call the privatization of education, the destabilization of schools, and the disenfranchisement of communities (Holpuch, 2013).

Criticism of TFA generally fall into one of two categories: lack of traditional teacher training and the two year time commitment TFA requires of its corps members (Xu, Hannaway, & Taylor, 2011). Linda Darling-Hammond has been one of TFA's biggest critics and has addressed both of these issues repeatedly since TFA was launched. Darling-Hammond (1994) charged that TFA "with its inadequate training of recruits--many of whom will teach in urban schools--and its disregard for the knowledge base on teaching and learning, continues a long tradition of devaluing urban students and deprofessionalizing teaching" (p. 21). Opponents of TFA also argue that TFA corps members have high turnover rates making the process of recruitment, training, and support an expensive endeavor to maintain, especially in light of shrinking budgets in education (Veltri, 2008).

Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, and Heilig (2005) questioned, "Does teacher Preparation Matter" in a study that took place in Houston, Texas, one of the regions in which corps members are placed each year (p. 1). This study replicates the

results mentioned previously by CREDO however; the researchers go beyond the analysis of CREDO in order to look at a larger range of achievement measures over a longer period of time with more controls. The results were much different when researchers looked at test measures other than the TAAS, such as the SAT-9 and Aprenda. Darling-Hammond, Holzman, Gatlin and Heilig found that “TFA teachers had a negative effect on student scores in both reading and math” (p. 15).

In an article published in *Jacobin*, Hartman (2011) supports the notion that TFA may be doing more harm than good with goals that “underwrite, intentionally or not, the conservative assumptions of the education reform movement” (p. 3). The issues he finds to be most problematic about TFA’s mission include: teachers’ unions being labeled as barriers to quality education; testing as the best way to assess quality education; educating poor children is best done by institutionalizing them; meritocracy is an end-in-itself; social class is an unimportant variable in education reform; education policy is best made by evading politics proper; and that faith in public school teachers is misplaced. In addition to these concerns, others argue that by design, TFA acts as the “missionary,” trying to “save” students and communities. This becomes increasingly more problematic because the “missionary” is generally white and middle class and the folks needing to be saved are people of color and lower economic status (Popkewitz, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1994).

A majority of the studies conducted on TFA teachers focused on student outcomes but Anderson (2013) questioned the legitimacy behind the organization’s implementation. Anderson conducted an analysis using Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence. Anderson argues that her analysis shows that “the goals of TFA are consistent

with the existing social order that is neither equitable nor just” (p. 67). It is through TFA’s accumulation of symbolic capital that the “perpetration of symbolic violence is permitted against both its corps members and the students whom they teach” (p. 35). This is important to note because the subtlety of symbolic violence allows it to go unnoticed to the point that those fighting against domination, begin to participate and perpetuate the structures that subordinate them (Bourdieu, 1977, p.191).

Cross-cultural competence of TFA. One area of importance that is void of research is the cross-cultural competence of TFA corps members. An ERIC database search using the terms “Teach For America,” “TFA,” and “cross cultural competence” or “culturally responsive” provided 1 result. TFA provides diversity training for all corps members called Diversity, Community, and Achievement (DCA) for the purpose of preparing corps members to work with diverse student populations. TFA is also placing culturally responsive teaching as a priority and has created a team that works with corps members and staff in their development toward being culturally responsive. In addition, a website has been created that corps members can build their “knowledge about culturally responsive teaching; see culturally responsive teaching in action; and spark your own development and culturally responsive practice” (TFA, 2014). Since corps members are placed in schools that are ethnically, culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse, it is important to discern if they are prepared to work with the groups of students in which they are assigned.

The History of American Indian Education

“Kill the Indian and save the man.” --Colonel Richard H. Pratt

These famous words spoken by Colonel Richard H. Pratt were the foundation of education for Native American children at the end of the 19th century when the Carlisle Boarding School was formed in order to “Americanize” Native Americans. Assimilation and termination were the primary goals of boarding schools and a one size fits all approach was utilized in order to create what Dr. Abbott called a “comprehensive system, that shall be inclusive, and that shall be so organized that it will go on like clock-work, to accomplish the civilization of all the Indians” (p. 54). The Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners supported this conclusion and added, “Schools are less expensive than war. It costs less to educate an Indian than it does to shoot him. A long and costly experience demonstrated that fact” (p. 53).

The approach of assimilation and termination emerged from the Indian Appropriation Act of March 3, 1871 which prohibits any group of Indians in the United States from being recognized as an independent nation (Provenzo & McCloskey, 1981). Under this new act, religious institutions were provided funds to help “educate and civilize” the Indian into the American way of life.

The gift of “Americanization” was not optional to the Native American and although it was provided free, the cost to Native Americans’ lives was great. Children were coerced into boarding schools and separated from their families for long periods of time in order to “civilize and Christianize” them away from a tribal identification (Lomawaima, 1993). In Teresa McCarty’s book, *A Place to be Navajo* (2002), she shares the stories of Navajo community members of Rough Rock, regarding forced boarding

schooling. Galena Dick, a community member of Rough Rock, shared, “Back then, we easily distinguished between the home and school cultures. . . . When we returned to school, we identified ourselves as a different person” (p. 21).

McCarty (2002) shares other accounts of forced schooling from members of the Rough Rock Reservation. In her interviews, many Navajo compared school to prison. Thomas James shared, “You couldn’t expect a great meal before you. . . . All we had to eat at noon were beans and a piece of bread. It was like being in jail. There wasn’t even coffee, only water. That is all we ate. The boys I came with began to feel homesick. We were starving” (p. 42). The boarding schools were run in military like fashion in order to accomplish the government’s goals of transformation of the Indian child. A strict regimentation was put into place that monitored everything, including the way students dressed.

As a part of the Americanization process of boarding schools, Native peoples were forced to give up their language in school and speak English only. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, J.D.C. Atkins, emphasized this in the English-only policy:

Please inform the authorities of this school that the English language only must be taught the Indian youth placed there for educational and industrial training at the expense of the Government. If Dakota or any other language is taught such children, they will be taken away and their support by the Government will be withdrawn from the school. . . . It is also believed that teaching an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect is a positive detriment to him. The first step to be taken toward civilization, toward teaching the Indians the mischief and folly of

continuing their barbarous practices, is to teach them the English language.

(Vogel, 1973, p. 199)

Galena Dick attended a boarding school in Chinle in the 1950s when she experienced these practices. Galena stated:

“We were forced and pressured to learn English. We had to struggle. It was confusing and difficult. . . . Students were punished and abused for speaking their native language. This punishment was inflicted even by Navajo matrons in the dorm. If we were caught speaking Navajo, the matrons gave us chores like scrubbing and waxing the floors, or they slapped our hands with rulers. Some students had their mouths “washed” with yellow bar soap. . . . This shows that even for Navajo adults like the dorm matrons, school was not a place for Navajos to be Navajos” (p. 45).

Punishment was a common practice in the boarding schools for Native students. Fred Bia, who also attended Chinle in the 1950s commented,

They’ll make you stand in the living room . . . and you’d be holding like four or five dictionaries over your head just for doing that . . . they would hit too, with boards . . . if you were talking therein the dormitory, whispering. Or they would sneak up on you and go and lay a big old two-by-four . . . across your back there (pp. 45-46).

This process was never about providing an education for Indian children; it was, however, about destroying Indian communities and Indian identities.

The effects of the U.S. government’s efforts to assimilate the Native Indian were dismal and in many ways considered a failure. The Meriam Report, 1928 outlined the

“Problem of Indian Administration” and the first sentence in the report on education reads, “The most fundamental need in Indian education is a change in point of view” (p. 346). The report continues,

Whatever may have been the official governmental attitude, education for the Indian in the past has proceeded largely on the theory that it is necessary to remove the Indian child as far as possible from his home environment; whereas the modern point of view in education and social work lays stress on upbringing in the natural setting of home and family life. The Indian educational enterprise is peculiarly in need of the kind of approach that recognizes this principle; that is, less concerned with a conventional school system and more with the understanding of human beings (p. 346).

The Meriam report continues by discussing the discrepancies between the curriculum offered by white teachers and the needs and learning styles of Native students. The curriculum and teaching methods are described as rote, unnatural, and out-of-date, even for the time period. These discrepancies still exist in the Four Corners region of the United States today.

In order to conceptualize the crisis of educating indigenous students, one must look to understand education from the perspective of Native Americans and more specifically, the metaphysical world in which information and beliefs naturally emerge. Deloria (2001) argues that for centuries, “whites scorned the knowledge of American Indians, regarding whatever the people said as gross, savage superstition and insisting that their own view of the world, a complex mixture of folklore, religious doctrine, and Greek natural sciences, was the highest intellectual achievement of our species” (p. 1).

This view of the world marginalizes a whole realm of human experience, declaring it unknowable and left out of serious consideration and discussion (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001).

CHAPTER IV

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following review of the literature will provide an overview of the research that focuses on developing culturally responsive teachers. I begin this chapter by reviewing the literature on culturally responsive teaching. Next, I sift through the research on teacher education programs and their ability to prepare preservice teachers to work with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds focusing on the perspectives of preservice teachers and intern teachers on their preparation to teach students with diverse backgrounds. Finally, I will conclude this review with the literature on best practices in teacher education and professional development programs that have found success with training preservice teachers for working with diverse student populations.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Indigenous Children

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) has been deemed as a positive instructional practice to use with indigenous students, including Alaska Native and Native American in schools throughout the United States. Beaulieu (2006) notes that culturally responsive education seems to be common sense to many folks in Native communities and that the practice has played a role in the academic success of Native students since the passing of the Indian Education Act of 1972 and again, with the passing of the Native American Languages Act of 1990 (p. 54). In this section, I will review the literature on culturally responsive teaching in order to provide a framework of

what teaching and learning might resemble in the Four Corners region of the United States.

The importance of including culture in the classroom and increasing the academic achievement of culturally diverse students has been promoted in education under the labels of multicultural education (Banks, 2003; Nieto, date), culturally conscious (Wolf, Ballentine, & Hill, 2000), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000). Literature on culturally responsive instruction necessitates “that all people, especially teachers, need to learn about and respect themselves, one another, and all other people in honor of their many diverse cultural characteristics” (Gallavan, 2005).

Gay (2000) describes the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching as validating and affirming, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, emancipatory, and caring (pp. 29-36). Teachers who are culturally responsive use students’ cultural knowledge, past experiences, and learning styles to engage them in meaningful activities that validate their cultural heritage. These teachers are also comprehensive in their approach because they teach to the whole, “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 382) as well as multidimensional because it “encompasses curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, and performance assessments” (Gay, 2000). In order for teachers to truly understand their students, they must become bicultural. Klug and Whitfield (2003) argue that in order for teachers to help their students become multicultural they “must be able to operate effectively within their own cultures and the cultures of their students” and become

“aware of and sensitive to the strengths, needs, and potentialities of our Native American students” (pp. 2, 13).

Villegas and Lucas (2002) offer a framework for preparing culturally responsive teachers which includes a strand that focuses on constructivist foundations for teaching and learning. Constructivism is based on the principle that knowledge is not fixed and should always be “filtered through knowers’ frames of reference, which are influenced by their experiences in the world” because knowledge is “value laden, partial, interpretive, and tentative” (p. 72). Teaching and learning in a constructivist classroom is an active process where students and the teacher participate in a learning community that is both social and collaborative. The teacher participates in this learning community and supports students by using their background knowledge and experiences as a building block to help students construct new understandings about the curriculum being taught. Constructivist methods include inquiry projects, small group collaboration, open dialogue, reciprocal teaching, project-based learning, building on student interests and linguistic resources, using appropriate and varied instructional materials, and a critical examination of the curriculum from multiple perspectives (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

I think it is important to discuss briefly, what constructivism in a culturally responsive teaching framework is not. First, culturally responsive teaching is not the contributions approach to education where activities that celebrate heroes, holidays and special events in a particular culture are celebrated (Banks, 2001). Banks (1993) warned against decontextualizing people from their experience with the use of curriculum that focuses on heroes and holidays. For example, learning about Navajo culture through an art project or learning about a group of people’s struggle in history through a single poem

(Nieto, 1995). This type of teaching and learning ends up presenting different cultures as mere artifacts and education as “monocultural and monolithic truth” (p. 196). Second, culturally responsive teaching is not the additive approach where content, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing the overall structure of the curriculum (Banks, 2001). In this approach, material is studied from the dominant perspective, marginalizing groups of people and failing to apply a critical lens to the curriculum.

Another characteristic of culturally responsive teaching is empowerment. Shor (1992) shares a framework that opens the door for empowerment that he calls an “agenda of values,” which are comprised of the following eleven components: participatory, affective, problem-posing, situated, multicultural, dialogic, de-socializing, democratic, researching, interdisciplinary, and activist (p. 17). Importance must be placed on the values as a whole, and their interconnectedness, not individually on any one piece. In essence, Shor argues that all of these pieces are necessary to engage in a more humanizing pedagogy, thus making it transformative, and emancipatory. Cummins (1992) focuses specifically on the empowerment of Native American students through education. He argues that power and status relations between dominant culture and Native American cultures have negatively impacted the school performance of Native American students to the extent that Native American students “have developed an insecurity and ambivalence about the value of their own cultural identity” (p. 4). In order to reverse this pattern and empower Native American students, educators need to (1) incorporate students’ language and culture into the curriculum; (2) encourage community participation in students’ education; (3) motivate students through instruction

to use language to generate knowledge; and (4) advocate for Native American students by focusing on how the function of interactions within the school context are failing students instead of locating the problem within students and their communities (p. 5).

In a culturally responsive classroom, “the power of caring,” is quite visible (Gay, 2000; Shor, 1992) to and for all students. hooks (2003) describes this power as “teaching with love,” because in order to be successful in the classroom, teachers “must nurture the emotional growth of students indirectly, if not directly” (p. 130). It is through this nurturing that love develops and grows. Nieto (1992) shares from her own work with diverse student populations that the area that made the greatest impact on students was the level of commitment and caring the teacher showed students in order to help them succeed. This ethic of care is demonstrated through high expectations, respect, and the creation of a learning atmosphere where students and teachers feel connected to one another. Teacher-student relationships in this environment are “fluid and humanely equitable” (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

There have been districts that have been successful at implementing culturally responsive initiatives for Native American students and they share some common characteristics. Successful districts and schools were found to have supportive administrators who want to make culturally responsive schooling a reality (McCarty, 1993). In addition to supportive administrators, having the support of other personnel in the school and a safe environment were important for student success (Powers, 2006). An example of a successful initiative on the Navajo Nation in the Four Corners region that includes these characteristics can be found in three locations, including Arizona’s Rock Point, Rough Rock, and Fort Defiance (Jordan, 1995). These sites emphasize the role of

teachers and schools as needing to change to support students and not students needing to change to fit the school. These schools also focus on discerning cross-disciplinary knowledge about students, culture, language, and learning as well as the support of the community (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). A key element highlighted in this initiative is that teachers have support which includes time, resources, and tools to reflect on their practice (Jordan, 1995).

In their review of the literature on culturally responsive schooling for indigenous youth from the past 40 years, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) found that sovereignty and self-determination, racism, and epistemologies were three topics that were missing from the culturally responsive teaching literature. The literature on culturally responsive teaching practices for indigenous students is more consistently than not, deplete of conversation on intellectual sovereignty and self-determination. Castagno and Brayboy found it troubling that the scholarship available on this topic overwhelmingly silent in regards to sovereignty and self-determination, especially in light of the fact that hundreds of treaties, constitutional rulings, and legislative acts have reaffirmed this status for tribal nations throughout the history of United States. “The ramifications on education for Indigenous youth are both wide and deep in scope, but they include--at a minimum--that tribal nations have inherent rights to determine the nature of schooling provided to their youth” (p. 949). Deloria and Wildcat (2001) argue that the very idea of living in a multicultural democratic society suggests that members of that society have the right to choose how to educate their children based on their own values and belief systems and Native communities should be warranted the same respect. He calls for “reindigenizing”

self-determination because “then it will entail a reordering of values and signal an effort to live in a manner respectful of the power, places, and persons surrounding us” (p. 140).

Cleary and Peacock (1998) also noted the absence of racism from the conversation on culturally responsive teaching for indigenous children. They wrote,

No existing book and few articles on teaching American Indian students have addressed the complex and troubling issues that characterize contemporary

American Indian education within the context of racism and oppression (p. 61).

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) argue that Native American students experience racism in schools through “paternalism, prejudice, harmful assumptions, low expectations, stereotypes, violence, and biased curricular materials” (p. 950).

Finally, Castagno and Brayboy emphasize the importance of including Native epistemologies in the research on culturally responsive teaching as well as for educators working with Native American students to understand their own: “One’s epistemology is fundamental to how he or she sees the world, understands knowledge, and lives and negotiates ever” (p. 952). They believe educators need to understand that there are multiple epistemologies in the world and that often their students will not share the same worldview. It is important to note that all Native people do not share the same epistemology but for the purposes of this literature review, a few general epistemologies that are attributed to Native peoples are knowledge systems that focus on communities, notions of responsibility to self and community (Deloria, 1970), a rootedness in place (Cajete, 2001), and a responsible use of power (Zedeno & Halmo, 2001), and finally, a holistic nature of the world (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001).

Culturally responsive pedagogy for indigenous students does not go without criticism. Yazzie (2000) warns of contradictions when calling for culturally responsive education for indigenous students. This contradiction exists in the decisions made regarding education, in terms of who decides what the purpose is and what it should look like. Yazzie (2000) writes, “Since formal schooling is the arena in which culturally appropriate education needs to take place, the ultimate purpose of that education tends to remain assimilation into dominant society” (p. 7). She points to English-only legislation that has been enacted and standardized testing as examples. Yazzie continues by asking, “How culturally appropriate is an education designed to assimilate students into the culture of the dominant society?” (p. 7). Although Indian nations have been given the right to sovereignty and self-determination, the government continues to make decisions regarding education and is often tied to the funding used to provide it. Emerson (1970) echoes Yazzie’s concerns: “Change must come, but not by mimicking antiquated Anglo-American education. New forms must be created to represent the resiliency and the genius for adaptation for which the Navajo is famed” (p. 98).

Culturally responsive teaching is supported by many researchers as a fundamental feature, to be included in any teacher preparation program. More specifically, scholars have written about the following premises (a) equity in education and multicultural education are interconnected; (b) teacher self-reflection should be self-conscious, critical and analytical; and (c) teachers need to develop a deeper understanding of what they are teaching, who they are teaching, and how they are teaching it (Gay & Kirland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Palmer, 1998, Valli, 1992; Zeichner and Liston, 1996). In a nation that has a predominantly white teaching force as well as predominately white teacher

education programs nation-wide, issues of diversity need to be intentionally added to teacher education programs. Teacher educators believe that in order for white teachers to become culturally responsive, they must develop cultural critical consciousness and practice critical reflection (Howard, 2003), digging into their own personal beliefs and forming ideologies that support inclusion of diversity. The use of critical literacy as a tool to develop culturally responsive teachers as well as a tool for teachers to use to teach to all children has great potential. I will continue to discuss teacher preparation for working with linguistically and culturally diverse students in more detail in an upcoming section of the literature review.

Critique of Teacher Education Programs

There have been numerous studies that have critiqued teacher education programs ability to prepare preservice teachers for working with diverse student populations (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust & Shulman, 2005). Sleeter (2001) reports that many institutions, specifically those that are predominately white, have responded slowly to the large cultural gap between their preservice teachers and the students they will teach. Data collected from a survey of 19 teacher education programs in the Midwest, demonstrated that only 56% of these institutions required elementary education preservice teachers to take a course on diversity or multicultural education; and one institution did not even have a course of this nature to offer to students (Fuller, 1992). Penny, Forney, and Harlee (2000) report that there are many teachers all over the U.S. that have not taken a single course on diversity or multicultural education. This information is alarming considering the consistent trends of a more diverse student population taking place in the U.S. Preservice teachers need to

possess more than a deep desire to teach as their career; they must be prepared to commit to working in diverse classrooms and develop the linguistic and cultural understandings needed in order to effectively teach students who are linguistically and culturally diverse (Walton, Baca, & Escamilla, 2002).

In Gordon's (2000) study, participants argued that their "university teacher education was training for upper-class suburban areas; it was a waste" and indicated that they were unprepared for the realities of teaching diverse student populations (p.79). Additionally, many participants believed that their training was detrimental and that their professors "lacked awareness of, and detachment from, public schools" (p. 79). This research is disheartening when considering the importance the teacher's role plays in the achievement of students of color (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989; Irvine, 2000). According to Irvine (2003), teachers influence the achievement, cognitive development, self-concept and attitudes of students of color, making their role a crucial part of their success. If teacher educators are going to teach preservice teachers to take on the role of being culturally sensitive with their students, then they, too, should be trained appropriately in cultural diversity education (Munn, 1996).

Sharma (2007) conducted a study in Florida and Missouri in order to discern teachers' perceptions on multicultural education and their preparation to teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Overwhelmingly, teachers in both states openly shared that they felt unprepared by the teacher education programs to work with diverse student populations. Teachers in the study recommended more courses in multicultural education, an infusion of multicultural education across curricula at the

university, practicum in culturally diverse classrooms, and professional development workshops for practicing teachers on multicultural education.

Similar studies have been conducted on alternative routes to certification that are offered by most states for candidates that hold a Bachelor's degree in a field outside of education. Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) administered a survey to close to 3,000 beginning teachers in New York City to find out their perspectives on their preparation to teach, their sense of self-efficacy, and their plans to remain in teaching. Darling-Hammond, et al, separated the results into three groups: (1) traditional routes to licensure; (2) alternative routes to licensure; and (3) emergency certified/ credentialed (TFA, Peace Corps and Teacher Opportunity Corps). Their findings indicated that teachers who participated in traditional routes to licensure "felt significantly better prepared overall" (p. 291) and teachers who graduated from alternative routes to licensure programs felt better prepared than the teachers who obtained emergency certification. TFA corps members rated their preparation lower than the other groups on 39 of the 40 items on the survey including the following items: (1) teach subject matter concepts, knowledge, and skills in ways that enable students to learn; (2) developing curriculum to support student learning; (3) helping all students achieve high academic standards; (4) using instructional strategies to promote student learning; (5) helping all students achieve high academic standards; (6) developing a classroom environment that promotes motivation and responsibility; and (7) working with parents and families. In terms of working with diverse student populations, all groups indicated that they were inadequately prepared to teach English language learners as well as using community resources to create a multicultural curriculum.

In Carter, Amrein-Beardsley, & Hansen's (2011) study, they asked TFA corps members to evaluate their teacher education programs for alternative licensure. The programs being evaluated were Master's programs at the elementary and secondary level, where students earn initial certification in their field of study as well as their Master's degree in a two-year period of time. TFA corps members overwhelmingly shared a lack of satisfaction with their alternative licensure program. Corps members were critical of instruction not being geared to their personal grade levels, issues related to the scheduling of the class, and misuse of valuable time. For example, one corps member commented, "I think some of the activities were busy work or seemed below us. We understand the value of practice but we are also educated adults" (p. 874). Another corps member lamented,

Courses so far were either not engaging or were taught almost haphazardly--as though it did not matter whether we completed them successfully or not. I do not expect an instructor to tell me that my assignments don't matter, that I just need to complete something to meet minimum requirements and pass (p. 881).

This particular study did not specifically ask corps members about their preparation to work with diverse students, but one corps member responded,

I couldn't tell you right now what I learned from the fall semester besides a few random points here and there. I know that ELL stands for English Language Learner and that SEI stands for Sheltered English Instruction. That's about it" (p. 881).

Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) demonstrate the challenges of preparing mostly white, middle-class teacher candidates in their review of the research on teacher preparation.

The studies in this review indicate that some teacher candidates came to think with more complexity but there was little evidence that they made dramatic shifts in their own perspectives which researchers believe is fundamental to culturally responsive teaching. These challenges may stem from white candidates bringing very little cross-cultural background and experiences with them as they enter the field of teaching (Barry & Lechner, 1995). Sleeter (2008) describes four “interrelated problems” in the preparation of white teachers that must be addressed in teacher-education programs: (1) a lack of awareness and understanding of discrimination, specifically racism; (2) deficit frameworks which allow teachers to have lower expectations for students of color; (3) ignorance and fear of communities of color; (4) lack of awareness of themselves as cultural beings and assuming that their beliefs and ways of being in the world are the norm (p. 560)

Teach For America Diversity Training

Teach For America offers their own diversity training within the organization for corps members called Diversity, Community, and Achievement (DCA). TFA defines diversity as:

The full range of differences that exist between people across lines of race and ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender, age, religion, political opinion, language, ability, etc. . . . We also pay special attention to race and class because these identity markers are highly correlated with widespread patterns of low academic achievement in our schools (Teach For America, 2010, p. 6).

DCA training was created because corps members consistently work with students that are culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse. According to Farr (2009),

over 90% of the students served by TFA corps members are racially and ethnically diverse, generally identifying as African-American or Latino (p. 8).

What is DCA training? The DCA handbook lists three key ideas that TFA believes is at the “heart of new teachers’ attempts to approach diversity issues”:

(1) maintaining high expectations; (2) building a strong knowledge base; and (3) working to effect significant gains with respect and humility. These key ideas are learned during the “pre-service training” with tasks to complete at each step. The first task for corps members happens before they arrive for institute; corps members have a variety of texts related to issues of diversity that they can read. Emphasis placed on “can” because the readings are not required and corps members are not held accountable for them. Next, during corps members’ regional orientation, they learn information that is specific to the community in which they will be teaching. The final piece to corps members’ DCA training occurs during institute where they will participate in weekly discussion led by a trained facilitator.

Critiques of TFA diversity training. There have been many critiques of TFA’s diversity training since its inception. One of the earliest studies was conducted by Popkewitz (1995) during the first year of the program. Popkewitz found through interviews, observations in classrooms, and observations of the TFA training that students of color and their families and communities were “framed as the ‘other’ who lacked the motivation, behavioral characteristics, and self-esteem to achieve . . . and during training sessions corps members learned that children of color learned best when ‘psychologically managed’ and were best taught using prescribed procedures and strategies” (p. 158).

Linda Darling-Hammond (1994) has also been a critic of TFA's lack of training for cultural competence with its corps members. In her article, "Who Will Speak for the Children? How Teach For America Hurts Urban Schools and Students," she cites research that demonstrates how TFA corps members are racially insensitive and unable to understand and identify with the students, families, and communities in which they are teaching.

Since Linda Darling-Hammond's critique, TFA's diversity training has been redesigned. In 2004, TFA rolled out their new Diversity, Community, and Achievement (DCA) program (described above) which has not gone without scrutiny. DCA has been a "sore spot" for many corps members as reported in a survey given in 2007 where 65% of corps members indicated that DCA was not a helpful tool (Yu, 2011, p. 35). Yu (2011) described DCA from a 2002 corps members' perspective,

People were coming in at all different levels of self-awareness . . . people would say offensive things, not realizing they were offensive. People in the majority did not realize they had biases or stereotypes. . . . People would come back deeply disturbed, questioning who Teach For America was, and how realistic we were about the work we're doing" (p. 35).

DCA was redesigned in 2007 with a narrower focus with concrete applications in terms of classroom practice. Four "diversity competencies" were developed: (1) suspending judgment; (2) asset based thinking; (3) growth mindset; and (4) interpersonal awareness. These 4 competencies are explored during institute through six 90 minute sessions that bring together assigned readings, videos, and audio clips of case studies demonstrating multiple perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. The new approach to diversity

training has had greater success with 60% of corps members reporting being satisfied but some corps members and TFA staff criticize that it is “too sanitized” and “lacks emotion, open-ended conversation, and it doesn’t develop a broader understanding of racism and racial dynamics in America” (Yu, 2011, pp. 37-38).

Talbert-Johnson (2006) argues that part of the problem of training teachers to become culturally responsive stems from an emphasis placed on content knowledge and little on the dispositions that make teachers effective with diverse student populations. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education demonstrated the importance of teacher dispositions by making it a part of the language incorporated in their standards. NCATE Standard 1 measures, “candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (NCATE, 2010). Although teacher education programs are beginning to assess dispositions, they are finding that dispositions are hard to define and much of what is assessed is directed by the accreditation bodies such as NCATE (Cummins & Asempapa, 2013). NCATE specifically identified fairness and the belief that all students can learn as dispositions that must be assessed. In addition, NCATE included the following two descriptions as dispositional targets for teacher candidates:

- Candidates work with students, families, colleagues, and communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.
- Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that create caring and supportive learning environments and encourage self-directed learning by all students. Candidates recognize when their own professional

dispositions may need to be adjusted and are able to develop plans to do so
(NCATE, 2008)

Other researchers support the idea that teacher dispositions play an important role in a teacher's effectiveness with students of color, specifically the disposition of caring (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2004; Noddings, 2005). hooks (2000) posits that "when the basic principles of love form the basis of teacher-pupil interaction the mutual pursuit of knowledge creates the conditions for optimal learning" (p. 131). hooks defines love "as a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust" (p. 131).

As discussed in the previous chapter, culturally responsive teaching is considered a positive method of meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of indigenous students. The one question that is still being answered, however, is how do teacher educators thoroughly prepare preservice teachers, and in the case of this particular study, intern teachers for this extremely important role? The lack of preparation of preservice and intern teachers continues to be of great concern as the population of culturally and linguistically diverse students increase and the pool of teachers available for hire stays monolithic (white, female, middle-class). A call to action was proposed by Brisk et. al (2002) stressing the urgency for teachers to develop practices that respect the language and culture of each child as well as effective and accommodative instruction that leads to academic success for English language learners. Howard and Aleman (2008) also address this urgency by calling for teacher preparation that

fosters a core knowledge that includes an awareness of the social and political contexts of education and the development of critical consciousness about issues such as race, class, gender, culture, language, and educational equity (p. 158).

In response to the demand to prepare teachers for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, many studies have been conducted to determine the impact on early field experiences on preservice teachers sensitivity and interest in working with this group of students (Burant, 1999; Mason, 1999; Bondy & Davis, 2000; Groulx, 2001).

Irving (2003) founded the Center for Urban Learning/Teaching and Urban Research in Education and Schools (CULTURES) as a professional development center which provides support to teachers in the Atlanta metropolitan area as they learn to teach students from racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socially diverse backgrounds. Irving (2003) found that a key component that contributed to the development of culturally responsive teaching practices were cultural immersion experiences. Immersion experiences that place students in diverse communities instead of school settings are emphasized by many programs (Noordhoff & Kleinfeld, 1991) as a means for preservice teachers to truly understand the dynamics of everyday life for many of their students as well as to help them see the positive aspects of their students' communities and culture (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

In Adams, Bondy and Kuhel's (2005) research study, the researchers focused on the Bright Futures Mentoring Project because this project is the first experience their students have in the field within the College of Education and for most of their students this mentoring takes place in an "unfamiliar community" (p. 44). Their study highlighted some major differences in how students responded based on their previous experience with people different than themselves. For example, Adams, Bondy and Kuhel found that students who had little or no prior experience with difference often responded with resistance, whereas the students with prior experience provided responses that were

closely aligned with culturally responsive teaching practices. Additionally, these researchers found that students were affected by the kinds of scaffolding and support that was available to them during their field experience. Students who believed that they received support and scaffolding were more aligned with culturally responsive teaching practices than those students who did not feel they were provided with support.

The Creating Cross-Cultural Connections Partnership is an example of Bradley University's attempt to provide their students with "a multifaceted, multicultural experience" that "is an integral part of constructing the knowledge base required to become muticulturally literate: caring and committed to humane and democratic change" (Robinson et al., 2002, p. 535). The partnership involves preservice teachers in the College of Education working with students at a local high school in pairs, small groups and large groups in order to engage in a variety of activities that focus on cultural identity and diversity as well as addressing gaps the researchers noticed between student and teacher knowledge and the development of empathy and caring. The project was designed to include three aspects of attitude change: thinking-knowledge, feeling, and action behavior. The goal being that students would learn to seek information and be truly informed about the other instead of only using a monocultural lens to view the situation and/or world. The results of this "immersion experience or extensive participation" demonstrate positive outcomes for both the high school students involved and the preservice teachers. One preservice teacher commented about his experience:

Any new experiences that we have with strangers makes us more aware and more tolerant of differences which people have in our world. This makes us more open-

minded and aware of our differences we have so we can confront our own stereotypes and biases (p. 536).

Providing students with experiences in the community through service learning may be a valuable tool for the development of culturally responsive teachers (Zeichner & Melnick, 1996) especially when the learning is situated in a specific context that considers race, class, and gender (hooks, 1989; McLaren, 1989). Shor (1992) emphasizes situated learning to create an education of empowerment whereas a problem posing pedagogy is utilized within specific contexts to develop critical thinking and action within students. Bennett (2013) used situated learning and sociocultural theory to study 8 preservice teachers tutoring elementary students in writing within the context of an after school program at a community center. All of the 8 preservice teachers were white, English speaking, and middle class with little exposure to people different from themselves. This service learning project was a component of a writing methods course in order to provide preservice teachers with opportunities to practice teaching writing to diverse student populations with scaffolding from a university instructor. Bennett found that the preservice teachers (1) made connections with their students; (2) extended their understanding of the definition of culturally responsive teaching; (3) demonstrated understanding of Banks' (2001) dimension of prejudice reduction; (4) developed deeper self-awareness and awareness of difference in others; and (5) came to a realization of the assumptions they often make about others based on physical appearance (pp. 394-396). Preservice teachers commented that the service learning experience was a powerful tool and that the scaffolding and support provided in combination with critical reflection helped them grow.

In a similar study, conducted by Morton and Bennett (2010), 39 preservice teachers participated in a service learning project at a charter school that serves lower income and diverse student populations. The preservice teachers met with the university instructor for instruction on the teaching of writing each week prior to meeting with students. They were required to write lessons that connected the curriculum to the interests and lives of the students they were tutoring and were provided with scaffolding from the university instructor throughout the semester. Through preservice teachers' reflections, Morton and Bennett determined that the service learning project was beneficial to both the preservice teachers and the elementary students being served. Specifically, they noted that preservice teachers made great effort to connect to their students in personal ways and use this knowledge to create student-centered lessons that considered each individual student's needs and learning style.

Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill's (2007) study is another example in support of early field experiences through service learning. In their study, they found that stereotypical beliefs were held by many of the preservice teachers who participated in the study prior to their participation in service learning. For example, one preservice teacher reflected prior to the service learning experience:

When I was told about this part of the class I was a little apprehensive. . . . I had heard that Aston Point was a bad neighborhood and there were a lot of racial problems. I didn't know how this was going to work or how we were going to be accepted (p.322).

As preservice teachers participated in the service learning experience in the community, most of their negative assumptions about the community and the students and families

living there changed. This can be illustrated by Jordan's comment, "I learned that despite their age and SES these kids were extremely intelligent. Our society is full of stereotypes" and Emily's reflection, "I shouldn't assume that he or she cannot do a certain task" (p. 322). It is important to note that the service learning experience for the preservice teachers in this study did not take place in classrooms; instead, preservice teachers participated in community-based placements. This decision was intentional on the part of the researchers because "in the classroom, they follow the lead of the host teacher and abide by the preestablished rules, routines, and curriculum into which neither they nor the children have input" (Buchanan, Baldwin, & Rudisill, 2002). It is in these environments that the preservice teacher may be "willing to accept the behaviors and practices they observe rather than to question the status quo" (p. 317). Service learning and community-based partnerships may have greater potential of allowing preservice teachers more autonomy in making decisions and negotiating with the community as well as countering any deficit views that preservice teachers hold (Sleeter, 2000). In addition, preservice teachers begin to develop an understanding of culturally responsive teaching; build relationships with families (Wade, 2000); discern the funds of knowledge of students' families and the community (Moll et al., 1992); and learn about the challenges many families endure in their everyday lives (Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007).

Another practice that has been deemed important in the development of culturally responsive teachers is critical teacher reflection (Gore, 1987; Milner, 2003). Howard (2006) states that, "critical reflection requires one to seek deeper levels of self-knowledge, and to acknowledge how one's own worldview can shape students' conceptions of self" (p. 198). Howard uses Palmer (1998) to illustrate his point. Palmer

believes that “we teach who we are,” which has powerful implications in terms of teachers teaching students different from their own backgrounds (p. 2). Howard suggests, what is important, within a culturally relevant pedagogical framework, is for teachers to ask themselves the important question of whether “who we are” contributes to the underachievement of students who are not like us (p. 198).

In order to engage in critical teacher reflection, Howard offers suggestions for teacher educators: (1) Ensure that teacher educators are able to sufficiently address the complex nature of race, ethnicity, and culture; (2) Understand reflection as a never ending process; (3) Be specific about what to reflect about; (4) Recognize that teaching is not a neutral act; and (5) Avoid reductive notions of culture (pp. 200-201).

According to Milner (2006), the preservice teachers that were most efficacious in demonstrating knowledge and understanding of cultural and racial diversity in his teacher education course on diversity were those who “engaged in a deep level of reflection” (p. 356). More specifically, Milner found that preservice teachers practiced “relational reflection in that the preservice teachers thought intently about their own perspectives, beliefs, and life worlds in conjunction with, comparison with, and contrast to their students’ and their students’ communities” (p. 357). Similarly to Howard (2006), Milner was specific on the questions and topics he posed to preservice teachers for reflection, designing questions that were both tough and introspective. For example, one reflection paper was designed specifically to allow preservice teachers to consider the first time they saw themselves as a racialized being. Questions such as this one, can be difficult for many students who have never had to think about race in the past, and even more so when they have to come face to face with their own family’s prejudices. One preservice

teacher wrote in her reflection, “I have been worried by what I learned and understood about racial injustice and equally so by my own mother’s racial prejudice” (p. 358). Banks (2001) and Sleeter (1995) have found that many preservice teachers do not experience this kind of change and often exit diversity courses with resistance and resentment.

In her attempt to address the issue of resistance and resentment in cultural diversity courses, Brown (2004) reports that preservice teachers made greater gains in cultural diversity awareness when appropriate methodology was utilized along with the content for the course. The methods deemed most beneficial to the growth of preservice teachers were active participation in cross-cultural field experiences, cross-cultural research, self-examination, simulations, and guided debriefing. These activities helped preservice teachers take on the perspective of the “other” so that they might better understand and reflect on the impact of minority culture status. The importance of the teacher’s role in the academic success of students from diverse backgrounds cannot be overemphasized (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989). According to Irvine (2003), teachers have an impact not only on the achievement and cognitive development of their students, but also students’ self-concept and attitudes. The more teacher educators are able to diffuse resistance to change from preservice teachers, the better prepared preservice teachers will be at helping diverse student populations experience success (Irvine, 1992).

In order for educators to enact a culturally responsive pedagogy, they must acquire culturally responsive teaching competence. Culturally responsive teaching competence encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help educators be

responsive to diverse learners and enact culturally responsive pedagogy. As can be seen in this review of the literature, there isn't a universal approach or framework which is being utilized to help teachers become culturally responsive. In the creation of their own framework for developing culturally responsive teaching competence, Villegas and Lucas (2002) found many challenges. First, conceptualizing a framework with prescribed knowledge, skills, and attitudes "has limitations" and "it would be unwieldy to discuss each attitude, each type of knowledge, and each skill needed by culturally responsive teachers. Such an approach would quickly deteriorate into a list that would inevitably be construed as a rigid prescription for program development" (p. 25). Second, there should not be a separation of knowledge, skills and attitudes because they are "interconnected, intertwined like the strands of thread in a piece of cloth" (p.26). As such, Villegas and Lucas (2002) propose six curriculum strands that "blend dispositions, knowledge, and skills" (p. 26) and can be used as outcomes for developing culturally responsive teaching competence. The six strands are (1) gaining sociocultural consciousness; (2) developing an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds; (3) developing the commitment and skills to act as agents of change; (4) understanding the constructivist foundations of culturally responsive teaching; (5) learning about students and their communities; and (6) cultivating culturally teaching practices.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) present the first three strands as the fundamental orientations that are needed for teaching a diverse student population. The three strands, gaining sociocultural consciousness, developing an affirming attitude, and developing the commitment and skills to act as agents of change "aim to engage prospective teachers in an examination of assumptions they have about schools and their relationship to society,

about students who are poor and of color, and about the work of teachers” (p.26). Each of these three strands are set up on a continuum with one end being the fundamental orientation (the goal we are trying to reach) and the other end being the opposite: (1) Sociocultural dysconsciousness (p. 33); (2) Deficit perspective (p. 36); and (3) teachers as technicians (p. 54).

Villegas and Lucas (2002) describe the first curriculum strand, “gaining sociocultural consciousness” (p. 27) as the understanding that worldviews are not universal and that there are multiple perspectives that are influenced by geography and social order in terms of race/ ethnicity, gender, and class. “Gaining sociocultural consciousness” also involves understanding that there are unequal power relations in society that privilege some at the expense of others. On the other end of the continuum lies “sociocultural dysconsciousness” which represents the opposite philosophy. Teachers who are “dysconscious” tend to believe that the worldview they hold is universal to all people and they fail to recognize how systems of power and oppression influence the lives of others.

The second curriculum strand in the curriculum is “developing an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This strand focuses on developing an attitude that all cultures are valid and that any differences in comparison to dominant culture should be respected and affirmed. Teachers who have developed an affirming attitude understand that students outside of dominant culture have experiences, knowledge and skills from their own lives that can be utilized in the classroom to help students learn. Teachers with an affirming attitude tap into students’ funds of knowledge and use it as a starting point or foundation for their

teaching. Teachers who lack an affirming attitude may adopt the attitude that dominant culture is superior to other cultures and that students who do not conform are “deficient and in need of fixing” (p. 36).

The third curriculum strand developed by Villegas and Lucas (2002) is “developing the commitment and skills to act as agents of change.” Teachers who “act as agents of change” are aware that schools are deeply connected to society and generally act as factories of reproduction, reproducing the current social order or status quo. These teachers also understand that education is politics and that nothing they do in schools is purely neutral; schools can act in ways that are uncritical of power dynamics or they can empower students to challenge and transform the existing inequitable society. On the opposite end of this continuum, lie the “teachers as technicians” (p. 54). “Teachers as technicians” believe that schools are neutral settings and that all students have the same opportunity to prove their merit. These teachers teach a prescribed curriculum that is not examined critically and has little or no room for the experience that students bring with them from their own lives.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) propose that the three fundamental orientations be developed in teachers first, and then the focus should be on the last three curriculum strands in order to foster culturally responsive teaching. The final strands 4-6 “focus more sharply on aspects of teaching and learning” (p. 65). Strand 4 is “embracing the constructivist foundations for culturally responsive teaching” (p. 65). Strand 5 is “learning about students and their communities” (p. 79). In the final strand, “cultivating the practice of culturally responsive teaching,” Villegas and Lucas pull together all of the

other strands “into a vision of culturally responsive teaching” that is representative or responsive of all children (p. 92).

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

“Experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience.

Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively.”

(Clandinin & Connelly, 200, p. 19)

I use narrative inquiry as a tool for digging into the experiences and lives of intern teachers as they maneuver a landscape of difference and learn to become culturally responsive teachers. I wondered about the stories that intern teachers tell about their experiences in the Four Corners region of the United States and how these experiences impact their roles as teachers to indigenous students. The intention of this research study is to discern and highlight the experiences that produced conflict for intern teachers in a way that not only allows them to struggle with difference but also moves them toward the development of an ideology that is culturally responsive and supportive of their Native American students. Thus, *Ideological Becoming: Intern Teachers Experiences Toward Culturally Responsive Teaching* uses narrative inquiry as its methodological framework and research design.

“Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants . . . simply stated, narrative inquiry is stories lived and told” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.20). The stories of five intern teachers were collected for this study and analyzed carefully in order to discern how these intern teachers understand culturally responsive pedagogy, how it is applied in their every day

practices, and what experiences have been the most beneficial in their development or “becoming.” This chapter begins with a brief overview of narrative inquiry and a rationale for using narrative inquiry in a case study format. Following this rationale is my study design which includes (1) a description of the participants in the study and the context in which it is situated; (2) the instruments and procedures used to collect data; and (3) the procedures utilized in analyzing the data.

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

1. How do intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States?
 - a. How do intern teachers understand the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy?
 - b. What factors, beliefs, and experiences contribute to this understanding?
2. What are the challenges that intern teachers face in the Four Corners region of the United States as they learn to implement culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms?
 - a. How do intern teachers negotiate struggle/ tensions between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses in their work as teachers?
3. What experiences have been most beneficial in their growth in becoming culturally responsive teachers?

Narrative Inquiry

Studying narrative is the study of the ways in which humans experience the world. Narrative inquiry has a long history of use in education and other disciplines as well because of its treatment of humans as “storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Narrative is an “account of something” and it is an important piece to our understanding about the world and how we interact in it.

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) explain narrative inquiry in the following way:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study (p. 375).

Narrative Inquiry offered a way for me to understand and inquire into the experiences of intern teachers through “collaboration between the researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). More specifically, narrative inquiry allowed me a window into how intern teachers make sense of culturally responsive teaching and how the telling of their perspectives and experiences position them both socially and culturally in the world (Sikes & Gale, 2006). Using this approach for data collection helped illuminate the

complexity of experience within its historical, social and political contexts, paying close attention to social positioning and power (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). For example, asking intern teachers to tell me stories about a specific phenomenon such as racism captures the details of how the experience has impacted their individual lives over time. Throughout this research study I did not see story as narrative that is always characterized by a structure that includes a beginning, middle, and an end. Instead, I viewed story as more fluid and an account of intern teachers' personal, lived experiences. Although some stories told had a beginning, middle, and an end, other stories focused on the middle in a somewhat rhizomatic structure that has "multiple entryways and its own lines of flight" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 21).

Research Design and Methods

Ideological Becoming: Intern Teachers Experiences Toward Culturally

Responsive Teaching focuses on the experiences of five intern teachers currently teaching Native American students in Dine, Zinia, and Rehoboth which are all located in the Four Corners region of the United States. Narrative inquiry methods are best suited for this study because it requires participants to reflect upon their cross cultural experiences as they consider how who they are impacts their teaching practices with students who do not share their cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Within the narrative inquiry tradition, a case study research design is appropriate for capturing the complex nature of learning to become a culturally responsive teacher. Yin (2003) asserts that case study methodology "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Essentially, using case studies to frame the research allowed

me to use multiple sources of data for triangulation in order to tell a more complete story of intern teachers' experiences in becoming culturally responsive teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States. Using the narrative inquiry case study process, I collected and analyzed data from questionnaires, interviews, and a variety of artifacts. The research design had three phases of data collection and analysis. In the first phase, I provided intern teachers with a demographic questionnaire to complete in order to obtain pertinent information about their background experiences and feelings about their own culturally responsive teaching practices. In the second phase, I conducted narrative interviews with each corps member. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed immediately after the interview took place. In the third and final phase, I collected a variety of artifacts from corps members and held two additional interviews at different points in time in order to ask additional questions and clarify comments that were previously made during the interviews. A focus group was part of the original research design but it was impossible to schedule a time that worked for all of the participants involved in the study due to complicated schedules, both professionally and personally. All data collected was analyzed prior to moving to the next phase.

Participants: Intern Teachers in the Four Corners Region of the United States

The study participants were all intern teachers who met the following criteria: (1) currently living in the Four Corners region of the United States; (2) have taught at least 1 full year; and (3) have completed the requirements outlined by the state for K-8 licensure through the University of Four Corners; (4) currently hold a level 1 license in the state in which they are employed; and (5) were all recruited by the Teacher Recruitment

Organization. This criterion was created because the purpose of the study is to look at intern teachers' experiences as a teacher and this necessitates that they have experiences in which they can reference. I use the term "intern teachers" throughout the study because all of these teachers began their teaching careers on an intern license before they had taken any teacher education coursework. The participants in this study were all recruited by the Teacher Recruitment Organization but this work can be looked at on a broader scale and applied to all "intern teachers" that begin work on an intern license in the Four Corners region of the United States.

All five intern teachers who agreed to participate in this study are elementary teachers in K-5 classrooms and have been teaching at least 2 years or more. They are also all women. Three of the women identify as women of color and two are Caucasian. Each intern teacher has a very unique background and comes from a different part of the United States or abroad and brings with them a variety of experiences and beliefs about education.

I initially invited 21 intern teachers who fit the criteria listed above to participate in this study. Only the five intern teachers who participated responded to my request, even after several attempts to contact all of them. Each of the five participants was open and willing to share their experiences with me. I use pseudonyms in order to protect their identity.

Maria. Maria identifies as Mexican and is originally from Chicago. Prior to moving to the Four Corners region, she attended school at a small college in the state of Illinois. Maria was a sociology major as an undergraduate student and developed an interest for learning about systems of oppression and how they impact people and

societies. It was because of this interest and her wanting to do something to alleviate oppression that she turned in the direction of education as a future career. Maria believes that it is through education that change can be made in society. Maria has been teaching third grade for four years at Sacred Mountatin Elementary School located on the Zinia reservation in the Four Corners region of the United States.

Sarah. Sarah identifies as Indian and her family is originally from India. She grew up in Michigan with her family. Sarah attended a university in Wisconsin for her undergraduate education and majored in International Studies with a minor in Women's Studies. Prior to moving to the Four Corners region, Sarah had already been involved with a number of organizations that allowed her to teach to others. Sarah has been teaching for 3 years. She taught fifth grade for two of those years at Rehoboth Elementary School, a Dine County school, located in Rehoboth, which is adjacent to the Zinia reservation. She applied to Sacred Mountain Elementary School her third year because she believed that she would have more support from the principal and her colleagues in terms of culturally responsive teaching. She is currently teaching fifth grade.

Michelle. Michelle identifies as African American and moved to the United States as a child from her home country of Jamaica. Michelle grew up in New York City. Prior to moving to the Four Corners region, Michelle had experience as a Teaching Assistant and Substitute Teacher but she did not have formal training or a degree in education. Michelle's journey toward the Four Corners region was a spiritual one and she believes that she was called to work in this location. Michelle has been teaching fourth grade for two years at Sacred Mountain Elementary School.

Laura. Laura identifies as white and grew up in Ohio, where she spent the first 22 years of her life. Her family moved to the Four Corners region of the United States when she was in college. Laura was a political science and journalism major as an undergraduate student and wanted to be a foreign correspondent when she graduated. In college she worked for a couple of different newspapers but it was the time that she spent working at a community center with 5 and 6 year olds that she really enjoyed. Laura teaches first grade at Redrock Elementary School which is located in the Dine County School district. She has been teaching for two years. Laura plans to stay in Dine at the end of this school year which is the end of her commitment with Teacher Recruitment Organization.

Kathleen. Kathleen identifies as white and is quite fond of her hometown, Portland, Oregon. She majored in sustainable design in environmental studies but always had an interest in education. Kathleen made the decision to move to the Four Corners region of the United States due to the short two-year time commitment of the Teacher Recruitment Organization and chose the Four Corners region because of an experience she had working on the Navajo Nation in college. Kathleen has been teaching for two years. She currently teaches kindergarten at Rehoboth Elementary, a Dine County School located in Rehoboth. Kathleen will be leaving the Four Corners region at the end of this school year and pursuing other opportunities within education, outside of teaching.

Research Setting

There are three distinct locations within the Four Corners region of the United States that are a part of this study: Dine, Rehoboth, and Zinia Pueblo. Although they are

all located in close proximity of each other, they are all very unique and warrant their own description.

The City of Dine

Situated in the middle of tribal lands in this southwest state, lies the city of Dine. This area of the United States is commonly referred to as the Four Corners region because the corners of four states touch, including New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. Dine is the county seat of this particular area with a population of a little over 20,000 residents. The Four Corners region of the United States is home to many Native American reservations including the Dine (Navajo), Hopi, Zuni, and Ute tribes. The Navajo Nation and Zuni are the largest reservations situated in this area of the United States and Dine is located between the two.

The Dine County School District encompasses the city of Dine and 15 other cities and/or reservations in the Four Corners region. The population of the county is approximately 75,000 with 76% identifying as Native America, 10% White, 13% Hispanic, .5% Black, and .5% Asian. The Dine County school district is one of the largest school districts in the United States in terms of square miles (5,455) and one of the poorest with a per capita income of \$9,872. The size of this school district is a consistent challenge due to the number of schools and their proximity from the Board of Education which is located in Dine. It is difficult for school principals on the reservation, as well as in the city of Dine, to locate and retain good teachers in their schools. The issue of teacher shortages makes it possible for organizations such as Peace Corps and Teach For America to bring between 20-30 new teachers into the area every year to teach.

Redrock Elementary School is a school in the Dine County Schools district. It is located on the eastern side of the city of Dine. 330 students attend grades Preschool-5th grade at Redrock Elementary and they fall into the following racial categories: 96% Native American, 3% Hispanic, 1% White. 97% of the students attending Redrock qualify for the free lunch program. Students at Redrock Elementary score 20 % lower than the average scores on reading and math in the Dine district and 30% lower in math and 40% lower in reading than the average scores in this southwest state. Redrock is considered a school in crisis and the University of Virginia will be working with the school starting in the 2015- 2016 school year with their Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program.

Zinia Reservation

The Zinia Reservation is located approximately 35 miles southwest of Dine and sits close to this southwestern state's border. The reservation covers 418,304 miles of land and is home to 12,000 members of the Zinia tribe. Zinia is one of the ancient homelands that Coronado and his men called the "Seven Cities." Zinia is a sovereign, self-governed nation that has its own tribal government. The population in Zinia is 97% Zinia, 2% white, and 1% Black, Asian and other races. 43% of the population lives below the poverty level.

Zinia Public Schools was impacted greatly by the U.S. government's crusade to Americanize Native American children. The education of Zinia children was in the hands of the U.S. government starting in 1876 and lasting until the Zinia Tribal Council Resolution M70-79-1108 was passed in 1980, over one hundred years later. This resolution terminated the relationship between the Zinia Reservation and the Dine County

School district and the Zinia Public School district was created. The official resolution stated:

The creation of the Zinia Public School District would recognize the significance of the uniqueness of the Zinia Indian community and return to the Zinia people the ability to preserve their heritage and culture and would enable them to identify and attempt to solve the special problems and situations peculiar to the educational needs of the Zinia Indian children.

This resolution has been significant for the Zinia Reservation because it allows the tribe to make decisions about what is best for their children's education and the preservation of their language and culture which was being decimated by the U.S. government prior to this change.

Zinia Public School District's mission is "to empower a community of learners through a thoughtful nurturing environment that meets the needs of all students in traditional and contemporary cultures" (Website withheld for purposes of anonymity). The district is still struggling after 35 years to accomplish this mission statement. Students attending school on the Zinia Reservation experience poverty, suicide, truancy and high school drop-out at extremely high rates. Zinia Public Schools has developed programs to help with efforts to revitalize their native culture and language within the daily lives of their students. The school district, like Dine County Schools, also hires many teachers outside of the reservation, who are not native Zinia, as teachers in their schools.

Sacred Mountatin Elementary School is located on the Zinia Reservation and serves students in grades 3rd-5th. Three of the teachers participating in this study teach at

this school. 99% of the students identify as Native American and 93% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch (only 3% is reduced lunch). Students attending Sacred Mountain fall far below the average scores for this southwestern state in both reading and math by at least 20 percentage points.

The Town of Rehoboth

Rehoboth is located within the boundary of the Dine County School's district. It is a small community of approximately 407 people on 3.8 square miles of land. It is situated between the Rehoboth Navajo Indian Reservation and the Zinia Reservation, 42 miles southeast of Dine and 16 miles east of Zinia. The community of Rehoboth was created by a group Mormons because it was in close proximity of their missionary work on the Zinia and Navajo reservations. The town is still heavily populated with people who practice the Mormon religion. The population in Rehoboth is 65% White; 25% Native American; 7% Hispanic; and 3% Asian, Pacific Islander and other races. Rehoboth, like Dine and Zinia, has high rates of poverty with about 23% of its families living in poverty and 31% of the overall population living in poverty.

Rehoboth Elementary School serves 191 students in grades Preschool-5th. The students that attend Rehoboth fall into the following categories of race: 62% Native American (Navajo, Zinia & other Pueblo tribes), 25% White, and 13% Hispanic. Over 85% of the students attending Rehoboth Elementary School qualify for free or reduced lunch. Students at Rehoboth Elementary score well below the norm in reading and math on the state's Standards-Based Assessment in comparison with other schools in Dine County Schools as well as at the state level.

Data Collection

Instrumentation

Demographic Questionnaire. This study wants to discern how intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive teachers. A demographic questionnaire was used to obtain background information on the participants as well as elicit information regarding their efficacy to use teaching practices associated with culturally responsive pedagogy. The Demographic questionnaire provided information such as age, race, undergraduate institution, number of courses with a focus on diversity, number of years teaching, and experience in a multicultural settings (See Appendix A).

Narrative Interviews

Narrative interviews were chosen as the method for interviewing because I wanted to discern intern teachers' experiences with becoming culturally responsive teachers. Narrative interviews allowed intern teachers to reference specific personal experiences they have had in a place and time with detail on events and actions (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). I did not have any preconceived notions of what I might hear from the individual intern teachers participating in the study because my focus was to learn about their cross cultural experiences and struggles through the stories that they chose to tell. The interview questions were designed to be open-ended, flexible and use language that is common to intern teachers (Glesne, 2011). Several questions in the interview protocol began with "tell me the story..." and other questions focused specifically on discerning intern teachers' past experiences with diversity, their stories of moving to and living in the Four Corners region of the United States, and finally, the

stories that they share about teaching Native American students in Dine, Rehoboth and Zinia.

The interviews were conducted in an informal manner in locations that were convenient for the intern teachers. Several were completed in the homes of intern teachers; one in an intern teacher's classroom; and one in a local coffee shop in Dine. Interview questions were prepared prior to the interview process and follow up questions were asked, when appropriate, during the interview. I wanted intern teachers to feel comfortable with me and the interview process because as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) report, opening up and sharing personal information and stories about your life can be intimidating and it requires a lot of trust and respect. Fortunately, I had already established a good rapport with all of intern teachers who accepted the invitation to participate in this study. I am the first person intern teachers have experience with on the Dine campus, I teach several courses in their program, and I am their main advisor throughout their 2 years or more at the University of Four Corners. However, these close relationships could influence researcher bias. In order to combat this issue, I consistently used reflexivity, "where researchers engage in explicit self-aware meta-analysis" (Finlay, 2002, p. 209). Interviews were scheduled in 1 ½ hour blocks of time and only a couple of them exceeded that time frame.

As a narrative inquirer, I had a vital role in the storytelling process. Riessman (2008) describes this role as providing a space for participants to tell their stories in order for them to negotiate their identities and make meaning of their experiences. In this particular space, I become both a narrator and listener with the responsibility for interrogating my own subjectivity in the research relationship, considering questions

about voice, authenticity, interpretive authority, and representation (Chase, 2005). I also had to pay close attention for multiple stories taking place at one time.

The stories that I help tell in this research study reveal the “complexities and contradictions of real life” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 237), “retain more of the “noise” of real life” (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001, p. 4) and expose the interrelationships at work with intern teachers in order to make visible those “taken- for- granted practices,” at work in our everyday living (Chase, 2005).

Additional Interviews

I originally planned to facilitate a focus group after the interview with all five intern teachers present in order to gather more information and stories about their experiences. Unfortunately, the focus group was extremely difficult to schedule due to intern teachers’ after school obligations and other commitments. We were unable to find a day in common when all 5 intern teachers could be together in the same space. In lieu of the focus group, I conducted 2 additional interviews with intern teachers.

Artifacts

The artifacts that were collected during this study were a continuation of the stories that intern teachers shared with me. I collected photographs of the intern teachers’ classrooms and the student work that they found important to include. Intern teachers also shared pictures from specific events in which their students participated, both inside and outside the school walls. Additionally, intern teachers provided copies of written communication with parents as well as lesson plans and relevant assignments they completed in the methods classes taken at the University of Four Corners. I found this

data to be extremely helpful in conjunction with intern teachers' stories as a way of triangulating my data.

Researcher Journal

I kept a journal during the research process in order to keep track of my thinking, ask questions to consider later, and make plans for the future. I started using the journal before I interviewed intern teachers, writing about issues that came up for me as well as any questions that I had that I either wanted to address at a later time or needed more research on in order to fully understand.

Data Analysis

“Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research” (Merriam, 1998, p. 151). For this reason, data analysis began immediately after the Demographic Questionnaire was completed by intern teachers. Data analysis continued immediately after each of the interviews.

Data Organization. As data was collected for this study, I created an organization structure that focused on each intern teacher. Each intern teacher was assigned a file in which all of their data was saved and stored. These files included the transcriptions from the interviews and the demographic questionnaire. In addition, all artifacts collected were added to this file. A spreadsheet was created in order to organize the information collected from the Demographic Questionnaire.

The interviews were initially transcribed by an internet company, Transcription Puppy. In order to ensure that I had a clean transcript (Elliot, 2005), void of pauses, utterances, false starts, and intonations, I reread the transcripts as I watched and listened to the video recordings. This process took a little longer than anticipated but provided me

with an easy to read copy of the transcription to use for analyses. After I transcribed the recordings, I provided intern teachers with the opportunity to view the transcription in order to ensure that their stories were accurately recorded and reflected. Once this process was completed, I began to code the data.

Coding. I used the constant comparative method as the structure for coding the interviews. This method involves breaking data into incidents (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) or units (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and then coding them into categories in order to “reconstruct the categories used by subjects to conceptualize their own experiences and world view,” and “develop theoretical insights into the social processes operative in the site under study” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 334-341).

First, I completed the initial or open coding of the data collected by sorting and categorizing the data (Charmaz, 1983). I coded each intern teacher’s data separately. Initial coding allowed me to identify what was happening in the data by identifying important words or groups of words and then assigning a label to them. This process is defined as grounded theory coding (Charmaz, 2006; Glesne, 2011). Using this method as I sifted through the data kept me from assigning my own preconceived categories to the data and helped me focus on what the data was actually demonstrating. Sipe and Ghiso (2004) argue that “All coding is a judgement call since we bring our own subjectivities, our own personalities, and our own predispositions and quirks” into the process (pp. 482-483). I coded lines using gerunds and described the data by action as recommended by Charmaz (2006). Charmaz states, “We gain a strong sense of action and sequence with gerunds. . . . Staying close to the data, and when possible, starting from the words and actions of your respondents, preserves the fluidity of their experience and gives you new

ways of looking at it” (p. 49). For example, I used the following codes: building relationships, showing love, and demonstrating care in my coding. I used post-it notes to record the initial codes (one code per post-it) and then sorted them on a large piece of poster paper. When I finished my initial coding, I had a total of 156 codes to sort.

Once I completed the initial coding, I created categories from the patterns and themes that emerged. Charmaz (2006) states, “Grounded theory coding generates the bones of your analysis. Theoretical integration will assemble these bones into a working skeleton” (p. 45). I began creating my skeleton from the patterns that emerged from the initial codes I found in my data.

The final action I took with my transcriptions and codes was to use the process of memo writing in order to “analyze my ideas about the codes in any- and every-way that occurs during the moment” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72). Memo writing helped me to document changes that took place over time with intern teachers and it helped me locate stories that demonstrate the tension they experienced and the growth that may or may not have materialized. For example, whereas Maria rarely thought about her own ethnicity when she was a child, this idea became an important part of her thinking once she moved to Zinia Reservation. Although Kathleen experienced tension in many situations in Rehoboth, the tension did not lead to her developing internally persuasive discourses for culturally responsive teaching. The memos I wrote helped me categorize the stories intern teachers shared as stories about their background, stories about moving and living in the Four Corners region of the United States and stories about their teaching practice and students. I was also looking for narrative that expressed intern teachers’ knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy as well as, narrative that demonstrated struggle with

authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. Rogers et al. (2006) used Bakhtin's theories on dialogue as a way to analyze the stories of preservice teachers. They believed that as preservice teachers are authoring their own narrative, they also "adopt social positions by juxtaposing their own and other's voices" (p. 205). As intern teachers go through this process of authoring and positioning, they are ultimately developing an identity as a teacher.

The process of memo writing helped me locate themes across the intern teachers' experiences with authoritative and internally persuasive discourses that played a role in their ideological becoming as culturally responsive teachers. These themes helped me develop the four categories of discourses of culturally responsive teaching that helped demonstrate intern teachers' ideas and actions in the process of their ideological becoming. The discourses that help tell their stories are: (1) discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness; (2) discourse of practices; (3) discourse of relationships; (4) discourse of accountability. These discourses will be described in more detail in the section "Ideological Becoming: Discourses for Culturally Responsive Teaching" that follows later in this chapter.

The collection of multiple sources of data for the triangulation process proved very helpful. I was able to look across the data collected for each intern teacher and find deeper meaning in their stories. The artifacts that each intern teacher provided me varied because I specifically asked for artifacts that demonstrated their work with students, their families, and their communities. For example, Michelle shared her action research project from one of her courses at UFC with me because she felt like it demonstrated her work with her students in terms of culturally responsive teaching practices. Maria, on the other

hand, finished her coursework at UFC over two years ago and had very little in terms of coursework that she could provide me. Instead, she sent me pictures of her classroom, lesson plans, and written memos and other documents that demonstrated her work in her classroom. Although I gathered artifacts for triangulation purposes and for a deeper understanding of intern teachers' experiences, this dissertation focuses primarily on the interview data collected.

Positionality

All of my K-12 school years were spent as a military brat, living on military bases. I attended both military schools and public schools and was always around diverse populations of people outside of the school setting but this was not always the case within the school walls. As a young child, I was pulled out of classes because I was deemed "gifted" by my performance on standardized tests and then as a teenager, I was assigned to "advanced placement" classes that would prepare me for college. These special placements were always void of students of color. I noticed it and questioned it at the time but did not truly understand its implications until later in life. It wasn't until I began to study systems of privilege in college that I understood how privileged my life experiences have been and still are. I am a white, female with middle class socio-economic status. I am also one of the 80% + white teachers (teaching diverse students) that are consistently described in the literature on multicultural education. The story of my experience is an example of why this research is needed and is important.

I have been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in the positions that I have had in education over the past 17 years. I learned a great deal about difference from teaching students with cultural and linguistic backgrounds that were very

different from my own. Specifically, I learned that difference is not a deficit. However, it wasn't until I started my doctoral program and began teaching at the university level that I developed a language for what I was seeing and experiencing and my life has forever changed. I could all of a sudden see very clearly how I participate and perpetuate systems of oppression. I could see how I benefit greatly from the system at the expense of so many other people who are consistently marginalized and suffer in the U.S. I could also see that it is my responsibility to leverage my privilege in order to serve as a voice and ally for those who are marginalized in order to create a more equitable world.

My desire as a teacher educator is to help develop teachers who think critically about the world and act as change agents for their students. This is not a novel idea in teacher education but it is one that needs much more consideration, especially in terms of the experiences provided to help students understand the students and communities in which they are working and how they are impacted by social injustice. As I worked through the process of collecting and analyzing data for this research, I was mindful of how my perspective and experiences could influence how I interpreted the experiences of the intern teachers I am studying. Peshkin (1988) asserts, "One's subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed. It is insistently present in both the research and nonresearch aspects of our life" (p. 17). As a Teacher Educator working with intern teachers in the area of my research, I know most of the intern teachers who were invited to participate very well. As stated previously, I am the first person at UFC that they work with and I have been their instructor as well as their advisor throughout the program. I develop strong relationships and remain in close contact with most of them after they have finished their coursework at UFC. For example, I have been to Sacred Mountain

Elementary School many times to work with Michelle, Sarah and Maria. I have also spent the night at Michelle and Sarah's homes on the Zinia Reservation. It took great effort on my part to maintain my role as a researcher and not as friend and mentor.

In order to make sure that I have represented intern teachers' stories and experiences accurately in my dissertation, I used collaborative interpretation (Whitmore and Crowell, 1994) after the completion of each story. The process I used for collaborative interpretation was to send intern teachers their story to read and verify for accuracy. If anything was incorrectly portrayed or misunderstood on my part, I changed it in order to reflect their realities of the story.

Ideological Becoming: Discourses for Culturally Responsive Teaching

"Human consciousness does not come into contact with existence directly, but through the medium of the surrounding ideological world." Bakhtin, 1978, p.14

"Culturally responsive teaching" has become an important concept in teacher preparation programs and school districts all over the United States as an approach of teaching and being that focuses on the success of students who are ethnically/ racially and linguistically diverse. CRT is not a part of the authoritative discourses that dominate mainstream education and culture.

The overarching question for this dissertation study involves discerning intern teachers' experiences as they learn to become culturally responsive teachers across the many contexts in which they are involved, including the Teacher Recruitment Organization, University of Four Corners, and the school districts and schools that have employed them. The literature review dissects the many different approaches to developing culturally competent and responsive educators but the main focus of this

dissertation is to examine the realities that intern teachers experience as they learn to teach students very different from themselves.

Teaching in Dine, Rehoboth and Zinia as Ideological Struggle

This study is rooted in sociocultural theories and assumes that learning to be a culturally responsive teacher involves the comingling of intern teachers' previous experiences, the training they receive from multiple institutions (TRO, UFC, and school districts), and the contexts of their individual schools as well as the communities in which they are situated. This process is challenging because intern teachers are often confronted with ideological positions that are different from their own or are contradictory in nature. Intern teachers must confront, wrestle with, and ultimately make decisions on how to synthesize these discourses with what they already know or think they know.

The five intern teachers who shared their stories and experiences with me for this study were engaged in ideological struggle and at times, resistance toward authoritative discourses. All five intern teachers began their teaching lives in the Four Corners region with their own personal beliefs about the purpose of education and their role as a teacher of indigenous students. Over the course of their time in Dine, Rehoboth and Zinia, they have been exposed to multiple sources of information regarding culturally responsive teaching and a variety of experiences to help them develop cultural competence. I rely on Bahktin's theory of "ideological becoming" and authoritative and internally persuasive discourse to help make sense of the experiences that intern teachers shared.

As I analyzed and interpreted the experiences of the intern teachers in this study, I consistently returned to the literature on Bahktin's theory of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse as well as the research on developing culturally competent and

responsive teachers in order to help me make sense of the data. A foundational theory that supports this research is that learning to teach is a social process that takes place in an ideological environment. It is in this ideological environment that intern teachers experience “intense struggle” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346) in the contact zone with authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses. Ultimately, intern teachers make decisions during this process about which discourses they will interact with and eventually make their own and which they will discard. I connected Bakhtin’s ideas of discourse and ideological becoming to the strands offered by Villegas and Lucas (2002) as a framework for developing culturally responsive teachers. Based on the description that Villegas and Lucas provide for each strand, I was able to locate four discourses in which intern teachers encountered as they were learning to become culturally responsive teachers. I used these discourses as a lens to analyze the experiences that intern teachers shared and at the same time, located moments of tension that produced struggle, resistance, and sometimes rejection of new ideas. Figure 1 demonstrates how I interpret ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching.

In Figure 1 I have conceptualized a model that helps frame this dissertation. This model demonstrates the process intern teachers go through as they learn to become culturally responsive teachers and come across a variety of discourses that compete for a place in their ideological consciousness. The outside circle that surrounds the two connected circles represents the ideological environment where intern teachers are exposed to a diversity of voices and their consciousness comes into contact with these voices through the surrounding ideological world. The top circle represents the voices of

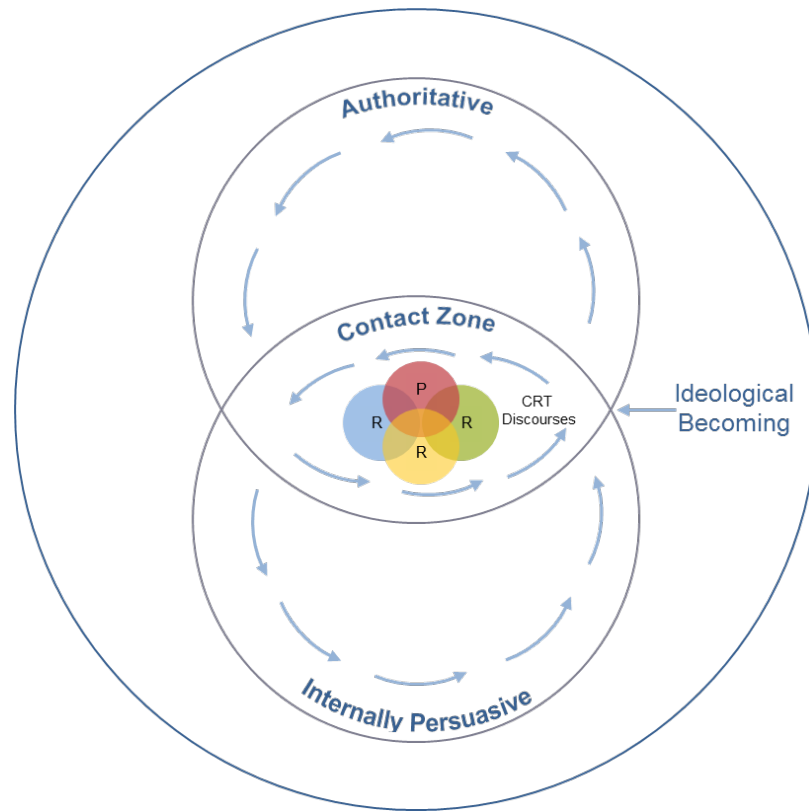


Figure 1. Ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching.

authority or authoritative discourses that are given power in the educational system at the national, state and local levels. These discourses include standardized testing, meritocratic ideals, and the commercialization of schooling as well as the discourses intern teachers encounter in their school districts, schools, TRO, and UFC. The bottom circle includes the internally persuasive discourses that “pull away from norms and admits a variety of contradictory social discourses”(Britzman, p. 42). These discourses are “subject to negotiation and shifting contexts” and they “express relationships between persons and things” (pp. 42-43). In the middle of this diagram the two circles intersect to form what looks like a Venn diagram. In this intersection between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses is the “contact zone” where intern teachers struggle with the tensions of new learning. In the contact zone are the four discourses of culturally responsive teaching. The data collected for this study demonstrates that intern teachers experienced tension which produced struggle across all four discourses. The discourses are represented with four circles that are interconnected because this is the reality of the discourses of culturally responsive teaching as interpreted by the data; one discourse does not exist without the other and all of the discourses are connected in some way. The arrows throughout the two circles demonstrate the constant and unending flow of ideology that intern teachers come in contact with on a daily basis in their teaching lives. These “communities of discourse” both authoritative and personal are always in conflict (p. 44).

Discourses of Culturally Responsive

The discourses of culturally responsive teaching that assisted in the analyses of the data collected on each intern teacher was developed from the literature on Ideological

Becoming and discourse and the framework offered by Villegas and Lucas on preparing culturally responsive teachers. The term “discourse” follows the tradition of sociocultural theory and refers to conversation, the exchange of ideas, and action that takes place during social interaction. The four discourses of culturally responsive teaching are described below.

Discourse of relationships. The Discourse of Relationships was a consistent discourse that surfaced throughout the study, whether it focused on building relationships with students, students’ families and communities or the need to build them. This discourse also deals with affirming students’ background and funds of knowledge and recognizing the validity of diverse groups of people in terms of their ways of speaking, knowing, and being in the world and using this knowledge as building blocks in the classroom.

Discourse of accountability. The discourse of accountability includes the authoritative discourse of the school district and schools that employ the intern teachers in this study. This discourse also includes the responsibilities that intern teachers have through TRO and UFC as well as the responsibilities that they perceive are important. The discourse of accountability also relates to intern teachers’ push back against ideas and activities that felt uncomfortable to them and at times, supported and/or perpetuated dominant culture’s ways of being and knowing at the expense of their students.

Discourse of practice. The discourse of practice represents the wide range of teaching practices that take place in K-12 schools. These practices include constructivism, traditional teaching, transmission views, project based learning, anti-racist education, and critical literacy.

Discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness. The Discourse of Race and Sociocultural consciousness was a common theme throughout the study. This discourse focuses on issues related to the demographic imperative, the achievement gap, discrimination, and assimilation. Also included in this discourse are ideas about white privilege, being an outsider, and the role that race, class, religion, gender, etc. have played in the oppression of many Native American students in the area.

CHAPTER VI

LAURA'S STORY

This chapter focuses on the experiences of Laura, a 23-year-old woman who identifies as white and middle-class. Laura was recruited by the Teacher Recruitment Program in 2013 because she discovered a love for teaching young children while working at a community center in a southwestern state during her summers in college. Laura's story differs greatly from the story of the Maria due to the experiences around race that she did not have to endure, but nonetheless her story of becoming is full of tension as she negotiated her new role as a teacher to indigenous students. Laura's story, in comparison with Maria's, helps unveil the complexity of systems of privilege and oppression. She was exposed to ideas of social justice and took great interest in learning about them but never fully understood them because she lacked the appropriate context to truly experience and apply those ideas until she reached adulthood.

Laura recently finished her second year of teaching kindergarten in the Dine County School district (DCS) at Redrock Elementary School. Laura did not always want to be a teacher. She began her college experience with the goal of being an international journalist. She worked for two newspapers during her time at Miami University of Ohio but it was the time she spent working at a community center in the southwest during the summer months of college that helped her realize that she wanted to teach. When Laura changed her trajectory, she was already well into her coursework at Miami University. It did not make sense to change her major and so, she looked for another alternative to

earning a teaching license. Laura had a couple of friends who had been recruited by TRO and enjoyed the experience and she decided that the Teacher Recruitment Program was a good option for her.

Discourse of Race and Sociocultural Consciousness

During the time that I spent with Laura, in interviews and as an instructor of one of her graduate courses at UFC, she demonstrated great passion and love for teaching her students in Dine. The love that she has for teaching her students has provided her with a context to further develop her lens for social justice and culturally responsive teaching, something she was missing in her early years.

Laura's ideological becoming around issues of race and sociocultural consciousness began as a child. Laura grew up in Ohio in a predominantly white neighborhood. Her father was a coach at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Laura described her years in Ohio in the following way:

So, I actually spent the first 21 years of my life in Ohio. So, the Four Corners area was the first time I lived away from there. Yeah, when I think about the schools I went to growing up, and then through college. It was very predominantly white" (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura clearly remembers her first encounter with the concept of race when she attended preschool. The preschool was open to faculty and staff at the local university and was considered one of the more diverse schools in the area. Laura shared, "I remember being aware that the kids I played with looked different than me but I didn't make much of it" (Interview 1, March 2015). She also recalled, "I remember playing outside with a girl who was Black and the girl saying, 'I wish I was white' (Interview 1, March 2015). Laura

did not understand this comment at the time because she was so young but as she became older this memory would become much more meaningful and produce a great number of questions for her.

Laura gained more of a sense that racial issues exist as a middle school student when there were protests over a police shooting of a young black man in Cincinnati. Laura's recollection of the event was still painfully clear. She remembered that the young man was a teenager and he was unarmed. She recalled,

“He (the Black teenager) came into contact with a white male police officer and the officer saw he had some charges against him. The officer chased him into an alley and ended up shooting and killing the teenager. After the fact, it turned out the charges against the Black man were for parking fines and such” (Interview 2, May 2015).

This event received a great deal of media coverage and Laura indicated that she received mixed messages from a variety of different sources including the faculty and students of her conservative Catholic school, the interviews with protestors that she watched on TV, and the conversations she would have with her family. The killing of this unarmed Black teenager was the catalyst that sparked her interest in wanting to learn about social justice. Although this event produced tension that brought race to the forefront of Laura's thinking, it did not produce the kind of tension that would help these ideas become an internally persuasive discourse. Laura suggests that she was beginning to understand race in theory but she still needed to experience it in context for it to be real for her. She shared,

I grew up in a mostly white town in the Midwest and the private schools I attended from kindergarten through high school were almost entirely white. This is to say, I was very aware of issues concerning race growing up, but I was also very sheltered from these issues (Interview 2, May 2015).

Bahktin believed that we are always “becoming” ideologically through the conflicts and struggles we experience with various viewpoints, values, and voices. It is a gradual, never ending process in which one evolves through “critical moments” or “turning points” that can lead to a change of consciousness or what Morson and Emerson (1990) called “punctuated equilibrium” creating a change in one’s thinking (p. 386). Laura would have a few of these “critical moments” during her college experience and then again after joining TRO and moving to the Four Corners region.

As stated previously, Laura did not always know that she wanted to be a teacher. She began her undergraduate years at Miami University because her father worked as a coach for the university and her tuition was free. Laura chose journalism and political science as her majors. At the time, she believed that she wanted to be an international journalist. Little did she know, her experiences with race and social justice as an undergraduate student would begin producing some of those “critical moments” that would prepare her for the start of her teaching career in Dine. The first “critical moment” that Laura experienced at Miami University wasn’t a single moment or story in time but came from a series of moments over a semester in a course on constitutional law that focused on civil rights issues and more specifically, race. Laura’s recollection of the course was extremely positive and it is clear that what she learned in the course was

meaningful and contributed to her ideological becoming. Laura described the class in the following way:

The most meaningful class I took was a constitutional law class taught by an African American man who had grown up in segregated New Orleans, earned his law degree from Washington University in St. Louis and was one of the first Black professors at the university I attended. The class itself was very small (8 to 10 students) and the professor expected us to talk about civil rights issues in historical context and present day context. He was an amazing professor who was able to facilitate these conversations and really make sense of the racial issues I was aware of in theory. Talking to and learning from students and a professor who had experienced these things first hand was so necessary in moving my thoughts from abstract theories to concrete realities (Interview 3, May 2015).

The narratives of race and social justice begin to become internally persuasive discourses for Laura. For Laura, the professor of her constitutional law class had provided a safe place for her to come into contact with a variety of alien voices that were competing for authority. In this space, or what Bakhtin would call “contact zone” Laura was beginning to liberate herself from her old perspectives and open up to new ideas, theories, and discourses. According to Bakhtin (1981), this type of environment, “creates fertile soil for experimentally objectifying another’s discourse. Fertile soil for facilitating an ideological struggle that needs to occur, a struggle that will result in more inclusive attitudes toward diversity (p. 348).

The “ideological becoming” that was started in Laura’s constitutional law class, would help her view later experiences with a lens for social justice and further challenge

her internally persuasive discourses. Readings and discussions she had regarding colonialism and racism had successfully stimulated Laura to think about and apply these new ideas to the world around her. Laura demonstrated this beginning transformation through a story she shared from when she studied abroad for a semester in Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Laura noted,

Traveling to developing nations as a white, upper middle class, pretty sheltered female certainly impacted my understanding of social justice issues. A moment that sticks out in my mind was a visit to a Cambodian school for children who were refugees. Most of the people living in the village were Vietnamese, and most of them became refugees during the Vietnam War (called the War of American Aggression in Vietnam) and during the violence that followed the war. The impact of colonialism and racism and economic injustice was so obvious and so devastating. The people living in the village were considered non-existent by the Cambodian and Vietnamese governments, and by the global north at large. I was traveling with a group of white, middle to upper class students and professors and the attitude with which the group approached this visit was one of tourism. It was disturbing, to say the least, that structures of colonialism and racism and militarism had created this refugee village and that the people benefiting from these structures were treating it as a stop on a tour (Interview 3, May 2015).

The disturbing nature of this moment would stay with Laura and would impact her thinking as she entered her new life in Dine as a teacher of indigenous students. As Laura began her journey west, she felt extremely cautious. Although she had spent her summers in college working at a community center in the southwest, she had never been to the

Four Corners region and was unclear of what she should expect. But, even with her lack of clarity, she knew that she did not want to fall into a similar situation as the one she experienced in Cambodia. Laura recalled her first trip to Dine in this way:

The first time I came to Dine, I remember feeling panicked and very out of place. I felt like everything I was wearing was wrong and every part about the way I looked was wrong. This was not the first time I had been in the minority in a work environment, but it felt very different (Interview 1, March 2015).

The tension Laura was experiencing increased during her home stay with a family on the reservation at the end of that first week. The home stay was arranged by TRO as a part of their work at preparing intern teachers for their new home. Laura shared her story of the home stay with me:

The family I stayed with was very kind and welcoming. At the end of the visit, they talked to the other TRO intern teachers about how excited they were to have them in the Four Corners region. Then, they turned to me and asked if I would even make it through one year. I think this sticks out because it was a verbalization of what I was already feeling- I was an outsider and I would not be able to survive in the Four Corners region (Interview 1, March 2015).

This “critical moment” would wake Laura from a state of ideological stasis and help her ask and seek the answers to the questions that surfaced for her. The family stay was only for one night, yet it proved to be a meaningful experience that produced tension for Laura. All of her life she found herself in spaces where she seen as the norm. This was the first time that she had ever been the minority in terms of race and the first time she was considered an “outsider.” Her ideological becoming would come to a halt, however,

during her time at the summer teacher training institute with TRO. Intern teachers participate in diversity training with TRO through a program they call Diversity, Schools, and Awareness (DSA). Laura shared the following about the DSA during her summer training:

Most of the DSA sessions I have experienced were at the summer institute. They were poorly run and the content in the sessions was not great. In most of the sessions, the facilitator read off a powerpoint that was not region-specific. When we did look at issues related to Native communities and students, it was not in context at all. In one session, we were supposed to look at pictures of Native children at boarding schools. These pictures were never put in context, and we never discussed what this meant for our students today (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura's diversity training during institute proved to be unhelpful. Her experience left her feeling uncomfortable and with many questions regarding her new role as a white teacher in Dine. Furthermore, Laura questions the organization as a whole, (not the Four Corners region in particular):

I feel a lot of hope when I take a step back and look at what TRO intern teachers are doing in the Four Corners region. But, when I look at the national organization and the model under which TRO operates, I worry that TRO is perpetuating colonialism and is doing more harm than good in communities. While TRO's mission is to cultivate social justice, I worry that what we are doing actually undermines social justice (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura had similar criticism of UFC, the university where she completed her licensure coursework and Master's degree. She noted that all of her professors were white and nearly all of the intern teachers who attended class with her and completed the licensure and/or Master's program were white. The intern teachers who chose not to complete the program were almost all women of color which left Laura wondering if there was something at UFC that is undermining non- white students.

Since moving to Dine, the diversity training that Laura has received from TRO has been much more positive and helpful. She described this work in the following way: "We have had sessions with community members and educators outside of TRO who are Native American that has been really productive and empowering" (Interview 2, May 2015). Laura shared that she was able to work with educators from the Native American Community Academy, teachers from different Pueblo nations, and teachers from the Navajo Nation. This work has strengthened her ideological struggle and becoming around race but also has left her with questions. Laura demonstrates this in our conversation on how her race impacts her classroom dynamics:

Since I teach kindergarten, I'm never quite certain how my race impacts the dynamics of my classroom. My students are not too young to beware of race, but I'm not exactly sure how they see me. I think the place my race has more impact is with parents. I have interacted with parents who have said they want their child to have a white teacher, and I have interacted with parents who clearly are wary of me. I think increasingly, I have been more aware of my race with making decisions about my classroom. Knowing that I have a different cultural background from my students makes me more likely to ask students,

parents, and other teachers at my school before I make decisions (Interview 2, May 2015).

Despite Laura's struggle with how her identity as a white teacher impacts her students, she continues to examine the role of race in her work and seeks help from students, parents, and other educators to bridge the gap in her understanding.

Discourse of Practices

Related to Laura's desire to learn about race and how it impacts her students, she communicated a deep commitment to providing a safe place for her students to learn the academic skills necessary to be successful readers and writers but also tending to their emotional needs and helping them develop positive identities as Native Americans. Laura clearly rejects the authoritative discourse of standardized testing and meritocracy that the district supports by giving mandates to use scripted programs and constant testing, yet, she consistently struggles with the idea of culturally responsive teaching practices and exactly what it looks like in her context at Redrock Elementary.

Laura's uncertainty about the definition of culturally responsive teaching was made clear during our first conversation together when I asked her, "How do you define culturally responsive teaching?" Laura responded:

I don't know if I have the perfect answer. When I think about it, I think about kindergarten mostly because I think that looks different than other grade levels. You know they don't come to you as blank. They come and know a lot of stuff, but you're still building the foundations of social justice and being in school and things like that. So, I think kindergarten is a lot about loving and respecting the kids and being open to hearing from them and incorporating what they want in the

classroom. So, instead of me telling them what to all the time, incorporating things that they are interested in, things they are passionate about into the classroom. I really don't think it means teaching them about themselves. I think it means letting them teach the rest of the class about themselves and about their families. I think it means being a really good teacher (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura's lack of clarity on culturally responsive teaching practices is not related to an unwillingness to learn or as I said in the opening of this section, a desire to embrace a discourse of standardized testing and meritocracy. Based on our conversations and Laura's work in her classroom, she has a firmer grasp on the practice of culturally responsive teaching than she gives herself credit for and in fact, has reflected deeply on how this discourse impacts her students. Laura demonstrates a willingness to challenge ideological positions and challenge concepts related to teaching, learning, and diversity. Specifically, she connected to the work of Django Paris and his use of the term "culturally sustaining pedagogy" because it "seeks to perpetuate and foster--to sustain-- linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism" (Paris, 2012). Laura shared,

I read an article that I really liked by Django Paris and he wrote about culturally sustaining teaching. I feel it makes me more of a participant in sustaining and helping, being a part of whatever my kids want to be for themselves" (Interview 1, March 2015).

As Laura continued, she struggled with what seemed to be a negotiation between culturally responsive discourse and one of basic reading and writing skills. She continued:

But I think part of it is being a really good teacher and I feel that we still need to use practices that help students learn to read and do math. It means incorporating elements of being culturally responsive into lessons not forgetting that my kids shouldn't have to wait to leave kindergarten to learn how to read or how to do math. I don't feel like I am doing them justice if I don't do the very best I can in those areas. So, I think a lot of it is also pushing myself to become a better teacher, so that my kids have all the skills they need to succeed in whatever they want because we can talk about it all we want, but they also need those skills to succeed in life and be able to do and sustain their culture. I know that's not a super polished answer (Interview 1, March 2015).

In Laura's ideological struggle, there appears to be the notion that if she is using culturally responsive teaching practices that she would not necessarily be teaching students the skills they need in order to succeed and for this reason there should be more of a balance. This dichotomy of two discourses, culturally responsive teaching and teaching for skills, may stem from the experiences Laura had in her own education that were influential enough to be carried into her own teaching. Olsen (2008) describes how teachers' experiences in learning to teach can (1) confirm their experiences; (2) disconfirm their experiences; or (3) appropriate their experiences. According to Olsen, teachers' experiences are confirmed when the ideas that they had as they entered education align with the ideas of the school or program in which they work. In addition, teachers' experiences are disconfirmed when their entering ideas about teaching practices contradict with the ideas of the school and/or teacher education program; and finally,

teachers' experiences are appropriated when they modify ideas in order to become more aligned with their pre-existing beliefs about education and teaching practices.

Olsen's work helps to understand the ideological struggle that teacher candidates and teachers may experience as they learn to be culturally responsive teachers in a white dominated world; A struggle that Laura appears to consciously attend to and question as she gains experience as a kindergarten teacher. The binary relationship that culturally responsive teaching and teaching basic skills causes for Laura, could indicate a struggle between her developing discourses and previous discourses upon entering the field of education. Laura provides an example of this struggle through the description of her classroom practices:

I don't know if I am a culturally responsive teacher. I can tell you what my classroom looks like and sounds like but I don't think I can determine if that truly is culturally responsive. I think one way is to respect my kids and not just using buzz words that we know we are supposed to say but actually doing them, actually caring about the kids and their families. Also, being a participant in the classroom with them, instead of me controlling everything, having shared control over the classroom and also having really high expectations for them. And I know that's a buzz word that a lot of us use, rigor and having high expectations, but actually doing and believing they can be the very best. There definitely is a mindset in our schools that because our kids are here and because of who they are and where they come from, they can't do all the things that are expected of them. I believe that they can and I push them to do it. Also, looking at the examples of different areas of kindergarten across the country and pushing the kids to achieve

skills. I think that is what it looks like and sounds like in my classroom (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura's description indicates that while she is embracing many of the components of culturally responsive teaching, she is also questioning how this concept is talked about and how it is practiced in reality. Her use of "buzz words" twice in this conversation is indicative of many of her experiences and struggles in learning to teach thus far.

Although Laura gives credit to all three of the institutions that have played a role in her learning to teach, (UFC, TRO, and DCS) her stories of becoming illustrate that the 3 institutions have not been consistent in the messages that they disseminate and the practices that followed.

Laura's discourse of practice was heavily influenced by the work that she has done through TRO, UFC, and the DCS district that employs her. I will discuss some of her training in this section and follow up in more detail in the section on the Discourse of Accountability. Laura's teacher training began at the summer teacher training institute the summer before she began teaching. It was in this space that she was first exposed to the idea of culturally responsive teaching. She described feeling extremely overwhelmed with learning to teach and then trying to learn about the issues that were relevant to the Four Corners region of the United States. She remembered the following about her summer training:

The summer is really a blur but I remember looking at some pictures of Native students at boarding schools and reading some quotes from white settlers and colonizers. I remember worrying that the DSA sessions were not preparing us to

interact with students and families in a way that did not perpetuate colonialism
(Interview 1, March 2015).

These events were clearly not aligned with using culturally responsive teaching practices. In addition to this work through TRO, Laura was perplexed somewhat by what she experienced at UFC, the institution where she was taking coursework in order to earn her teaching license. UFC is a university that serves a predominantly non- white group of students on the main campus as well as the branch campuses and field centers. In Dine, the branch campus serves over 80% of students who identify as Native American, yet, all of the instructors that Laura had in her program were white and a majority of the intern teachers in her teacher education program were white. In addition, she reports that only 1/3 of the courses she was required to take in her Master's program openly discussed culturally responsive teaching. Laura communicated that although many of her classes did not have a CRT component, she feels that they were essential to her development as an excellent teacher. She stated,

I think that part of being a culturally responsive teacher is being a really excellent teacher. So, when I think of Dr. Mason's class and Dr. Garrett's class, they may not have explicitly talked about CRT, but their teaching was essential to CRT
(Interview 2, May 2015).

Laura gives credit to the program for teaching her methods in two content areas but it is important to note that UFC prides itself on being the flagship university that serves diverse students.

Although Laura displayed uncertainty in her teaching practices, the stories that she shared with me and the lesson plans that she has created over the past year, indicate

that her discourse of practice is strongly connected to culturally responsive teaching practices. As Laura stated earlier in this section, she believes in building bridges between students' lives and interests and the standards and curriculum that she is teaching. She makes decisions about her daily/ weekly curriculum and instruction by looking at the school-made pacing guide, formative assessments on her students, and information from her students indicating what they are interested in learning. Additionally, she seeks feedback from parents on what they are learning through her weekly newsletter that she sends home with her students.

Using students' interests in the classroom and providing them with choice is an important component in Laura's classroom that she has learned to incorporate this past year. Villegas and Lucas (2002) site this practice as one that helps students engage in learning because it is connected to their lives. Laura's writing workshop is a good model of this practice. Laura's writing workshop takes place every day for 45 minutes. She admits that her writing instruction has evolved from last year's scripted writing curriculum which only required students to copy pattern sentences. This year, Laura offers students choice on what they want to write and student writing progresses in a developmental fashion from drawing pictures to writing creative sentences. This practice has motivated her students to want to write and Laura is able to learn more about her students' lives from reading their writing.

Another practice that is common in Laura's classroom is the teacher learning alongside students. Laura models this on a daily basis in her classroom through her participation in the work that they are doing and the questions that she asks. Laura also models her own love of learning by joining her students for Navajo Language and

Culture class. She began this practice at the beginning of the school year in order to learn more about the Navajo language and culture that she could use in her own instruction.

Laura told me the following story about her experiences:

My kids thought it was a little strange at first to have their teacher sitting on the floor with them, repeating vocabulary words and singing songs. It was pretty obvious that I did not already know what they were learning. In many cases, my kids were already familiar with the word we were learning, or they picked up on them much more quickly than I did. I didn't retain a ton of the new language I learned in the Navajo Language and Culture class. I think it will take several years of using the basic words and language before I have the proficiency of a kindergartener! (Interview 3, May 2015)

Laura believes that participating in learning with her students has had a positive impact on her classroom culture this year. Her students were able to see that what they were learning in the Navajo Language and Culture class was important to her, too. They were also able to see her as a fellow learner and not in the typical position of power that a teacher generally holds in the classroom. Laura noted that learning Navajo with her students has also provided her with an avenue to talk about difference and how language is important to a person's culture and identity.

I chose to describe the two practices above as a way to demonstrate Laura's growing discourse of practices for culturally responsive teaching and also because both of these examples help provide examples of the work that Laura does with her students around building positive identity and helping them feel good about who they are and who they want to be. Identity work also helps her students navigate their identities, especially

when faced with negative stereotypes. Laura provided the following example that happened this year:

A week or so before Thanksgiving, my students and I were standing in line in the cafeteria waiting for lunch. The school librarian (a Navajo woman who grew up in the community) had decorated the cafeteria bulletin board with clip-art style pictures of pilgrims and Native Americans. The pictures showed smiling, white pilgrims carrying turkeys and guns and cross-legged Native Americans adorned with leather and feathers holding baskets of vegetables. After observing the board for a few moments, one of my students turned to me and said, pointing, “I know what that is Ms. Calvin! That’s an Indian!” I asked him to tell me more about what he was thinking. He responded, “That’s an Indian. Indians are from India. I’m a Native American” (Interview 3, May 2015).

She believed that the work she was doing with her class was helping her students show incredible self-awareness and perception of the world. This student was 5 years old and already familiar with the stereotypical pilgrims and Indians picture, but he knew that it does not represent him or his experiences.

Discourse of Relationships

The discourse of relationships involves teachers knowing their students, students’ families, and the community. This discourse also focuses on how teachers interact with their students and the ways in which they provide support for their academic and emotional needs as well as affirming students’ cultures, values, and funds of knowledge. Laura has clearly developed strong relationships with her students as well as parents, other teachers, and members of the community. She consistently communicates the

necessity and importance of these roles on her own development as well as how building these relationships reinforces and supports her classroom practices.

Developing relationships has been an important piece for Laura's development or ideological becoming as a culturally responsive teacher. As a white woman with little exposure to difference Laura felt tension with moving to an area where she was seen as the minority and an outsider. She never felt uncomfortable about being white in spaces that were predominantly non-white but felt cautious because of the power that is represented in that position. Laura shared with me,

I was never uncomfortable just more aware of everything. I think sometimes it can be a little overwhelming to think about being a white person and all the terrible things that white people have done and all of the terrible connotations that carries with it. It can be kind of scary to think about what people see when they look at you. And then you work with real people and real kids and it's not that way at all. You see them as real humans" (Interview 2, May 2015).

She remembered that her mother grew up in the Four Corners region and was always one of the only white kids around. Her mother saw this situation as quite normal. Laura could see the benefit of white people being immersed in more diverse settings. She explained to me:

I think being around people that are not all white, that experience in of itself has been really beneficial because I actually read a study where it showed that most white people only ever talk to other white people and people that share their reactions or people very similar to them. So being in a situation where I am always listening to other perspectives and to people who are different from me

has been really helpful. Also, to have to think about the things before I say them because I am talking with people who don't think exactly like I do or have the same experiences I do (Interview 3, May 2015).

Being able to take a step back and listen to the perspectives of others that are not from the same racial group and socio-economic group as well as asking questions when she is unsure have been beneficial. Laura has made a conscientious effort to build relationships outside of the identity groups in which she identifies. She told me,

For the first time, most of my close friends are not white. I think this has really pushed me to be more open minded, and it has given me the opportunity to talk about issues like race and class in a really safe environment. Living in Dine has helped me seek out relationships with people who are not like me, in part because there aren't a ton of people who are like me (Interview 3, May 2015).

These relationships have been essential to Laura's ideological becoming in the following way:

I think the friends I've made here have been really helpful because they are people I can talk with about a lot of really controversial, touchy and sensitive issues, and not have to worry about them feeling touchy or sensitive. I can ask questions and they can ask questions and we can talk about issues with a lot of honesty." (Interview 3, May 2015)

Laura is adamant that these relationships must be organic and authentic, not something put together for the sole purpose of being a teachable moment. Developing authentic relationships with others different from herself has allowed Laura to grow ideologically around the discourse of culturally responsive teaching. She originally experienced tension

with how she would be seen by people different from herself and through struggling with that tension, she began to seek out difference.

Laura's discourse of relationships with her students was, for her, essential to being a good teacher. It was clear through our conversations and the work Laura was doing inside and outside of her classrooms that her students were placed in the center and their needs were the focal point of everything she was doing. Her attention to the individual needs of her students was obvious in all aspects of her teaching life. Laura's classroom is set up so that her students can work in small groups in order to have more choice in the activities they complete, which is an aspect to her teaching that she feels is very important. This set-up also provides Laura with the structure needed to work with students one on one who need additional help on specific skills that she has taught. She discussed this point with me:

It is really nice because it gives me the ability to work well with my kids which has been really useful this year because I've got at least one new kid every month and each new kid comes in further behind than the last and doesn't know all letters (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura told me the story of one of her students Sam, who was new to her classroom in February and he still could not write his name and did not know all of his letters. She shared that the way her classroom is structured, her students can work together in collaboration, and she can help students like Sam every day.

Another example of Laura's desire to build relationships with her students and families in a way that is meaningful to their academic and social development was apparent in the funds of knowledge project she designed for her students to complete with

their families at home. The project involved the sharing of family stories and positive information such as, “Our family is good at this . . .” and “Our family’s favorite thing to do is . . .” (Interview 1, March 2015). The assignment was 10 pages long but it was so meaningful to her students and their families that she had a 100% completion rate for the first time. Laura learned a lot of information about her students and their families and her students reported that it was fun.

Laura’s attention to students like Sam and her willingness to work with them after school hours exemplifies her strong commitment to her students. In addition to Laura’s work with students in an academic setting, she also spent time with them outside of the academic environment. Laura spent a great deal of time attending her students’ after school activities, such as sports and dance performances. She explained the importance of these events to her ideological becoming in this way:

Attending events with my students and their families has helped me become more comfortable around my students’ family members. Some of the most meaningful experiences I’ve had in the past year have been at events involving parents- a cookout that another teacher and I had at Rocky View Park on a Saturday, and a field day I had for my kids and their families. I still feel some anxiety around those occurrences, but I also know they were essential parts of building my classroom culture this year (Interview 3, May 2015)

Laura exhibits some tension regarding the events but by organizing these events, she was able to build strong relationships with her students and their families and use the knowledge she gained in her classroom to further support their learning.

Discourse of Accountability

The process of learning to become culturally responsive teachers involves the examination of a variety of discourses from a number of different levels and exploring the implications of these discourses on students who are marginalized in our education system. In Laura's case, she was challenged by a number of discourses that surfaced from the Dine County School district, TRO, UFC, and the parents of her students during the past two years of her teaching in Dine. She continues to experience tension and struggle with the larger systemic issues but within this struggle has learned to place her students first and use her privilege as leverage.

My first discussion with Laura that focused on the discourse of accountability came from her response to the following question asked during my interview with her, "One day all children in the United States will have access to an equitable and excellent education. What does this day look like to you?" Laura struggled with an answer to this question at first because for her it was hard to imagine "one day" in her current context. As she responded to my question, the complexity of the situation in Dine came to surface. Laura stated:

Yes, so, this is one of the questions I ask myself and I was thinking, I don't have any answers for this question. I don't know what it really looks like here. I think when I look at my kids that I taught and the kids that I know in the school, it doesn't seem that far away. It seems attainable because they are these wonderful, brilliant little people. But when I look at statistics, if I teach for 5 years one of my kids will graduate from college. If they follow trends. And so, I don't know when

I look at the larger picture. I don't know what it looks like (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura can see so much potential in her students and at the same time she is in conflict with what is clearly a pattern of educational oppression for her Native American students in Dine. She experiences a great deal of tension over “one day” and although she cannot articulate a clear picture on what it might look like, she does believe that it can start with the classroom teacher. Lauren stated,

I think it looks like a caring teacher in every classroom. We don't have that at my school right now. We have a lot of long-term subs in the classrooms. And some of them are really, you know, wonderful teachers but...” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura brings to light the teacher shortage that has plagued the Dine County School district and the surrounding area for years and has made it possible for herself and other intern teachers to move into this community to teach. In her school alone, there were five full-time substitute teachers all year in grades preschool, first, second, fourth and fifth. Laura reported that the first grade class had 6 different substitute teachers throughout the year. She said, “And so, they just had, you know, a sub for a week or two and they had one really good sub who is there about a month and a half” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura's struggle with the bigger picture of the “one day . . .” question reveals her thinking about who holds responsibility for her students' success. She understands that each student must have a caring teacher in the classroom and she points to the fact that her school is lacking this major component for student success, a problem that falls on the administration of the school district.

In addition to her struggle around seeing the bigger picture of “one day” she also wrestles with and challenges the question I posed. She states, I also don’t know if I like the phrase, “one day” because it seems like if I say “one day” that I can push off responsibilities to someone else instead of saying like today, today we need an excellent education for our kids” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Laura’s lack of a clear vision may be interpreted in a couple of ways. As discussed earlier, prior to moving to the Four Corners region of the United States, Laura only had exposure to diverse groups of people in her working environment during the summers in the southwest and her semester studying abroad in Hong Kong, Cambodia and Vietnam. Based on the time I have spent with Laura, I believe that she genuinely cares about the perspectives of the community in Dine. Her lack of a clear vision may be due partly to her inexperience as well as the deep respect that she has come to value for the community in which she is teaching. Laura’s struggle with ideas about success has moved away from dominant culture’s definitions to a realization that she is still uncovering what her students’ parents and the community wants for their children. In this way, Laura is suggesting that the discourse of accountability does not belong solely to her and the school but that there is shared responsibility by many stakeholders.

The idea of shared responsibility under the discourse of accountability continued as Laura and I discussed her assessment of the support systems she had as a new teacher across the three institutions in which she was involved: TRO, UFC, and DCS. Laura was extremely fair in her assessment of each institution, providing examples of support that she received as well as examples of inadequacy. Laura prefaced most of our conversations that fall under the discourse of accountability with appreciation and respect

for the people and institutions that she has worked with as a teacher. The first conversation we had regarding her preparation to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students, she began by stating, “I’m charitable towards all of these places” (Interview 1, March 2015). It was clear that she was experiencing a little discomfort on her part and that she wanted to be honest but also acknowledge that her learning experience happened across all three of those institutions and for this, she was grateful. I also found through her stories that Laura took control over her own learning and what takes place in her classroom and doesn’t believe in making excuses. In one conversation she shared,

I think a lot of it is working around obstacles and doing so because it’s so necessary. I think it is part of a mindset that if you believe that all of these things happening in your school and at your district will prevent you then it will, but if you believe that you can have culturally responsive or sustaining practices, you will find a way to make it happen (Interview 2, May 2015).

Although Laura feels that teachers can do what is in the best interest of kids, she also acknowledges that there are hurdles in the Dine County School district that hurt teachers and students. One of the biggest obstacles, for Laura is “destructive” teachers and principals. In her conversations with me, Laura told me several stories that illustrate a lack of accountability by the administration of her school and the district.

In the first story Laura described the tension she felt at a staff meeting at the beginning of the school year when her new principal, a white female who has been in the district for 30 years, gave a speech about the kids in her school. During the speech, the principal said, “They come to us so broken and it’s our job to fix them” (Interview 3,

May 2015). This comment disgusted Laura. She told me, “The principal said it with such conviction with a lump in her throat. She truly believed we were here to save these barbaric, broken children” (Interview 3, May 2015). The incident described above was followed by an equally disturbing workshop that the principal organized on behavior management. Laura explained:

Discipline and behavior management were a struggle at my school this year.

Incidents were not handled well or consistently and there was no school-wide behavior plan. My principal brought in an administrator from the district to show teachers behavior management strategies. The meeting started off badly when the district administrator relied on intimidation and physical contact as the basis of his behavior management. At one point in the meeting he said, “Families at Redrock Elementary School are inherently violent by nature” (Interview 3, May 2015).

Laura reported that the speaker’s racist comment went unchallenged by the faculty and staff in attendance. She admitted that she felt so uncomfortable in that situation that she really didn’t know what to say. Since then, Laura has begun to use her voice in opposition to comments and practices that are harmful to her students.

The ways in which teachers resist authoritative discourses also falls under the discourse of accountability and refers to the ways that intern teachers worked against the authoritative discourses that they felt was not in the best interest of their students. Villegas and Lucas (2002) describe this practice of culturally responsive teachers as teachers working as “agents of change . . . who assume responsibility for identifying and interrupting inequitable school practices” (p.54). In Laura’s case, she may not completely

understand culturally responsive teaching practices but she communicates an abiding will to do what is best for her students.

The process of ideological becoming was made much more complex for Laura as she was taking coursework, participating in professional development with TRO, and learning the authoritative discourse of her school and school district. Laura grappled with a disconnect between what she was learning outside of her school and what her school district required her to teach. She has quietly resisted the authoritative discourse of using scripted programs for more student-centered curriculum. She discussed her resistance with me:

I think I've been lucky in a way that I haven't been challenged much about my classroom practices. I have not been following the district curriculum or schedule, which could be an issue next year when my school is part of the University of Virginia turnaround schools program. But, in the past two years, my classroom has been largely ignored. I teach kindergarten, so there are not as many high-stakes tests that the district cares about, and my students have done pretty well on the state tests they have taken. So, I think my resistance to district policies to this point has gone unnoticed! (Interview 3, May 2015).

Laura's resistance is evidence of how much she cares for her students and their success in her classroom. She is unsure how the district determines which programs they will purchase for the individual subject areas or their justification for not teaching subjects like writing every day but she tries her best to make decisions about what she teaches and how she teaches it based on what she knows about her students.

The lack of support and accountability at Laura's school and the fact that there are five long-term substitute teachers that have been teaching all year has made it easier for Laura to resist practices at her school. She described this as having gained "a little bit of arrogance" on her part. In her mind, there are so many issues going on in the district that need attention that she can say, "What are you going to do, fire me and get a long term sub? I know I could get a job somewhere else" (Interview 1, March 2015). She continued, "If you are scared of getting in trouble or getting fired for doing what's best for your kids, then what's the point of teaching?" (Interview 1, March 2015) Laura's comments here demonstrate her privilege to be able to put her job on the line and "get a job somewhere else" but more importantly, it illustrates her willingness to leverage her privilege to be an ally for her students' well-being.

Conclusion

Learning to become a culturally responsive teacher is a process that is full of tension. For intern teachers employed in the Four Corners region of the United States, this process may be considered even more challenging as they learn to internalize the discourses related to culturally responsive teaching: the discourses of race and sociocultural consciousness, practices, relationships and accountability in a context that is unfamiliar and whose people are still suffering from historical trauma.

In this chapter, I shared the experiences of Laura, a young white woman who had intense moments in her ideological struggle as a teacher wanting to become culturally responsive. Laura entered the teaching profession with some experiences and beliefs that would help her make the discourses related to culturally responsive teaching internally persuasive and she indicated a willingness and desire to struggle with the tension she

encounters as she continues her career as a teacher in the Four Corners region of the United States.

Laura's ideological struggle with the competing discourses of her school district, school, TRO, and UFC are demonstrated in her practices within her kindergarten classroom as she tries to make sense of what she should be doing with her students. Her school and school district were not supportive in her developing ideology of culturally responsive pedagogy with their embrace of standardized testing, commercial programs, teacher-centered classrooms, and deficit views of the students who attend the school. UFC and TRO provided Laura with teacher training on culturally responsive teaching practices but were not consistent or specific enough for Laura to clearly articulate an understanding of the theory and implement it in her classroom. All of these factors impacted Laura's development which I will describe next.

Although Laura shared moments of tension within all four discourses in which she struggled, she did not demonstrate growth equally across all of the discourses. Laura's evolving ideology for culturally responsive teaching was stronger in the discourse of relationships and race and sociocultural consciousness than the discourses of responsibility and practices. All of her childhood and college years, she was immersed in an environment that was predominantly white and lacked the polyphony of voices needed for ideological becoming. It was a couple of courses that she took in college that had a social justice focus that provided her with a safe space in which to listen to different perspectives and experience the tension that she needed to begin her struggle. Once moving to the Four Corners region, Laura found that building authentic relationships with people from the Four Corners community who identify as Native American was an

important piece to her ideological development. It was through the sharing of ideas and listening to people different than her that she was coming to a better understanding of how who you are impacts how you experience the world. Bakhtin (1981) describes this process of listening to different voices as a part of a person's ideological growth:

“Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth but strives to determine the very basis of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior” (p. 342).

Laura communicated an understanding of the importance of taking a stand against ideology that oppresses her students but she found it difficult to apply this ideology during situations that involved direct conflict with her principal and administration from the district office. As a new teacher, she was learning how to use her voice to advocate for her students but was left voiceless due to the oppositional discourse of authority that held all of the power (Britzman, 1991). In these cases, it would have been beneficial if Laura had more support from TRO and UFC so that she felt secure in using her voice. Additionally, Laura found it difficult to reconcile the binary and contradictory relationship between her use of the commercial programs her school adopted as curriculum and constructivist practices that are an essential component of culturally responsive teaching (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). Laura was able to take a stand and resist some to the teacher-centered practices and commercial programs used as curriculum but this was done quietly because as she shared, her kindergarten class was not a grade that is tested so administration tended to leave her alone.

Figure 2 illustrates Laura's ideological development with the discourses for culturally responsive teaching. In the figure, the four circles in the contact zone that

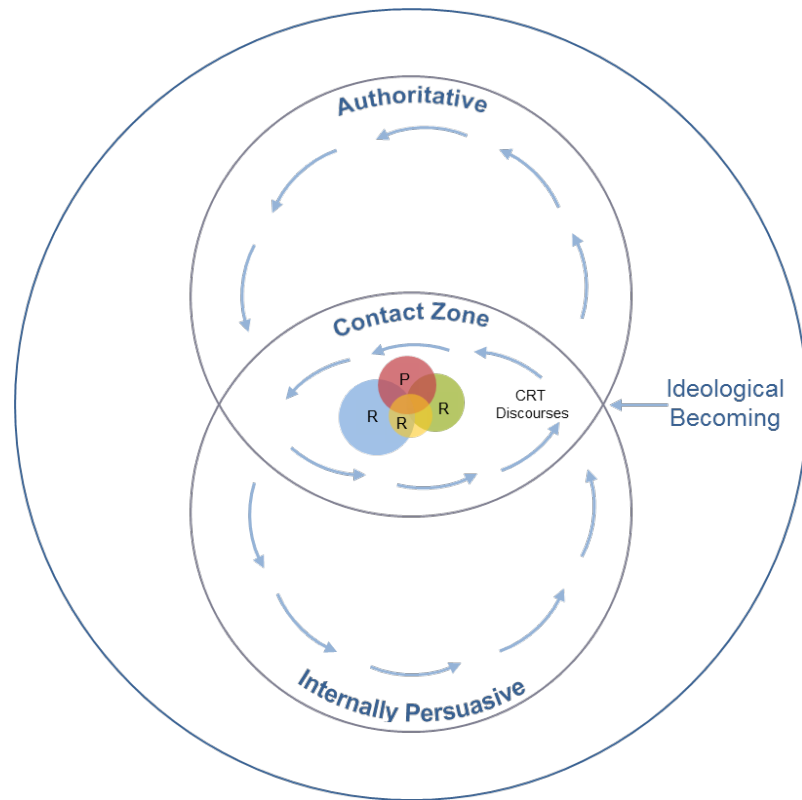


Figure 2. Laura's ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching.

represent the discourses of culturally responsive teaching intersect in order to demonstrate the connectedness of the four discourses. The circles are drawn at different sizes to illustrate that she has not had equal growth in all four discourses.

CHAPTER VII

MARIA'S STORY

This chapter focuses on the experiences of Maria, a 26-year-old woman who identifies as Mexican American and working-class. Maria was recruited by the Teacher Recruitment Organization in 2011 with the goal of working with indigenous students in the Four Corners region of the United States. Maria recently finished her fourth year of teaching third grade at Sacred Mountain Elementary School on the Zinia Reservation and has had moments of success and frustration as she learned what it means to become a culturally responsive teacher to her third grade students. Maria's experience is unique in that as she learned to be a teacher of students who are Zinia, she has also learned how to embrace her own Mexican culture which had been denied to her most of her life. Maria has experienced great success in Zinia with her students but her success has come with many challenges and frustration. Her work as a teacher in Zinia has created the tension and ongoing struggle that Bakhtin describes as necessary for developing ideological becoming.

As new teachers with little teacher education training, intern teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States begin to grapple with difference from the moment they arrive to the area. The very nature of the situation of assigning non Native intern teachers to an area that is predominantly Native American and has suffered great historical trauma is a source of great tension. Intern teachers learn quickly that they need a crash course on Zinia and Navajo culture as well as learning about the issues that

impact these communities. Learning to navigate these tensions as they learn to be culturally responsive teachers is not easy.

Maria grew up in the south suburbs of Chicago in a predominantly white community. She attended Catholic grade school K-8 and a public high school because these were considered “good” schools. Maria characterized her grade school as predominantly white and her public high school as very diverse. Although her high school was diverse she states, “I never was immersed in that fully” (Interview 1, March 2015). Instead, Maria found herself in predominantly white spaces even in her diverse high school because she was in advanced placement and college preparation classes which catered to white students. It was in this white space, however, that she would be influenced by Mr. Johnson, her U.S. History teacher and would start to hear other perspectives that were drastically different from the authoritative ones she had internalized. Maria attended a small liberal arts school on the Illinois/Iowa border. This was another predominantly white space that she found herself in with only 10% of the total student population identifying as non-white. This was, however, the space where Maria would learn a great deal about systems of privilege and oppression which would become the foundation for her work with TRO and the Zinia Reservation. Maria had a double major in communications and sociology with a concentration in social welfare and she chose women’s and gender studies as a minor. It was her coursework at her college that sparked an interest in learning about systems of privilege and oppression and opened her eyes to the world around her. Maria struggled to make sense of how to change the system and truly believes that education is the place where this change can happen. In the story that I help tell of Maria’s ideological becoming, I show the layers of complexity

that exist for Maria as a woman of color who has experienced success in white spaces in the United States. These layers become more and more difficult for Maria as she learns about her own marginalized identity and her work to peel back those layers and examine what is underneath has helped strengthen the internally persuasive discourses needed to teach her indigenous students on the Zinia Reservation in the Four Corners region of the United States.

In this next section, I demonstrate Maria's development of internally persuasive discourses for culturally responsive teaching in conjunction with the authoritative discourses that were consistently trying to influence her thinking. Similar to Laura's story of becoming, I share the details of Maria's story in chronological order within each discourse described. I want to point out that I do not compare the stories of Laura and Maria in this chapter except to say, "Like Laura" This is an intentional decision. I want to respect the experiences of both participants without comparing and possibly demeaning the experiences one shared that was different over the other.

Discourse of Race and Sociocultural Consciousness

"No one was white before he/she came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this became a white country." (*James Baldwin*)

I begin this section with the quote from James Baldwin because I feel it represents Maria's struggle with the social construction of difference. Maria's ideological becoming around issues of race and sociocultural consciousness began in her early years as a child in Chicago. As previously stated, Maria grew up in a predominantly white, Polish community. Her K-8 education took place at a Catholic school that was also predominantly white. She felt very sheltered by her family around issues of race and it

was not talked about in her home. Her parents did not speak about Mexican culture and Maria was not taught to speak Spanish, her native language. As far as Maria was concerned, she was no different from anyone else until she reached the 2nd grade. It was in the second grade that the “invisibility of oppression” was made a visible reality for Maria. She shared this story with me:

My second grade teacher had a reputation for being the cruelest old retired nun in the school, but she liked me because I worked hard, stayed quiet, and always got good grades. One day in class she was filling out some sort of information and she had a couple of students, including myself, stand up. One by one she asked each of us a question and then had us sit down. When she got to me she asked, “What are you?” I stared blankly because I had no idea what she was talking about. Then she harshly said, “Are you Hispanic?” I responded with, “I don’t know” because I didn’t. I had never heard of the word “Hispanic” before in my life. I felt so embarrassed and ready to cry because then she said, “You don’t know? Sit down.” (Interview 2, May 2015)

This experience with the authoritative discourse of “whiteness” was a difficult one for Maria because she was experiencing for the first time the idea of being the “other” and had no tools in which to help make sense of it. Like many other groups of people who are marginalized by system, this moment of humiliation would stay with her. Maria internalized her oppression and wanted to be like everyone else. She wanted to be “American.” During our time together, Maria’s stories clearly demonstrated her understanding of the authoritative discourse of “American” being white and her struggle to change it. She shared the following story with me about being “American”:

“Growing up I was very American. I was very white washed. I was very Americanized. I didn’t know what it meant to be Mexican until I was in the fourth grade. In fourth grade, a couple of my classmates came to the Catholic school and they were Mexican. They asked to me, ‘Do you speak Spanish?’ I said, ‘no’ and they were confused. They responded with another question, ‘But aren’t you Mexican?’ So, that experience of them criticizing me for that, for something I didn’t even know I should know about turned me off from wanting to know about my Mexican background or wanting to be Mexican. I didn’t want anything to do with it until I started to get older” (Interview 1, March 2015)

Maria would be confronted with the discourse of assimilation, again, by her older sister when she was in middle school. Her sister told her, “You need to learn Spanish. You need to learn about your culture” (Interview 1, March 2015). Maria reported looking at her sister and thinking, “I don’t want to be like that. They look at me and say I should be ashamed. I don’t need that” (Interview 1, March 2015). Maria shared that she was a product of her upbringing. Her grandparents did not teach her parents the Spanish language or about their cultural heritage and her parents followed the same example. She described her family as interesting “because no one really asks questions about where we’re from. Now when I go home and ask questions about where in Mexico we are from, they want to know why I want to know” (Interview 1, March 2015). This has been difficult for Maria because as she spends more time on the Zinia Reservation, she wants to learn more about her own culture.

In addition to the choices that her family made to teach her to be “American,” Maria also recognized that living and attending school in dominant white spaces, she was

never encouraged to learn about different cultures. She recalled not knowing the difference between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. She shared:

I literally didn't know the difference between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.

Calling someone a Mexican who was Puerto Rican--You don't do that! They get offended. Growing up, I never knew why. Why not? What is the difference between the two? (Interview 2, May 2015).

Maria was too young at the time to understand the dynamics at work and the authoritative discourse of assimilation to "American" culture was already powerful enough to motivate her to stay the course of being "white." As Maria grew older, she was confronted by the idea of assimilation and has experienced great tension around the idea of being "American" and what it might mean to be "Mexican American" or if there is even room for Mexican to be shared with "American." It was clear during the time I spent with Maria that "American" was equivalent to being "white" and although she does not identify as white, she understands that the privilege she grew up with was just that--white.

Maria would begin to peel back the layers of her socialization into dominant white authoritative discourses in her junior year of high school. Maria tells the story of having a teacher in the 10th grade named Mr. Dyke who was "pretty cool teacher, a straight shooter who always told things like it was" (Interview 2, May 2015). Mr. Dyke taught World History but was often sidetracked in class by conversations surrounding current events, government aid, and welfare. Maria remembers being "brainwashed" by him into believing ideas that worked against the most marginalized in our society. She remembered one such conversation:

I remember one day we were talking about the free lunch program at school and Mr. Dyke said, “I don’t agree with giving high schoolers free lunch. They should have to work for it. We give our money to the government so these kids who are able to work get lunch for free and that’s not fair!” (Interview 2, May 2015)

Maria recalled thinking, “He’s right! Why should they be getting these free hand outs when they could work?” (Interview 2, May 2015) Mr. Dyke had reinforced the authoritative discourses that she had already learned. The next year, however, Maria would have Mr. Johnson for U.S. History and his teaching would wake her from an ideological slumber.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Dyke were on opposite ends of a spectrum, ideologically. Maria describes Mr. Johnson as the first person she had encountered in school who taught her “the truth.” Although Mr. Johnson is a white man, he was not afraid to interrogate the history of the United States and its brutal history. Maria explained:

He was the first person to expose Christopher Columbus, Thomas Jefferson, and many other “great American leaders” true nature and the actual stories behind their “heroic” acts and accomplishments. He also introduced me to Howard Zinn and a whole other side of history I had never known but that I needed as a lost minority student looking to make a change (Interview 2, May 2015).

Mr. Johnson was the first teacher to truly believe in Maria’s abilities and even pushed her in the direction of teaching, although at the time it was the last job she ever thought she would want to do. Mr. Johnson had such a big impact on Maria that she chose his alma mater for college as her top choice of schools out of the 14 schools that accepted her

because “if this college was good enough for Mr. Johnson and helped produce a teacher like him, it was good enough for me too” (Interview 2, May 2015).

Maria’s struggle with the authoritative discourse of race would continue to shift as she learned more about systems of privilege and oppression during college. As previously stated, the student body at her college was 90% white. A majority of the professors were also white but according to Maria, they were also “conscious.” Her professors often addressed issues of racism in current events both inside and outside of the classroom and they supported students of color and often brought up that the college needed to be more racially diverse “in order for us to hear, understand, and respect a wider variety of opinions and be ready for the real world.” Maria remembered that during her four years of college, a White Privilege Summit was developed that included speakers like Tim Wise who spoke on white privilege and how it affects both whites and People of Color.

It was in this space that she made a conscious decision (due to Mr. Johnson’s influence) to take coursework that focused on diversity and issues of social justice and slowly her ideas about the world and who she is in it would change. These experiences would open her eyes to the power of the racial and economic divide in America. She would even begin seeing how the system of oppression impacted students of color at her college. Maria told me the story of a professor convincing her to apply for a position as a writing tutor at the school’s Reading and Writing Center. She noticed the following about her job right away:

Most of my peers I tutored were students of color or students on scholarship. I could immediately see the gap in writing ability when working with students. I remember being so mad and frustrated because they didn’t know simple elements

of writing. I asked myself, “Who didn’t teach them these skills? How did they make it so far without knowing how to write? I was mad at the system that didn’t take care of my peers and I was furious that a majority of these students were minorities either racially or socioeconomically (Interview 2, May 2015).

Maria’s anger made her want to learn more about social injustices and different social structures in the United States. She realized, however, that she was learning about all of these problems but not a solution to solve all of them. She came to the realization that education was the way to take action against the problems. For her, education wasn’t the “end all be all” but it was definitely a starting point. Maria was originally interested in joining the Peace Corps until TRO visited her college classroom and shared information about their organization. Maria liked what TRO had to say and what they stated as their goal, so she applied and was accepted.

Maria chose the Four Corners region of the United States as one of the areas that she would like to work because she was drawn to Native American spirituality. She commented that it was spirituality, not religion that always made her feel better. In addition, Maria shared with me that she read an article by John Ogbu on voluntary and involuntary minorities and then, Ogbu’s work on the classification of minority groups and Native Americans were considered the lowest minority or the “worst of the worst.” Maria’s internally persuasive discourse of race and equity fueled her desire to learn more about marginalized groups of people, specifically Native Americans and that pointed her in the direction of the Southwest.

As Maria learned more about structures of injustice, she began to see how she was both privileged and marginalized by the system. This dichotomy was interesting to her and also caused her pain. She shared the following with me:

I am a minority but at the same time I feel like I have been privileged in the sense of my mentality. But at the same time it cost me my culture. It cost me my language. It cost me all of that. It is hard for me because at the same time I have to think about well, ok I have this mindset and mentality where I feel entitled to this great country's education and to be able to do whatever I want and not feel bad because I am Mexican or a woman but like I said it cost me my culture. It cost me my language and traditions and heritage. It made me ashamed of it growing up. So, I resent that but at the same time I'm not going to sit and wallow in it. (Interview 1, March 2015)

This reflection would become painfully obvious to Maria when entering the Four Corners region as an intern teacher. She reflected on how people made assumptions that because she is Mexican and brown that she would know a lot about Mexicans and Native Americans but she has to do her own research because she was raised "American."

As Maria made her way toward her new life in the Four Corners region, she was excited about the work that she would be doing with indigenous students. Maria, however, had accepted this placement with TRO without ever having stepped foot out of the Midwest. Although she had researched the area and knew it was rural, she had no idea what she was coming into until she reached the Four Corners region. Her first encounter with Dine caused her great tension because she was used to the big city life of Chicago and this was far from anything she expected. She remembered being "blown away by the

fact that the airport was two-and-a-half hours away from Dine.” There were two airports close to her in Chicago and her family rarely used one of them because it was 45 minutes away which was considered too far. She recollected her first encounter with Dine in this way:

I remember that first drive to Dine in a huge white passenger van with a few other new intern teachers who were also picked up at the airport. Everyone was chit chatting, asking each other questions and exchanging previous experiences but all I could do was sit there silently staring out the window at the vast emptiness thinking to myself, “What the hell did I just do?” No buildings, no greenery, no reception, no anything” (Interview 1, March 2015)

Maria reported that her tension only grew from there as she and the others were dropped off at the famous Rodeo hotel:

I remember calling my Mom that first night trying not to cry as I told her everything was good. We spent a week in Dine, going to sessions and trainings but once those were over for the day, there was literally nothing suitable for us recent college graduates to do. I remember going out with a group of people to explore and only coming across gas stations, bars, fast food restaurants, and grocery stores I’d never heard of. Thankfully at this point I wasn’t the only one thinking about what the hell I’d done by foolishly agreeing to move to the Four Corners region of the United States (Interview 1, March 2015).

Maria’s ideas about rural communities were being challenged from the moment she arrived. As a 22-year-old recent college graduate from a large metropolitan city, she had different expectations of what were appropriate living conditions. After her first week in

Dine, she headed to another large southwestern city for her 5 weeks of training at Institute. She welcomed this change and recalled driving into the big city for the first time:

Five girls and way too much luggage trekked the unbearable five hours to the big city and when our car finally hit the city limits exposing all the palm trees, amusement parks, malls, buildings, and four lanes of traffic, my only thought was, “Thank you! Civilization!” (Interview 1, March 2015)

Her views about Dine and Zinia since then have shifted dramatically. She no longer looks at this community with a deficit lens but sees the beauty in the openness of the desert and red rock that looks as if it were chiseled out of the earth. Maria also sees the beauty in the people who reside there. She completed her two year commitment with TRO and made the decision to stay in Zinia, the place she now calls home.

Moving to the Four Corners region would be powerful for Maria in terms of her ideological struggle with race and sociocultural consciousness. She would have a new context in which to apply the ideologies that were becoming internally persuasive for her and she would also begin to experience dominant white spaces differently in Dine. As a woman of color who had been denied her language and culture, she could relate to the experiences of her Zinia students. Nieto (1999) wrote that this is often the case with teachers of color that have experienced the same inequality and alienation as their students. Maria became a “cultural broker” or “cultural translator” (Irvine, 2003, p. 55) for her students and others at her school as well as their parents when dealing with her white colleagues. Cultural translators “tend to be knowledgeable, sensitive, and comfortable with students’ language, style of presentation, community values, traditions,

rituals, legends, myths, history, symbols, and norms” (p. 55). This is evident in a story that Maria shared about her roommate that she lived with for her first two years in Zinia who was white and also an intern teacher. Maria’s roommate Kathy adopted the dominant discourse of colorblindness when interacting with people different from her. Kathy struggled from the moment she entered Zinia because as a white woman on the Zinia Reservation, she stood out. This experience was difficult for Kathy and Maria recalled the following story:

My roommate Kathy who lived with me for two years was white. She would say things like, “Everyone is looking at me because I am white” or “They think this about me because I am white and it’s not fair.” I would literally be like, “Huh?” It was so hard for me not to be mean about it and say how does that feel? How does it feel when somebody’s looking at you because of the color of your skin? It was so hard for me to really sit down and listen to her and not belittle her. I told her, “At any given moment you can leave here anytime and be part of the majority again. You have that opportunity. Try living it every day. I come to this one place (Zinia) and it is my sanctuary where I am part of the majority but any other place in mainstream culture that is me. That is what I live every single day.” (Interview 1, March 2015)

Maria’s story demonstrates how her move to Zinia has impacted her in ways that she had not thought about before the move. She reflected with me many times how living in Zinia is the first time in her life that she was part of the majority. She understands that she is not Native American and does not share their language or culture but she shares lived experiences with them, including the loss of language and culture.

As Maria learned to be a cultural broker for her students, she was also learning lessons from them about her own identity. The revitalization efforts around language and culture on the Zinia Reservation have been inspiring to Maria and have challenged her ideological becoming, especially around the discourse of assimilation to American culture. As a product of dominant culture, she has come to realize how much she has lost of her identity as a Mexican. She told me:

I was always grateful for the American mindset but coming here (to Zinia); I see their culture and what they have and I want that, too, for myself. I eventually want to go back and learn Spanish. I want to learn about the traditions of my culture. Being here has helped open my eyes to the beauty of racial identity and its importance in growing and developing as a whole person.

(Interview 2, May 2015)

Maria shares her story and struggle with her students. She believes that being truthful with them and letting them see her struggle, question and learn about her own identity and culture helps them feel safe to explore, struggle, question, and learn about their own culture.

Discourse of Practices

Maria's discourse of practice has evolved over the four years that she has been teaching. Maria, like Laura, vehemently rejects the authoritative discourse of standardized testing and meritocracy which she sees as a huge problem in education because the system is trying to fit all kids into the same mold when they are all so diverse. Maria reported that Sacred Mountain Elementary follows a "loose" pacing guide

based on the standards that are expected to be taught and there are no specific programs or curriculum that she must follow.

Although Maria did not embrace the discourse of standardized testing and meritocracy or the discourse of scripted programs, her first year of teaching she had somewhat adopted these practices because she wasn't sure what to do yet as a beginning intern teacher with very little training. Maria reported:

During my first year of teaching, I mainly tried to stay on track with the five other teachers in my grade level, teaching what they were teaching, when and how they were teaching it and using the same textbooks they were using. However, that quickly got very old to me. Teaching that way felt very scripted and unnatural to me and I didn't like it at all. (Interview 2, May 2015)

Maria is extremely lucky in that she has a great deal of support in the Zinia Public School district and is provided a great deal of flexibility in what she teaches and how she teaches it. Maria described using two different lenses when making decisions about what to teach: academic and cultural. Academically, she consults with her grade level team and uses the state standards as a guide to determine the topics and skills that she should be teaching. Culturally, she looks at dates and what time of the year it is to see if there are any holidays that can be included in the curriculum. For example, the Zinia holiday, Diwali or other Zinia cultural days and/ or events. Maria also brings current events into her curriculum and takes her students' interest into consideration. Maria describes her philosophy of education in the following way:

In my mind when children go to school and they're able to learn about who they are. They're able to learn about what contributions their culture, their community,

their heritage has made to this country but also at the same time they're able to critique this country in a way that isn't seen as backlashing but a true evaluation of where they stand in the country. Not only that, students should never have to worry about how much money they have, where they live, if they will have an opportunity because of their skin color. They should know they're entitled to opportunity. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Maria instills these ideas into her students and her work starts with a set of "classroom values." Maria chose not to have rules for her class and she tells her students,

Rules are sometimes meant to be broken but values on the other hand are meant to be lived by. So, whether I am your teacher, whether I'm with you or you are in another teacher's class or somewhere else, these values should stay with you for life because they are so important. (Interview 1, March 2015)

The values that are the foundation for everything that happens in Maria's classroom are (1) We will give love; (2) We will show respect; and (3) We will be a team and family.

These values are on the wall in Maria's classroom in English, Zinia, and Spanish to represent who they are as a group. They recite the values in Zinia to represent who they are as Zinia; they recite the values in Spanish to represent who Maria is as a Mexican; and they recite the values in English to represent who they are collectively as a group.

Maria explained that it is important to teach the skills that help students learn to read and write but it is also important to teach students to be the best person that they can be and to be a leader. This is what Maria is doing, "growing leaders" (Interview 1, March 2015).

In addition to "growing leaders," Maria wants her students to be "global citizens" and to know about the world around them. Maria's inability to distinguish between

Puerto Ricans and Mexicans when she was younger has had great influence on some of the decisions that she has made in her classroom. She wants her students to understand that different countries and ethnicities exist around the globe and learn that different is not bad. She does not want to perpetuate the ideology of colorblindness and wants her students to embrace difference. Maria described a large map of the world that she has hanging on the wall in her classroom and she reports that her students know all of the continents and great number of the countries. She believes that her role in being culturally responsive with her third grade Zinia students is to teach them about the world and the different people who live in it. Maria explained to me:

So, I teach about you know there's people who look like this. There are people in this country who look like this and they do these kinds of things. There are people who have this and getting them to understand that different doesn't mean bad. So for me, culturally responsive teaching is in my actions, showing them that I like learning about new ideas and people and just because other ideas and people are different, doesn't mean that it's bad. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Maria exposes students to difference through a variety of sources but one of her students' favorites is CNN Student News. They watch it every day and Maria discusses issues with them, teaching them to ask questions such as, "Why was Malala Yousafzai shot? Why do the Taliban think that woman should not have an education?" (Interview 1, March 2015) Maria also addresses the idea of fear and the role it plays in the reproduction of the idea "different is bad." Maria shared an example about how she talks to students about this so they will understand. She said that many of her students will talk negatively about the Navajo. She asked them, "What if I went back to Chicago and I wanted to call someone

stupid and I said, “You are acting so Zinia!” (Interview 1, March 2015) Her students were immediately surprised and said, “But why would you say that?” (Interview 1, March 2015) Maria pointed out that this is exactly what they are doing when they talk negatively about the Navajo that way and just as we are fighting against all of these outside forces that oppress, we do not want to become the oppressor in the process.

Maria expands on how she views culturally responsive teaching in her classroom by building on the idea of relationships with others that are different and leading by example. She tells her students,

I am not going to be in Zinia forever and that’s okay because this is not my community, this is your community and eventually you will need to be the leaders of your community. I eventually want to go back to Chicago and my community but first I’m going to go to different places and learn as much as I can so that I can bring that back to my community. Right now, I am here learning from you and I will take that back with me. You can do the same. (Interview 1, March 2015)

For Maria, culturally responsive teaching is who she is; it’s what she does; it’s how she interacts with her students, their families, and their communities.

Maria describes her discourse of practices as “a work in progress.” She knows her students well and she is positive that her students know she loves them but she struggles with knowing if her actions will inspire them to want more for themselves when they grow up. For Maria, a good teacher meets the following definition:

A good teacher is one who inspires her students to want more for themselves. A good teacher is one who makes a lasting impression on their students in any type

of positive way. A good teacher creates time and opportunities to get to know students on various levels (emotionally, mentally, intellectually, etc.) and then uses that knowledge to help students succeed. Additionally, a good teacher doesn't have a predefined definition of success because a good teacher knows that success looks different for every single student. Furthermore, a good teacher also shares their classroom with the students and takes into consideration the things that are important to the students. A good teacher encourages students to question everything and most importantly a good teacher is always a learner first.

(Interview 3, May 2015)

Maria holds herself accountable for this definition of a good teacher and critically reflects on her daily practices with her students in order to improve.

Discourse on Relationships

During my conversations with Maria she discussed in some detail that she believed that education was one of the gateways to social justice. As someone who has been marginalized by the system all of her life, she believes a foundational piece to working toward social justice is building relationships with her students, their families and with people in the community. The discourse of relationships is a discourse that Maria entered with when she joined TRO and moved to the Four Corners region and building relationships became a central focus for Maria in Zinia and is a theme throughout our discussions together. Maria's interpretation of this discourse included knowing her students and their families beyond what happens behind the four walls in her classroom as well as learning about the Zinia community, its values and traditions, and participating in cultural events when appropriate and more importantly, when invited.

Another important piece to the discourse of relationships for Maria was demonstrating love and an “ethic of care” toward her students which I will describe throughout this section. Maria’s descriptions throughout our interviews revealed that she not only makes connections with her students on a very personal level but she also cares about their future well-being. The first time I asked her to tell me about her students, she said, “I have twenty of the most beautiful little creatures in my classroom. They are little people and they are just the sweetest, most kind kids ever.” Maria prides herself on developing deep and meaningful relationships with her students. She said to me:

When I think of the most important aspects of my life, it is people and relationships. While this may seem very fundamental to most, I don’t believe this is a skill or value most people carry with them. When it comes to my students, I let them explicitly know that I care for each and every one of them and love them, especially my “tough” ones. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Maria’s love and ethic of care, especially with her “tough” students was portrayed in a story about one of her students named Franklin. Maria shared that Franklin was “pretty hard to crack.” He was a year older than the rest of her third graders and he constantly had his guard up. Franklin rarely laughed, he was easily irritated and he didn’t seem to like to try new things. The other students in class often described Franklin as mean. Maria handled Franklin with great care and started off slow by asking him about things he liked and questioning what he would like to learn. As he began to grow more comfortable with her, she began to show him affection by giving him nicknames and making statements such as, “It’s ok. I know you love me, Franklin” (Interview 3, May 2015). Maria took the time to seek information from Franklin’s grandmother, his legal

guardian, and found out that Franklin's previous school experiences were unpleasant for him. Franklin didn't like going to school and cried every day the previous year because "no matter what he did in class, his teacher told him he was wrong and there was no point even trying" (Interview 3, May 2015). Maria was heartbroken over Franklin's previous experiences and her love for him grew even stronger. Reaching out to Franklin's grandmother helped her understand him better and although he was not always affectionate with Maria and he didn't go out of his way to please her, she reported that teaching him became easier and by the end of the year not only was Franklin on the honor roll but he would also raise his hand eagerly during her instruction and ask, "Can we start working now? I just want to work!" (Interview 3, May 2015)

Maria's discourse of relationships embodies the principles that Villegas and Lucas (2002) lay out for affirming students' ways of being in the world. Maria "acknowledges the existence and plurality of ways of thinking, talking, behaving, and learning . . . and, she sees all students as learners who already know a great deal and who have experiences, concepts, and language that can be built upon and expanded to help them learn even more" (p. 37). When you enter Maria's classroom you will see several languages written on her wall to represent the learning community and their cultures. You will also see lots of pictures of her kids everywhere. Maria has a large digital photo frame that pictures rotate through like a slideshow and she has a "family portrait" of her and all of her students hanging on the wall. She also keeps a calendar with students' pictures and birthdays because she says, "This makes them feel special" (Interview 1, March 2015).

Maria creates a positive classroom culture with the classroom values that hang on her wall, where every student is validated and has a voice. Her students have embraced

the values and have consistently demonstrated that they are invested in them through their everyday talk in the classroom. Maria gave this example:

They've really embraced it and they talk about it. It's cute to hear them say, "You weren't really showing him love when you said that" or "Are you being respectful because you are not listening?" or "We're working together in a group right now and you're not being a team." (Interview 1, March 2015)

Maria communicated that she has an important role in being conscious of her own behavior and modeling these values for her students at school as well as in her everyday life outside of school. Maria reflected on this with me, "It is important for me to lead by example. I ask myself, "Am I showing love? Am I giving respect? Am I being a team and family at all costs?" (Interview 1, March 2015).

When asked about her favorite stories to tell people back home about the Four Corners region, Maria immediately shared two stories that are evidence of how much she cares for her students. The first story she told was about coaching her students in soccer. She said,

I really like being a mentor and a coach. I really, really love that I can be real with them and I can talk to them about issues. We go to different places. We see different competitions and I often talk to them about why other players are at a higher level and teach them how to be more strategic with their playing. Being strategic is something they will use even when they are not on the field with a ball. (Interview 1, March 2015)

The second story Maria told me was about taking two of her students back home with her to Chicago. Maria always talks about her hometown of Chicago with her students. They

know that this is where her heart is and where she will return one day. She often teases them about taking them home with her one day. One day, two of her students took her up on this offer and asked if Maria would really take them to Chicago with her. Maria has a relationship with these two students outside of school; she coaches them in soccer and she is close with both of their families. She agreed and once she obtained permission from their families, Maria helped the two students fund raise to pay for their plane tickets. Maria recounted the trip for me:

We went to Chicago and stayed with my family and it was really great to see the girls be able to go. We did all the tours and went to museums. We went to everything. It was crazy. We ate all kinds of food and for the girls, the exposure to something different, something new, was amazing. We walked around Chicago seeing the different types of people and for them, the large numbers of people.

(Interview 1, March 2015)

Maria and the two students loved the experience. Maria indicated that she would love to expose all of her students to different places outside of Zinia.

Another very important relationship that Maria values is the relationship she has built with two other teachers at her school. Both of these women are also women of color. Together, the three of them make up the Brown Ladies Coalition (BLC), a name that they have given themselves. The three women share similar teaching philosophies and a love for each other and the work that they are doing that is obvious when you spend any length of time visiting with them. Maria told me,

I've always had two or three close friends who I could trust to love, support and encourage me no matter what. This past year while living in Zinia those two

people were Michelle and Sarah. The friendship I've created with these two women has been beyond enlightening for me and gone to a deeper level than I thought it could be." (Interview 3, May 2015)

Maria shared that upon critically reflecting about her relationship with these two women, she realized that Michelle and Sarah have been her only friends that have pushed and challenged her around the image that she has of herself, especially spiritually and culturally. She explained:

Through their own spiritual and cultural strength and connections, they've inspired me to dig deeper into my own. They've helped me see the importance of these other dimensions of my identity I used to hide or be ashamed to explore. When I'm with Michelle and Sarah, it's okay for me to be Mexican first; it's okay for me to ask questions about their culture and spirituality; it's okay for me to get mad about losing my language and traditions so I could fit in and be more American. Michelle and Sarah not only give me the space to grow as a whole person but they also encourage it without judgment or condescending thoughts which I am eternally grateful. (Interview 3, May 2015)

As Maria describes in this passage, Michelle and Sarah have been influential in helping her learn about who she is in this world and encourage her to explore her identity by providing her a safe place to do so without feeling judged or marginalized.

Maria has always considered people and relationships to be the most significant aspects of her life. Her discourse of relationships demonstrates a true commitment to continuing her practice of building relationships and affirming her students in and out of the classroom. In addition, through her own struggles to learn about her Mexican identity,

her students are able to see the importance of knowing more about their own culture as Zinia Pueblo and being proud of who they are.

Discourse of Accountability

Maria's undergraduate coursework and her own internally persuasive discourses to be a change agent influenced how she interpreted the discourse of accountability. Maria viewed the discourse of accountability as encompassing the actions of teachers, administrators, and policy makers as well as larger societal and cultural issues that play a contributing role in the lives of her students. She also viewed accountability as being responsible for using your voice to affect change for students and their communities.

In our conversations, Maria consistently argued that one of the biggest obstacles in teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students is the lack of a clear definition to the goal of education. She believes that the U.S. is such a diverse country that culturally responsive teaching should be the norm. She explained,

Our current system is not for our kids. We are the number one nation in the world, yet research shows that we are ranked in the 20's in terms of education in the world. How is that possible? Until we decide as educators what we want out of education and that is clearly defined and updated for this generation and for all of our kids, culturally responsive teaching is just going to be a term and not the norm. In reality, we should not have a term "culturally responsive teaching," it should just be what we do and who we are as teachers. (Interview 1, March 2015)

In addition to clearly defining what we want out of education for our kids, Maria also believes that the job of teachers needs to be shown more respect. She questioned, "What is the purpose of an educator? Babysitters get paid more than me if you want to do it by

an hourly wage” (Interview 1, March 2015). Maria argued that in other countries, educators are valued in the community. They are paid well and respected. “In the U.S., teaching is considered a job someone does because they couldn’t get the original job they wanted. The difference between the U.S. and other countries show in what happens to our kids” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Narrowing the focus of education to the Four Corners region, Maria provided critique of the institutions providing education at all levels. Specifically, Maria has experienced great tension with how social justice issues have been addressed in TRO and the Zinia Public School district. Maria did not go into specific details but she did explain her tension this way:

For starters, I joined the Teacher Recruitment Organization program because I believed it could help address issues of inequality within education and while I’ve met and interacted with some passionate and outstanding teachers, there have been those who have put my belief of TRO and my school district into question. As I grow in both my identity and teaching skills, I see how crucial understanding my identity is to teaching my students. I have met intern teachers in TRO and from my school district who don’t hold this truth and end up inadvertently hurting their students. Whether they are white and don’t acknowledge or understand the doings of their ancestors or non-white and use their identity and culture as a separation rather than a means of connection and relation. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Maria’s own ideological struggle with learning about her Mexican identity has shaped how she sees identity. She believes that if you are going to work with indigenous

students, looking at and analyzing your own identity is an important aspect to helping students build positive identities.

In a similar manner, Maria feels strongly that more needs to be done at her school to help her students connect more with their language and culture so they can fully develop their own identities. She told me, “I don’t think they understand the true importance behind preserving their language and culture or the history of Zinia and why things are the way they are” (Interview 3, May 2015). The school district has been making efforts to revitalize language and culture through daily instruction for all students attending her school and they demonstrated the importance of the cultural events celebrated in the Zinia community by altering the school calendar two years ago so that it is aligned with these events and students do not have to make decisions on whether they will be in school or attending a cultural event. Unfortunately, the community voted to change the school calendar back to the old schedule.

Maria also believes that UFC has a role to play in what is happening in education in the Dine area. During the time she was taking coursework for her Master’s degree, she said that there was a lack of high expectations for students and that she was not being challenged in her classes. Maria also recommended that UFC work with the local community in order to tailor the coursework to the actual needs of the community. This work would entail truly listening to many community members and not trying to tell Native communities what they need.

Besides providing critique, Maria views being accountable as taking a stand against actions that do not benefit Native students and their communities. This past school year, Maria experienced tension with an issue that took place on the Zuni

Reservation with the school district. Maria told the story of the school district accepting gifts from the National Football League Washington Redskins football team. I use “Redskins” in the previous sentence in order to be clear on the name that is being referenced in this story. I will use R**skins in the rest of my description to respect Maria because Maria refused to use the name throughout the telling of this story. She did not want to recognize or give any power to the racist term that demeans her students and their lives. Maria said that the gifts that were being given to the school district by the R**skins were Ipads. Once the gifts were accepted, the R**skins organization returned to the reservation a few months later because they wanted Zinia Pueblo to customize jewelry for them. Maria was outraged by this gesture and explained why:

These weren’t gifts of good nature and thoughtfulness, they were gifts of bribery.

While other tribes were rejecting this type of bribery, Zinia was gladly accepting these gifts. It even went as far as the R**skins offering free transportation and tickets to a game in Arizona. I was outraged about this for many reasons, mainly at the Washington R**skins because I considered this to be a low-blow. If you dangle food in front of a starving person, of course they will want it. If you offer Ipads to an underprivileged community of course they’re going to want them.

(Interview 2, May 2015)

Maria decided not to treat this issue like the elephant in the room and pretend it wasn’t happening in the Zinia community. Instead, she decided to teach her third graders about the issue, starting with the origin of the name R**skins and then sharing examples in history of other minority groups being exploited. Maria’s students had no trouble understanding the issue and showed great courage and leadership the next time the

R**skins were in town to buy jewelry from the Zinia people with the Washington mascot embroidered on it. Her students protested with signs that read, “Don’t make fun of my culture! We are NOT your mascot and you can NOT buy my support!” (Interview 2, May 2015).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented Maria’s journey through the discourses of culturally responsive teaching and the tensions she encountered that allowed her to struggle and develop a more critical consciousness. Maria’s journey can be characterized by what Britzman (1991) called a “struggle for voice” (p. 8) among a variety of voices in which she had been influenced in her childhood as well as those she encountered as a teenager and adult. The voices (discourses) of her childhood had significant influence over her and had taught her to be “American” and assimilate to the point that she said she was “Americanized” and lost her Mexican identity (Interview 1, March 2015). Maria had little interest as a child to be different and rejected the internally persuasive discourses of others who she felt tried to shame her for not knowing her Mexican identity.

Maria’s ideological development would remain fairly stagnant until she reached high school and was exposed to new ideology that would challenge the way she had always believed. She experienced great tension with these new ideas that conflicted with what she had internalized as the truth about the world and her beginning struggle pushed her toward a program in college that helped her develop a theoretical lens to later understand the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices. This new lens would help her see injustice all around her, including her own life and propel her toward

becoming a teacher. It was as a teacher that she believed she could affect change in the world.

As Maria learned to teach in the Four Corners region and was exposed to the ideas of culturally responsive teaching, she was bombarded with a variety of discourses in which she had to negotiate. Many of these discourses resembled that of her childhood which placed a deficit lens on students of color and held low expectations and assimilationist views of teaching and learning. The tension she experienced helped Maria embrace the discourses of culturally responsive teaching and it became an internally persuasive discourse for her. Figure 3 illustrates Maria's development with the four discourses of culturally responsive teaching.

Although growth in terms of ideological becoming is fairly subjective, I present a model that demonstrates Maria's growth with the discourses of culturally responsive teaching based on the data. Maria's understanding and application of the discourses were consistent and treated equally in practice. Through her interviews, I could see the connections between discourses and how they often worked together, not separately, in Maria's ideological environment. For example, all four discourses played a role in the story about the National Football League's R**skins soliciting the community to create jewelry for their team. In this situation, Maria used her knowledge about systems of oppression as a way to understand the actions that were taking place. She felt great tension about what she saw as exploitation of a community that she has developed a close relationship with in her four years as a teacher there. As she struggled with this tension, she made the decision to bring the issue into her classroom and share different perspectives with her students in order for them to better understand the issue and

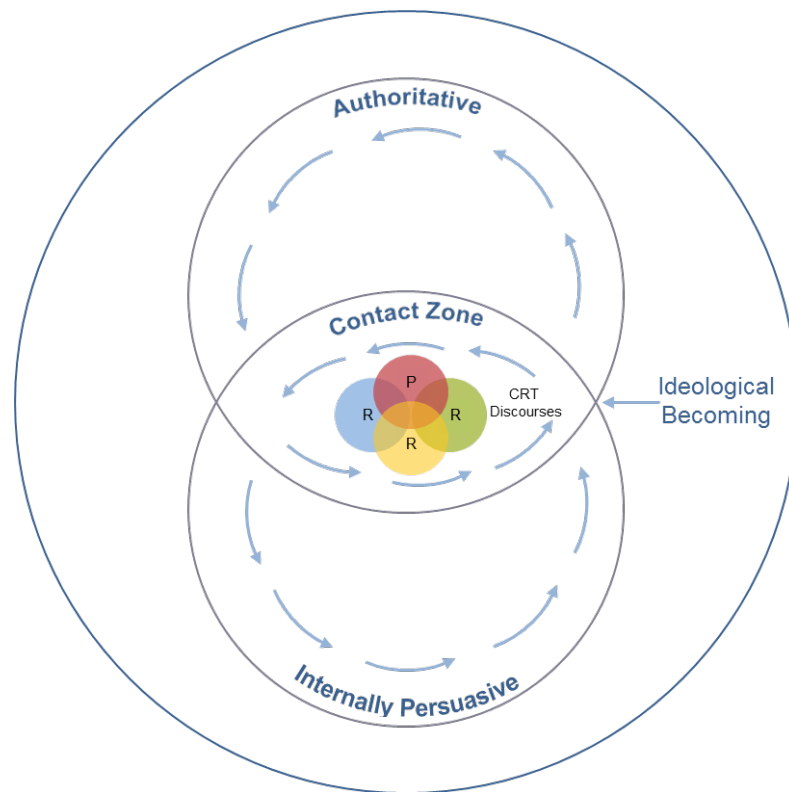


Figure 3. Maria's ideological development for culturally responsive teaching.

ultimately, form their own opinion on whether the practice of creating jewelry for a team whose name offends who they are as a people is the right action to take. It is important to note here that Maria's actions may be viewed similarly to what she finds offensive with the football league's actions. In the story that Maria shared with me, she did not tell me that community members had expressed their disapproval of the football team's requests. In fact, the school district and community members accepted the gifts that were offered. Maria's actions might be interpreted as an outsider (with privilege) coming into a community and trying to impose their way of thinking on them. These actions, from this point of view, works against culturally responsive teaching practices that calls for developing relationships with families and communities in order to discern what they want for their children and community (Littlebear, 1992).

Maria's ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching, like Laura's, is a work in progress. She has experienced great tension across the discourses of culturally responsive teaching as she came into contact with conflicting discourses, both authoritative and internally persuasive. Maria engaged in struggle with these discourses in order to learn how to best work with her Native American students. It is her participation in this struggle that has helped her grow and come to new understandings as a culturally responsive teacher and she now believes that it isn't merely a practice, but who she is as a teacher.

CHAPTER VIII

MICHELLE'S STORY

This chapter focuses on the experiences of Michelle, a 45-year-old woman who identifies as African American and Jamaican. She wants to acknowledge the motherland of her birth (Jamaica) as well as the country where she has planted her feet since moving here as a child (U.S.). Michelle was recruited by the Teacher Recruitment Organization in 2013 because she has a love for teaching. She worked in other occupations for years but she was drawn to teaching because “teaching is in my blood. I was always drawn to young people and helping them in some form or fashion.” Michelle currently finished her second year of teaching fourth grade on the Zinia Reservation at Sacred Mountain Elementary School. The completion of this school year also brought her two year time commitment with TRO to an end but she will continue teaching in Zinia for the 2015-2016 school year. Michelle, like the other intern teachers in this study, has experienced both tension and success as she learned to become a culturally responsive teacher to her students on the Zinia Reservation. The tension that Michelle has struggled with during her two years of teaching in Zinia, became a source of inspiration for her which I will describe throughout this chapter. Her deep faith in God has been a foundational piece for her and has inspired her to stay the course and find answers to all of the problems that have surfaced in her journey the past two years. She makes no excuses and always strives for excellence in everything she does inside and outside of her classroom.

Michelle was born in Jamaica and moved to New York City with her parents as a child. She attended an all-white grade school until her mother moved her to a predominantly Black school district in the city. This move influenced Michelle greatly and would be the first time she remembers learning a lesson about race. Michelle attended Briarcliff University in Long Island, New York, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Business. Her university campus was very diverse with students attending that were white, Black, Hispanic, and East Indian. Although Michelle earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, she found herself following in the footsteps of the rest of her family who are nurses. She worked as a Nursing Assistant but found it difficult to return to her job on a daily basis and find that one of her patients had died. Michelle realized that teaching was her passion when she worked as a Teacher's Assistant and Substitute Teacher in Westbury. Michelle would have some life altering moments happen to her that would send her down south to live with her parents in Atlanta, Georgia. It was here that she came across material for TRO in the midst of applying for other jobs. Michelle applied and was accepted to the Teacher Recruitment Organization.

Michelle is one of the few intern teachers brought into TRO that has more life experience (she is 45 and most intern teachers are fresh out of college) and she is part of a small percentage of intern teachers that identify as a person of color. Michelle's story of moving to the Zinia Reservation is one of "survival and healing" and what she describes as "new beginnings in a foreign land." She, unlike the other intern teachers in this study, felt a sense of peace almost immediately when she entered the Four Corners region that would be her new home. She shared:

I moved to the Four Corners region after being accepted to the Teacher Recruitment Organization. I was so shocked at first; I knew nothing about the Four Corners region. I prayed and I knew it was going to take a nose dive of faith to leave everything and everyone I know to go to a strange place where I knew NO ONE! What stuck out the most was the calm and peace I felt as soon as I got to the Four Corners region: clear skies, beautiful sunsets, pueblos--God's presence was almost tangible. I was both excited and scared but I knew I was going to make a remarkable impact and I was so honored to be in such a rich place. I knew I was in the right place for this season of my life. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Michelle's story demonstrates how her life experiences had prepared her for this moment, and although she was scared to move to a place and leave her family and loved ones behind, her deep faith in herself and her commitment to God would carry her through. Interestingly, Michelle told me that 8 years prior to moving to the Four Corners region, she had dreams of red clay and turquoise skies. She would call family and ask about the Four Corners region. It was her mother who told her, "Just wait, it will manifest itself." When Michelle received the call from TRO telling her that she had been accepted to the program as an intern teacher, she was shocked. The Four Corners region was number 12 on the list that she had provided to TRO of places she wanted to work. Michelle believes, "coming here has put me on destiny's road."

Discourse of Race and Sociocultural Consciousness

Michelle's ideological becoming as a culturally responsive teacher has been a long process that began in her early years as a student in Glen Oaks Queens. In this section, I will tell the stories that have influenced the development of Michelle's

discourse of race and how Michelle's struggle with race and racism would help her become a culturally responsive teacher for her students on the Zinia Reservation. Michelle's first encounter with the idea of race and racism was an interesting experience because it was taught to her, not by white people but by other Black children at the school she was attending. Michelle spent her early years in the United States in an all-white neighborhood located in Glen Oaks Queens, New York. Michelle's Jamaican mother believed that this was the best place to raise her family and believed that the best education would be found in an all-white school. Michelle remembered that although she was the only Black student and did not look like her classmates, she never felt threatened or different from them. Years later this would change for Michelle. Michelle's Mom grew up in a house in Jamaica and she wanted her children to have the same experience. She moved Michelle and her siblings out of their apartment in Queens to a house in Westbury, Long Island, New York when she was thirteen and Michelle began attending a school that was "integrated." She shared the following story with me:

My first encounter with race was when I moved from a school where I was the only Black student to a predominantly Black school district. My sister and I were teased for talking "white." We were bullied and teased because of how we dressed. We are Jamaicans and my Mom believed young ladies should wear dresses, skirts, stockings and shoes that look like young ladies. Here we were in a predominantly Black school being teased for "acting white." It was very difficult for me, and I often felt alone and isolated. I quickly became aware of the fact that if I was going to survive in this new town, I was going to have to learn to be

Black. I joined cheerleading, track and became friends with people who could teach me the talk and walk of “being Black.” (Interview 2, May 2015)

Michelle reported to me that learning to “be Black” caused all kinds of conflict with her Jamaican Mom, who is very critical of American Blacks. According to Michelle, her mother would not tolerate her speaking and dressing in the same ways as her peers from school. This situation was very difficult for Michelle and she would begin seeing other differences that produced tension for her.

After moving to Westbury, Michelle began to learn more about who she is and her culture. At the same time, she would begin to feel very disconnected with the world and especially with her school experiences. She shared, “I would walk into a classroom and there were no books that look like me, no posters on the wall, no teachers and no staff that looked like me and that always made me feel a little leery” (Interview 2, May 2015). Michelle’s feelings of being invisible would have great influence in how she approached her own classroom environment in Zinia and her classroom practices which I will describe in the next section. Struggling with the tension of her own identity and what it meant to be Black and also Jamaican in America has certainly impacted how Michelle views education. This was obvious when I asked her the following question, “One day all children in United States will have the opportunity to receive an excellent and equitable education. What does this day look like to you?” Michelle responded:

Wow! I would say that’s a day when there is no racism, there’s no prejudice, there’s no classism or sexism. I feel as long as those things are in place, there is always going to be a fight for a class to be higher than others where their education will always be better, the house and the quality of life, the jobs. So I

feel in order for this statement to be true, so many other things have to be broken down. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Michelle moves beyond race with this response and addresses other forms of power, privilege, and oppression. She demonstrates an understanding of how power, privilege, and oppression are obstacles to education and often marginalize many of our students.

Michelle's ideological struggles around race and other social justice issues helped create the internally persuasive discourses that are needed for becoming a culturally responsive teacher. Michelle is not afraid to talk about issues in her classroom and she begins her school year helping students develop positive racial identities. Michelle described her first day of school with her students:

My first encounter with my students sounds like this, "Hello scholars! My name is Ms. Waters and I am proud to be Black because I can never be anything else."

This statement is made so students can understand that they are to be proud of who they are because they can never change who they are. As a Black woman teaching Brown babies, I feel so very connected. The history of Native and African Americans is very similar and for this reason, I can be very transparent with my students. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Michelle extends the connection she describes by creating a Venn diagram with her students and comparing and contrasting Native Americans with African Americans. Her students are able to understand that there are so many similarities between the two groups of people. Michelle believes that her identity as a Black woman has a profound and powerful impact in her classroom. She makes every effort to affirm her students'

identities as Zinia Pueblo because she did not have that affirmation when she was growing up. She reported,

While I was in elementary school, I never saw or read books about anyone Black. Black History Month was non-existent and culturally responsive teaching was not known. For this reason, I embrace culturally responsive pedagogy and look for ways to affirm my students and build character traits that will give them confidence to move forward and create positive change for their people.

(Interview 2, May 2015)

Even as Michelle's own five children entered school, some fifteen years later, she saw the same issues in their classrooms. Michelle's children attended the same school that Michelle attended in Westbury and even had some of the same teachers. Unfortunately, her children's experiences would remain the same. Michelle recalled that the only time they had posters of Black Americans was when she would provide them for the teacher and they were typically only hung during African American History month. Michelle's third child, Jaynell, felt so disconnected from her culture when she graduated from high school that she chose a historically Black college, Delaware State, for her undergraduate degree. Michelle reported that Delaware State changed her daughter and helped her develop a sense of identity.

In addition to her children attending school in Westbury, Michelle experienced the education system there, again, as a Teaching Assistant (TA) and Substitute Teacher (ST). She moved from being a TA to a ST because she felt like she was limited in what she could do as a TA. She felt like her hands were tied. She shared the following about her work in schools in Westbury:

Drexel Avenue School was very diverse as far as the students but not the teachers.

I witnessed mistreatment of the students. I witnessed stereotypes and negative archetypes and prejudice from the teachers that cut me to the core. I was so disgusted but felt there was nothing I could do. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Being a witness of the mistreatment of the students at Drexel Avenue School would stay with Michelle and she would do the opposite in her own classroom in Zinia.

The tension Michelle has experienced in the past and still experiences to this day with being invisible impacts the work that she does with her students on a daily basis. She shared a very recent encounter with racism that helps develop a deeper understanding of her actions in the classroom. Michelle and many of her family members planned a two-week trip on a cruise that toured Portugal, Morocco, the Canary Islands, and Barcelona and Madrid. Michelle shared the following about the trip:

When on the cruise ship my family and I met people from all over Europe and the interaction was friendly and genuine. We sat at tables and ate breakfast with people we just met. We were greeted in a friendly way each day. This interaction was quite the opposite from our days spent in Spain. (Interview 3, May 2015)

The friendliness and welcoming nature of the people Michelle and her family met on the cruise ship allowed Michelle to put her guard down and she was not expecting what would happen next:

While on tour in Spain, I was very taken aback by how we as Blacks were looked upon and spoken to with a sort of scorn. I was so excited to be visiting Spain and greeted everyone with a friendly smile and a warm hello, only to be looked upon

with a frown. This happened quite often as we toured Spain for two days.

(Interview 3, May 2015)

These encounters in Spain brought back painful memories for Michelle. Although she has experienced racism many times in the past and knows that it is still alive and well in the U.S. and abroad, this was not her expectation on the trip. Michelle realized that her work with affirming her students' identities is extremely important and hopes that when her students come across overpowering and demoralizing attitudes and practices, they will choose not to deny or forget who they are but embrace being Zinia, like she has done with her own Black identity. Nieto (2004) posits that being culturally responsive is about maintaining and affirming students' pride in who they. The practice of affirmation offers students tools to use as a "shield from the devaluation of their identities by schools and society" (p. 367). In this way, Michelle embodies the principles of culturally responsive teaching with her consistent efforts to affirm her students' identities.

Discourse of Practices

Michelle's consciousness of the power race holds in systems of privilege and oppression and her commitment to affirming students' identities in her classroom was also present in her discourse of practices. Michelle has consistently demonstrated a passion for learning about her students and implementing culturally responsive teaching practices in her classroom. In this section, I will tell the story of Michelle's discourse of practices and how it embodies the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Although Michelle felt like the Four Corners region of the United States was her destiny, her move to Zinia would not be without tension. She learned very quickly that

the substandard education that her students in Zinia had experienced in the past had a negative impact on students' learning and their mindset about their own abilities. Her students and their parents had internalized messages that they had received that placed emphasis on deficits, rather than strengths and many parents complained about the work that Michelle was doing in her classroom. Michelle told me:

As an outsider coming into Zinia, I made sure that I learned about my students' funds of knowledge so that I would act in culturally responsive ways in my classroom. As an educator, I feel my job is to give my students the best education. This meant rigor and high expectations, not just for me, but my students, their parents, and the school community as well. After teaching for about two months, parents started complaining about the quality and level of work in my classroom. They felt I was expecting too much of their children and the work was too hard. Parents requested their children to be moved and complaints were made to the principal and the superintendent. (Interview 2, May 2015)

Michelle was surprised and angry by the backlash from her parents. She couldn't believe that holding high expectations of her students would cause such tension with their parents. Michelle realized that her anger may have been misplaced. Her parents were the ones that should be angry because this is the first time their children were being challenged and being held to high expectations. Michelle held a class meeting and invited the parents of her students. She showed them what fourth graders were expected to learn in terms of skills and content and then she helped them make posters so they could support their children at home. Michelle reflected, "I built stronger home school

connections so parents felt more connected to me and our classroom. I didn't have any problems after that" (Interview 2, May 2015).

Michelle's discourse of practices revolves around a classroom community that is inclusive of all students. In this community students learn to truly care about each other and demonstrate care and respect in everything they do. Michelle describes her classroom as "a space where my students are affirmed, loved, vested, and confident. This is a space where learning takes place, where mistakes are made, where students are driven and learn to be self-sufficient" (Interview 1, March 2015). Michelle also called her classroom a "bubble of love, where we respect and take care of each other" (Interview 1, March 2015). A beautiful example of inclusion in Michelle's classroom is the story of a little boy in her class who was diagnosed with Autism. She describes him as "brilliant but his mind works differently" (Interview 1, March 2015). At the beginning of the year he had limited speech and would not participate in any of the activities that the rest of the class was doing. In his previous school years, he was allowed to do whatever he wanted without being held accountable for any learning. This was unacceptable to Michelle. As a class, they all worked with the student and held him accountable. The whole class helped model behaviors on what work time should look like and sound like and how to raise his hand to leave his desk. The class gave him positive feedback, high fives, and big smiles as he worked. Michelle reported that his vocabulary grew to over 300 words that no one thought he could say. He also can now work in collaborative groups, actively participate in class, and present projects in front of the class.

Upon entering Michelle's classroom, it is obvious that the classroom belongs to her students and that they have true ownership in what takes place in their classroom.

Student work is in on the wall, as well as pictures of people from the Zinia community wearing ceremonial garb, dancing during one of the Zinia celebrations. There is also a classroom quilt on the wall that represents Michelle and all of her students and students are encouraged to use their native Zinia language throughout the day. Michelle reflected on her intentions:

I've given them the space to say, this is our space. It's not I am the teacher and I am in charge. No, this is our space and how are we going to make learning happen in here? I set the tone from the first day. This is a space for learning, outside is for playing. So when we are in this space, we can have fun but education must happen, you must learn. I know that because of this my students think that this classroom is a safe, loving environment where learning does take place, but also where they can be themselves and have a voice. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Michelle is intentional with how she plans lessons for her students. As stated at the beginning of this section, Michelle learns about the “funds of knowledge” that her students and their families have in order to intentionally incorporate their lives into the daily curriculum and instruction (Gonzalez et al, 2005). She asks herself, “What is important to these students? How can I incorporate what’s most meaningful to them into the classroom to drive their education, including their culture, family, traditions, cooking, dances, etc” (Interview 3, May 2015). Michelle described a recent unit that she developed on fables, folklores, and fairy tales. She didn’t want to use only the traditional Eurocentric fairy tales with her students. Instead, she met with parents and other members from the community to locate stories from Zinia culture that would better represent her students and help them connect to the traditional Eurocentric fairy tales like

Cinderella. Michelle extended the unit to include stories from a variety of cultures as well, so they could compare the stories and learn about other countries and groups of people in the world.

Cox (2011) writes that the curriculum in a culturally responsive classroom is designed to do the following: (1) to make explicit links to students' cultural knowledge; (2) to affirm students' identities; (3) to prepare students to understand multiple perspectives; and (4) to involve students with real-world, relevant issues in order to empower them to transform their communities (p. 121). Michelle's discourse of practices incorporates all of these characteristics.

Michelle's favorite concept to teach this year was the concept of perspective. She used the picture book, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka to introduce the concept of perspective and she used the issue of negative stereotypes to help her students understand and apply it to their lives. Michelle shared:

It was very important to me to discuss the concept of perspective with my children. I use the issue of stereotypes with them because they understand it; they live with negative stereotypes. I ask them, "What don't you like about stereotypes?" They told me that they don't like stereotypes because they are not true. I agree with them and then connect stereotypes to perspective. This leads to me asking them, "When things aren't true, what can we do about it? Do you have a voice? Do you have your own perspective or point of view?" I remind them that the wolf did not like how he was portrayed in *The Three Little Pigs* so he wrote his own version from his own perspective. I tell them, if you read something that you do not like about your people, Zinia Pueblo, or someone or something else,

you can do something about it. You can write an alternative story that provides your perspective. You don't like it when people call the Zinia lazy and alcoholics.

You can write your own stories. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Michelle extends the idea of perspective and includes it in all subject areas. For social studies, her essential question was: Who gets to tell their stories? This essential question allows Michelle's students to explore many different stories as accounts to history and discuss why some stories are valued and why others are marginalized.

Michelle linked her discourse of practices to the experiences that she has had as a Black woman living in the United States. It was the experiences of being invisible, not being held to high expectations, and not knowing the contributions that people who look like her have made to the world that inspired her to become a culturally responsive teacher. Michelle reported, "I came into teaching with the insight and knew a lot of things. I just didn't have the jargon but I embody these principles" (culturally responsive teaching) (Interview 3, May 2015).

Discourse of Relationships

Ladson-Billings (1994) describes culturally responsive teachers as teachers who develop relationships that are "fluid and humanely equitable" (p. 61) and that move "beyond the boundaries of the classroom" (p. 62). Culturally responsive teachers are also able to "demonstrate a connectedness with each of their students" (p. 66), "encourage a community of learners" (p. 69), and teach their students to "take responsibility for each other" (p. 70). Michelle exemplifies these characteristics in her teaching. She believes that relationships are extremely important in every aspect of her life and her students' lives. Michelle shared, "My firm belief is that when you are sure and confident in your

own identity, values and beliefs then you can go anywhere and build genuine, authentic relationships” (Interview 3, May 2015). Michelle’s ability to build strong relationships has been shared throughout the previous two sections in context with her discourse of race and discourse of practices. This is discourse that is internally persuasive for her. In this section, I will build on to the previous descriptions of relationship building and tell the stories that Michelle shared with me that have been the most meaningful to her since moving to Zinia in the Four Corners region of the United States.

As I have stated previously, Michelle believes that building relationships with her students is extremely important. As I listened to her stories, I thought of Parker Palmer’s book *The Courage to Teach* and the simple idea he introduces, “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10). This is my experience with Michelle. She never puts her content in front of her relationships; she teaches from a place that starts with who she is and who her students are. The stories I will tell in this section demonstrate how Michelle’s ideological becoming as a culturally responsive teacher has given her “the courage to teach.”

The first story I will tell is one of my favorites that Michelle shared with me. Michelle prefaced this story by telling me that there were no places in the Dine for Black women to get their hair styled. She has let her hair go natural and this has been the source of great fun in her classroom. Michelle delighted in sharing the story of how her hair has helped her bond with her students:

Oh my God, I have the best interactions with my children and my favorite stories are around my hair. They are particularly fascinated with my hair. So, my first year of teaching, I, being very transparent put my name in the middle of a graphic

organizer and began to list different things about me around it. I put “African American” and as I was putting other characteristics, a student asked, “What’s up with your hair?” I asked, “What do you mean?” My students said, “We’ve seen other Black people and their hair isn’t like that.” So there are many stories that resonate around my hair. They are just tickled with my hair. I don’t think they have ever seen an afro. Sometimes I make my hair dance around when I move and students will say, “Wait, oh, your hair has a mind of its own today.” Basically, I just embrace who I am. I always tell my students that I am Black. I will never be anything else. I love who I am. You are Zinia. You will never be anything else. So be happy. Be who you are. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Using her hair to connect with her students has been a successful strategy for Michelle. Her students feel comfortable with her and have more than a surface level relationship with her which is clear in their day to day interaction. Michelle showed me a survey from one of her students and the student wrote, “I thought I was going to have a mean white teacher. I am glad you are Brown like me” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Close cross-cultural relationships with her students’ families and the local community are also an important component for Michelle in her discourse of relationships. Michelle consistently invites parents and community members into her classroom to be a part of the learning community. Sometimes her parents are experts that come to share their expertise and other times they are simply visiting to be a part of the learning environment and help with the activities students are completing and/or participate in a special celebration. One of Michelle’s best moments with her students and

their families was when God gave her the idea to create a fourth grade exit project for her students at the end of the year. She described it for me:

My students had to select one thing from each subject that they enjoyed learning best and create a poster with their clans, etc. I cooked a BIG Jamaican feast and parents brought food from the Zinia culture. Students presented their projects to parents in English and Zinia. Parents were shocked to hear their students giving their introductions in Zinia. Tears flowed as my student with autism stood before the class and gave his presentation. One student referenced the fact that he enjoyed having choices in his life, unlike the children in the book, *The Giver* by Lois Lowery. The feeling of excellence in the room that afternoon was priceless. Students were confident and secure in what they learned and what the future held for them, parents were happy and supportive, and it felt like we were all in this together. (Interview 2, May 2015)

Working with students and parents outside of her classroom is a normal part of teaching life for Michelle. As I write about her experiences, I recall how difficult it was to schedule interviews and a focus group with her because of all of the activities and groups that she sponsored after school hours in the best interest of her students. Another story that relates to her work outside of the classroom involves an organization that she and a former colleague of hers, Mr. Bently created. The organization is called the Sacred Mountain Elementary Student Council Leadership Academy (SMESCLA). The focus of this organization is to build leadership skills in elementary students. Michelle and Mr. Bently help facilitate meetings but most of the responsibility for what happens with the organization falls on students. Michelle is extremely proud of how who students have

worked within this organization. She told me that students often plan events that bring awareness to issues that the Zinia community is facing. One particular event for the school and community took place this past Valentine's Day. Michelle reported:

Students decided that they wanted to do a Valentine's Day dance titled, "You are LOVED! Suicide is NOT an option." The day of the dance, students from SMESCLA stood before their peers, parents, and community members and counseled them on how important their lives are and told them that they do have choices. They (students) explained that they (audience) are the future and the future cannot give up and kill themselves. Tears spring up right now as I think about that evening's events. It was more powerful to hear from students than adults. I know everyone there was impacted in a big way. (Interview 3, May 2015)

The work that Michelle is involved in after school as well as in the community helps her build strong bonds and trust with the Zinia people. This is important because so many outsiders come into this community using a deficit lens, and try to force assimilation on the Zinia people. Michelle is clear that this is not her intention and she puts emphasis on letting students and community members tell her what the issues are and what they would like to do about it.

Michelle's discourse of relationships is directly connected to the experiences she had when she was attending school in Westbury. Michelle remembers that it wasn't until high school that any of the grown-ups in her school noticed her and tried to help her. She spoke fondly of one of her Assistant Principals:

She (the Assistant Principal) took an interest in me because she saw potential. I was a hot mess! Not sure of who I was as a person, scatter-brained and pregnant at 17, a disappointment to myself and my family. I was lost and so many people gave up on me and counted me out for any hopes of a bright or better future. She (Assistant Principal) mentored me even though I rebelled. She always let me know she saw something in me and that no matter my path she knew I would get to my destiny. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Michelle shared that she never really paid much attention to what the Assistant Principal was communicating to her at the time because she was trying to figure out her life. As years went by Michelle found herself with 5 children by the age of 25. She was in a domestic abusive relationship and she was living in poverty. The Assistant Principal's words would come back to her and propelled her to no longer accept her situation and sit around in order to be another statistic. Michelle told me:

I remember her and how she showed me unconditional love. When I come in contact with my students and parents, I try my best to show them the same thing. My mantra is NEVER count anyone out! Where you see them today is NOT where they will be tomorrow. I am truly a witness to and for that! (Interview 3, May 2015)

This one educator was a source of true inspiration for Michelle and she wants to make sure that she can give her students that same inspiration and unconditional love.

Another relationship that Michelle feels as provided her with unconditional love and inspiration is her relationship with God. This is a relationship that she does not hide

and you will often hear her sharing stories about how she has been inspired by her faith.

Michelle described her relationship with God in the following way:

Boy, oh boy, my faith in God grew the way you step up a ladder: each year was another step in my faith building. Being a young mother and in an abusive relationship was no easy feat. I was raising my children in a way that was so disturbing to me and I was not raised that way. I felt so trapped. They deserved the best and I was in no condition, educationally or financially. Talking to God through prayer helped me face each day. That was the only way I survived those turbulent years. (Interview 3, May 2015)

This relationship is apparent in many of the stories that Michelle shared with me, and a few are included in this chapter of her story. Her commitment to God has made her a stronger woman and she feels like she can do anything as long as her faith remains steadfast. In fact, because of her strong faith and consistent use of prayer, she reports that she God responds to her and gives her ideas and direction in terms of what she should do in her classroom. One particular incident, I was visiting Michelle's classroom and she showed me her bulletin board which was freshly decorated with different ways to solve a Math problem. Michelle was so excited about what she had learned and what she was doing. She told me that she was given the vision for her bulletin board by God.

Discourse of Accountability

The discourse of accountability, for Michelle, involves being responsible--taking responsibility for one's actions including the thoughts and ideas that are shared as well as the practices in which one is engaged. Michelle views the discourse of accountability as one that is happening all of the time in schools, whether it is within classrooms during

every day instruction where formative assessment might tell you that you need to do something different, to times when she needs to take a much more active role and become an ally and a voice for her students in order to improve their learning and success. In this section, I will discuss how Michelle has experienced education in Zinia and the surrounding area and what she feels needs to be changed in order for all students to be successful in their communities and in life.

Michelle's discourse of accountability, like all of the other discourses, has been influenced by her educational experiences in Westbury, Long Island. These experiences have empowered her to be a change agent for students who are consistently marginalized by systems of power and oppression. Michelle explained why she advocates for her students and resists authoritative discourses that focus on deficit views of students and their families:

When you as an individual have experienced or seen harmful practices toward children and you have a genuine heart and passion for teaching, you will do everything and I mean everything in your power to ensure that those things will not happen in your own classroom. I am often reminded of the broken smiles and looks of hopelessness on students' faces in the past. When teachers, administrators, and other adults put limits on children, it is a clear indicator that they do not believe in the potential of their students or they are not willing to do the hard, tedious work necessary to assure that all students achieve to some level.

(Interview 3, May 2015)

Michelle reported that the most challenging issue that she has had teaching in Zinia is that she feels many of the teachers at her school put limits on their students and they are

not willing to change. She acknowledges that teaching the children of our future is not an easy job. Michelle believes that when a teacher decides on this profession, they are not only taking on the teaching of content areas but they are also taking on multiple roles as counselors, doctors, lawyers, mediators, mommies, daddies, and confidants. She explains this further:

We have to wear so many hats. Teacher is not a one man or one woman show. We have to work together to give our children the best future possible. As educators we must all be accountable to the quality of education we bring to our students. Why is academic achievement so high in some areas and lacking in others? All children can learn. I have proven it time and time again but they are all not offered the same opportunities and something has to change. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Although Michelle understands the complex nature of teaching and the many roles that teachers take on that make the job difficult, she still maintains that children must be held to high expectations and provided the opportunities to be successful. High expectations and a discourse of practices for culturally responsive teaching are something Michelle feels is lacking at her school. She was particularly critical of some of the practices that she has witnessed at her school, believing that many teachers “half assed” their way through the school year, hurting the students in their classrooms. She strongly feels that it is educators like this that stifle dreams, kill visions, and never drive students to their full potential, very much like the teachers in Westbury. Michelle discussed a particular interaction with her colleagues at a faculty meeting where there were strong verbal exchanges:

I was taken aback and very baffled by the conversation at a recent faculty meeting where we discussed the quality of education our students should be getting. The Zinia teachers kept using their culture as an excuse saying, “We are a very passive group of people.” I almost bit my tongue off! Being laid back and passive does not mean we should not drive our students toward excellence. They seemed to be ok with the low level of education that they had been providing. I was ready to explode. Another colleague whispered to me, “Fix your face” because my facial expressions said it all. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Michelle is now a member of the Sacred Mountain’s school leadership team and she is the 4th grade team leader. She is determined to raise the bar and expectations for the school as well as her 4th grade team. Michelle receives a tremendous amount of support from the principal at her school and the Superintendent of the school district because of her discourse of practices and they both recognize the need for “sustainable transformational change” within the district. In fact, the principal and the Superintendent have asked Michelle to train other teachers in the district on culturally responsive teaching practices.

Michelle was very critical of TRO during our conversations and her experiences caused her to question both their mission and vision. Michelle’s first criticism was over their recruitment process:

One thing I strongly believe that TRO needs to do in their recruiting, screening and interview process is include stronger questions around race and identity.

Many of these young intern teachers are coming in with strong stereotypes and archetypes and a 6 week institute is not going to build their identity or train them

to see through a critical lens. I have seen TRO staff and intern teachers take a back seat when it comes to standing up for social justice issues, raising the rigor and expectations of students and teachers, behavior management and building strong bonds with communities. Some of the comments I have heard made me want to not be affiliated with TRO. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Michelle believes that TRO's mission and vision are attainable if they accept intern teachers who are truly joining because they believe in social justice and not because they want to use the experience as a stepping stone for another job opportunity or so they can say, "I have helped poor children." Michelle believes that many teachers who are accepted are doing more harm than good which led her to ask, "When you as a teacher are not secure in your own identity, how can you help students feel strong and secure and affirm their identities?" (Interview 3, May 2015).

Michelle, unlike Maria, was very positive about her teacher education classes at UFC. She said, "I can honestly say, my UFC experience was really good. The classes I took and the professors I had gave me the resources, insight and feedback I needed to develop into an effective educator" (Interview 2, May 2015). Michelle's description of her experiences with TRO was quite the opposite. She believed that many of the TRO staff were too inexperienced to be providing teacher training:

A lot of the staff for TRO are young white people who have not lived long enough to experience some of the things in life that will have them rooted and grounded in their identity, values, beliefs and culture. They are working on trial and error and that is not always the best course of action. The staff member who teaches the diversity sessions teaches from book knowledge and it is downright offensive.

When one can teach from real life experiences, the impact is so much more. I strongly feel that TRO needs to collaborate to design and create marketing strategies that will bring in more intern teachers of color. (Interview 3, May 2015)

Michelle added that having more intern teachers and staff of color not only makes TRO a stronger organization but it will also improve relationships within communities because it is the intern teachers of color who stay in the communities in which they were assigned beyond the 2 year commitment.

Conclusion

In this chapter I told the story of Michelle's ideological becoming into a culturally responsive teacher. Through Michelle's story I came to understand how the struggles she has had in her life regarding the discourse of race, low expectations, and deficit models used for understanding achievement have helped her internalize culturally responsive teaching as an internally persuasive discourse. Michelle's ideological development for culturally responsive teaching began as a child in NYC where she experienced tension with the authoritative discourses that painted her and her siblings as culturally deficit in her K-12 classrooms. Michelle vividly recalls struggling with feeling invisible as a child in these classrooms and saw the same issues in her own children as they attended the same schools. These experiences stuck with Michelle and when she made the move to the Four Corners region of the United States, these memories propelled her toward culturally responsive discourses that would help her value each of her students for who they are as Native Americans.

Michelle's ideological development in the discourses of culturally responsive teaching is similar to Maria's, in that they appear to be equally influential in how she interprets culturally responsive teaching. Also like Maria, Michelle's discourses can be seen overlapping as she negotiates tensions in her ideological struggle. In Michelle's case, I could consistently see how the discourses worked together to impact her teaching. For example, Michelle consistently focused on building relationships with her students, their families, and their communities (Littlebear, 1992). These relationships and the internally persuasive discourses that Megan brought with her helped shape her teaching practices so that she emphasized the strengths of her students' identities in the classroom and used their everyday living practices at home as building blocks for new learning (Moll, et al, 1992). The discourses of race and sociocultural consciousness, practices, and relationships as described above worked together to influence her discourse of responsibility. Megan clearly communicated throughout her interviews that she believed she held great responsibility for advocating for her students, whether it be improving her own teaching practices by doing research, or speaking up when other teachers were not holding high expectations and using a deficit lens to view students in her school (Villegas and Lucas, 2002).

Michelle's ideological development for culturally responsive teaching is represented in Figure 4. The arrows in the large circles demonstrate constant movement of discourses that Michelle encountered as a teacher of Native American students and illustrate how the process of ideological struggle is unending. The discourses for culturally responsive teaching within the contact zone are of equal size and connect

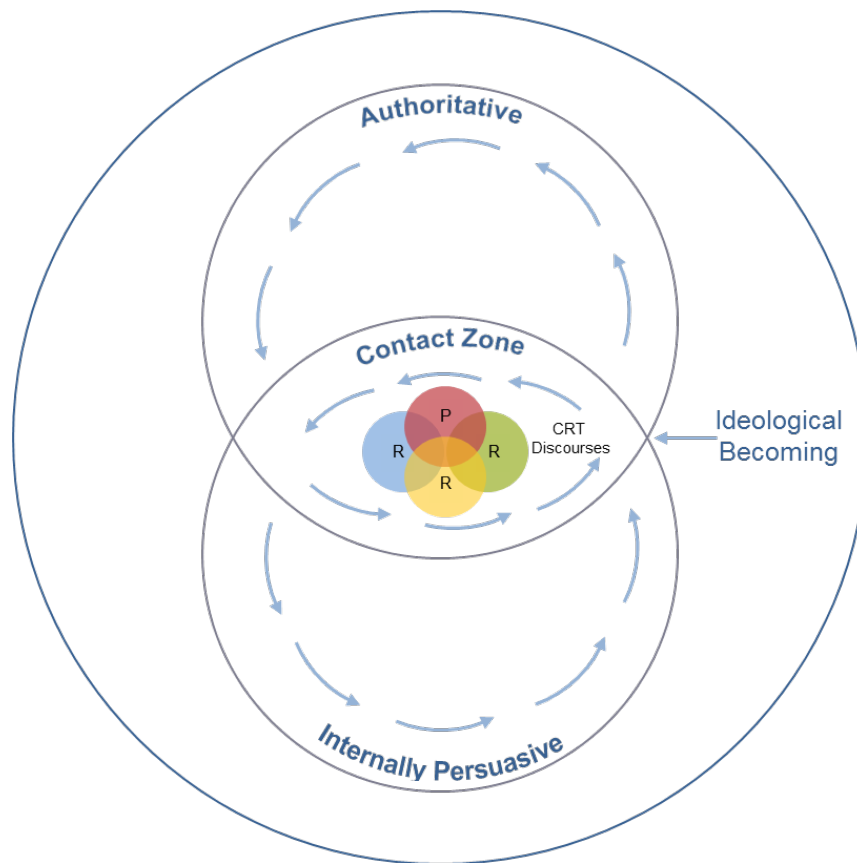


Figure 4. Michelle's ideological development for culturally responsive teaching.

because as previously stated; Michelle's developing perspective was influenced by these discourses together and not as individual ideas in isolation.

As Michelle's ideological development reveals, the process of ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching is a complex process that needs an ideological environment that is supportive and allows for ideas to be questioned and challenged. Michelle was able to flourish at Sacred Mountain Elementary because her principal and superintendent were open to hearing her ideas and she had flexibility in what and how she taught her students.

CHAPTER IX

SARAH'S STORY

This chapter focuses on the experiences of Sarah, a 25-year-old woman who identifies as Indian and middle-class. Sarah grew up in the Midwestern part of the United States. Her parents are first generation immigrants and only wanted the best for Sarah and her sister; they always enrolled them in the best schools near their home. Sarah attended schools that were considered diverse as well as schools that were predominantly white. The university she chose to attend was located in Wisconsin, where she studied International Studies (Political Economy and Discourse) with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies. Her final year of coursework, she moved to Spain and attended the Universidad de Complutense. She has extensive experience traveling outside the United States for extended periods of time. Sarah has traveled to India, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Ireland.

Sarah was recruited by the Teacher Recruitment Organization in 2012 because she wanted to pursue working in education with communities of color in the United States. She had a few friends who were radical educators of color who had strong, mostly negative feelings about TRO but it was a "domestic option" for her. Although Sarah did not have any formal training in the field of education, she had attended some international education lectures and seminars and she took a course in college, Global Higher Education. She was also involved in jobs, internships, and volunteer work over a ten year span of time prior to applying to TRO that were all related to education. Sarah

taught in a prison in Spain for over a year and tutored Spanish children in English. She also worked with some high school juveniles in Madison and she facilitated workshops on reclaiming diversity and multi-cultural spaces (radical, political spaces) for folks of color. She noticed time and again in doing this work that the people she was working with were in really tough situations and that it was adults that were “not only not encouraging them or pushing them to be their best, but were intentionally trying to break them down.” Sarah realized that people are easily influenced and impacted the most when they are kids and this was why she wanted formal training in education so she could work with young kids.

This year, Sarah completed her third year of teaching. The first two years in the Four Corners region she taught fifth grade at Rehoboth Elementary School in Rehoboth. This past year, she taught fifth grade at Sacred Mountain Elementary School on the Zinia Reservation. Sarah experienced great tension in her three years of teaching which caused her pain but also strengthen her ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching. Her first two years were the most difficult in a school district and school that holds racist views about Native students.

Discourse of Race and Sociocultural Consciousness

The discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness is a discourse that Sarah began developing early in her life. She was influenced by her own identity and how the world responded to it as well as the strong role models, like her parents, that were providing her with examples of their resistance. By the time Sarah moved to the Four Corners region, she had a thorough understanding of systems of power, privilege, and oppression and how it impacts the lives of those who are “othered.” In this section, I will

tell the story of Sarah's struggle with the authoritative discourse of White Supremacy and how this struggle essentially helped her internalize the discourse of race and sociocultural conscious as an internally persuasive discourse that she continues to develop to this day.

Sarah is a child of immigrant parents from India and they were not strangers to the concept of colonization. Sarah described her parents as "pretty radical and progressive in their own ways" and she was affected early on by their actions and resistance to injustice (Interview 3, June 2015). She told me a story about her father that illustrates how he practiced social justice in his everyday life. Sarah's father was always aware of race and class dynamics that were at work in India and abroad. In his work as a doctor he often provided medical care for free to those in need when the more common practice among his colleagues was to moonlight in order to earn extra money. Sarah reported that many of her father's colleagues were earning a lot of money moonlighting and thought her Dad was an idiot for traveling to Central America to work for free. Her Dad, however, became a doctor to help people, not simply for money and this was important to him. His leading by example is a characteristic that Sarah admired. She said:

That approach he took, his intention is something I try to be conscious of in my classroom. You can spew as much ideological shit as you want but at the end of the day, what are your intentions? What are your values and how are you living true to them? You can talk about your values but how are you living out your values? My Dad has always been true to that and very blunt. (Interview 3, June 2015)

As shown in this passage, living a life that is true to your beliefs is important to Sarah. She learned this same lesson from her Mother. During one of our interviews, Sarah

lovingly described her Mother as a “hippie--love everyone and at the end of the day all you can do is be a kind person.” Sarah admires her Mother’s big heart and trusting nature. She shared that even when her Mother has been taken advantage of she continues to help others; she never compromises that part of who she is in the world. These life lessons of living what you believe are a piece of Sarah and she carries that into her classroom every day.

Sarah’s parents were a source of inspiration for her and provided her with the foundation she would need to stay true to who she is as she learned about race and racism. Sarah started to notice the difference between people’s skin tone when she was attending a diverse Montessori school in Kansas City. She told me the following story as told by her Mother:

We lived in Kansas City in the early nineties, and the school my sister and I went to was pretty diverse. I came home from school one day and asked, “Mom, there are Black people and white people, what are we?” All she said was, “We’re Brown” and I was satisfied. A few days later I had another question for her, “Mom, there was Jesus and then there was Krishna. Were they friends?” Again, she replied simply with just a “yes” and I didn’t think much on it. (Interview 2, May 2015)

Sarah was beginning to recognize difference but had not experienced this difference as something negative or as a perceived deficit, yet. Her mother reported that she was happy with the responses that were given and moved on to something else. In the third grade this changed for Sarah. She moved to a grammar school in the third grade where she was the only student of color. The school was a 40-minute commute one way to school

because this school was considered a good school. Sarah's family was always commuting in order for her and her sister to attend the best schools but even the best schools could not protect her from racism. Sarah told me this story:

It was winter so it was cold. We were going out for recess and I was talking, you know like going out, goofing around with one of the girls. One of the boys in front of me turned around and he screamed, "Shut up nigger! Just shut up nigger!" My friend said, "Ooohh!" The next thing I know I am basically chasing after this kid with a chunk of ice and I throw it at him. The fourth grade teacher on duty started freaking out and screaming, "You can't be throwing ice!" I was sent to the Principal's office and I had to write the boy a letter of apology. I got home and my Mom was upset and saying, "Non-violent resistance . . . remember Ghandi! This is not who we are or how we react to situations!" Then my Dad says, "The next time someone says something to you, you better punch them so hard that they can't say it again!" (Interview 2, May, 2015)

Sarah and I laughed at her Dad's response but the moment was not funny and very painful for her. She communicated to me that hearing the "N" word to this day makes her literally sick to her stomach and she instantly shuts down.

Sarah's efforts to decolonize herself from the master narrative started after that event, subconsciously at first, but became much more deliberate in high school and college. She described herself during this transition as "rough around the edges." She became much more blunt and "in your face about my culture." In high school she attended a predominantly white, affluent prep school and two of her best female friends were white with blonde hair and blue eyes. Sarah did not have any trouble fitting in with

her white peers. She was editor and chief of her school newspaper; and she was class president. During this period of time she would start to notice more subtle forms of racism or racial micro aggressions while attending this school. She shared a couple of stories that demonstrate the racism she experienced there. The first story focused on Sarah's love of performing. She loves to sing and her preference is to sing jazz and blues but her school was really small and they did not have a musical program that fit her interest. If you wanted to perform any type of music you had to audition for musicals as an after school activity. Sarah noticed after auditioning for roles throughout her time at this school, that she was being typecast. She told me:

I always got cast as either the Black character or the secondary comical maid, evil step-mother role. Even from a young age a lot of white kids at school would comment on it. They would ask, "Why are you always being given these roles?" Don't get me wrong, they were usually funny parts and I had great solos and great songs. I definitely got to do more in terms of a range of acting but these were subtle ways of pointing out that I am different. (Interview 3, June 2015)

Sarah would also notice that she was different and not represented at her school through the "blatantly Eurocentric" curriculum that was provided for her. She reminded me that she was attending a prep school and the whole point is to prepare students for college. Sarah's freshman year, she was given an assignment to choose an author to research. She chose the poet, Rabindranath Tagore because he is "an overall badass" that refused to be knighted by the Queen after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The principal of the school refused to let Sarah study him because the school was preparing her for college which means she had to study a Eurocentric canon in the core curriculum. If she wanted to study

Rabindranath Tagore, it would have to be done as an elective. She felt like her principal was communicating, “Your culture is like pretty decorations but it’s not substantive; it’s not meaningful in any type of way” (Interview 3, June 2015).

As Sarah moved away from home for college, the racism she experienced changed from being subtle to outright blatant. The university she attended was another predominantly white space that Sarah occupied. Only 12% of the student body was students of color and out of that, 8% were international students. The racism she experienced on campus caused her great tension and she was in a state of fear at night and on weekends. Sarah told me the story of a fraternity on campus lynching a large, life-size Black Spiderman in front of their fraternity house one day. She also experienced the chanting of racist slurs at her as she walked by their fraternity house on many occasions. She remembered a specific story when she was spending time at her friend’s apartment one night:

I was talking out on the balcony of an apartment with one of my friends and there were some guys a couple of floors up from the apartment that screamed out, “Oh my God, a real live nigger. I have never seen one of those before.” They were screaming other stuff too. (Interview 3, June 2015)

Sarah was constantly afraid when she was walking home at night that she might get jumped or raped by drunken white students because she had friends who had been jumped or attacked.

Racism didn’t only occur in spaces off of campus; Sarah also encountered it on campus. She shared that she finally had the opportunity to take courses on Indian history and she would be in a class full of “ignorant, annoying white people who don’t know shit

but talk like they do and try to teach you about your own history.” She struggled in many of her courses being the only woman of color and having to listen to what she considered to be very ignorant comments from white students. Sarah continued to encounter examples of how the histories and identities of students of color are discounted in American society. She shared the story of her college wanting to get rid of scholarship programs that were created for low income students of color. When faced with criticism over this possible move, students and faculty of color began to organize around the issue. Their response to the university was, “Diversity amongst the student population was never for Brown and Black students in the first place but to provide opportunities for white kids to meet folks of color” (Interview 2, May 2015). For Sarah, this university was an exhausting and toxic space and it is because of experiences like this, that she is very cautious of whom her pedagogy is directed towards in her class and she clearly articulated,

I feel no qualms in saying that I absolutely prioritize the identities and safe spaces of my students of color because ultimately they do not nor will they ever have the access to that anywhere else in our society even if their population is the majority as I have seen in Rehoboth. (Interview 2, May 2015)

Sarah almost dropped out half way through her second year but managed to save money and secure scholarships to finish up her studies abroad. In addition, her immigrant parents were not going to have her dropping out.

When you consider Sarah’s experiences, the Four Corners region of the United States would seem to be the perfect place for her to be assigned with TRO, but it was not a location that was high on her list due to family obligations. She really wanted to be

closer to her elders. Sarah asked specifically about indigenous education during her interview with TRO because of the work she had done with indigenous youth in Wisconsin. In addition, one of her closest friends who is like family to her, went to a tribal school K-12. Sarah described her friend as a “brilliant woman . . . brilliant, funny, caring, and compassionate but was so screwed over when it came to foundational education” (Interview 1, March 2015). Sarah’s friend was Valedictorian of her class and lacked some of the basics in writing. Sarah used to stay up with her until 2 or 3 in the morning in order to help her rewrite papers and her lack of preparation was so frustrating that she dropped out. Sarah told me, “She hasn’t finished her degree yet.” This situation was upsetting and disturbing to Sarah; another example of how the system fails students of color.

Although Sarah was interested in working with indigenous youth, her assignment to the Four Corners region of the United States was something she had concerns about and still does not take lightly. She explained her thinking to me in this way:

Coming from an immigrant family and context, I’ve always been very wary of my settler, colonial role and the fact that I am occupying Native land. Just because I am a person of color doesn’t give me a free card. I’m still occupying this land that was taken. (Interview 2, May 2015)

This is a conversation that she would have with her students many times in Rehoboth. She let her students know that she was there teaching them but would not be there forever and they should not want her to be there forever because the Four Corners region is not her home. They should want teachers that are Navajo and Zinia teaching in their schools.

Sarah struggled with the authoritative ideology of the DCS district and Rehoboth Elementary School. She described DCS in the following way:

When I think of DCS, I really do think of white administrators and white teachers teaching Brown kids and making decisions about Brown kids and Brown families, specifically Native.” (Interview 1, March 2015)

Sarah found many of the district and school’s practices racist, unsupportive, and exclusive to many of her students. She shared several stories that demonstrate these practices. First, Sarah recalled contacting the Indian Education Unit with DCS that deals with all of the Indian Education programs including Bilingual education and Navajo Language and Culture support. Since she had Native students that identify as Navajo and Zinia, she was requesting resources to help teach her students. She was provided beautiful posters to use in her room for Navajo students but was told that they did not have any resources for Zinia students and “if they want to learn Zinia, they can go to school in Zinia. Our bilingual services are for Navajo students only” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Another point of conflict for Sarah working in DCS is that even some of the Native representatives working for the district displayed attitudes that are racist. She shared:

Another woman who worked for the district who identified as Native but not Navajo has said some interestingly and implicitly racist stuff, supporting or backing individuals and systems that don’t do good things for our kids.
(Interview 1, March 2015)

Sarah's tension over the discourses of the school district would strengthen the internally persuasive discourse that she had already internalized and was practicing with her students in Rehoboth. This tension would also move her toward Zinia Public Schools where she acknowledges that they are still facing institutional norms like standardized testing that make Native kids suffer but in comparison to DCS, she said, "It's in a much healthier place" (Interview 1, March 2015).

Working for DCS and more specifically, Rehoboth Elementary School was an important step in strengthening Sarah's ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching. Sarah experienced great pain during her time as a teacher in Rehoboth and culturally responsive teaching was the little piece of hope that helped her through. She confided in me:

Honestly, teaching in a school with such a strong, dominant white culture, even though the white population was a minority, was a good slap in the face that I needed. Seeing how a lot of my Navajo boys had internalized a lot of these negative comments, a lot of these racist assumptions about themselves- for me as an educator, as a person of color, as an individual who has a really strong passion against racial injustice that was huge. It really pushed me, really hurt me, and really challenged me. The fact that it wasn't about me I think was what was beneficial. Seeing these young kids get broken down, whom demographically when you talk about the population, are the majority. When you talk about their voice and their sway of influence, it was essentially marginalized and they would silence themselves as an impact of that. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Sarah indicated that she needed the two years at Rehoboth in order to “really see racist education at its finest” (Interview 1, March 2015). For Sarah, seeing racism so clearly in the roles she has been in throughout her life, helped her come to the understanding that for indigenous youth, we cannot settle for a colonized, Eurocentric model of education.

Sarah’s discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness has everything to do with her own experiences as a woman of color living in the United States. She began to develop this discourse at an early age and every incident involving race and racism helped her see the power of white supremacy and increased her desire to dismantle it. Sarah stills experiences tension and struggles with the discourse of racism and deficit theories regarding race and culture as it relates to her students in Zinia but this struggle only strengthens the internally persuasive discourses that she carried with her to the Four Corners region for culturally responsive teaching.

Discourse of Practices

Sarah’s discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness has a strong influence over her discourse of practices. Her own experiences involving race throughout her life has helped her see the criticality for using culturally responsive teaching practices with her students, regardless if they are students of color or white. In fact, Sarah adamantly believes that her white students in Rehoboth benefited just as much as her Native students from culturally responsive teaching and anti-racist education.

Sarah began our conversation on her teaching practices by reminding me that she wrote her Master’s thesis on culturally responsive teaching. She followed with, “It’s definitely something near and dear to my heart” (Interview 1, March 2015). Sarah believes that being culturally responsive is “creating opportunities for students to come

into their authentic selves and meeting them where they are at” (Interview 1, March 2015). She explained this in more detail:

When I was in the fifth grade, I wanted nothing to do with my culture. Getting me to recite prayers, make offerings- it was like pulling teeth. I wasn’t in a place to understand it. I wasn’t in a place to fully appreciate it. That’s okay, right?

Knowing my language and knowing my culture did not necessitate affirming me. You can still affirm and love someone and push them into their best self without having a set or structured idea of what that looks like. It’s just creating opportunities for them to find what that looks like. Yes, I have kids who are traditional and love that aspect of themselves. I have other kids who don’t connect with that right now, who might not connect with that for a while, if ever. That’s okay. My job is respecting them where they’re at but letting them know that they come from a really badass, resilient history and they have so much to be proud of.

(Interview 1, March 2015)

Sarah’s definition of culturally responsive teaching may seem a little unclear from the description above but will become clearer throughout the narrative in this section. Her belief about how her students should be educated includes what Castagno and Brayboy (2008) argue is left out of the literature on culturally responsive teaching: sovereignty, self-determination, racism, and Indigenous epistemologies. The idea of an “indigenous education” has evolved over time, for Sarah, as she formed relationships with indigenous leaders in the Four Corners region and listened to their perspectives on how they see education in their communities. Sarah described a conversation that she had with folks from the Native American Community Academy (NACA), a school serving Native

American children from a variety of tribes in the Four Corners region that has a focus on indigenous education. The teachers and administrators from NACA are clear that,

We cannot go back. To be realistic, we cannot go back to how our ancestors used to learn. That's just not fully applicable to where we're at now; what the needs of our kids are now. At the same time, we cannot settle for a colonized, Euro-centric education. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Sarah calls what was described above as “blending” and she believes that it is up to all indigenous people to decide what that looks like for their communities and kids and to ensure that their children as well as adults and elders have access to it because she states,

If you look at excellent education, that's adults. That's elders. It's a process and it's a lifelong experience that is holistic, inclusive and not some stupid multiple choice standardized test. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Sarah's discourse of practices is centered in this idea of “blending.” Everything she does in her classroom and with her students involves helping them develop a critical consciousness and their best selves. Sarah's classroom is set up to focus on who her students are as members of the Zinia Pueblo. She has posters that hang with a variety of words in Zinia, as well as 12 posters of different Native women leaders who she sees as role models for her students. Next to the 12 posters is a Maya Angelo quote that reads, “We are here alive today because our ancestors dared to dream.” There is also a quote by Octavio Paz that reads, “Merece lo que sueñas,” which translates as “Deserve your dream.” In addition, Sarah has words posted that are part of their learning to develop a critical consciousness: prejudice, racism, oppression, etc, and a bulletin board that lists if/then goals. For example, “If we want to be curious, then . . . ;and, “If we want to be

conscious, then we need to . . .”; and finally, “If we want to be grounded then . . .” Sarah allows her students to have full ownership over what meeting those goals looks like (Interview 1, March 2015).

In this physical space Sarah has set up in her classroom, she demonstrates an “ethic of care” and has unconditional love for her students. Sarah feels great privilege to work with her fifth graders. She says that they are “confused and lost in a lot of ways. . . . They have a lot of hurt and haven’t necessarily had the space to process it” (Interview 1, March 2015). Growing up as a woman of color in the United States, Sarah can really relate to them. Sarah’s love for her students was obvious throughout my time with her. She uses terms of endearment such as “love bugs” when talking to her students and she describes them to outsiders as “loving, passionate, and goofy.” She also calls them, “brilliant, amazing, funny and caring” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Another important characteristic that Sarah shared about her students is that they still have hope and have not internalized apathy, yet. She works hard at keeping the hope in them alive by developing their sociocultural consciousness which she says, “is at the core of what I do” (Interview 1, March 2015). Sarah has found that using Socratic Seminars is the most organic way for her to approach this learning because it is completely student-driven and student-based form of discussion. She admits that she is very biased in the materials that she chooses to be the basis for Socratic Seminars and they are usually racially and culturally charged articles, quotes, songs, poems, etc. Sarah provided a couple of examples of Socratic Seminars that she has facilitated with her students. The first involved students reading an excerpt from *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko, where they made connections to how important traditions and elders are

to a community. The second example, Sarah used an article from *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*, titled, “George Washington An American Hero?” The article describes how our first president, one of our “founding fathers” stole 40,000 acres of Native land and issued the order for the mass genocide of the Six Nations (Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras). Sarah reported that after her students participated in Socratic Seminar over the George Washington article, they were extremely angry and they wanted other people to know what they had learned about the first president of the United States. Her students decided to share this information with others on their way to the lunchroom and a few white teachers overheard them. Sarah was approached by both white teachers and white parents in Rehoboth about the article and they voiced their concern and anger that she was teaching students negative information about U.S. History. She did not have the same reaction when she taught this same lesson in Zinia (Interview 1, March 2015).

In addition to developing students’ sociocultural consciousness, Sarah is learning how to include indigenous ways of knowing into her instruction. She described a beautiful lesson that one of her students who is in the “gifted humanities group” facilitated with the rest of the class with her supervision. The student’s name is Stephen and he chose to research Zinia agricultural practices. Sarah took him to the Zinia museum and he was able to look through a photo archive as well as speak to one of the museum employees. Stephen chose to focus on waffle gardens and he created two posters with information about waffle gardens on it. He also asked Sarah to go to the local grocery to pick up 6 aluminum trays. Sarah recounted what happened next:

We go out to the side where there's this small garden. We collect dirt. I'm crouching in my heels collecting dirt in these trays. Then Stephen proceeds to basically facilitate a workshop with the class on how to create a waffle garden. In small groups, my students are all making mini waffle gardens. Stephen models it. It was indigenous education. It was like seeing and observing in the traditional sense--creating it, getting positive feedback, and talking it over. Some of my kids were singing songs. The boys were joking around and saying, "Oh in the spring we should do this and plant some prayer sticks and say some prayers over it." They were so into it. I was there making a waffle garden myself, sitting down at the desks with them. It was just one of those opportunities where Stephen was in his element. He was teaching. He was directing. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Sarah said that she was so proud of Stephen for his work and she noted the power in true indigenous education.

A second example Sarah shared of utilizing indigenous ways of knowing was taking her students to a fractal maze at the Rio Grande Community Farms in the Four Corners region. Sarah's class had to fundraise in order to pay for the trip and they earned enough money to go. Sarah's students were able to build their own bricks out of mud and create their own Sierpinski triangle. She explained what she saw as the benefits:

They got to find examples in nature of fractals. Then they presented what they learned to the Zinia Board of Education. For me that type of whole body learning where they were exploring and stumbling across real world examples and making connections, that was indigenous education. That was culturally responsive teaching. (Interview 1, March 2015)

In these examples, Sarah highlighted constructivist practices which are central to culturally responsive teaching as well as indigenous education.

As Sarah developed her discourse of practice, she resisted the authoritative discourses of DCS for scripted commercialized curriculum and standardized testing. She provided her students with engaging materials that are relevant to their lives and created safe spaces for her students to have a voice that is not marginalized, especially her students of color.

Discourse of Relationships

Everything Sarah does in her life centers around developing relationships and learning from those relationships. I remember fondly, my encounters with Sarah after my social studies methods class when she would stay after to talk about social justice issues taking place at her school or with TRO. She allowed me to share some of the concerns I was having, too, and we tried to support each other, console each other, and provide advice when we had some to offer and when it was appropriate. My experience with Sarah is not unique. This is who Sarah is and this is what Sarah does with the people she encounters. Her discourse of relationships is central to her being and because of it; she has been able to naturally infiltrate three communities that have embraced her presence since moving to the Four Corners region of the United States: Rehoboth, a predominantly white community, the Rehoboth Navajo, and Zinia Pueblo.

Sarah develops close relationships with her students and she sees it as a major goal and responsibility that she has as a teacher. She believes that she cannot possibly be culturally responsive without developing relationships because it is through these relationships that she learns about her students so that she can not only bring their lives

into the curriculum and instruction but also so she can help them develop into their best selves. The bonds that she creates with her students are obvious when you walk into her classroom. She not only addresses her students with terms of endearment like “love bugs” but she demonstrates respect for who they are and in return they demonstrate the same respect. It is not uncommon to see students giving her a hug or talking to her about events that are going on in their lives. It is also not uncommon for students from other classes to run up to Sarah in the hall to give her a hug and talk to her.

Sarah not only has close relationships with her students and the school community during school hours but she also spends a great amount of time attending after school functions and different events and celebrations that take place in Zinia. Sarah regularly attends her students’ sporting events and cheers them on. She has also attended the games of her students’ siblings as a sign of support. Sarah also spends time talking to her students on the phone and helping them through difficult issues. One of Sarah’s students, Justin, is even tutoring her on Thursday afternoons on Zinia culture and language. She is learning words and phrases in Zinia and religious figures and the cultural calendar events. She told me the following story about this relationship:

It was funny one day outside a meeting for the fifth grade I was sitting with two EAs and we were talking and Justin comes over and he says, “Um, Mrs. B., I’m not going to be able to tutor you this week because stuff is picking up with my religious practices.” I said, “oh, yeah, yeah, your Mom told me. It’s okay.” He said, “Do you want me to try to find somebody else?” “We’ll talk about it tomorrow.” He walks away and the EAs are laughing, “What is he tutoring you on? What is going on?” (Interview 3, June 2015)

For Sarah, her students are like family and they treat her as such. These relationships are the foundation of her teaching and it is easy for her to naturally affirm who they are because she becomes such an integral part of their lives.

Sarah shared three specific relationships with me, outside of the relationships that she develops with students that have helped her and have been important with her transition as a teacher in Native communities. The first relationship that she highlighted was the relationships that she builds with her students' parents, grandparents and extended families. She was clear that when she uses "extended" she is talking about sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. She articulated,

The one thing that I have learned, the one thing that I have appreciated and connected with the most is the strength of extended families and the role that extended families play in a child's life. Sort of like our Khandani structure in my culture where you always have an aunt or an uncle, a grandparent or a cousin helping you with your homework and taking you to your games, checking up on you. The whole, it takes a village mentality. (Interview 3, June 2015)

Sarah talked about how even with colonization, these communities have been able to maintain the concept of extended family and for her, developing relationships with her students' extended families enhances her relationship with her students and the community. The development of relationships with extended family has been really powerful for Sarah. She attends the games of her students and their siblings; she goes to the bake sales of her student's aunt; she participates in birthday parties, graduation parties, etc. all so she can build relationships. In fact, Sarah shared that she is still good

friends to one of her student's cousins from Rehoboth and they talk all the time on the phone.

The second relationship that Sarah described was a relationship that she developed with a family when she was teaching in Rehoboth. Sarah immediately connected with this family and they invited her to Sun Ceremony (name changed); she's gone to every birthday party and every graduation party. She has become so close that she will be invited to the aunt's husband's birthday party. Sarah said, "I'm at everything now. It's me and the family cleaning up afterward" (Interview 3, June 2015). She shared how she met her current Superintendent long before she applied to Zinia Public Schools because he is related to this family. In addition, because she becomes so invested in these relationships, people begin to share information about taboos in Zinia culture and nice things to say in the Zinia language. They also begin to confide in her and tell her information about specific people in the community. For example, people have told her to "Please be careful around that person or that dude is on wife number 9 and might want to make you number 10" (Interview 3, June 2015). Sarah has become so connected to the Zinia community that members of the community actually believe that she is Zinia and the in-depth knowledge that she gains from these relationships helps her connect more with her students in the classroom.

The third relationship that Sarah emphasized was with folks and organizations that she has no connection with from school. For example, Sarah has met random people that work at the hospital, in suicide prevention, in teen help; organizations and people that she might not have come across through the school environment. The events that she attends have been extremely beneficial in this way. In addition, when students and their

families see Sarah at events like the Suicide Walk and Vigil that are outside the normal school activities, she believes it strengthens her relationships and place in the community because it demonstrates her commitment to the community.

Sarah's discourse of relationships does everything to affirm who her students are without having to put artificial labels on what she is doing. She doesn't have to ask, "Am I affirming my students?" She does this by naturally developing relationships with her students, their family and extended families, and other community members and organizations. Sarah's students know that she cares because she takes the time to learn the Zinia language and learn the details about their cultural traditions and celebrations and she uses her knowledge about the community in her everyday classroom practices, instead of focusing on dominant culture. Sarah's knowledge of Zinia culture also helps her students feel proud of who they are and want to learn more themselves, without "stuffing their culture down their throats" (Interview 1, March 2015).

Discourse of Accountability

Sarah's discourse of accountability is connected to the previous discourse of relationships. She believes that everyone has a role to play in the education of "Brown babies" and that this role should be taken seriously. In this section, I will describe the multiple layers of injustice that Sarah has experienced in her work as a teacher in the Four Corners region as it relates to her students and how this struggle has strengthened her internally persuasive discourses of resistance in order to act as an "agent of change."

Looking back to the first discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness, Sarah shares in many of the same stories of racism that her students in Rehoboth and Zinia have experienced in their young lives at school and in their communities. When Sarah moved

to the Four Corners region and began her training as a teacher, she was not surprised by the presence of racism and the deficit views of Native American children. She understands the power of White Supremacy even in Native American country but she did expect more from Teacher Recruitment Organization that claims social justice and educational equity are their mission. The first issue that Sarah addressed regarding TRO involved the preparation of new intern teachers for the Four Corners area. She believes that TRO did not adequately prepare intern teachers for the enormous task that they were embarking on, especially white intern teachers. Although TRO has a required reading list composed of books and articles on issues related to education and social justice most intern teachers had not read the material prior to arriving in the Four Corners region and there was no mechanism in place in which to hold them accountable. Many of the white intern teachers did not have any experience or background knowledge with systems of privilege and oppression and Sarah believed this may be why some struggled with teaching Native American students. Additionally, TRO put together panels composed of Native members from the community to talk about their lives, the history of education in the area, as well as provide information that might make intern teachers' transition easier. However, Sarah does not believe that these panels are beneficial in a real sense. They might provide some background knowledge for intern teachers but this is not like building real, authentic relationships and understanding how real people in the area are impacted by policies and their actions.

Another issue that Sarah feels TRO needs to change is how they deal with intern teachers of color. She reports that she and other intern teachers of color often felt

marginalized and treated as the token representatives for their race and/or ethnic groups.

Sarah emphasized this in the following statement:

My first couple of months felt very disjointed because I'd walk into a grocery store and be surrounded by Brown folks and blend in but then spent the majority of my days in these Teacher Recruitment Organization sessions surrounded by a 98% white, mostly ignorant group of people. It was overwhelming and marginalizing. I was very angry and frustrated for the majority of those sessions.

(Interview 2, May 2015)

Sarah was surprised by the structure of the sessions that TRO facilitated and believed that this should have been a space that she felt comfortable in because they were talking about cultural and linguistic diversity. She shared, "That's a lived experience for me, yet, the way it's being facilitated and communicated does not sit right with me. It does not feel right. It does not feel respectful" (Interview 1, March 2015). According to Sarah, many of the intern teachers of color from her year had similar experiences, especially the intern teachers who identified as Native American. These intern teachers were often asked to share their experiences with being Native as if their single story was representative of their entire tribe.

The TRO sessions were inadequate spaces for Sarah and other intern teachers of color to feel comfortable sharing their perspective without experiencing tension around race and racism. Sarah wanted to participate in groups where her voice was heard; where she was affirmed and validated, not silenced, marginalized, and constantly put in a position to teach other intern teachers about racism. She believed that TRO should be able to offer this support to all intern teachers, especially those who do not identify as

white. Sarah has always found ways, and mostly subtle, to resist practices that she considered unjust. In this case, Sarah was able to form her own group for intern teachers of color to meet and process the issues they experienced and provide support to one another.

In terms of accountability, Sarah did acknowledge that TRO in the Four Corners region of the United States has been working hard to improve everything they do around diversity. Sarah had many conversations with TRO administrators regarding the sessions on diversity and culturally responsive teaching and consistently provided them with examples of what did not feel good and what could have been done differently. Sarah could not speak to the details but she knows that the structure looks dramatically different from when she entered in 2012. She said, “Just in the past three years, I’ve seen them shift a lot and add a lot and even their value base system etc. has definitely come together a lot more” (Interview 3, June 2015).

Sarah’s struggle with the tensions she experienced through TRO has strengthened her discourses for culturally responsive teaching as well as her decision to work in communities of color. In our final conversation, she indicated how important it was to have teachers of color working with students of color. She said,

The relationships that I have with my kids and my families, you cannot teach someone how to build that. I think given the historical context of this community, if you are white, I don’t know if you can really have that kind of relationship. I don’t know how it can be possible. I think you can be taken in to a point. You can be loved to a point. But there will always be that wall. (Interview 3, June 2015)

As an indigenous person who has been colonized on the subtlest of levels, Sarah speaks from those experiences. She believes that it doesn't make a difference how old students are they realize the difference between a white teacher and a teacher of color; they understand that one looks more like them than the other and that matters. For this reason, Sarah strongly advocates for TRO as well as other institutions that train and hire teachers to recruit more teachers of color.

Sarah's discourse of accountability is heavily influenced by the activism work prior to moving to the Four Corners region. She considers taking a stand and showing resistance to practices that hurt students as important and a central part of her being. A few moments of resistance have already been shared: she has consistently used her voice during her time as an intern teacher to communicate issues that have impacted her, other intern teachers and students of color. Also, she formed her own groups within TRO so her voice and those of others would not be marginalized by her white peers.

In addition to these moments, Sarah has demonstrated resistance in her schools on several occasions. First, when she was working in Rehoboth, the school was required to use Reading Street as their reading program in the fourth grade. Sarah did not feel that this commercial program was appropriate for her students. She spoke with her principal and he supported her decision to use texts outside of Reading Street and she used only Native authors. Second, Sarah considers the relationship that she develops with her students as a form of resistance to the traditional power structure found in most schools, even in Zinia, that often create barriers for students. Her students call her "Calu" which means sister and she takes this very seriously. Sarah treats all of her students like they are family (Interview 3, June 2015).

The final act of resistance is her ability to not compromise who she is and what she believes in everything she does. For example, she would like to collaborate more with the other teachers at her grade level but they are not doing what she believes her kids need from the curriculum and instruction and many teachers see Sarah as “too radical.” Instead of compromising in order to collaborate with her team, she collaborates with a third grade and fourth grade teacher that have similar beliefs about education. Another example of Sarah standing true to who she is comes from a story she shared with me. Sarah teaches fifth grade and her students generally move on to the middle school in Zinia. She told a middle school teacher in Zinia that she encourages her students to go to other schools like the Native American Community Academy or Dine because she feels her students would get more from those schools. The teacher was very upset and sent emails to the superintendent and other principals to share what Sarah was doing. Sarah told me,

If you ask me to pick between my kids and my district, I will always pick my kids. And if I don’t feel like the district is doing them justice, I will tell them to go elsewhere because they are my kids and I want the best for my kids. (Interview 3, June 2015)

As this excerpt shows, demonstrating resistance is very important to Sarah, especially given her history with being marginalized and silenced. Resistance for Sarah doesn’t have to be “blatant or like a Molotov bomb” (Interview 3, June 2015). It can be subtle like a conversation or simply navigating conflicts in a different way but it isn’t giving up your voice. It is important to note that after writing this and asking Sarah to proofread it to ensure that her story represents what she said, Sarah illustrated the subtle resistance

that she described above by editing all the w's in the word "white" to lowercase and all the b's in "Brown" and "Black" to uppercase. I have left her edits to show respect for Sarah's actions.

Conclusion: Sarah's Ideological Becoming

Using Bakhtin's theories on ideological becoming and authoritative and internally persuasive discourse, I was able to peel back the layers of Sarah's experiences and come to some understanding of where she is in her ideological development as a culturally responsive teacher. In this chapter, I demonstrated how Sarah encountered a number of discourses from TRO, UFC, and the two school districts where she has worked and although she experienced tension with the actions and policies of a number of these groups on different occasions, her struggle to be heard would help her take a stand and do what she thought was best for her students.

Sarah's Ideological Becoming into a culturally responsive teacher began in her early childhood through her experiences growing up as a woman of color in the United States. Her entire life up until this point has been full of tension based on the intersectionalities of her race, gender, and class and the authoritative discourses present in the United States that work to devalue who she is as a human being. She was influenced early on by her progressive parents who taught her lessons on social justice simply by leading by example. These lessons would come in handy as she struggled through critical moments of racism that were both subtle and blatant. It was through this process that Sarah began to develop the discourses for culturally responsive teaching, long before she would come across the ideology in context to teaching.

Sarah's discourses for culturally responsive teaching, like the other three intern teachers described prior to this were interconnected and internally persuasive for her. The discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness was a discourse that produced great tension for Sarah throughout her 3 years of teaching in the Four Corners region. Sarah has a strong background in systems of power and oppression from her own experiences and the coursework that she took in her program in college. This background helped her see when issues of injustice were happening in her teacher education training and within her school district. For example, Sarah experienced tension with her school in Rehoboth when she was told that she had to use Reading Street, a commercial program to teach reading to her students. She communicated to me that Reading Street did not represent who her students are and perpetuated white dominant culture. Sarah immediately advocated for her students and discussed this issue with her principal. She won his support to use books that represent the Native experience that were written by Native authors in her classroom.

All of Sarah's actions as a teacher are heavily influenced by her discourse of relationships. Building relationships is a priority in her classroom and she consistently takes the time to learn about her students, their families and their community. This practice, in turn helps her develop practices within her classroom that support what the community and parents want for their children. Sarah is also able to help her students build positive Native identities by bringing the practices of their lives at home into the classroom as well as expose them to Native Americans who have made great contributions to society that often go ignored in mainstream culture. The relationships that she has built have also provided her with insight on how her students learn best and

she has been able to create environments that allow her students to participate in the learning process and experience “true indigenous education” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Figure 5 demonstrates Sarah’s ideological struggle as she learned to become a culturally responsive teacher. Sarah’s struggle and internalization of the discourses of culturally responsive teaching appeared to have equal strength across all four discourses. Sarah articulated the importance of how these discourses work together as well as how her work will be a continuous process as she comes in contact with competing authoritative and internally persuasive discourses across different contexts. It is difficult to determine if Sarah has reached ideological becoming but the data reflects a close resemblance to the process as described by Bakhtin (1981):

When thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting, an discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse, along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us. (p. 345)

Bakhtin’s concept of ideological becoming seems applicable to Sarah in that she is able to confront questions about equity, identity, race and sociocultural consciousness, teaching and learning, knowledge and relationships as they come into contact with the beliefs, and ideologies that she holds from her own experiences to form her own identity.

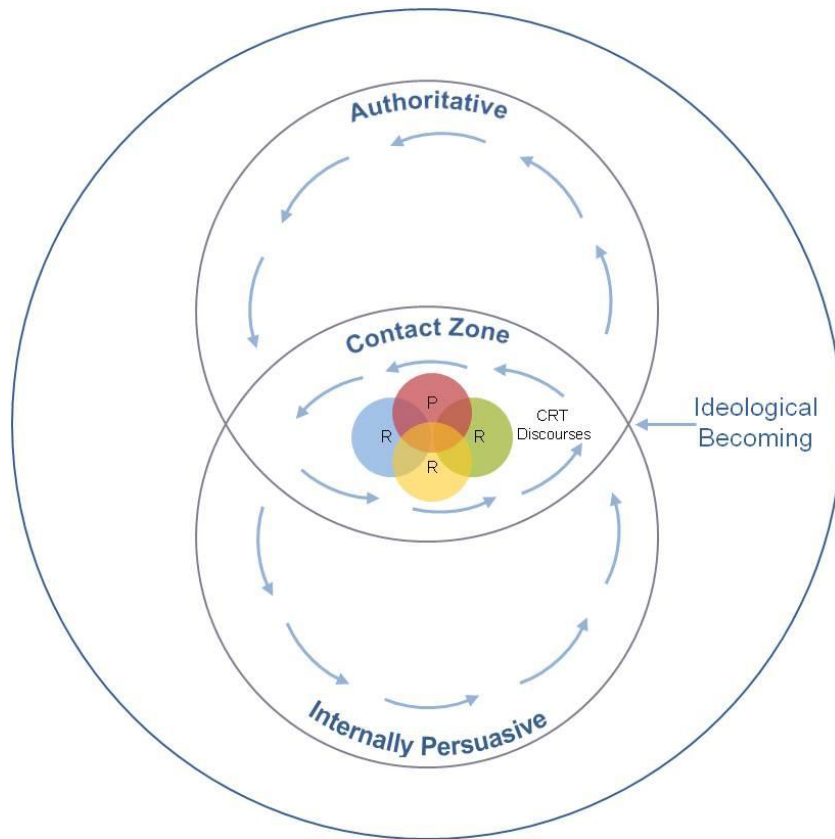


Figure 5. Sarah's ideological development for culturally responsive teaching.

CHAPTER X

KATHLEEN'S STORY

Kathleen is a 24-year-old woman who identifies as white, and middle-class. Kathleen loves her hometown of Portland, Oregon and she often tells her students about “the land of milk and honey.” Kathleen attended college in Oregon and describes the campus as “not very diverse.” The biggest diversity came from the students attending that were from Hawaii and that population made up 25% of the student body. Kathleen studied Sustainable Design and Environmental Studies and did not take any courses that had a focus on social justice or diversity. The environmental studies courses that were a part of her program focused on humans and how they can have the best impact but there wasn't anything on diversity.

Kathleen has spent some time traveling to other countries. Her first international experience was in the 7th grade when she went to China on a school trip. Kathleen has also backpacked through Spain, Italy, UK, and Mexico; and visited Costa Rica and Belize on a group trip. Her interest in the Teacher Recruitment Organization in the Four Corners region of the United States was inspired by a service learning trip that Kathleen took in college to the Navajo Nation and she loved her experience with the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school that she worked with there. The Four Corners region was her first choice.

Kathleen always had an interest in TRO as a way to begin teaching because she wanted to teach but she also wanted to have another field of study for her degree so that

she wasn't obligated to teach forever. TRO was a good option because she could earn a degree in something she enjoyed as an undergrad and then earn her teaching license through an alternative licensure program and only be committed to teach for two years with TRO. She shared:

I really didn't want to major in education because I feel like when people major in education that's all they did. They didn't do anything else and I wanted to take a lot of other classes which was the big reason I didn't do education. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Discourse of Race and Sociocultural Consciousness

The discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness was not a discourse that Kathleen encountered until she was in college. Kathleen grew up in a fairly homogenous environment and although she traveled abroad many times prior to moving to the Four Corners region, and had even taken a trip to the Navajo Nation in college, she was not prepared for the tension she experienced once moving away from the "land of milk and honey." In this section, I will describe Kathleen's experiences with ideas of race and racism and how she was confronted with many critical moments that caused her to struggle but she would ultimately embrace the discourses that she brought with her into the Four Corners region and would not make the discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness an internally persuasive discourse.

Kathleen told me in our first interview that she grew up in "the whitest city in the United States" and had little exposure to racial diversity and difference on a daily basis. She attended a small public elementary school that she described as "almost all white and it had experienced teachers with a high level of parental involvement" (Interview 3, June

2015). Her middle school was also a public school and “almost all white with a handful of recent immigrants from Somalia” (Interview 3, June 2015). This school was a Bernstine school which focused on art education. Kathleen said, “It was an amazing school and I loved it!” (Interview 3, June 2015). It was her time at the middle school that helped her develop a love for art which she included in her own classroom in Rehoboth. Kathleen moved from the public school system to a private, Catholic girls’ school for her high school years. She described this school as “very liberal and inclusive,” with only 45% of the student body practicing Catholicism (Interview 3, June 2015). Kathleen identifies as an Atheist and she did not have any problems at the school. She also shared that the school’s curriculum had a focus on social justice and liberation theology. I asked Kathleen how the social justice and Liberation Theology curriculum impact her ideologies on race and sociocultural consciousness and she said that she didn’t fully grasp it until after she graduated. For example, she didn’t understand Liberation Theology until she moved to Dine and saw poverty in that context. She noted that during her time at this school,

I did learn a lot about serving other people and helping people out through empowerment. Each year we would have a Poverty awareness day and this was a day dedicated to empowerment around a topic. For example, we focused on debt, women’s rights, etc. (Interview 3, June 2015)

Kathleen’s experiences at this school and her knowledge of Liberation Theology would not help her fully understand what she was witnessed in the Dine area with poverty.

Kathleen emphasized that seeing her students living in “extreme poverty” was a struggle

for her. She was used to having options if she needed something but her kids did not have the same.

Kathleen's first experience with a different culture was during the 7th grade when she traveled with her school to China. She recalled that as white Americans she and her peers stood out: "I remember walking down the street and people asking to take pictures with me because they had never seen a blond person before. To be honest I didn't think anything of it." She did, however, have a difficult time with one of China's cultural traditions when she was at dinner with her host family. Kathleen was offered the chicken's heart at dinner and she said,

The trip to China was interesting because I was a guest in a different culture. I still feel guilty for not eating the chicken heart that was given to me at a meal with a host family. I thought it was gross and there was no way I was going to eat that. Kathleen's tension with some of the traditions in China would help her become more aware of difference but would not help her internalize that difference as something positive. She admits that she does not like to feel uncomfortable and that her feelings about difference often prevent her from participating in new experiences. She communicated this to me:

The experience in China carried over to moving to the Four Corners region. I missed out on plenty of things because they were too far outside of my comfort zone or I anticipated experiences that would be out of my comfort zone.

(Interview 3, June 2015)

Kathleen's earliest experience with a different culture had a lasting impact on her and she still does not like to be outside of her comfort zone.

As described earlier, Kathleen grew up in predominantly white spaces. She told me that she never really thought about skin color because everyone she knew was white. It wasn't until Kathleen entered her first year of college that she was confronted with the idea of race in a way that she would have to struggle with it. She remembered being really excited about the idea of making friends with someone from Hawaii because the college she chose to attend had a large population of students that were native Hawaiian (25%) and "who doesn't want a BFF from Hawaii?" Kathleen remembered the following story:

I remember my freshman year roommate. She graduated school from Hawaii but she was blond and white like me. Students from Hawaii get an orientation before other people move in so she knew a bunch of people. I remember going to a party with her the first week of freshman year and being told I can't come because I'm not from Hawaii and barely getting in. I had no idea of the race relationships in Hawaii, nor experienced large groups of different races. I was shocked at how exclusive they were and how I felt really judged because I was not from Hawaii. It really surprised me because I didn't even have a concept of people not liking me for being white. I didn't think it would be a problem, but it was. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Kathleen indicated that lacking a solid understanding of race and racism made this experience and others difficult for her. The experiences she had up until this point had allowed her to lead a life of colorblindness. She told me, "I sometimes forget that it is even a thing to think of" (Interview 3, June 2015).

During college, Kathleen had the opportunity to travel to the Navajo Nation as part of a class service learning trip. She and a group of college students worked near Chinle in an art room at a BIE school for three weeks and she loved what she was doing so much that she told me, “I didn’t want to come back” (Interview 1, March 2015). She said that in hindsight, it was more like a Native tourism trip:

On the weekends we would chop wood, or other community service activities. In that group we ate most of our meals at home because we didn’t want to deal with people’s special diets. We also did a lot of cultural things and I had some tension with what we did because in two years of living in the Rehoboth community, I didn’t do as much as the trip does in 3 weeks. I did a sweat, went to a Kanilada, a Yebachie and a Fire Dance along with have dinner with a Navajo Code Talker and many of community members. (Interview 3, June 2015)

Kathleen’s positive experience on the Navajo Nation teaching art was the primary reason she listed the Four Corners region as her top choice for placement with TRO. She reported that she was eager to return until she arrived and was confronted with the realities of rural life and no internet and cell phone reception. She shared:

I was really excited to move to the Four Corners region but that quickly faded. I spent a lot of time wishing I was home. I think I was too wrapped up in my own world to notice things like race, or even being that different when I was trying to grapple with the fact that Netflix didn’t load over my satellite internet, or my cell phone didn’t work. I had a really hard time adjusting to rural living. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Kathleen's feelings toward rural life took on somewhat of a deficit view and this would not change during her time in the Four Corners region. As she spent more time in Rehoboth, she would begin to notice more differences between her new home and her hometown in Oregon. She would also begin to consider all of the resources that she had access to back home that she once took for granted that her students do not have. She described the differences to me:

Portland is a middle class, very liberal and progressive city. Moving out here after living there was really hard and living so isolated and rural was really hard. That really hindered me because last year I was so unhappy that kept me from being even a subpar teacher. It was also really good to realize that most of my students cannot go home and make a phone call and their parents don't have the resources that I might have had growing up. We didn't have a computer until I was older but I could go to the library and like all of the things they don't have could really help my students academically that are outside of the classroom. That was a real eye opener, like I cannot go to the library and my students are not getting books to read or they cannot go to children's museum on the weekends. Most of their academics are coming from the classroom versus a majority of my academics growing up came from every other walk of life in addition to the classroom.

(Interview 1, March 2015)

It is clear that Kathleen is reflecting on her experiences and that she wants the best for her students but she takes a deficit perspective as described by Villegas and Lucas (2003) in this process. Kathleen seems to believe that because her students do not have access to the same environment that she grew up with that they were lacking in many ways.

Kathleen did not have any coursework at her university as an undergrad on diversity and social justice issues that might have helped her prepare to work with students who are linguistically and culturally different from her. She did, however, participate in the Diversity, Schools, and Awareness (DSA) training during Institute in Gila Bend, Arizona. Kathleen could not remember much about DSA from her first summer with TRO. However, she pointed out that her Timehope, which tells her what she was doing on social media a year ago, referenced the Macklemore song, White Privilege. She shared some lyrics with me that stood out to her,

“Cause it’s human nature to want to be part of something different, especially when your ancestors are European Christians. And most whites don’t want to acknowledge this is occurring.” (Interview 2, May 2015)

Kathleen listened to this song frequently during her time at Institute in Gila Bend. She said, “I like this because for me it did a good job summing up cultural appropriation and I related it back to me” (Interview 2, May 2015). I had to ask Kathleen to clarify this statement for me. She told me that the song helped her come to terms with her privilege as a white person. More specifically,

While I never thought of myself as racist, I never really thought of my privilege. When you grow up in a dominant culture you don’t even realize the other things that happen or that you are privileged.” (Interview 3, June 2015)

It is important to note that Kathleen did not attend her initial teacher training in the same location as many of her peers. She completed her initial teacher training in the Gila community in Arizona. Kathleen characterized her time there as “good but very different from Rehoboth” (Interview 1, March 2015). She also pointed out that her work in Gila

did not prepare her at all for the negative and dysfunctional school culture that she encountered at her school as well as in the district. Kathleen experienced tension over the negative school culture and she described it in this way:

One tension that I saw is most teachers at my school were white, Mormon and from Rehoboth. I would often hear stories about how a student may be low because their whole family was academically low. For example, teachers saying things like I taught their parents and they were like that and that's how they are. I know that some learning disabilities are passed down and inherited, but this went beyond the scope of things. It can be frustrating, but it is also an easy out.

(Interview 2, May 2015)

In this case, Kathleen was able to see that the teachers at her school were applying a deficit lens to the students and parents of her school community and it was upsetting to her. She believed that this negativity impacted her own growth and made it more difficult to be a culturally responsive teacher.

In addition to the DSA training and her initial teacher training in Gila, Arizona, Kathleen reported that DCS offered a one-day training before she started her first year of teaching on Navajo culture and provided a packet on how to approach talking about certain animals in the classroom and which animals should not be discussed at all. She pointed out that the information was interesting but that most of her students are not traditional and they do not follow traditional Navajo practices. Most of her students' parents had the option of sending their children to a more traditional BIE school and chose her school because it is not traditional. Kathleen indicated that she wanted to learn

about the Navajo culture but it created tension for her since it was so different from her own worldviews. She explained:

There were times that I really just struggled with the culture. I didn't grow up religious. I don't have a superstitious grandma and sometimes I just could not relate to the culture. It just felt so far out of my worldview that I didn't know where to start. For example, people saying that if an owl hoots you need to have a ceremony because it is bad luck. As much as I want to appreciate that, it seems silly to me. I had a hard time with the taboos and superstitions.

Kathleen's assessment of Navajo traditions as "silly" falls in the same practices that she criticized her colleagues for doing. Throughout her time in the Four Corners region she struggled with the differences she came across regarding the context of working with Native American students in a rural area as well as the differences in belief systems. This struggle would create the tension necessary for the critical moments to occur that help produce change in ideologies but Kathleen sustained the ideologies that she entered the Four Corners region with two years ago. In fact, the experience in the Four Corners region may have strengthened her views that life in Oregon is better than life in rural Rehoboth.

Discourse of Practices

Kathleen's interest in teaching started when she was in high school. She told me that she always enjoyed working with kids and in high school she had the opportunity to work with a program called the Outdoor School. This program was similar to a summer camp except the focus was on science. Kathleen was a volunteer and she traveled with sixth graders to the camp and lived in the cabins with them. She was responsible for

creating science lessons and she reported, “I love doing that! I absolutely loved it and that is where I knew I wanted to start teaching” (Interview 1, March 2015). Kathleen was able to explore teaching again in college when she ran a homework club for a year and again, when she accepted a position in art literacy and visited classrooms and taught lessons in art.

Kathleen’s early experiences with teaching without any formal training in the field of education helped her foster a love for teaching but it did not cultivate an understanding of how to teach students that are linguistically and culturally different from her. Unfortunately, her time in the Four Corners region gave her more experience teaching but left her with many questions surrounding what culturally responsive teaching is and what it looks like in her classroom. During my first interview with Kathleen, I asked her to define an excellent education. Kathleen’s definition of an excellent education focused on students having fun while learning a combination of practical skills, academics and other areas of interest that are not in the typical school day. Kathleen explained her philosophy in this way:

I really look at this as when kids are having lots of fun learning. I think back to the things that we used to do in school and I loved that. Learning doesn’t have to be the most rigorous thing so I am definitely not looking at it as the most rigorous day. I am looking at it as a day when everyone learns really practical skills and skills that they really love and find things that they love. For example, incorporating art into everything and having academics would be really important but also having things other than reading and math and having a well-rounded education. (Interview 1, March 2015)

I asked Kathleen to talk more about what she means by “well-rounded” and she shared that every subject area would be taught but not with the end goal of passing a test or Dibbels. Students would work toward goals that focused on what they want to do when they grow up or an area in which they have interest. For example, “When I grow up I want to be an artist . . . a president . . . or, I want to go to this college” (Interview 1, March 2015).

Kathleen’s discourse of practices, very much like her discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness, was influenced by the entering discourses that she brought with her from her own school experiences and it does not evolve into practices that support culturally responsive teaching. She shared with me that she believes all teaching should be culturally responsive and she defined this as teaching that is not based on stereotypes and lies but more authentic to the subject being taught. On the day of this interview, Kathleen was teaching her students about the Chinese New Year. She said to me,

I really don’t know a lot of significance about Chinese New Year. I’ve even been to China but I’m like oh, we’re making dragons. It’s not like necessarily culturally responsive but things that are true so you are not giving them the Pilgrims and the Indians and the first Thanksgiving that are blatant lies.” (Interview 1, March 2015)

Kathleen admits in this excerpt that she does not know the significance of what she is teaching but she is doing it anyway so her students can use art and make dragons. It appears that she believes if she isn’t teaching blatant lies, then she is being culturally responsive. Kathleen doesn’t connect this content to her students’ lives and appears to be

using more of the transmission model of education instead of constructivist practices that are a component of culturally responsive teaching (Villegas and Lucas, 2002).

Kathleen also viewed culturally responsive teaching as having students that are empowered and excited to be at school so “they can build a culture of learning and a culture of knowledge regardless if that is what they have at home” (Interview 1, March 2015). Kathleen told me that in many of the TRO sessions they talked about ways that they can empower their students and encourage them to be proud of who they are. She thought that these sessions were good but she also found it difficult to apply what she was learning through the lens of an elementary school, and more specifically kindergarten. She shared,

There are so many things that I would love to do but I don’t have the time or the resources or I don’t even know how to do it. So, my culturally responsive curriculum is usually pulling out things that are very unculturally responsive. I feel like with TRO I have a good framework of what it looks like but I don’t know how to implement it in my actual classroom. (Interview 1, March 2015)

Affirming students through the curriculum and classroom instruction is an important piece to culturally responsive teaching practices (Villegas and Lucas, 2002) but Kathleen felt unprepared to do this because she didn’t know what this looked like in her context with her students. Kathleen took several methods courses in her program at UFC that either focused on culturally responsive teaching or at least had a component of it in the class. She specifically mentioned her science methods course where she described learning about what not to teach in a Navajo science class, similar to the one-day

workshop in DCS that was discussed earlier. Kathleen and her students might have benefitted from more support in this area from TRO and UFC.

Linked to Kathleen's general lack of clarity on culturally responsive teaching practices, was her school's practice of using commercial programs as a curriculum and not simply as a resource for teaching the curriculum Kathleen reported that she found a lot of it difficult to use as a new teacher and the programs were often missing some of the parts or pieces required to teach it. Consequently, Kathleen began to find and use her own materials to teach in her classroom. She described the frequent use of technology, especially her Smartboard to teach; she often plays songs and videos to teach specific concepts they are working on such as phonemic awareness.

Kathleen's description of her every day classroom practices focused on the discourses that she remembered from her own educational background. She characterized her approach as trying to be engaging and fun. Kathleen reads a lot of books to her students because she knows that they like for her to read to them. She will sometimes read the same books over and over because if they like the book, "why not keep reading it?" (Interview 1, March 2015). As part of her fun practices, Kathleen incorporates coloring as much as possible. Her students will do coloring math and coloring worksheets or if she reads them a book they will color a page for it; they also create a lot of art projects together.

Another characteristic of Kathleen's discourse of practices is making modifications for her students and providing them with choice. She said if students don't want to color something, they don't have to color it. If students hate to cut, they don't have to do it. Kathleen believes that her students should have those options. She also tries

to allow her students to choose what they want to do and personalize projects as much as possible. Kathleen shared an example,

We try to do a lot of things that are really exciting because sometimes math and reading aren't necessarily exciting especially for the low kids, they're really hard. So having parts of the day that aren't necessarily all academic. Sometimes kids need a break from that because they are not good at it right now and it is not saying that they won't ever be good at it but I try not to push the kids that are struggling in a way that they feel bad about themselves. I want to give kids the opportunity to feel really good about themselves like, oh, you're not the best reader but you're a really good artist.

Kathleen's description was interesting to me. On the one hand, she appears to want to provide her students with options and help them develop their interests, but on the other hand, it seems to come at a cost of holding high expectations which is important in culturally responsive teaching.

Kathleen's discourse of practices does not embrace the district's discourse of commercial programs and scripted curriculum but it also fails to meet the components of culturally responsive teaching practices. Her experiences as a child in school have heavily influenced how she sees teaching and the activities that she incorporates in her classroom. She frequently incorporates art in her lessons in order to make learning fun and help students feel good about themselves but then often undermines her own process by not holding high expectations for her students.

Discourse of Relationships

Kathleen's discourse of relationships was, like the other discourses difficult to develop in the Four Corners region. I begin this section with Kathleen's description of a "good teacher" because it demonstrates her understanding that developing relationships are essential to a teacher's discourse of practices:

A good teacher has really strong classroom management skills and rapport with students and families. I think if I think of the best teacher at Rehoboth, she had excellent communication with families. She also never gave up on kids and made sure they would all succeed. (Interview 2, May 2015)

I think it is clear in the excerpt above that Kathleen understands that relationships with students and their families are important to develop and that teachers need to have high expectations for their students as well as provide the support that they need in order to succeed but she struggles to do this in her own practices.

During my time with Kathleen, I failed to get a strong sense of her relationships with her students. For example, in her description of her students, she tells me very little except how they rate academically and how they identify racially/ ethnically. She reported,

I teach 13 students and they're all kindergarteners. There's one girl in her second year of kindergarten who came in from another school. Some of them came in pretty high and some of them came in really low academically. Most of them are Navajo. There is one girl who is Zinia and 2 or 3 kids that are white. Two of them are Mormon and one is from Candy Kitchen. They're pretty cute and have a lot of energy. One could use special ed and two I am hoping to retain.

Kathleen's description did not leave me with the feeling that she develops relationships in order to affirm who they are and demonstrate an "ethic of care" which is described in the literature on culturally responsive teaching. Kathleen did tell me that she liked all of her students but she added, "I just clicked better with some and that allowed us to connect on a different level. Her favorite student was Oliver. She said that he was her favorite because of his personality. According to Kathleen, "He was just fun to hang out with."

Kathleen also struggled with building relationships with students' parents and families. She noted that she sometimes feels uncomfortable with parental involvement and that this impacts her relationships with her students. She acknowledged,

If I know a parent is always popping in, I may look at the student through a different lens. I know it is not right but it was the reality. Because of my school this tended to be more with the white students than Native. (Interview 2, May 2015)

Kathleen viewed parental involvement in this case as negative but when she described her elementary school when she was a child she seemed to see it as a positive part of the culture of the school. She appears to be very suspicious of her parents' intentions and this could have something to do with the insecurity she felt toward her own discourse of practices. She told me, "I have a really hard time recognizing the good in my teaching. I feel like I struggled a lot with academics both of my years" (Interview 3, June 2015).

Through her coursework at UFC she completed a "funds of knowledge" project that helped her learn more about her students. She shared that it was through this project that she learned that most of her students do not participate in traditional Navajo culture. The project was completed in the fall and Kathleen sent home large pumpkins for

students and their families to decorate with all of the things that are important to them. She learned that many of her students' families are religious which she was not expecting. An important point to note is that Kathleen did not use this information to construct learning opportunities for her students but it did help her be more sensitive to their religious beliefs.

Kathleen's difficulty developing relationships extended outside of the classroom as well. She describes her experiences in the Four Corners region as often feeling like an outsider, similar to her story with the students from Hawaii, except on a much greater scale. It was much easier for her to find spaces in her hometown where she was in the majority again than it was in the Four Corners region. She told me, "It's been different when I am the only person that is white at the store and I look so different" (Interview 1, March 2015). Kathleen also shared that sometimes she feels like living in the Dine area is like living in a foreign country because there are so many pockets of people and although they may share the same ethnicity or race that may be all that they share in common.

Kathleen admitted that building relationships in general were an issue for her. She shared,

I was not the best relationship builder. A lot of times I felt like I was an expat living overseas. I tended to hang out with other teachers, TRO and non TRO. I realized that I don't make friends outside of situations easily. I also tended to shy away from jumping into social norms. I didn't want to make a bad impression, so I tended to make no impression. (Interview 2, May 2015).

Kathleen's discourse of relationships is a discourse that she is still developing. She experienced tension with this discourse but the tension did not help her see relationships differently using a culturally responsive teaching lens, instead she simply avoided

creating relationships altogether which limited her own growth as well as that of her students.

Discourse of Accountability

Kathleen's discourse of accountability may be characterized as her strongest discourse in terms of her ability to acknowledge that she knows that she struggled with all of the other discourses involved in the ideological becoming into a culturally responsive teacher. It is clear from Kathleen's story that she had not developed the dispositions, knowledge, and skills needed to be successful in her position as a teacher to Native American children. She reported that her teacher training was beneficial in ways by providing her with knowledge about different concepts, specifically culturally responsive teaching practices but she often did not understand how to apply that knowledge to her own teaching concept. Kathleen mentioned ways that she believes this could be improved for future teachers and intern teachers. She said,

I think more collaboration would be important. I'm fairly certain that the majority of teachers at my school have never thought about race and how they impact students unintentionally. TRO is a problem because they bring teachers into a system (DCS) that may not be ready to deal with change. If everyone at a school and district spent more time norming and working on a common vision and plan of how students can succeed then it would be better. For example, TRO does classroom visions but those in my experience are rarely shared outside of the classroom and TRO.

Kathleen shares what Maria described in her story that there isn't a common goal or vision that everyone in the school district is working toward in terms of student success.

She also demonstrates awareness that the discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness is a discourse that needs to be discussed.

In addition to her critique above, Kathleen believes the DCS district should require fewer standardized tests and more resources in order to develop a curriculum that is more appropriate to the students in the area. This is an issue in which Kathleen was able to show resistance. The program she was expected to use in her classroom was incomplete, missing many items that were required to teach it. She decided to find and/or create her own materials for her classroom instruction.

Finally, Kathleen shared stories of her diversity training with the Teacher Recruitment Program. She indicated that for someone who had not thought about race, racism and white privilege in the past, that these sessions were helpful but this was up to a point. Kathleen communicated that TRO would talk about identity development but then they wouldn't do anything with it. She said, "I feel like we didn't get anywhere. I feel like it is really hard to make steps in growth" (Interview 1, March 2015).

Conclusion

Learning to become a culturally responsive teacher as an outsider in the Four Corners region is a process filled with tension. It is often a challenge for intern teachers who are not from the area and who do not have the Native experience to grapple with the differences that they encounter with the environment, language, and culture. Kathleen was certainly one of those teachers. Throughout the two-year period that Kathleen was in the Four Corners region, she was consistently confronted with situations and ideology that conflicted with her own personal experiences, ideas, and beliefs about the world. These differences caused Kathleen great tension that felt extremely uncomfortable to her.

Instead of embracing the tension and struggling with it in order to grow into a culturally responsive teacher, she simply rejected the ideas and embraced the discourses of her own childhood experiences as a student in Oregon that was already internally persuasive to her.

Although Kathleen had experiences on the Navajo Nation in college and indicated that she truly enjoyed her experience, her arrival to the Four Corners region two years ago did not feel the same. Kathleen immediately applied a deficit lens to the new experience and this is the lens she used throughout the rest of her time there. Her discourse for race and sociocultural consciousness would focus more on her experience as a white woman surrounded by Brown skin than it would be a true understanding and acceptance of difference. Kathleen indicated that her eyes were opened to the idea that she has white privilege and that race and racism impact the lives of other people, however, this is not ideology that she used to think about her discourse of practices in order to become a culturally responsive teacher. Interestingly, Kathleen shared examples of moments when her colleagues and the school district participated in racist practices, but she failed to see her own. Kathleen told me during the first interview that she is from “the whitest city in America” and this is where she wanted to return.

Kathleen’s discourse of race and sociocultural consciousness impacted all of the other discourses in the same way. Her inability to embrace difference also carried over into her discourse of relationships. She admittedly preferred to be with others like her than to be build relationships with parents and people from the Rehoboth community. Kathleen did not welcome parents in her classroom and indicated that parents who stopped in her room uninvited were looked at with suspicion and the consequence of this

was that she treated their children differently. Even when Kathleen had opportunities to get to know her students through a “funds of knowledge” project that she completed for a class at UFC, she shared that she learned that most of her students were not traditional but she did not use this information in any way to bridge her students’ lives with her teaching and curriculum (Moll et al., 1992). Kathleen was not shy about telling me that she had favorite students in her classroom and it appeared from her description of the relationship that they were students who she found endearing and/or funny. Her relationships focused more on her own needs than they did the needs of her students.

Kathleen’s discourse of practices and responsibility were also impacted in a similar way. Kathleen demonstrated throughout the interviews that she was in conflict with the authoritative discourses of meritocracy and standardized testing, yet she did not embrace culturally responsive teaching practices as internally persuasive either. Instead, she relied on her own experiences as a student in Oregon and communicated that she wanted learning in her classroom to be fun. Kathleen continued to use the prescribed commercial programs assigned to her and supplemented the instruction with art and technology. Although this could be viewed as a small form of resistance, it is not what Villegas and Lucas (2002) describe as attributes of teachers working as change agents which requires that teachers have “a personal vision of their own roles as teachers, empathy for students from diverse backgrounds, and a passion for and commitment to students, teaching, and social justice (p. 59). Kathleen also told me that she did not learn how to teach reading from her online reading methods class at UFC but she also did not seek additional resources to help gain the expertise needed to help her students be successful. Kathleen’s ideological struggle is represented in Figure 6.

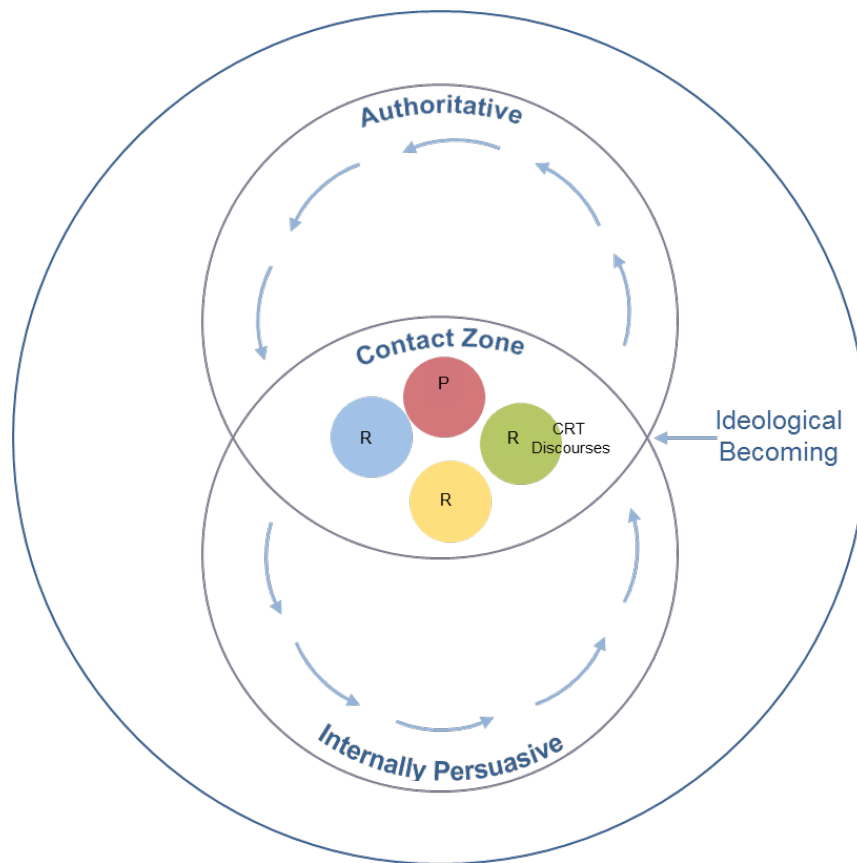


Figure 6. Kathleen's ideological development for culturally responsive teaching.

Kathleen's ideological development was different than all of the other intern teachers in this study. Whereas the other intern teachers' discourses for culturally responsive teaching were connected in the contact zone, Kathleen's are all separate to demonstrate how she failed to embrace them and see them as interconnected ideas about teaching. Another difference is there are no arrows showing a flow of discourses in the contact zone and there is a big X in the middle of the discourses. This illustrates Kathleen's rejection of the discourses for culturally responsive teaching. She was not successful in making culturally responsive teaching an internally persuasive discourse and she chose not to continue in a career of teaching and has moved out of the Four Corners region back to her hometown in Oregon.

In conclusion, Kathleen experienced great tension when she came into contact with the discourses of culturally responsive teaching as well as the social context in which she was teaching. However, she did not participate in the struggle that Bakhtin suggests is necessary to come to new learning and develop new ideology. Kathleen's lack of growth can be contributed to her own refusal to be open-minded as well as a lack of support from her school, school district, TRO, and UFC.

CHAPTER XI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Culturally responsive teaching is “validating and affirming, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, emancipatory, and caring” (pp. 29-36). Teachers who are culturally responsive use students’ cultural knowledge, past experiences, and learning styles to engage them in meaningful activities that validate their cultural heritage. These teachers are also comprehensive in their approach because they teach to the whole child (Gay, 2000), “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 382) as well as multidimensional because it “encompasses curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, and performance assessments” (Gay, 2000). Learning to become a culturally responsive teacher is a complex, ongoing process full of tension and ideological struggle between numerous authoritative discourses that are competing to be internally persuasive. As I learned from this research, this ideological struggle begins long before teacher candidates apply to teacher education programs and continues throughout their teaching careers. Furthermore, successful “becoming” into a culturally responsive teacher requires facing the tensions head on, and critically reflecting on how they impact our students and our classrooms. This dissertation study sought out to discern how intern teachers experience ideological becoming into culturally responsive teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States. Specifically, I explored the following questions in my research:

1. How do intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States?
 - a. How do intern teachers understand the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy?
 - b. What factors, beliefs, and experiences contribute to this understanding?
2. What are the challenges that intern teachers face in the Four Corners region as they learn to implement culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms?
 - c. How do intern teachers negotiate struggle/ tensions between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses in their work as teachers?
3. What experiences have been most beneficial in their growth in becoming culturally responsive teachers?

In this chapter, I will discuss each of the research questions using the findings from the cases created for each intern teacher in the study.

Research Question #1

How do intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive teachers in the Four Corners region of the United States?

As complex as the process of ideological becoming into culturally responsive teachers is for teachers to experience, I found it equally as complex to study. My initial interviews questions, although very thoughtful and well intentioned, were often not enough to uncover the experiences that demonstrated my participants' ideological struggle. In these instances, I asked follow-up questions in order to dig deeper into the

experience for a clearer understanding of the struggle and how the participant negotiated and wrestled with the tension. In order to thoroughly examine and analyze this first question, I had to probe deep into my participants' histories as racialized beings in the world. I sought to understand how they learned about race, the role race has played in their lives, and how race impacts the dynamics of their classrooms. These questions are important to understanding how they experience becoming culturally responsive because all of the intern teachers in my study are teaching Native American children who live in communities that have experienced great trauma historically, and none of them identify as Native American.

In the process of collecting intern teachers' stories and retelling them through the lens of the discourses of culturally responsive teaching, it became evident that the discourses that I created to represent culturally responsive teaching overlap significantly and that no one discourse exists without the influence of another. Villegas and Lucas (2002) found the same with the strands of curriculum that they created for developing culturally responsive teachers in a teacher education program. They explain that separating the skills, dispositions, and knowledge bases is artificial. The discourses of culturally responsive teaching are "interconnected and intertwined like the strands of thread in a piece of cloth. . . ." These strands together form a "series of strands that constantly intersect and depend on one another to form a cohesive whole--strands that blend dispositions, knowledge, and skills" (p. 26). As I was analyzing data and creating memos on what I saw, I frequently recorded stories that demonstrated several discourses intertwined. For example, in Michelle's stories about race, she often talked about the relationships that she developed that were instrumental in her struggle as well as some of

the classroom practices that she has established because of the experiences she had as a child involving race. Michelle discussed in one of her stories, the relationship with her Assistant Principal in high school that helped her move beyond the discourse of deficits that had been instilled in her by other adults and institutions in her life. This relationship was extremely valuable to her and she communicated wanting to provide her students with the same kind of care and love by the environment that she created for them in the classroom as well as the curriculum and instruction that took place.

The interconnection of discourses was not only present in my retelling of intern teachers' stories but also present in how intern teachers' experienced the discourses in the context of their everyday lives, both in and out of the classroom. In this case, the interconnection wasn't only with the discourses of culturally responsive teaching but also with the authoritative discourses of TRO, UFC, and their individual schools and school districts as well as the discourses that they brought with them when they moved to the Four Corners region. All of the intern teachers in this study experienced the tensions that accompanied the interconnection of discourses and continue to struggle with them. Although Sarah, Maria, Michelle, and Laura all appeared to embrace the discourses of culturally responsive teaching from the very beginning of their time in the Four Corners region, they were not immune to competing voices that struggled to find a place in their consciousness. In fact, I think it is fair to say that they are still involved in the struggle of becoming and will continue to struggle as they are impacted by "critical moments" filled with tension and conflict, especially if they continue to work in the Four Corners region. Kathleen, on the other hand, did not experience ideological becoming into a culturally responsive teacher. Although she experienced great tension and wrestled with this tension

throughout her 2 years in Rehoboth, she was unable to successfully make culturally responsive teaching an internally persuasive discourse. Interestingly, in her case, Kathleen did not agree with the school district and school's policies in terms of using scripted, commercial programs, and the constant bombardment of testing that students were exposed to but she also did not embrace the ideology of culturally responsive teaching. Table 1 is a visual demonstration of how the discourses connected.

The ideological struggle that each of these intern teachers have endured is an unending process that does not have a stopping point or a place where one can say, "I am done. I know everything." As long as there is difference in the world among people, places, and ideas, there will be ideological struggle among them. One specific idea that caused conflict for intern teachers in their ideological becoming was the lack of a clear definition on how culturally responsive teaching is defined. Throughout all of the interviews, there was not a single intern teacher who answered this question the same way and Laura clearly articulated that she was unsure about culturally responsive teaching (although many of her teaching practices indicate that she is thoughtfully using them in her classroom). The differences in their responses can be contributed to the differences in their own lived experiences and the internally persuasive discourses that they already developed prior to moving to the Four Corners region. It may be reasonable to expect different interpretations of culturally responsive teaching based on prior knowledge and experiences. However, based on the content of the interviews, I believe that there is something else happening that is beyond the scope of intern teachers'

Table 1**Intermingling of Discourses of Intern Teachers**

Teacher	Race & Sociocultural Consciousness	Practices	Relationships	Responsibility
Kathleen	One size fits all programs that she modifies	Teaches using knowledge of students	Discerns background	Modifies mandated curriculum
Maria	National Football League exploits community	Teaches students about Native mascots	Builds relationships based on love and respect	Supports students as they organize
Michelle	Deficit views and low expectations internalized	Teaches positive identity and multiple points of view	Builds relationships	Advocates for students and teaches self- advocacy
Sarah	Racism internalized by students	Teaches using Native literature and student experiences	Builds relationships	Advocates for students
Kathleen	No connections across discourses			

control, specifically, the inconsistency of the authoritative discourses in which intern teachers are exposed. I will describe these inconsistencies in the next part in more detail.

The ideological struggle that each of these intern teachers have endured is an unending process that does not have a stopping point or a place where one can say, “I am done. I know everything.” As long as there is difference in the world among people, places, and ideas, there will be ideological struggle among them. One specific idea that caused conflict for intern teachers in their ideological becoming was the lack of a clear definition on how culturally responsive teaching is defined. Throughout all of the interviews, there was not a single intern teacher who answered this question the same way and Laura clearly articulated that she was unsure about culturally responsive teaching (although many of her teaching practices indicate that she is thoughtfully using them in her classroom). The differences in their responses can be contributed to the differences in their own lived experiences and the internally persuasive discourses that they already developed prior to moving to the Four Corners region. It may be reasonable to expect different interpretations of culturally responsive teaching based on prior knowledge and experiences. However, based on the content of the interviews, I believe that there is something else happening that is beyond the scope of intern teachers’ control, specifically, the inconsistency of the authoritative discourses in which intern teachers are exposed. I will describe these inconsistencies in the next part in more detail.

As intern teachers are accepted into TRO and begin their transition into the Four Corners region, the first authoritative discourse that they encounter is that of TRO. TRO in the Four Corners region schedules a week of induction activities for intern teachers the first week they are in the Four Corners region which includes presentations by

community members and an overnight stay with a Navajo family on the reservation. At the completion of the week, intern teachers travel to another state in the southwest for 5 weeks of teacher training and then they are back to Dine and the surrounding area to begin their 2 year teaching commitment. Intern teachers reported experiencing the two years from start to finish very differently but most of them began their time as an intern teacher feeling excited about the work that they were doing with TRO. This excitement was dismantled slowly by some of the practices that occurred around diversity and culturally responsive teaching. The first practice that all intern teachers mentioned as unhelpful to their growth was the Diversity, Schools and Awareness (DSA) training offered during their 5 weeks of teacher training in the summer. Intern teachers, regardless of the year they joined TRO, consistently communicated that this was a scripted “program” where the facilitator simply read off of a powerpoint slide. Conversations that were initiated in this space about issues of diversity and culturally responsive teaching had a time limit and were often cut short to move on to the next slide or agenda item. In addition, the issues were generalized to all of areas in which intern teachers at the training were assigned instead of focusing on specific issues for the Four Corners region.

The training that took place in the Four Corners region upon their return and throughout the two years of their commitment was mixed but only one intern teacher had favorable reviews and that was Laura. Laura believed the sessions in the Four Corners region around diversity and culturally responsive teaching were much more helpful but that at a point sitting around talking about white privilege and identity with other white intern teachers did not help her grow. Kathleen couldn’t remember anything about DSA from the summer training and nothing memorable about the training she received in the

Four Corners region except, “I think TRO tried to do things around identity but we just did the same thing over and over and I feel like we didn’t get anywhere. I feel like it was really hard to make steps in growth.” Sarah, Michelle, and Maria were extremely critical of the diversity sessions and the support TRO provided, in general. The lack of experience was cited as a major factor. Maria commented,

It was very hard for me to find someone with only two years of teaching experience as a credible teaching coach. In fact, after my first two years in the classroom, they asked me to consider being a teaching coach and while I was flattered by their offer, I told them I had absolutely no business telling other teachers how to run or improve their classrooms when I had only been in a classroom for two years myself.

Sarah articulated the lack of experience the TRO staff has with working with people of color and shared,

I don’t know if I would be comfortable with them teaching my kids. I don’t know what types of relationships or rapport they’re capable of having. When they try to facilitate workshops or give sessions on this, it’s hard for me to take them seriously and often I have left these sessions angry or upset or misunderstood or silenced.

Michelle’s perspective was very similar to Maria and Sarah’s. She also believes there is a lack of experience among the TRO staff and that the diversity sessions are not handled very well. Michelle shared the following story about one of the sessions:

I remember the conversation about the adoption of a Navajo baby by a white family. There were so many emotions, comments, ideals, feelings and solutions

flowing around the issue of Native children being adopted by non-Natives. A few intern teachers shared their views which unfortunately did not sound or feel respectful. The way some of the teaching coaches handled the conversation after it got out of hand was not very productive.

Michelle ended this story with suggesting that TRO staff do more work on developing their feelings around their own identity and developing a strong sense of self.

The second authoritative discourse that intern teachers are exposed to is the discourses of the school districts and schools that hired them. In the Dine County School district, Kathleen, Laura, and Sarah (during her first two years of teaching) did not have any exposure or training on culturally responsive teaching. Kathleen and Laura mentioned that they attended a workshop on what animals they could and could not teach about in traditional Navajo culture but both of them stated that this was interesting but a majority of their students do not participate in the traditional lifestyle. Culturally responsive teaching was not, and still isn't, an ideology that the district finds to be important enough to provide training for all of their teachers. The district is relying on the University of Virginia to help turn their schools around by boosting student test scores on standardized tests, a discourse that clearly works against the discourse of culturally responsive teaching. Kathleen was critical of this practice in the district. She explained that she received an email from the district about practice testing and boot camps to prepare students for testing. It is her understanding that these practices are not culturally responsive. She said, "Dedicating your whole life to dealing with or taking a test doesn't seem very responsive to anybody."

Teaching students to take a test is not the only contradictory discourse that intern teachers received from DCS. Another discourse that does not fit with culturally responsive teaching practices is one of fidelity to scripted, commercial programs. According to the intern teachers who have been employed by DCS, every subject has a program that goes along with it and these programs have very little, if anything, in them that represents the community in which it is being used to teach. Although the Four Corners region has adopted common core standards, little focus is given to the standards in DCS. It is more about moving to the next story in the reading manual or the next chapter in the other subject areas.

The Zinia Public School district has been open to the ideology of culturally responsive teaching and has implemented Zinia language and culture programs in all of their schools. Zinia also provides non-Zinia teachers training on Zinia culture when they are hired by the school district. Unfortunately, many of the teachers use traditional teaching practices in their rooms and until recently, there has not been any training on culturally responsive teaching. Professional development on culturally responsive teaching has been given more of a focus over the last year because of the efforts of Michelle, one of the participants in this study. According to Michelle, she created a presentation for the Superintendent and the members of the Zinia Board of Education after she experienced success in her own classroom using culturally responsive teaching practices. Her presentation was well received and she was invited to present to teachers in the district.

The third authoritative discourse that intern teachers experience are the discourses of the Teacher Education program at the University of Four Corners. As an Instructor and

Program Coordinator for the Teacher Education programs at the Dine branch campus, I can confirm that one of the goals of our licensure and Master's programs is to support pre-service and in-service teachers as they learn to be culturally responsive teachers. This, however, is not what intern teachers shared about their experience at UFC. Intern teachers expressed a lack of cohesiveness in the coursework in the program. Specifically, there were only a couple of methods courses that focused on culturally responsive teaching, while the others may have used the words culturally responsive teaching a time or two, there was no real focus or examples of what culturally responsive teaching might look and sound like with Native American students. More than one intern teacher shared that the methods courses helped them learn to be a good teacher but not necessarily a good culturally responsive teacher. In addition to this critique, intern teachers expressed disappointment that more of their instructors were not Native American and/or had at least taught Native American children (myself included) and Maria specifically shared her displeasure with the lack of high expectations by instructors throughout the program.

These inconsistencies across the authoritative discourses that influence intern teachers on a daily basis made learning how to be a culturally responsive teacher much more difficult for these new teachers but as the case studies in this dissertation demonstrate, four of the five intern teachers were still able to successfully implement culturally responsive teaching practices and make culturally responsive teaching an internally persuasive discourse. In the case of the four intern teachers in this study, their entering beliefs, experiences and values had an influential impact on how they viewed teaching and more specifically, culturally responsive teaching. I will discuss this in more detail when answering Research Question 3.

Research Question #2

What are the challenges that intern teachers face in the Four Corners region as they learn to implement culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms?

The five intern teachers who participated in this study experienced many challenges as they learned to become culturally responsive teachers to Native American students in the Four Corners region of the United States. These challenges produced great tension at times and were often vehicles that either strengthened the internally persuasive discourses they already made their own or they were a catalyst that led to the internalization of new discourses.

In the previous question, I discussed one of the challenges as the clashing of authoritative discourses across the three institutions intern teachers work with during their two years with TRO in the Four Corners region. This clashing involved the inconsistency of messages intern teachers received about how to best teach Native American children. While TRO and UFC both preach the ideology of culturally responsive teaching, their actions did not always support or help develop this ideology. DCS does not embrace culturally responsive teaching as a practice in their schools which made learning how to become culturally responsive even more difficult for intern teachers employed by the district. Zinia Public Schools wants to revitalize Zinia language and culture in their schools but they are still learning how to do this in the best way for their students.

In addition to these inconsistencies, intern teachers expressed that a lack of resources and a lack of support were among the challenges that they faced as they developed ideological becoming for culturally responsive teaching. The lack of resources

was mentioned by several intern teachers and they specifically referenced the commercial programs that they are expected to use. Intern teachers expressed the need for additional resources outside of the commercial programs in order to incorporate material that is relevant to their students' lives and material that offers multiple viewpoints for them to explore. Sarah, Michelle, and Maria have flexibility in what they use and are provided with needed resources in Zinia. Laura and Kathleen do not have the same flexibility. The programs they currently use feel forced. Instead of pulling resources that help them teach a standard in a way that is relevant and responsive to students, they are following the script in their teacher's manual and figuring out how standards might be addressed in it.

During my time with the intern teachers in this study, all of them told me stories that demonstrated their need for more support during their first years of teaching. Although there were moments that they all found some form of support being offered, it was often inadequate for new teachers learning to teach using culturally responsive practices with Native American students. Some of the more prominent issues that came out of their stories were a lack of preparation for stepping into their classrooms for the first time with their students. Intern teachers participated in diversity sessions and presentations by community members and many of them indicated that it provided some helpful information but felt that this in no way prepared them for their roles in the classroom. In addition, intern teachers working in DCS shared that they were provided mentors for their first year and a "mentor binder" full of activities for the mentor and mentee to complete together but this was busy work and not a productive process for helping them develop. Laura shared that she often wrote her mentor's reflections for her because she was too busy. In addition, Kathleen and Sarah were assigned mentors that

viewed teaching as transmission, which neither of them agreed with, so their support was not valued or desired.

As intern teachers wrestled with these inconsistencies, four of the five intern teachers found ways to negotiate these tensions in order to use culturally responsive teaching practices with their students. The ways in which they negotiated varied depending on the intern teacher and the context of the tension. Michelle felt tension and struggled with some of the parents and teachers at her school not holding high expectations for their students. She knew that these practices would not change without some convincing and decided to invite parents to her classroom in order to show them what their children were expected to learn and provided them with resources to help them at home. At the school and district level (as well as within TRO), Michelle began presenting information on culturally responsive teaching and providing examples and resources to help teachers begin the practice themselves. Michelle is also an unofficial mentor to several new intern teachers who are struggling or simply need additional support.

Sarah might be characterized as the most vocal of this group of four and because of her background as an activist; she did not have any difficulty resisting oppressive acts and practices as they occurred. Sarah spoke out a number of times when she was a teacher in Rehoboth because she believed that the school's practices were not relevant to the students they were teaching. She also gained the support of her principal to teach what she believed to be more appropriate for her fifth grade students and she taught her students how to resist unfair practices as well. Sarah was often confronted by teachers and parents who did not want her to teach multiple perspectives in U.S. History if it

portrayed white people in a negative light. Every time teachers and parents pushed back, Sarah pushed back too, with the comment, “You should want our children to know this information.” Sarah also used her voice within TRO sessions that did not support the intern teachers of color. She consistently expressed her feelings about the marginalization of intern teachers of color and began facilitating her own groups in order to give intern teachers of color a safe place to have a voice.

Maria, Kathleen and Laura may not have been as vocal as Michelle and Sarah but they resisted inappropriate practices in other ways. For example, the lack of resources was a frustrating issue for Kathleen and Laura. Teaching their kindergarten students using a commercial program was difficult because the program did not represent Native American students in New Mexico in both the content and their ways of knowing. Both intern teachers, in their own ways, found ways to resist this practice. Laura and Kathleen used the internet as a resource to find activities and videos that would help them teach. Laura, specifically, decided to leave out pieces of the program that she is required to teach for reading and she intentionally builds in topics and activities that her students have expressed interest in. She also shared with me that she is learning to use her voice more in public spaces. The racist remarks that her principal and a district administrator made during two separate faculty meetings last year left her feeling disgusted. She felt so uncomfortable and did not speak up but she wants to change this in the future because she understands that her students do not benefit from her silence. Kathleen became an expert at using the Smartboard in her classroom and used it throughout the day to engage her students (when the internet was available). She also incorporated more storytelling, drawing and coloring into her literacy block because this is what her kids enjoyed doing.

These small acts of resistance were important to both intern teachers because it is clear to them that district and school policies are failing their students.

Maria wrestled with many challenges since arriving to the Four Corners region four years ago. Her background with systems of privilege and oppression has provided her with a lens to clearly see injustice at every level. Maria practices resistance by being the best culturally responsive teacher that she knows how to be. She critically reflects on who she is and what she is doing and she teaches her students to learn about their language and culture as she does the same. Maria also brings issues that impact the Zinia community into her classroom and teaches her students to explore multiple perspectives and take a stand. She believes strongly that just because this is the way things are now, does not mean there can't be alternative realities. The biggest source of resistance for Maria was building relationships and teaching herself how to be culturally responsive within the context of her classroom with her students. She embodies this concept and tries hard to lead by example.

Research Question #3

What experiences have been most beneficial in their growth in becoming culturally responsive teachers?

Among all of the challenges that intern teachers described as they learned to become culturally responsive teachers, there were some that intern teachers highlighted as beneficial to their ideological development. Each intern teacher who participated in this study has a unique story that they shared with me; stories that have played a role in developing who they are and how they view the world; stories that are both heartfelt and painful but, nonetheless, have been instrumental in their ideological becoming. In the five

stories that I shared, four of the five intern teachers were successfully internalizing or adopting culturally responsive teaching as an internally persuasive discourse. It is difficult and maybe even inappropriate to make generalizations about their experiences because as human beings none of us experience one event or idea in the same way. We bring our prior knowledge, practices, understandings, struggles and realities with us into any given context but there are some commonalities that might be useful to Teacher Educators in the Four Corners region of the United States.

First, as I analyzed and retold intern teachers' stories, I noticed that prior experience with diverse groups of people and/or coursework that focused on diversity and social justice issues were an experience that the four successful intern teachers brought with them as they entered the Four Corners region. Sarah, Maria, and Laura had coursework that focused on diversity and systems of privilege and oppression; Kathleen did not. For Sarah and Maria this work was extensive. Laura took a few political science courses with a focus on diversity and social justice issues. Michelle did not have any coursework with a focus on diversity but she had life experience that made up for it. She commented to me during our time together that she could see what was happening and what was needed in schools but she did not have the jargon for it.

The life experiences that Michelle, Sarah, and Maria have endured as women of color are another very important factor to consider. All three of these women have experienced trauma around issues of race that Kathleen and Laura have not experienced and most likely will never experience because they are white. Michelle, Sarah, and Maria shared stories about feeling invisible and lacking a sense of identity because of their school experiences. Sarah and Maria acknowledge that they were exposed to very

privileged spaces growing up but both feel like it was at a huge cost to their identity. For all three women, culturally responsive teaching practices are not a negotiation but a dire need that they are willing to fight for in their classrooms, schools, and school district. These women see this less as a practice and more as who they are.

Irvine (2003) helps explain this difference between the white intern teachers and the intern teachers of color. As stated previously in Maria's story, students of color often face cultural conflicts in the classroom based on differences in behavior, world views, values and learning preferences. Teachers of color serve as "cultural translators" for students and help them understand mainstream culture (p. 55). They also tend to have higher expectations of students of color. Nieto's (1999) research adds another layer to explain the difference. She found that teachers of color often share similar realities of inequality and alienation as their students from their own years of schooling. This creates a sense of urgency for teachers of color to be the best teachers they can for their students of color by holding high expectations, mentoring students and being a constant and consistent voice to advocate for them.

The second practice that intern teachers consistently indicated was beneficial to their development is establishing real, authentic relationships within their teaching communities. The four intern teachers who adopted culturally responsive teaching as an internally persuasive discourse spent time developing relationships with their students, their students' families, other teachers of color and members of the community that identify as Zinia or Navajo. These relationships are authentic and based on care and respect. It is through these relationships that Michelle, Maria, Sarah, and Laura were able to learn details about the culture of their students and dig deeper to discern their students'

funds of knowledge in order to use it in their classrooms and to honor their identity as Native Americans. In several cases, students' families began to shift away from seeing these intern teachers as teachers and began to see them as part of their own families. Maria, Michelle, and Sarah are often invited to the homes of their students or invited to participate in a Zinia ceremony.

Conclusion

Using Bakhtin's ideas on discourse and ideological becoming was helpful in examining the experiences of intern teachers as they learn to become culturally responsive teachers. Ideological development is a complex and ongoing process and as I learned in this study, it begins long before intern teachers apply to TRO and it is never-ending. What makes for a culturally responsive teacher isn't necessarily the superficial attributes that are required for the admission process into teacher education programs and this research offers a few contributions to the existing research on developing culturally responsive teachers.

First, the analysis of the data demonstrates that the intern teachers in this study who have had coursework that covers issues of diversity and social justice as well as experiences with diverse groups of people, and/or identify as non-white experienced greater success in their ideological becoming into a culturally responsive teacher. This information is important to consider, especially in terms of admitting students and intern teachers to universities and TFA. Many institutions require applicants to their programs to submit transcripts but this is generally used to verify their GPA. A close examination of course content that demonstrates candidates have had diversity related courses does not occur. Recruiting more candidates that have a background in systems of privilege,

power and oppression is essential or at least requiring prerequisites for diversity classes prior to applying to the program. Currently, UFC asks applicants to write one essay that responds to a generic question regarding working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and students with special needs. This in no way gives faculty a clear indication that the applicant has worked with diverse populations and has positive views about diversity. In addition, this research helps support the call for recruiting more teachers of color to work with diverse student populations. The three women of color who participated in this study understood the urgency of culturally responsive teaching before they even heard of the concept because of their own experiences as a marginalized “other” in school.

Second, in terms of working with intern teachers in the Four Corners region to provide teacher education coursework, I believe this research demonstrates a need for three institutions that influence intern teachers (TRO, UFC, and school districts) to work closely together to provide intern teachers with a clear and consistent goal that they are working toward and valuable support in order to be successful. Currently, intern teachers receive their initial training as a teacher in a much different context than where they end of teaching. It may be helpful to partner with a local university, whether it is UFC or another institution, as well as the local school districts in order to prepare intern teachers for what they are actually going to be doing. In addition, Maria commented that she believes that the TRO commitment should be at least 3 years and that the first year be immersion in the community and student teaching within the schools before applying for a position and working with no teaching background on someone else’s kids. Maria’s suggestion seems very reasonable in terms of helping intern teachers develop authentic

relationships and learning about the community and may be a more powerful experience than the community panels that generalize the Native communities in the area to the single story of the participants.

Finally, I believe using narrative inquiry and Bakhtin's theories on ideological becoming and discourse may be beneficial in the development of culturally responsive teachers in the future. Specifically, intern teachers accepted in the Four Corners region of the United States. In this research study, I was able to peel back the layers of each intern teachers' experiences and come to a deeper understanding of who they are and where they are in their ideological becoming. This could be an important tool to help provide better support to intern teachers and additional resources and/or training for those who need it.

Ideological Becoming: How This Research Has Challenged Me

I started the journey of this dissertation with the poem, "Why Can't You See Me?" to describe the disconnect that I have experienced as a Teacher Educator working in Kentucky and the Four Corners region of the United States. Although each program was unique in its own way there are many similarities in terms of their mission to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers to work effectively with linguistically and culturally diverse students and the reality that the work we are doing with students in our classrooms often belies what we say we are working on in the first place. The lack of clarity and consistency among the authoritative discourses that the intern teachers in my study experienced is not a new phenomenon in teacher education and it is something that I have experienced in my work as a Teacher Educator. I have been at odds many times for expressing my concerns over the lack of coherence in the programs in which I have

worked and the lack of understanding about systems of privilege and oppression as well as culturally responsive pedagogy. I have been a voice for the Dine students and have consistently shared their concerns about online methods classes and ITV classes and these concerns have fallen on deaf ears. It has been difficult to work in an administrative role and feel as if you have no power to affect change.

My work over the years has been a source of constant tension and ideological struggle. As I moved into the teaching and coordination role in Dine, this tension increased because all of a sudden the behind the scenes practices that take place at colleges and universities became transparent to me. I was able to see institutional racism much more clearly as I tried to manage the teacher education programs for a branch campus that serves a large number of Native American students. In Dine, the maintenance of low expectations and inequitable educational opportunity is a cyclical process that begins in the local school systems and continues once they enter the community college. It appears that we are all a part of the problem. Native American students earn A's in their coursework before applying to our undergraduate program but have difficulty with the admission process because they struggle with writing a simple essay. For intern teachers, they actually apply to the Master's program and take the courses for licensure, which is something they are criticized for not doing in the national conversations on TRO, and then they leave the program feeling unprepared to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Another source of tension for me is the fact that I am a white Teacher Educator working among a predominantly white faculty on a college campus that serves a large number of Native American students. I can still remember my first trip to Dine and

walking down the hall in Calvin Hall, where my office was located. Every student face I saw was clearly Native American. Almost every faculty face that I saw was white. I was astonished! I questioned, “How can this be?” Although most of the students in the graduate program are white (another issue that needs to be addressed), I believe there is a need for more Native American faculty on the branch campus teaching courses in Teacher Education. I do not believe it is enough to simply live in the community; you must have the Native experience. For this reason, an ultimate demonstration of my ideological becoming is my resignation of the position I held in Dine. August 1st will be my final day. My sincere hope is that the next person chosen to fill this role is a member of the community and someone who identifies as Native American.

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Appendix A

TRO Experiences with Becoming Culturally Responsive Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of conducting this interview is to discern how Teacher Recruitment Organization intern teachers experience becoming culturally responsive teachers, through the work they do at the university, with TRO, and within the school districts in which they work. I have developed a series of questions about your coursework you have taken, experiences you have had within the university setting, TRO, and the school district, and your definition of culturally responsive pedagogy and the practices you employ in your classroom. Once we have covered the interview questions, you will have the opportunity to make any final remarks that you feel is relevant to our topic of discussion.

Interview Protocol:

1. Welcome participants and explain the study.
2. Ask participants for permission to audio record and/or video tape interview.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me the story of you wanting to become a teacher.
2. Why did you choose Teacher Recruitment Organization?
3. Why did you choose to teach in the Four Corners region of New Mexico?
4. What is your favorite story to tell about your experiences in New Mexico to your friends and family?
5. “One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.” What does this day look like to you?
6. Describe your classroom and students. Please be as thorough as possible.
7. How do you define the term culturally responsive teaching?
8. What does this look like and sound like in your classroom?
9. In what ways were you prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students? Please address the following institutions in your response: 1) Teacher

Recruitment Organization, 2) University of Four Corners, 3) Dine County
Schools or Zinia Public Schools

10. Tell me about your experiences with diversity since moving to the Four Corners region of the United States? What experiences were the most beneficial?
11. In your development towards becoming culturally responsive, what experiences have been the most challenging? In what ways did these experiences help you stretch your thinking about your own identity, and how it positions you in the world? In what ways did these experiences help you think about what it means to teach students who are marginalized by our society?
12. Finally, what do you believe to be the biggest obstacles to becoming culturally responsive and implementing a culturally responsive curriculum and teaching practices?

CURRICULUM VITA

NAME: Sonya Burton

ADDRESS: 5216 White Reserve Ave. SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105

DOB:

EDUCATION
& TRAINING:

Ph.D. Program in Curriculum and Instruction
Area of Concentration: Critical Literacy and
Culturally Responsive Instruction
University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
July 2015

Elementary Education Certification, Bellarmine
University, Louisville, KY
May 2004

National Board Certification, Special Needs
Specialist, Birth-Age 21
September 2002

Masters in **Special Education**,
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
December 1998

Masters in Secondary Education, University of
Louisville, Louisville, KY
May 1997

B.A., History, University of Louisville, Louisville,
KY
December 1995

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

September 2010-Present

Full-time Lecturer & Gallup Program Coordinator,

University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Courses Taught:

EDUC 331: Teaching of Reading
EDUC 333: Oral & Written Language
EDUC 421: Social Studies Methods (graduate)
SPCD 489: Exceptional Students in General Education
EDUC 502: Advanced Instructional Strategies
EDUC 552: Social Justice in Education (graduate)
EDUC 542: Principles of Curriculum Development (graduate)
EDUC 400: Student Teaching
EDUC 595: Advanced Field Experience (graduate)
EDUC 590: Seminar (graduate)

August 2006-May 2010

Full-time Instructor & Field Supervisor

Bellarmino University
Louisville, Kentucky

Courses Taught:

EDUC 111 Supervised Field Experience (undergraduate)
EDUC 214 Nature and Needs, Children with LBD (undergraduate)
EDUC 334 Children's Literature (undergraduate)
EDUC 338 Social Studies Methods (undergraduate)
EDUC 339 Language Arts Methods (undergraduate)
EDUC 420 Supervised Professional Semester
EDUC 515 Speech and Language (graduate)
EDUC 534 Children's Literature (graduate)
EDUC 535 Teaching Reading (graduate)
EDUC 545 Reading in the Content Areas (graduate)
EDUC 556 Curriculum Design and Methods Elementary (graduate)
EDUC 621 Strategic Reading and Writing (graduate)
EDUC 622 Emergent Literacy (graduate)
EDUC 627 Writing: The Workshop Approach (graduate)
EDUC 636 Advanced Curriculum and Methods

	(graduate) IDC 301 Education for Liberation or Domination? International Service Learning in Jamaica
August 2006-June 2008	Reading and Writing Intervention Specialist Read to Achieve Grant, Ohio Valley Education Cooperative, Shelbyville, Kentucky
January 2006-August 2006	Adjunct Instructor , Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky
Summer 2005 & 2006	Special Education Teacher , Summer School, Meredith Dunn, Louisville, Kentucky
August 2002-June 2006	Teacher , 3 rd and 4 th Grade, Old Mill Elementary School, Bullitt County Public Schools, Mt. Washington, Kentucky
August 1999-June 2002	Special Education Teacher , Learning and Behavior Disorders, Old Mill Elementary School, Bullitt County Public Schools, Mt. Washington, Kentucky
August 1997-June 1999	History Teacher , North Hardin High School, Radcliff, Kentucky

CERTIFICATIONS

- K-5 Elementary Education
- K-12 Special Education, Learning and Behavior Disorders
- 7-12 High School Education, Social Studies: History, Sociology, Political Science, Geography
- National Board Certification, Special Needs Specialist, Birth-Age 21

SCHOLARSHIP

Publications

Peer-reviewed Journals

Renner, A., Brown, M., Stiens, G., & **Burton, S.** (2010). A reciprocal global education? Working toward a more humanizing pedagogy and practice. *Intercultural Education*, 21, 2-18.

Presentations

Burton, S. (2014, October) *Use Your Senses!* Presentation at the Young Author's Conference, University of New Mexico, Gallup, New Mexico.

Burton, S. (2014, February) *Critical Literacy: Reading the Word and the World.* Guest Presentation, University of New Mexico, Gallup, New Mexico.

Burton, S. (2011, February) *Storytelling Across the Curriculum.* Special Education Summit, University of New Mexico-Gallup, Gallup, New Mexico.

Burton, S. & Hulscamp, K. (2010, November) *Educational Equity: Creating Opportunity for Our Children.* Round Table Conversation at the Four Corners Education Summit, University of New Mexico, Gallup, New Mexico.

Burton, S., Hill, D., Donnelly, L., & Rasp, E. (2009, November) *Storytelling for Social Justice.* Council for Exceptional Children, Louisville, Kentucky.

Burton, S., Donnelly, L., Hill, D., & Rasp, E. (2009, October) *Storytelling for Social Justice.* Teachers for Social Justice Conference, San Francisco, California.

Orthober, C. & **Burton, S.** (2009, September) *Participating in a civil rights history workshop.* Kentucky Council for the Social Studies, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Burton, S. & Orthober, C. (2009, May) *History workshop: Students interpreting history to question, examine and dispute power relationships.* Rouge Forum. East Michigan, Michigan.

Renner, A.; Stiens, G.; & **Burton, S.** (2009). *Education for liberation or domination? Toward a reciprocal/generative global partnership.* The Rouge Forum. Ypsilanti, MI.

Renner, A.; Stiens, G.; & **Burton, S.** (2009). *Education for liberation or domination?: Toward a reciprocal/generative global partnership.* Pedagogy and Theater of the Oppressed. St. Paul, MN.

Burton, S., & Kinsey, R. (2008, November). *Critical Literacy with Struggling Middle School Readers and Writers.* Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Louisville, KY.

Gnadinger, C., & **Burton, S.** (2008, September) *History Workshop in the Reading Classroom.* Kentucky Reading Association Conference, Louisville, KY.

Burton, S.; Kinsey, R.; Osborne, E.; Williams, K. (2008, March). *Critical Literacy in the K- 12 Classroom*. Three hour presentation at the Rouge Forum Conference, Louisville, KY.

Kinsey, R.; Renner, A.; Brown, M; **Burton, S.;** Stiens, G.; Osborne, E. and Morgan, A. (2008, March). *The Progressives Engaged in Struggle Support Network*. Rouge Forum, Louisville, KY.

Burton, S. (2007, September; 2007, October; 2007, November; 2008, February). *Beyond Paris Hilton: Empowering Students to Change the World Through Critical Literacy*. Paper presented at the Kentucky Reading Association Conference, Lexington, KY; Louisville Writing Project Mini-conference, Louisville, KY; Kentucky Middle School Association Conference, Lexington, KY; Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Louisville, KY; Kentucky Council for Teachers of English, Louisville, KY.

Burton, S. (2006, September). *Reading engagement: What's the motivation?* Paper presented at the Kentucky Reading Association Conference, Louisville, KY.

Workshops and Trainings

Burton, S. (2010, June). Comprehension Strategies Using a Critical Literacy Framework. Workshop to be presented internationally in St. Anne, Jamaica by request of the Jamaican Partnership for Education.

Burton, S. (2010, June). Comprehension Strategies Using a Critical Literacy Framework. Workshop to be presented internationally in Montego Bay, Jamaica by request of the Jamaican Partnership for Education.

Burton, S. (2008). Critical Literacy in the K- 5 Classroom. Workshop presented to K-5 teachers at Louisville Collegiate Lower School, Louisville, KY.

Burton, S. (2007, August). Writing Workshop in the K-5 Classroom. Workshop presented to K-5 teachers at Lebanon Junction Elementary, Lebanon Junction, KY.

Burton, S. (2006, June). *Questioning strategy in the reading workshop*. Workshop presented at Read to Achieve Training, Louisville, KY.

Burton, S. (2006, June). *Reading engagement in literacy stations*. Workshop presented at Read to Achieve Training, Louisville, KY.

Burton, S. (2005, December). *Engaging the struggling reader*. Paper presented at National Reading Conference, Miami, FL.

Burton, S. (2005, August). *Four blocks training*. Professional development presented at Lebanon Junction Elementary School, Lebanon Junction, KY.

Burton, S. (2004, August). *Four blocks training*. Professional development presented at Mt. Washington Elementary School, Mt. Washington, KY.

Burton, S. (2004, July). *Reading first training*. Professional development presented at Madisonville Community Center, Madisonville, KY.

Guest Lectures

Invited Speaker: Education for liberation or domination? (Bellarmine University, October 6, 2009)

Workshop: Being White in Jamaica: Working Across Racial Boundaries.
Presented with Gina Stiens and Adam Renner (*The Saturday Academy*, A community outreach initiative of the College of Arts & Sciences University of Louisville, December 13, 2008).

GRANT FUNDING

2005 Family Reading Adventures, Target Reading Grant, \$1,000.
Wrote and submitted grant proposal in order to purchase texts and materials for a themed family reading program.

SERVICE

Bellarmino University

Grievance Committee (2009- 2010)
MAT Redesign Committee (2009- 2010)
Co-sponsor Education Club (2007- 2010)
Dispositions Committee (2009)
MA Redesign, Capstone Committee (2008- 2009)
Discover (2007, 2008, 2009)
SOAR (2007, 2008, 2009)
MAT Open House/ Orientations (2006- 2010)

Louisville

Board Member and Volunteer: Learning Disabilities of Association of Kentucky (LDA) (2005- 2010)
Louisville Writing Project Advisory Board (2007- 2010)

Volunteer at St. Anthony's Outreach (2008- 2010)

National

Rouge Forum Conference Planning Committee (2007- 2008)

International

Co-Coordinator of service trips to Montego Bay, Jamaica (2008- 2010)

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:

Council for Exceptional Children
International Reading Association
National Reading Conference
National Council for Teachers of English
National Council for Social Studies
Rouge Forum
Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education