Pathways to Equity: An Auto-ethnographic and Narrative Study of Teacher Educator and Preservice Teachers in a One-credit Course and Community-based Field Experience

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Abstract

Students of Color are projected to compromise an increasingly higher percentage of the student population in the United States within the next several years, while predominately White teachers will continue to compromise the teaching population. Schools continually fail to serve racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, particularly African American students. As such, a critical issue within teacher education is how to best prepare teachers to teach across the lines of ethnicity/race, language, and social class.

In response to this issue, this study looked closely at the identities, perspectives, and experiences of a teacher educator and undergraduate, preservice teachers throughout a one-credit education course infused with elements of equity pedagogies and an added community-based field experience. Using Autoethnographic and Narrative methodologies, this study sought to explore self-narratives as pathways to helping teacher educators and preservice teachers begin to recognize the need to work toward equity in education.

Findings of this study reflect complexities within the identities and socialization of a teacher educator, providing insights for growth of sociocultural consciousness required for teaching equity pedagogies. Findings indicate that while most preservice teachers gained insights from the course and experienced a transformative process of countering deficit-laden assumptions of children and their families as a result of their community experiences, there were considerable challenges in their understandings of the need for equity, such as aspects of their White identity and ideology, colorblind and racist dispositions, and the use of deflection
strategies. Implications are provided to shed light on what this means in terms of equity in literacy education, especially to support socially conscious suggestions for supporting preservice teachers and teacher educators in recognizing inequities and making commitments toward changing an unjust society.