



# “I remember being aware of how I was being positioned by my school”: How early experiences with deficit views of education influence the practices of literacy teacher educators<sup>☆</sup>

Pooja Dharamshi

Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6, Canada

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Direct connections between the LTEs' early life experiences and their current practice.
- Developed broadened conceptions of literacy teaching and learning.
- Understood in and out of school literacy practices as equally important to the meaning making process.

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 17 April 2017

Received in revised form

19 September 2018

Accepted 21 September 2018

### Keywords:

Teacher education

Literacy teacher educators

Critical literacy

## ABSTRACT

This paper explores how the practices and pedagogies of U.S. literacy teacher educators with a critical stance were influenced by their early life experiences. Findings from this study revealed that early life experiences directly informed their broadened conceptualizations and enactments of literacy pedagogy. Teacher education programs need to provide teacher educators with opportunities for collaboration to learn from one another, while broadening the experiences from which they construct their literacy education curriculum.

Crown Copyright © 2018 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Literacy teacher educators (LTEs) play a key role in student teachers' development of the skills, knowledge, and dispositions required to be effective classroom teachers for diverse classroom settings (Rogers, 2013). They introduce student teachers to new ideas about teaching and learning, and encourage them to unpack their own assumptions and embrace practices they may not have encountered during their own schooling (Kosnik, Dharamshi, Miyata, & Clevoulou, 2014; Williamson, 2013). Above all, LTEs have the potential to guide student teachers in re-imagining literacy education as a place “fundamentally about equity, access and justice” (Lytle, 2013, p. xvii). (see Tables 1 and 2)

Emerging research, however, on equity and justice in teacher education has revealed that although there has been a push

towards addressing critical issues of diversity and multiculturalism in teacher education courses, this effort is often artificially implemented (Dixon & Dingus, 2007; Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). Researchers have identified several reasons for this, including: teacher educators who don't identify with this work are being forced to teach it (Ladson-Billings, 2005a; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005) and teacher educators are using an “add-on” approach to teaching because they are simply appealing a call to action (Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). Ladson-Billings (2005) argues these tensions are a result of “disconnections between and among the students, families, and community and teachers and teacher educators” (p.229). There is a need for rethinking practice in teacher education. This calls for research focused on teacher educators' beliefs about teaching and learning in relation to their own critical literacy practices.

Focusing on one aspect of a research study, this paper aims to examine the ways in which LTEs draw on their early life experiences when negotiating a critical stance into their current practices and pedagogies in their teacher education classrooms. A critical stance has been described as the attitudes and dispositions essential to

<sup>☆</sup> This work was supported by the Social Sciences and Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada.

E-mail address: [pooja\\_dharamshi@sfu.ca](mailto:pooja_dharamshi@sfu.ca).

**Table 1**

Overview of Three Participants as of February 2015 (all are faculty at U.S. universities).

| Participant | Racial Background | Years Teaching in the Classroom (K-12) | Grade Level (Primary: 1–5; Intermediate: 6–8; Senior: 9–12) | Years in Teacher Education (Tenure-track Faculty) | Faculty Position    | Sample Research Topic                                   |
|-------------|-------------------|--|---|---|---------------------|---|
| Maya        | Latina            | 2                                      | Early Childhood Education, Primary                          | 4   | Assistant Professor | Ethnographic study on first-grade writing practices     |
| Paul        | White             | 5                                      | Intermediate, Senior  | 6   | Associate Professor | Literature discussions in High School English courses   |
| Misa        | Black             | 2                                      | Intermediate  | 6   | Associate Professor | Ethnographic study of Black and Latina student teachers |

**Table 2**

Samples codes which emerged from analysis.

| Sample Codes & Sub-Codes                   |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Early Childhood Experiences                | Pedagogies                           |
| <i>Family</i>                              | <i>Texts</i>                         |
| <i>Classroom</i>                           | • Digital                            |
| <i>Cultural</i>                            | • Bilingual                          |
| <i>Community</i>                           | • Multimodal                         |
| <b>Goals for Course</b>                    | <i>Assignments</i>                   |
| <i>Knowledge</i>                           | <i>Community Building</i>            |
| <i>Dispositions</i>                        | <i>Course Format</i>                 |
| <i>Skills</i>                              | • Pre-set curriculum                 |
| <b>Educational Background</b>              | • Organic curriculum                 |
| <i>Graduate</i>                            | <i>Theorists which inform course</i> |
| <i>Ph.D. Topic</i>                         | <i>Bridging theory and practice</i>  |
| <i>Continuity of Ph.D. in current work</i> | • university-school partnerships     |

“way[s] of knowing and being in the world of educational practice that carries across educational contexts ... that links individuals to larger groups and social movements intended to challenge the inequities perpetuated by the educational status quo” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. vii). A deeper exploration of the intersection of teacher educators’ backgrounds, beliefs, and practices will allow for development of theoretical understandings of the unique professional group. Gist (2014) notes:

The teacher educators’ sociopolitical consciousness in praxis (e.g., confronting the inequitable distribution of power and privilege in the teacher education classroom through commitment and pedagogical action) offers a window through which to see the culturally responsive [teacher] educators as a construct (p. 279).

LTEs as a unique professional group need to be understood and thus a more widely researched (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Loughran, 2011; Martinez, 2008). The research questions that guided this aspect of the study are:

- What are the defining early life experiences of literacy teacher educators with a critical stance?
- How do literacy teacher educators draw on their early life experiences to inform their views, practices and pedagogies?

## 2. Teacher educators: A unique professional group

### 2.1. Teacher educators

Researchers have raised concerns regarding the absence of sustained and systematic research on the preparation, knowledge and practices of teacher educators (Berry, 2007; Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Loughran, 2006; Martinez, 2008). Goodwin and Kosnik (2013) argue that quality teacher preparation depends on quality

teacher educators (p. 334). Yet, we know relatively little about what teacher educators should know and do as a professional group.

Scholars of teacher education have responded to the call for better understanding this group of professionals. There has been a growing body of research on teacher educators as a professional group, including: their transition from the classroom context to the university context (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Loughran, 2006; Murray & Male, 2005; Zeichner, 2005) their knowledge, practices and pedagogies (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Langerwarf, & Wubbels, 2001; Loughran, 2011) and their role in enacting critical literacy practices (Mosley, 2010; Rogers, 2014; Skerrett, 2009; Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013).

Further, significant contributions to the literature on culturally relevant pedagogies and teacher education have been made, which have direct implications on the work of teacher educators. Ladson-Billings (2006) has suggested pedagogical considerations for teacher educators which consider and respond to “disconnections” in teacher education mentioned above:

- Giving prospective teachers an opportunity to interact with children in non-school settings and seeing students in places where they are likely to be experiencing success (e.g., community centres, clubs, teams)
- Structuring experiences and activities for student teachers to closely look at their cultural systems and begin to recognize the cultural underpinnings of their own beliefs, attitudes, and practices
- Considering and valuing the global dimensions of teacher education in order to give student teachers a chance to see schooling in other parts of the world and help student teachers see the commonalities in human learning coupled with the specifics of culture in various settings (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 109).

With scholarship on teacher educators as a professional group increasing, there has been an emergence of knowledge of the sub-groups of teacher educators, including literacy teacher educators. In their study of literacy teacher educators, Kosnik, Dharamshi, Menna, Miyata, and Clevoulou (2015) argued literacy teacher educators have their own set of expectations, skills, and consequently unique needs. Their knowledge base, backgrounds, career trajectories, and visions of teacher education are unique, and they face specific challenges and so had to adopt “spheres of knowledge” specific to their content area (e.g., literacy research, pedagogy of teacher education). These expansive and over lapping spheres reveal the complex work of LTEs because they “span two disciplines, literacy and teacher education” (p. 138). What remains understudied in the landscape of research on this group is an understanding of their experiences prior to entering teacher education.

## 3. Lives of teacher educators

While extensive research has been conducted on the lives of

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11023982>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11023982>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)