Face-to-Face Over Race: Personal Challenges From Instituting a Social Justice Perspective in Our Teacher Education Program

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ABSTRACT: The authors, one African American and one White, use personal narrative and dialogue to examine the process of implementing a social justice perspective into a teacher education program. The process reported in this article unearthed issues related to race that caused unexpected tensions among a small faculty. For the White educator this process entailed continuing a critical self-examination of her own racial identity development. For the African American faculty member, the process proved particularly stressful and isolating, yet led to an increased understanding of the nature of institutional racism. The authors' hope is that through sharing our struggles around race and social justice others will be encouraged to begin or continue such transformative journeys.

Introduction

Teacher educators often face the challenge of leading their student teachers into sound educational practices for diverse populations when they have not had much extensive work with diverse populations themselves (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994: Nieto, 2000). Often an unexpected outcome for teacher educators, when they are trying to provide an authentic experience with diverse populations for student teachers, is their own personal encounter with issues of racism that need to be resolved (Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998). We are both females, one African American assistant professor and one European American female associate professor, at a large research institution. We embarked to gain an increased understanding of the process of integrating a social justice perspective into a teacher education program. During this time, one particular issue surfaced that we will use as an example of the tensions that arose. We, as a faculty, were trying to give our students a field experience in diverse settings. In our location this meant long distance travel. And while concerns about weather, time, danger on the road, and changes in the structure of the program loomed large, the reluctance to commit to these changes could be seen as a reluctance to implement our vision of social justice. This was one of the issues that we struggled with, and the different perspectives on both the meaning of social justice and how it could be realized with our students came down to being face-to-face over race.

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We will begin with the context and purpose of this project. We will then present our theoretical perspectives drawn from racial identity and critical theories, cultural studies, and multiple and multiethnic perspective taking. We then share our methodology based in autoethnography and dialogue. This is followed by a written dialogue between us in which we reflect upon who we are and our responses to and struggles with issues that surfaced during our work toward a social justice focus in our teacher education program. We conclude our article with what we have learned from the process and what work is left to be done.

Context and Purpose

Although attempts have been made to bring a more diverse student population into our fifth-year graduate teacher education program, the reality is that the vast majority of the preservice teachers in the program are White and middle to upper-middle class. The faculty at the university is also overwhelming White. While 8% of the university's nearly 3,000 faculty of all ranks is of color, only 8 individuals (.3%) who are tenured or on tenure-track are African American. Currently five core tenure-track faculty and five adjunct faculty members make up the advising and instructional team for a cohort of 47 students in the professional teacher education program. Of these 10 faculty members 8 are White, one self-identifies as Latina, and one is African American. One is male.

In the spring of 2000 we decided to more purposefully pursue a social justice perspective in our program. We agreed to a general statement in our handbook:

> The Elementary Education Teacher Licensure Program holds a social justice perspective towards education, curriculum and teaching. From this perspective, the purpose of education is to promote a democratic society based on principles of social justice and economic equity. Schools and education should be laboratories for democracy, where adults and children learn together to raise questions about issues and problems, both of a cognitive and social-critical nature, and they work together to find the answers to those problems. We believe that people learn by constructing their own knowledge in relationship with more knowledgeable others in the context of authentic activity. We believe that knowledge is a social construction, and that knowledge reflects biases, interests and power that underlie relations between individuals and between groups. A basic task of education is to support students' ability and disposition to analyze experience, as it relates to justice and equity issues, and then to take action to address injustices or problems in that experience. We conceive the teacher as the more knowledgeable other who seeks to engage the learner in activity that is culturally sensitive, meaningful, authentic and educational. We aim that our students become citizens who have the strategies and disposition to identify problems and issues that are important to them and their communities and then to work systemati-

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> cally and responsibly towards solutions to those problems. Basically, we aim that our students become citizens who participate in the political life of their communities in an intelligent and compassionate manner. (Professional Teacher Education Program, 2002)

We made plans to incorporate a social justice focus in our syllabi, our course readings and reflections, for example, we required a social justice piece in our students' work samples. Yet, it became clear that, even with this definition in place, we did not agree on how to approach social justice with our students. The visible and invisible differences between people based on race, class, and gender, especially as they underlay our faculty team members' perceptions and definitions of social justice, began to become more apparent than ever before as we strove to institute our social justice conceptual framework.

Zollers, Albert, and Cochran-Smith (2000) found this true in their research: "Although faculty members unanimously embraced the goal of 'teaching and teacher education for social justice,' they held widely varying ideas about the meaning of social justice" (p. 5). Their study postulated three continuums for understanding social justice. We will consider one continuum that immediately emerged as relevant to our faculty and that helps explain part of our conflict. This continuum contained a sentence that could be finished in several ways. The sentence "Creating Social Justice requires . . ." could be completed with the phrase: "changing individual beliefs" at one end and the phrase: "taking action collectively" at the other.

At first all of our faculty team intended to proceed with a study of ourselves, our students, and our work. We all believe that an understanding of our interactions, our roles, and our transformation would enhance our success in preparing our students as transformative educators and reformers for social justice. At our faculty meetings our progress on social justice would come up both on purpose and as a tangent to other material; we sometimes would take the time to do a "self-check" on how we were are doing. Over time the tension increased between the *administrivia* of the daily running of the teacher education program, and the important work of examining those values and belief systems that would allow us to embrace the deeper changes that may undergird long-term and effective implementation of a social justice framework.

We were caught off guard by the unexpected tensions that arose in our meetings. Predictably the variety of definitions of social justice led to some lively discussions at faculty meetings. Unpredictably, Jean, the lone African American faculty member's carefully balanced role at the university was caught in the crossfire, threatening both her tenure-track status at the university and some carefully forged friendships among her colleagues. The small group of faculty with increasing workloads could not find the time for either interactional skill-building or for discussions about race. The situation was exacerbated as Jean, as part of preparing materials for publication, had to

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reexamine her role in the university and the team. Tension within herself and unexpected confrontations within the group led to a more complete examination of the perspectives of the members of the whole group. From Jean's viewpoint, it seemed that only when she brought up race and race relations in the meetings—at the expense of pressing agenda items—that any progress was made in addressing underlying racial issues and perspectives.

Another faculty member, Eileen, who had increasingly become an outspoken antiracist White educator, encouraged by Scheurich (2000) and others, was, Jean felt, one member of the faculty who remained in the conversations the longest. Jean felt that Eileen had more impact on the discussion, as she often spoke up with her views.

During an intense 3-week placement in either a two-way bilingual immersion school or a high poverty urban school, Eileen and Jean became deeply involved in working with the preservice students on their reflections and development in these diverse settings. As questions arose and discussions escalated in faculty meetings, we (Eileen and Jean) proposed to more fully understand our differing perspectives. Eventually our study efforts narrowed to our perspectives and dialogues.

Theoretical Perspectives

Our theoretical perspectives are drawn from racial identity and critical race theories and multiple and multiethnic perspective taking. We begin with the theoretical framework based on the theories of Cross (1995), for Black racial identity development, and Helms (1990), for White racial identity development. Jean, as the African American member of the team, found this framework extremely helpful in making sense of our words, actions, and reactions. Based on Cross's and Helms's models, here is Jean's simplified version of racial identity development that she terms, "racial interaction development":

> I believe this [framework] will help enrich the understanding of my own story, and perhaps help other people understand their own. During my years of working with students in [the course] multicultural issues in education, I wanted my students to have a much clearer and quicker understanding of the theory so I proposed a four-level racial identity development scale with very simple terms. I call stage one "I'm OK; you're OK." This corresponds to the preencounter stage found in many racial identity development theories. The second stage I call "Something is not OK." This corresponds to the encounter stage found in most theories. The third I call "I'm OK, I'm not so sure about you." In this stage I summarize many other stages from different theorists including anger, denial, pseudoindependence, immersion, emersion, etc. Depending on the group I am working with and their interests, I expand and define this stage using details from various identity development models. A last stage I call "I'm OK, you're OK, we're OK." This stage is equivalent to the autonomy or independent stage where people are ready to work for change in a more fully integrated manner. (Moule, in press)

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Using this simplified framework often helped Jean to conceptualize what she witnessed and experienced in faculty meetings. It gave her a larger perspective from which to understand both herself and her colleagues. Multiple/multiethnic perspective taking as developed by Hyun and Marshall (1997) as well as Selman and Schulz's (1990) work on social perspective taking also help explain the different perspectives that emerged in our meetings. As with Jean's simplified framework, these other theories help us make sense of very complex human relationships that may occur when different individuals attempt to work together across the different levels of understanding as detailed in these theories.

Our work is also informed by critical race theory. Ladson-Billings (2000) tells us that critical race theory is an outgrowth of critical legal studies, an ideology that "depends on the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' to describe the continued legitimacy of oppressive structures in American society (Unger**<QU1>**, 1983)" (p. 264). Critical race theory "begins with the notion that racism . . . is so enmeshed in the fabric of the U.S. social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this society" (p. 264). Critical race theorists utilize storytelling and the experiential knowledge of those who have experienced "isms" such as racism and sexism to analyze and critique dominant discourses that have oppressed minority groups.

QU1: this is a quote from Unger in Ladson-Billings? If so state "Ladson-Billings quote Unger (1983) that critical theory" and then delete (Unger, 1983 off end of quote

Autoethnography and Dialogue as Method

To capture the deeply personal and interpersonal and the self-reflective nature of our study, we chose to draw from autoethnography and dialogue for our method of recording and then analyzing our journey together. Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe autoethnography as "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness connecting the personal to the cultural . . . focusing outward . . . then . . . inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations" (p. 739). As a method, autoethnography can be used to uncover the subjective experience of personal thoughts, feelings, and emotions in relation to the interpersonal and the social/historical. These authors continue:

> In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought, and language. (p. 739)

Like Ellis (1997) in *Evocative Autoethnography*, we have found meaning from pursuing methods that support both the personal and emotional nature of our study. Ellis started with a formal, citation-laced report, then moved to a first-person, friendly discussion of her data, before eventually creating a piece that began "I was born. . . ." This "lived experience" has the power to move others.

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Our intent in writing this article is to recapture our struggles. Our autoethnographies may be seen as "a commitment to examining one's own practice to bring into action the values that underlie their practice" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, pp. 1–2). Through our own examinations of our process we hope to evoke and perhaps provoke feelings, emotions, and insights in the readers. Ellis (1997) wrote, "A story's 'validity' can be judged by whether it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is authentic and lifelike, believable and possible" (p. 129).

Along with autoethnography we have also drawn from dialogue as method. Bohm (1996) defines dialogue different from its common usage:

> "Dialogue" comes from the Greek word *dialogos*. . . . *Logos* means "the word," . . . And *dia* means "through" . . . this derivation suggests *a stream of meaning* flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding. It's something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all. (p. 6)

Senge (1990) highlights the importance of this distinction since it increases "the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine 'thinking together' . . . allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually" (p. 10). Isaacs (1999) points out the *cultural containers* that inhibit our ability to think together outside of our strongly constructed boxes and barriers. Through our dialogue we attempted to think together and make the sides of our "cultural containers" porous and translucent and therefore open to each other's perspectives.

Data

Our data are primarily our journals generated through direct e-mail messages and e-mails with more extensive journals sent as attachments. Additional data include minutes from faculty meetings and materials distributed to faculty. These materials ranged from course schedules to articles related to racial issues and/or social justice.

Data Analysis

We began to make sense of our gathered data through increased journaling, an extended dialogue on e-mail, and a three-hour taped dialogue. Although our exercise of pulling details out of context perhaps helped us make more sense of the experiences, this works against taking our experience as a whole that in some ways cannot be differentiated. For instance, by journaling and sharing our thoughts we are consciously moving away from a quieter inner calm that might actually help us in our work. Scheurich (2000) refers to "some Native American spiritualities [that] teach their practitioners to be quiet inside, and they often think that US Whites are 'loud' inside, always comment-

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ing and chattering to themselves" (p. 10). This state of "loudness inside" may be amplified by detail-focused disaggregation of our interactions. We need to also remain aware of the larger context that is more holistic and intuitive.

Duncan (1995), an African American scholar, also frames research from a perspective that is holistic. He discusses the "thinking in which positivist rationale posits a world that is reducible to objective and measurable parts; hence a common dictum among researchers, even in the social sciences, is that if a thing exists, it exists in some amount and can be measured" (p. 81). Part of our frustration is that by being explicit, as we feel we must, we are contradicting some of the assumptions we have both about research and about our interactions.

The Dialogue Between Jean and Eileen

Point of Views on Social Justice

Jean and Eileen

LeCompte, in her work, *A Framework for Hearing Silence: What Does Telling Stories Mean When We Are Supposed to Be Doing Science?* (1993), said, "*Real* empowerment requires *real* participant observation. . . . Real collaboration may mean getting roughed up, losing battles and projects. . . . Bringing about change is not a quiet academic pursuit; to empower is to get into trouble" (p. 15). And get into trouble we did.

Like those in the study by Zollers et al. (2000), "not all participants believed that social justice was achievable through the individual construction of new points of view. Some argued that the way to fight for social justice was through activism and political action" (p. 9). This difference in definition held us back from making as much progress as we might have in our work and also underscores part of the conflict that arose between faculty members. The following points of view summarize and exemplify the major themes we discovered as we examined our materials and ourselves. We shared our work with our colleagues for continued growth and feedback for us all. Using the framework of Jean's racial interaction development schema and our personal histories and narratives, we will describe how our differing perspectives played out as we came face to face over race.

Jean: I believe that social justice means being personally transformed to the point of taking actions to enact or "walk the talk" of one's core beliefs. I believe it means being personally transformed and committed to making a difference through critically examining societal issues. This leads to encouraging others to take action whether or not we agree with another's particular course of action or perspective. That is, in a democratic society individuals must work for change even if those actions are opposing.

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Eileen: My definition of social justice means helping the interns plan classroom experiences that are centered on making the world a better place by working toward equality for all through a democratic process. This means centering the curriculum around social issues rather than content disconnected from the realities of the world around us. Issues related to racism and linguicism undergird many social issues and are an important part of the curriculum for the bilingual classes I teach.

As our faculty participated in discussions regarding definitions for social justice, different perspectives surfaced. Tension built when we made the decision to institutionalize the diversity experiences our student teachers would have in our teacher education program. Now we could no longer give lip service to diversity. These experiences would no longer be optional and their implementation would impact the total program and all faculty: students and faculty driving 40 to 80 miles each way (depending on the destination school) a number of times each term for student teaching experiences in diverse settings; course schedules changed; new courses added and courses modified. As faculty members criticized parts of the plan, tensions grew. I was among the criticizers. My workload the previous year had been intense and very stressful. Implementing the new plan meant more meetings and less time to devote to my writing. I could only see these changes as too overwhelming and taking away from what I thought I really needed to focus on: getting tenure. I wince thinking back on this.

It was agreed that Jean and I would meet to try to develop a working plan for the coming year that we could take back to the faculty. The morning she came to my house to work on it I told her I didn't think it was a good idea and I was feeling too stressed to try to find time to do the necessary work to get it going. Jean took the time to share how the changes would not result in that much of a difference from what we were already doing. She also pointed out that we had all stated a commitment to social justice. Were we committed or not? Our teacher education program had gone through many changes in the previous years. I know that it must have been discouraging for Jean to see the resistance when the changes this time involved providing our students the opportunity to work with Latino/a bilingual students and African American students in inner city schools and when the faculty had stated a commitment to social justice. What was happening?

Our faculty discussions and experiences together surfaced racial issues that lead to a break down in communication. My perception is that as a group of White educators we pride ourselves in being not only progressive but also antiracist. I believe our inability to examine this assumption in our faculty meetings was due to a variety of reasons: pressing programmatic issues; responsibilities to the students, the department and the university; our need and desire to research and publish; interpersonal and interaction style differences; and, very importantly, perceptions and feelings that every discussion and pro-

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gram decision came back to racial issues and the fatigue and frustration that accompanied this.

Jean

Because I believe in personal transformation as a means to social justice, I tend to conceptualize my own and other people's words and actions along a continuum of racial identity development that I am beginning to refer to as racial interaction development in my work. Although I like the idea of a continuum because it gives me hope that people can/will move from one position to another, I fully expect this movement to be nonlinear in both moving between and among levels at any given time, and to be cyclical. There is always another set or level to move through. Cross's recent work with others has emphasized this nature of racial identity development (Cross, Smith, & Payne, 2001.

Before describing how I see and use this four-level racial interaction development adaptation to help me both understand and survive in the world Powell (1999) caustically refers to as "the oppressors' pathologically constructed quagmire that they call education" (p. 88), I will use the four stages to describe some aspects of my personal history that have brought me to my definition of social justice and to this place in the academy.

As I began my journey as a teacher educator, I found myself recalling stories of my childhood. The stories became a step in my own understanding of racial identity development in my life before asking others to take a similar journey. These stories, as harsh as some seem now, encompassed a secure world that I made sense of at the time. I'm not sure it was truly a preencounter, "I'm OK, you're OK" world because I often did not feel "OK" in it.

I believe these stories also became part of my encounter, "Something is not OK," stage as I wrote them down. This happened in retrospect, because as a child, I did not have the skills to understand or move through the process. Others have understood that early stories influence current work. Foster (1993), for example, felt that the stories from her childhood influenced the course of her study.

The important case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, was decided in 1954. I was eight years old and my family had quietly moved into an all-White, neighborhood 4 years earlier. And some people did not want us to be there. I had been doing in New York City what 7-year-old Linda Brown's parents had wanted her to do in Topeka, Kansas—going to a local school within walking distance, regardless of its racial makeup.

Only recently my father told me about an event that happened during that time. One morning he had gone outside, seen "N___ go back where you came from" scrawled on the outside of the house. Without telling anyone, he had washed it off. I shudder when I visualize the scene, but it helps me understand why he raised me as he did, with a level of determination that my sister

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and I would become exemplary citizens. This story helps me understand his need to have us "fit in." This pressure gave our family a surface, "I'm OK, you're OK" conformity to the culture around us. Still, I experienced being different even as I worked to assimilate. The resultant dissonance separated me even further from my peers as I entered the "Something is not OK" stage.

The next summer I moved from an East Coast urban area to a West Coast suburb, from a two-parent family to being raised by a single mother as my parents separated. My previous classroom had been Jewish except for me, and my new school was as culturally diverse as anything Los Angeles could offer.

Miss Thomas was graying and, to a third grader, she seemed elderly. Miss Thomas's classroom exemplified the proverbial, "You could hear a pin drop." She was strict and unyielding, yet her classroom was safe from any disrespect toward her or between students. Miss Thomas's room was a secure and healthy place for my own emotions-in-transition. In Miss Thomas's classroom I probably experienced the calm and false security of Helm's (2000) pseudoindependent stage that I call: "I'm OK, I'm not so sure about you."

In junior high I began a love/hate affair with history. In the eighth grade I had to attend a summer session to raise my low history grade. We were studying pioneers and the western migration, which interested me. I was devastated, however, when my teacher, a European American female, accused me of plagiarism. I wrote a stirring, creative beginning to my term paper, and she did not believe me when I said I wrote it myself. Her assumptions and her low expectations hampered my interest in writing, as well as in history. I hated the study of history for 20 years.

I believe I had done much of the work in racial identity development in my life as a wife in an interracial marriage, a mother of biracial children and a teacher in predominately White rural communities. Yet, as I began to examine these stories during my work as a teacher educator, I found new meaning in them and they initiated a new encounter stage in my growth toward understanding myself and influencing others.

These youthful experiences form the roots of my later thinking and theory about issues of social justice, as they do for most individuals. As an adult, I began to reflect on these childhood incidents using a more global understanding of race, intellect, history, and my recent study of racial identity development. I have also come to accept that my perspective transcends my personal lived experience, for society imposes on me perspectives or reactions to perspectives not my own. This difference in perspective is articulated well by Collins (1990):

> All African-American women share the common experience of being Black women in a society that denigrates women of African descent. This commonality of experience suggests that certain characteristic themes will be prominent in a Black women's standpoint. For example, one core theme is a legacy of struggle. . . . The existence of core themes does not mean that African-American women respond to these themes in the same way. . . . For example, although all African-American women encounter racism, social class differences among African-

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> American women influence how racism is experienced. . . . Black women's work and family experiences and grounding in traditional African-American culture suggest that African-American women as a group experience a world different from that of those who are not Black and female. Moreover, these concrete experiences can stimulate a distinctive Black feminist consciousness concerning that . . . reality. (pp. 22–24)

I believe that writing these stories and participating in this study is part of my own continuing journey to understand and bridge between different perspectives, as well as a means to increase my understanding of racial identity development. "We avoid telling stories that evoke feelings that we do not care to relive" (Schank, 1990, p. 47). I have chosen to relive these stories, though painful, in the hopes that they will move others.

As I list each of the stages I will give an example from our faculty meetings or my ongoing dialogue with Eileen. In naming each of these situations, I am writing my understanding of the perspective of another person as heard or experienced by me.

Stage 1: "I'm OK; you're OK," the preencounter stage: Early years of ignoring race in meetings where our only concerns about race involved how to recruit students of color into our program.

Stage 2: "Something is not OK," the encounter stage: Our early efforts to openly discuss and examine race as part of our social justice conceptual framework led to tensions that came from our differing perspectives. For instance, consider the story of our conflict over travel. It seemed that there was one standard when we were discussing travel for White students to Portland and another when we were discussing travel for our few students of color to the other direction. At one point we bring in a mediator to one of our faculty meetings to try to sort out our frustrations and perspectives.

Stage 3: "I'm OK, I'm not so sure about you," with these substages:

- I'm OK, you're not: Reactions to my perspective are seen as personal faults rather than the common experiences of people of color. For instance, I have heard spoken in my presence by several individuals, "Every time Jean doesn't get her way, she plays the race card." This statement does not recognize that as an African American anything I say comes from that experience (i.e., I have no other card to play). This statement also may indicate that the person speaking has not fully owned that they too have a race and speak naturally from that perspective.
- I'm OK, you don't exist: My FTE and responsibilities not acknowledged as others' appear to be based on an examination of our staffing over the years and my increasing responsibilities in diverse school settings.
- I'm OK, you're not as *assimilated* as I *thought*: Implied through reactions to African American interactional patterns (see next example) and pressure to not name race as a factor in the tensions in our faculty meetings.

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- I'm OK, you're *angry*: My anger seen as inappropriate even when supported by objective measures others cannot see initially. The emotional content of many conversations was seen as too strong to be allowed in our conversations as evidenced by others leaving the meeting or no longer being willing to actively engage in the conversation. (In these last two subtopics of "I'm OK, I'm not so sure about you," many different words could replace the italicized words. These substages are designed to include interactions based on anger, denial, pseudoindependence, immersion, emersion, and so forth from Helms's (1990) and Cross's (1995) models.)

Stage 4: "I'm OK, you're OK, we're OK," autonomy or independent stage: Eileen and I working on this article in order to make a difference is some evidence of this stage in our interaction. The faculty as a whole may be working independently at some aspects of overcoming problems of institutional and societal racism at this stage; however, because we have been unable to discuss race openly in our meetings without tension around our relationships we have not worked as collaboratively as we might. Hyun and Marshall (1997, based on Selman & Schultz, 1990) explain the underlying tension well, "concern for the relationship's continuity over time is a necessary consideration for the . . . solution of any immediate problem" (p. 193). If we were at an autonomy level and more "OK" with each other, we could accomplish much more.

Over time I have come to have the following insight about stage 4 and I shared this in an e-mail to my students at the end of a Multicultural Issues in Education course:

> One rather deeper issue that I would like to address because it seemed to appear in several papers is a new reflection I have had on racial identity development. In many ways the level one, "I'm OK, you're OK," represents a surer, more confident position than the level four, "I'm OK, you're OK." At the first level a lack of knowledge allows us to be more confident in our unexamined position. At level four there is almost a built-in expectation that there is more to learn. In fact one way to put the first part of the statement in level four is, "I'm OK with and in my own ignorance." Similarly, in level four the "You're OK" must mean, I am OK with wherever you are, whatever stage you are in. A key perspective here, and this is why I am writing this to you, is a new understanding this can give us about the statement I have read a number of times this quarter, "People hate me because I am White." First of all, if you are thinking this, you, at least, are beyond stage one yourself. Second, if someone IS thinking this about you, then you know that individual could not be at stage four. In other words, you may take the position that the person thinking along those lines has much to learn. This may help you have patience and understanding with others as you continue to move/recycle through the stages yourself. It is not the fact that you are White alone that is a problem. It is that you are White and refuse to move beyond stage one that causes those of color frustration. Think of Victor in *The Color of Fear* (Wah, 1983). He was angry at David not because he was White, but because he

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> was unwilling to listen and begin to understand. Victor had few problems with the other White fellow who was moving into a role as an antiracist individual. Stage four means we are through with pretending that there is no problem or ascribing blame. We are simply ready to talk, move, work towards understanding and action whenever and wherever we are in a position to do so safely and with effect. It is understood that this is a journey that continues. (personal communication)

Eileen

Particular readings (Banks, 1978, 1997; Behar, 1993; Boyer & Baptiste, 1996; Crawford, 1999, 2000; Cummins 1996; Freire, 1988; Kozol, 1991; McIntosh, 1989; Miner, 1991; Scheurich, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999; Suina 1998) and mentoring by individuals of color who were my students, teaching peers, or university instructors have helped me in my journey to critically examine Whiteness, White privilege, and linguicism. However, looking back at my development as an educator over the past 20 plus years I sometimes get discouraged because I seem to be such a slow learner. Let me try to explain.

Jean used the "I'm OK, you're OK" framework to help her in her courses on multicultural education and for her own survival on our faculty. The framework lists stages of racial identity development. In applying this framework to my own racial identity development I would use the following stages to represent my process:

I'm OK, you are different, interesting, exotic: I grew up in a predominantly White, middle and upper class community within a state with a minority population of approximately 45%. By the time I graduated from high school my interactions with individuals of color were very limited even though I lived within thirty miles of three American Indian Pueblos and the same distance from communities that were predominantly Hispanic. With my family I visited the Pueblos on a number of occasions as a tourist. On other occasions I went with my mother and watched as she "traded" our used clothes for their pottery. I studied Spanish with Euro-American teachers, learning several curse words from a Latina classmate. These memories have me wincing again.

I'm OK, you are understandably angry: During my college years and my beginning years of teaching I interacted with many individuals of color and became aware of the anger and resentment toward White individuals. I never felt threatened by this. Their anger was always so understandable to me considering the history of our country and all that has been done to them. However, I was still not integrating this new understanding into my teaching, into my being. I recently ran across an example of this. For my doctoral comprehensive exam I wrote an autobiography. In it, I looked back at my masters comprehensive exam responses:

> In writing that response I can see that I was somewhere within the stages of Belenky, et al. (1986) referred to as received knowledge and procedural

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> knowledge. My masters comprehensive exam is more a collection of information arranged in a unique fashion by me but absent of any meaningful context. I failed to apply what I had learned to any personally meaningful situations. I wrote about bilingual education as though it only existed in the pages of books, and the statistics of research, in the thoughts and words of others. Yet, at the same time, I was teaching as a bilingual teacher in a bilingual school working with a number of monolingual Spanish speakers and bilingual Spanish speakers. I find myself angry for not having seen the validity of my own experiences, and not having seen the value of my own thoughts about my experiences and how they related to what I learned about bilingual education in courses and in readings. I had not come to depend upon myself. (Waldschmidt, 1993, pp. 5–6)

I blush with embarrassment at the self-absorption in my words. For me, the "I'm OK" of Jean's framework represents the stage of a lack of critical racial self-examination. It would take an article by Delpit (1993) to jolt me into the next stage.

I'm not OK and I need to do some serious racial self-examination: In terms of Jean's framework, this would be the encounter stage. Delpit's (1993) words made me realize for the first time that the teaching practices and beliefs I held so dear were seen as questionable in terms of their ability to meet the needs of students of color:

> I have met many radical or progressive teachers of literacy who attempt to resolve the problem of students who choose to "not learn" by essentially deciding to "not teach." They appear to believe that to remain true to their ideology, their role must be to empower and politicize their most disenfranchised students by refusing to teach what Gee [1989] calls the superficial features (grammar, form, style, and so forth) of dominant Discourses. Believing themselves to be contributing to their students liberation by deemphasizing dominant Discourses, they instead seek to develop literacy *solely* within the language and style of the students' home discourse. (p. 291)

I have shared with Jean that I actually cried when I read this article because it brought me face-to-face with my own obliviousness. To be honest, I have been in a state of discomfort ever since reading that article over ten years ago. Words fail me when I try to express the fact that I do not resent this critical event. I am grateful for it. Although, there are times when I wish I could stop thinking about racial issues because it is often difficult, emotional, painful work. For most White individuals, not thinking about racial issues is a privilege that they possess as members of the dominant group. For the White antiracist educator there is no longer the option of not thinking about racial issues. And, for individuals of Color, there has never been the option of not thinking about racial issues.

It is at this point that the "I'm OK" framework feels limiting and unable to capture the complexity of issues that we grapple with. My above application and modification of Jean's framework presents a linear and reductionistic representation of a highly complex fluid process. There are historical, social, cultural, linguistic, economic, and gender perspectives that interact with racial

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issues that are not captured in the framework. If I had to come up with a final "stage" it would probably be titled:

Life is complex and we have a lot of work to do: Whenever I read articles related to multiculturalism and antiracism I know that I am searching for new insights or small clarifications that will move us closer to realizing what Steinberg and Kincheloe (2001) define as critical multiculturalism:

> As it integrates and connects the study of race, class, and gender to the nature of consciousness construction, knowledge production, and modes of oppression, critical multiculturalism embraces a social vision that moves beyond the particular concerns of specific social groups. While these concerns are important and must be addressed in a critical pedagogy, we ultimately embrace a democratic politic that emphasizes difference within unity. . . . Critical scholars seek a multiculturalism that understands the specific nature of differences but appreciates our mutual embrace of principles of equality and justice. (Collins & Sandell, 1992; McLaren, 1995) (p. 8**<QU1>**)

So where are we now? What has our process of journaling and reading articles and books and doing more journaling and teasing out themes accomplished?

Working Toward Social Justice: Steps Accomplished in a Complex Struggle

As faculty, we have talked, argued, called in an outside mediator, and participated in some very tense faculty meetings. Although I believe that this hard work has resulted in growth, it has not come about without damage being done to relationships among faculty. This is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of our work. There is much work still to be done.

Jean and I have both been willing to talk about and reflect upon some very difficult issues regarding race and we are continuing that dialogue. I have had the opportunity to continue to learn from Jean and her experience as the lone faculty of color in our group. Jean made me aware of a reality that, because I am a White individual who was socialized in the United States as a member of the dominant group, I was blind to**<QU2>**. Just as my reading of Delpit (1993) many years ago opened my eyes to the limitations of my neo-liberalism (White, whole language teacher), Jean helped me see attitudes, beliefs, practices, comments, events through the eyes of an individual of color. Jean pointed out examples of "Whiteness" and "its privilege, normativity (its ability to designate itself as the standard), and its erasure" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001, p. 12). This has been a painful process for me. Jean and I have talked about this pain. Jean said that she does not want to inflict pain on others yet she feels it is necessary to point out people's racist statements, beliefs, or practices. I know that there is more pain ahead for me and that there will be times when I will be too physically and emotionally fatigued to do the necessary work of examining my own Whiteness but I am still committed to hanging in there with the process.

QU1: at the start of this quote you say the quote is from Steinberg and Kincheloe but then you give these two cites with an odd page number—is the quote from Steinberg and Kincheloe on page 8 and the other two cited in this extract? If so move period to after (McLaren, 1995)

QU2: word missing?

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We now have a teacher education program that includes student teaching experiences in diverse settings. Our students have the opportunity to work with African American children and bilingual English/Spanish children. I attribute this very important aspect of our program to Jean's individual efforts and I thank her for them.

We have now included in any literature regarding our program the statement about our commitment to social justice. This includes the handbooks that we use in our program for our students to develop their units of study. We have begun to see students who have developed unit lessons centered on issues of social justice for kindergartners through middle schoolers. Although as a faculty we disagree on definitions of social justice, we have put on a face of unity for our student teachers and have stood behind our social justice statements in our program literature.

In one of my journal entries to Jean I stated:

> I thought about our faculty meetings, who we are and how we interact: one African American female, three White females, one White male; when the instructors are included we add five more White females, and one Latino male [who subsequently left this position to become an administrator]. I have many unanswered questions regarding our relationships as faculty: Is every interaction related to race (and class, gender—and/or other differences)? Would a concerted effort at unlearning White privilege be something that our faculty would embrace? If so, how do we go about that? Who leads us in this unlearning process? What will happen if we don't go through this unlearning process?
>
> . . . I'm going to end with a quote from the Banning (2001) article: "Those attempting to unlearn privilege must be willing to position themselves and practice a kind of listening called for by . . . Spivak and Gunew (1993), and Delpit (1995), all of whom suggest that the real question in critical multicultural, antiracist education really is not who will speak, but who will listen." (p. 25)

Jean

When I look at the levels of racial identity I see most of the faculty in the "I'm OK, I'm not so sure about you" stage identified by Helms (2000) as pseudoindependent. I have come to this conclusion partially because my attempts to work with people at the last level, "I'm OK, you're OK, we're OK," seem to fail. At that level we should be able to talk about and work against societal and institutional racism without worrying about offending each other. Since offense happens with some regularity, then we may not be there. In my emerging understanding of these racial interactional developmental stages, stage four includes a sense of "You're OK at any stage you are at." For those who position me as *the* "not OK" person in the meetings this may be another indication of our collective need for continued growth if we are to confront institutional racism. This is very painful to me, as it seems as if the only way to maintain harmony is to not voice my perspectives as an African American. This is particularly true when the European American perspective is so em-

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bedded in our decisions and discussions that I am often the only one who seems to notice.

I am hopeful that we can move beyond our currently stalled progression in understanding our multiple perspectives. Hyun and Marshall (1997) suggest that "to develop this multiple/multiethnic perspective-taking ability, teacher educators must first examine and come to understand their own monocultural experiences" (p. 193).

I would like to end this section on my viewpoint with a metaphor. I shared an earlier version with the faculty at a retreat. I have not decided what to call this piece. "The river" centers the societal/institutional racism in which we work; that doesn't feel so good. "The boat" centers White privilege. "The raft," my raft, seems self-deprecating. Perhaps "The journey" is the best title at this point.

> It is as if we are all on a river that flows quietly and gently along. Before I came to this university, I spent most of my time on the banks, dipping in only as necessary. Now, as a faculty member in higher education, I've found myself in this river most of the time. My friends and colleagues float on this river in a strong, sturdy boat of White privilege. The river, our societal mainstream, is simply a given. As is their boat. Although I am a strong swimmer in this mainstream I am in the river more than before and it is increasingly difficult to continue to just wade in and out, swim a while, or float comfortably next to the boat. Every once in a while someone in the boat notices and tosses out an inner tube or holds my hand for a bit. And then some times, someone reaches out and pushes my head under, "Just get over this race thing, Jean." Usually I sputter and resurface and continue on. At a certain point I figure in the long run it makes sense to try to put together a raft for myself. So while continuing to float down the river and engage in conversation and even work through some rapids with those in the boat, I am trying to build this raft with whatever materials I can find. One of the first things that happens is that someone in the boat says, "Hey, how come Jean gets a raft?" If I say, "Because I can't get in the boat with you and I'm getting tired of staying afloat without more support," some say, "What boat?"

Conclusion

We found, as Zollers, Alberts, and Cochran-Smith (2000) did, that "varying definitions and understandings of social justice *is* critically important for their day-to-day work in a preservice teacher education program that depends to a certain extent on consensus and mutual goals for success" (p. 5). We thought our destination was social justice, but it often became a matter of being "face-to-face over race." We realized during this process of intense conversations that sometimes confrontations might serve us well and we might learn much if we allowed the learning to develop through dialogue.

Our faculty is like those in the study by Zollers et al. (2000): "not all participants believed that social justice was achievable through the individual construction of new points of view. Some argued that the way to fight for social justice was through activism and political action" (p. 9).

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These varying worldviews led to open confrontation in our faculty meetings. As we looked at the issue of travel, for example, did the faculty members look at it from the vantage point of larger conceptual frameworks or from the physical inconveniences entailed? What efforts are worth it for our students to gain a new point of view? Different perspectives of the nature and process of social justice, racial interaction development, and levels of awareness of the extent of White privilege held us back from making as much progress as we might in our work and also underscores part of the conflict that arose between faculty members. Again, from Eileen's journal:

> I felt it was a good discussion about some very fundamental differences we have on the faculty. We are not anywhere near developing a social justice curriculum for our students though in my opinion because we are not all on the same page. . . . Do we all have to agree on political agendas to be able to develop a social-justice based program?

We believe we cannot institute a deep change in our perspective without considering such personal impacts we have examined. In one study, Finders (1992) said, "How can we untangle our own deeply entrenched assumptions?" (p. 60). Our points of view and understanding show concrete evidence of bridging this gap through more open dialogue and our shared experience of confronting these issues. The type of honest examination of perspectives that we have been able to engage in gives us hope in the possibility of positive conflict where diversity is valued and empowerment and mutual benefit results.

> The travelers stopped to rest. They looked back the way they had come. The path seemed longer and more difficult than they had remembered. . . . Now that they had the vantage point of the ridge, they saw that what they perceived as a summit had only been the beginning of the foothills. They continued. (Moule, 1998, p. 169)

In this article we have revisited and examined our own emotions in the hope of evoking or awaking similar feelings in readers. In our work, especially in this area of social justice, we have learned to value dialogue. In all of our work, consensus and working together as a five-member faculty team toward shared goals underlie our effectiveness. Yet our work toward social justice jeopardized our carefully crafted and preciously held community. Bohm (1996) emphasized the problem of differing "opinions" and strongly held positions getting in the way of creative solutions. He helps us let go of the limitation of avoiding conflict and instead, seeing conflict as a steppingstone to true dialogue.

We have learned much from our dialogue and we have found our story resonates with others as we have shared personally and at conferences. Our hope is that through sharing our struggles around race and social justice others will be encouraged to begin or continue such transformative journeys.

Our challenge is to engage in dialogue over emotionally charged issues while still maintaining an effective and caring working unit. We believe in the

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power of shared lived experience to change lives and that it is one of the few things that will. Therefore, we embarked on a journey that took us deep into uncharted territory: how does implementing a social justice perspective in a teacher education program impact two individual faculty members understanding of racial identity development and their relationship with each other?

We care for each other enough to want to pursue this difficult work, but we do it with some trepidation: we don't want to damage relationships. As Bohm (1996) said, "a dialogue is . . . a common participation, in which we are not playing a game against each other, but with *each* other. In a dialogue, everybody wins" (p. 7). We want to come out on the other end closer and stronger. It is our belief that through our efforts we will be better teacher educators and will move from a hopeful vision to a more clearly defined and viable social justice framework. Our work is not done; we don't have all the answers; we are presenting in this article where we are in the process. TEP

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