Examining pre-service teachers' understanding of multicultural education

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Examining Pre-Service Teachers’ Understanding of Multicultural Education

by

Amal Abdullah

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the Master of Education Degree in Educational Theory and Social Foundations

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August 2010
An Abstract of
Examsing Pre-Service Teacher’s Understanding of Multicultural Education
by
Amal Abdullah
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Education Degree in Educational Theory and Social Foundations
The University of Toledo
August 2010

As the student population within the United States’ K-12 public schools becomes increasingly diverse (Banks, 2007), multicultural education is of the essence. Thus, it is imperative for teacher education programs to prepare pre-service teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary in order to foster a holistic multicultural education in K-12 classrooms and schools. However, in order to achieve the aforementioned, teacher educators must gain an awareness of pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education.

This qualitative research study, which represented an ethnographic case study, examined pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. More specifically, the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education was analyzed within James A. Banks’ (2007) conceptual framework, “the dimensions of multicultural education” (p. 83). Furthermore, this study examined how an introductory education course impacted the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education.
The participants in this study were pre-service teachers enrolled in an introductory education course at the Judith Herb College of Education at The University of Toledo. The researcher employed the use of multiple data collection methods, and the data generated from pre- and post-questionnaires, philosophy papers, and field notes were analyzed. The data analysis provided insight into the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education, and it indicated that the course influenced their understanding. The results from this study could be utilized to develop or contribute to the further development of an introductory education course.
For my mother.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

As the student populace within the United States’ schools becomes increasingly diverse (Banks, 2007), multicultural education is of the essence. However, as Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti (2005) point out, previous research studies have demonstrated that the majority of pre-service teachers possess a dearth of knowledge pertaining to diverse student populations. Henceforth, it is imperative for teacher education programs to prepare pre-service teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary in order to foster a holistic multicultural education in K-12 classrooms and schools. In order to achieve the aforementioned, teacher educators must acquire an initial awareness of pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education.

Multicultural education, according to Banks (2007), is comprised of three main components, which include “(1) an idea or concept, (2) an educational reform movement, and (3) a process” (p. 82). Multicultural education is expansive and its components are interrelated. Moreover, multicultural education includes various transformative educational practices including culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1997), teaching for social justice, and critical pedagogy. Various conceptual frameworks for
multicultural education have been developed. Banks (2007) generated a comprehensive
typology, “the dimensions of multicultural education” (p. 83) that supports the
implementation of a holistic multicultural education. The five dimensions of this
framework include “(1) content integration, (2) the knowledge construction process, (3)
prejudice reduction, (4) an equity pedagogy, and (5) an empowering school culture and
social structure” (Banks, 2007, p. 83). A holistic multicultural education promotes
constructive school reformation, while concurrently supporting the learning processes
and academic achievement of all K-12 students.

Despite the substantial increase in ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of the
student population in the United States’ schools (Banks, 2007), the majority of the
teaching force is comprised of White teachers (Sleeter, 2001). Nonetheless, Sleeter
(2001) cites extant research that discusses how White pre-service teachers’ readily
possess a paucity of “cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experience” (p. 95).
Moreover, many pre-service teachers attended schools that were predominately White
and middle-class (Martin, 1995a). As a result, the majority of pre-service teachers
demonstrate a limited cognizance and understanding of multicultural issues and diversity,
particularly in regard to systemic oppressions (Martin & Koppelman, as cited in Martin,
1995a). This is not surprising particularly since a misconstrued understanding of
multicultural education is often supported within K-12 classrooms and schools. However,
this phenomenon must be addressed because, as Banks (2007) states, “the teacher is a key
variable in successfully implementing multicultural education” (p. 113).

Teacher education programs at colleges and universities serve a salient role in
facilitating opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and
dispositions necessary to effectively teach all K-12 student populations through the implementation of a holistic multicultural education. The incorporation of multicultural education into teacher preparation programs has significantly increased within the past 30 years. In teacher education programs, field experiences, including service-learning, have served a pertinent role in enabling pre-service teachers to interact with and teach diverse student populations. Since 1978, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has stipulated the implementation of multicultural education into all teacher education programs at NCATE-accredited institutions (Gollnick, 2001).

Research has been conducted that underscores the importance of multicultural education. However, a comprehensive approach to the integration of multicultural education and diversity issues, as Martin (1995b) points out, is not frequently integrated throughout teacher education programs. This inadvertently relegates the significance and depth of multicultural education. As Vavrus (as cited in Sleeter, 2001) notes, many pre-service teachers view multicultural content as a sheer appendage to the mainstream curriculum instituted in schools. Nieto (2000) accentuates the need to integrate multicultural education into all teacher preparation courses, irrespective of content area.

Teacher preparation programs often foster an enduring curriculum with prescribed knowledge that is “presented and accepted as being nonproblematic” (Muffoletto, 1995, p. 41). This ultimately renders pre-service teachers scarce opportunity to engage in critical reflections pertaining to pertinent multicultural education and diversity issues. It is imperative that all pre-service teachers engage in dialogue pertaining to systemic oppressions, such as racism, and constructively address any biases that they hold (Nieto,
in order to become a “multicultural person” (p. 61), and thereby foster a holistic multicultural education in K-12 classrooms and schools.

Several research studies (e.g., Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Gayle-Evans & Michael, 2006) have examined pre-service teachers’ dispositions, knowledge, and awareness pertaining to multicultural education and diversity issues, as well as the impact of multicultural education courses. Many of these research studies, which yielded various findings, employed the use of quantitative or mixed methods. However, as Sleeter (2001) points out, many of the research studies that examined the effect of multicultural education courses on pre-service teachers are quantitative, and thereby lack “a very textured reading of what students learn” (p. 99).

1.1 Overview of the Research Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. More specifically, the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education was analyzed within Banks’ (2007) comprehensive conceptual framework, “the dimensions of multicultural education” (p.83). Furthermore, this research study examined the influence of an introductory education course on the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education.

The participants in this research study were pre-service teachers enrolled in the Introduction to Education (EDU 1700) course at the Judith Herb College of Education (JHCOE) at the University of Toledo (UT) during the fall semester of 2009. This course, which is required for all pre-service teachers at the UT JHCOE, explores six integral themes mandated by the Ohio Board of Regents: professionalization; standards-based education; democratic issues/social justice; legal and organizational issues; diversity; and
curriculum and instruction. In addition, this course requires participation in a 10-hour service-learning experience that facilitates the opportunity for the pre-service teachers to tutor students in various urban educational settings. Henceforth, albeit not a multicultural education course, EDU 1700 seamlessly integrates various competencies and issues pertaining to multicultural education throughout the course.

This qualitative research study is an ethnographic case study. As Creswell (2007) points out, qualitative research involves the employment of “multiple sources of data” (p. 38), which in this research study included pre- and post-questionnaires, pre-service teachers’ completed course assignments, and field notes. The researcher utilized various data collection techniques—participant-observation, administering of pre- and post-questionnaires, and document collection—that fostered triangulation of data. Through the use of qualitative research, the researcher was able to acquire a comprehensive insight into the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education, as well as the impact of the course on their understanding of multicultural education.

The results of this research study will contribute to the fields of multicultural education and teacher education. Moreover, this qualitative research study has the potential to contribute to further development of the EDU 1700 course at the UT JHCOE.

1.2 Research Questions

This qualitative research study sought to address the following two questions:

- What is pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education?
- How did the Introduction to Education course, EDU 1700, influence the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education?
1.3 Limitations of Research Study

As Creswell (2007) candidly mentions, there are limitations inherent in all research studies. As an ethnographic case study, this qualitative research study provided insight into a small, but relevant, sample of pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. However, the results generated from this research study cannot be used to generalize all pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. Nonetheless, as Creswell (2007) points out, “their [qualitative studies’] findings may be transferable” (p. 42). Another limitation pertains to the document collection because, although the researcher sought to collect all of the assignments of the participants, some participants did not submit some of their assignments to the course instructor. Therefore, assignments (documents) not submitted to the course instructor were not a part of the document collection.

The following chapter, the literature review, provides a comprehensive overview of facets of multicultural education relative to this qualitative research study. The literature review explicates the definition, purposes, and history of multicultural education, details a holistic conceptual framework for multicultural education, and describes the role of multicultural education in teacher education. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used, and chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data. In chapter 5, the author presents the findings, the significance of the study, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.
2.1 Multicultural Education: Definition and Purposes

Prior to examining and analyzing pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education in the study, it is pertinent to expound on multicultural education and its purposes. Indubitably, the denotation for multicultural education is not static in education discourse. Various constituents in the field of education would inevitably proffer myriad responses if asked to generate a definition for multicultural education. Nonetheless, as leading multicultural education researcher James A. Banks (2001) mentions, there is a general agreement amongst multicultural education researchers regarding the range and aims of the field.

Currently in its fourth stage of development (Banks, 2001), multicultural education cannot be succinctly defined. The plethora of definitions generated for multicultural education embodies the perspectives from various scholarly disciplines, institutional policies, and school practitioners (Gay, 2001). As mentioned in chapter 1, according to Banks (2007), multicultural education is comprised of three salient components, which include “(1) an idea or concept, (2) an educational reform movement, and (3) a process”
These components are interdependent, thereby emphasizing the complex scope of multicultural education.

The profundity of multicultural education is reflected in the cogent definition articulated by Carl Grant (1997) in the *Dictionary of Multicultural Education*:

Multicultural education is a philosophical concept and an educational process. It is a concept built upon the philosophical ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity…a process that takes place in schools and other educational institutions and informs all subject areas and other aspects of the curriculum. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in the organizations and institutions of the United States…it helps students to develop positive self-concepts….Multicultural education acknowledges that the strength and riches of the United States are the results of its human diversity…It demands a curriculum that organizes concepts and content around the contributions, perspectives, and experiences of the groups of people…It confronts social issues…Multicultural education provides instruction in familiar contexts that are built upon students’ diverse ways of thinking…It teaches critical thinking skills, as well as democratic decision making, social action, and empowerment skills. Finally, multicultural education is a total process that cannot be truncated: all components of its definition must be in place for multicultural education to be genuine and viable.

(p. 172)

Thus, multicultural education constitutes a “philosophical concept” and “an educational process,” thus representing the coalescence of theory and action. Multicultural education encompasses several transformative educational practices including culturally relevant
pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1997), teaching for social justice, and action research. Moreover, the crux of multicultural education embodies diversity. Gollnick (1997) mentions that researchers in multicultural education explain “diversity in terms of racial, ethnic, gender, and economic groups. Others have added language, religion, ability…” (p. 94). Henceforth, the scope of diversity is inclusive and comprehensive in multicultural education.

Despite the copious amount of research conducted in the burgeoning field of multicultural education, a misconstrued understanding of multicultural education is often engendered in K-12 schools and classrooms. As Banks (2001) points out, many educators in schools and universities regard multicultural education as curriculum reform that consists of augmenting content pertaining to ethnic and cultural groups and women. In K-12 schools, ethnic food nights and the celebration of months recognizing historically-marginalized populaces are often considered exemplars of “multicultural education.” Albeit multicultural education entails pertinent curricular aspects, including content integration, it must be elucidated that multicultural education does not constitute a mere fragment of curriculum. An impoverished conception of multicultural education easily “relegates multicultural education to knowledge about ethnic cultures that are considered deviations from the norm—that is, the mainstream dominant White culture” (Kumar, 2004, p. 139), thereby serving to impede the implementation of a holistic multicultural education.

2.2 History of Multicultural Education

Prior to examining the conceptualization of multicultural education, it is imperative to discuss the historical underpinnings and development of multicultural education.
Banks (1996) asserts that how “the history of a field is conceptualized is directly related to how its aims and boundaries are constructed” (p. 31). Research (Banks, 1996) demonstrates that the purposes and conceptual frameworks for multicultural education have significantly expanded over the past few decades.

The multicultural education movement emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, with its roots in the early ethnic studies movement and African-American scholarship (Banks, 2001). The early ethnic studies movement was significantly influenced by and reflected the seminal works of notable African-American intellects, including Carter Woodson and W. E. B. DuBois. During the 1960s and 1970s, the ethnic studies movement was initiated by the African-American populace in a concerted effort to establish the inclusion of African-American culture in school curricula and academic studies (Banks, 2001). As a result, other ethnically-marginalized populations also sought inclusion in the academic programs and curricula (Banks, 2001).

Their scholarly work influenced by the early ethnic studies movement and prolific African American scholarship, scholarly researchers James A. Banks, Gwendolyn C. Baker, and Geneva Gay served (and continue to serve) integral roles in the continuous development of multicultural education (Banks, 2001). In its nascent stage, multicultural education was primarily comprised of ethnic studies (Banks, 1996), thereby placing an overt emphasis on content knowledge. Ethnic studies consisted of integrating the “concepts, information, and theories from ethnic studies into the school and teacher-education curricula” (Banks, 2001, p. 260). An exclusive focus on content knowledge contains a paucity of opportunities for students to engage in meaningful and constructive learning experiences to improve society. Indeed, critical educators recognized that
“ethnic content was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for restructuring schools so that students from diverse racial and ethnic groups would experience equality” (Banks, 1996, p. 40).

Salient change in student learning and the promotion of educational equality were needed and therefore, multicultural education needed to extend beyond the promulgation of ethnic studies. Multicultural education would need to be more holistic, supporting endeavors that sought to establish and facilitate educational reform. Thus, the aim of the second phase of multicultural education, multiethnic education, was “to bring about structural and systemic changes in the total school that were designed to increase educational equality” (Banks, 2001, p. 260). The reform promoted by multiethnic education included efforts to restructure school environments (Banks, 2001), which include explicit and implicit curricula and policies. As the multicultural education movement expanded, other historically-marginalized populaces demanded inclusion in the curricula and educational reform, including women and individuals with disabilities. The aforementioned constituted the third stage in the multicultural education movement (Banks, 2001). Evidently, as a result of the third stage, the facets of diversity within multicultural education extended beyond race and ethnicity.

The fourth stage of the multicultural education movement is currently in progress (Banks, 2001). This stage entails the “development of theory, research, and practice that interrelate variables connected to race, class, and gender” (Banks, 2001, p. 261). Without a doubt, the fourth stage serves a pertinent role in expanding relevant discourse pertaining to race, class, and gender and the systemic oppressions and discrimination experienced by members of historically-marginalized populations in the United States. Within the past
couple of decades in the field of multicultural education, several prominent educational scholars have emerged including, but not limited to, James A. Banks, Christine E. Sleeter, Carl Grant, Philip C. Chinn, Geneva Gay, Sonia Nieto, and Donna Gollnick (Banks, 1996). These educational scholars have significantly contributed to the conceptualization of multicultural education.

2.3 Conceptual Framework for Multicultural Education

Conceptual frameworks developed within the field of education often serve to guide and influence the educational practices and policies of schools, thus demonstrating that scholarly research is germane and pragmatic. Unambiguous conceptualizations and descriptions of the dimensions, or components, of multicultural education are necessary in order for teachers to implement multicultural education that is consistent and compatible with theory (Bank, 2001). Henceforth, various typologies (e.g., Bank, 2007; Sleeter & Grant, 2003) that represent the conceptualization of multicultural education have been developed in order to support the facilitation of multicultural education.

To support educators in the implementation of multicultural education, Banks (2007) developed a comprehensive typology, “the dimensions of multicultural education” (p. 83). The five dimensions of the aforementioned framework include “(1) content integration, (2) the knowledge construction process, (3) prejudice reduction, (4) an equity pedagogy, and (5) an empowering school culture and social structure” (Banks, 2007, p. 83). These pertinent dimensions are complex and interdependent. Within K-12 classrooms and schools, as well as teacher education programs, there is often a focus on content integration. Thus, it is important for pre-service teachers to learn that all five
dimensions must be recognized and simultaneously implemented in order to effectively foster a holistic multicultural education in K-12 schools and classrooms.

Content integration involves the teachers’ development and implementation of lessons and units that contain content from various groups (e.g., women) and cultures used to explicate concepts pertaining to the subject being taught (Banks, 2007). When concurrently accompanying the other four dimensions, content integration serves an integral role in fostering multicultural education. However, as Banks and C. A. M. Banks (2007) mention, integration of content pertaining to various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups into the curriculum is often misconstrued as the quintessence of multicultural education. As a result, many mathematics and science schoolteachers may neglect their role in fostering multicultural education in classrooms and schools (Banks, 2001).

Indeed, content integration represents the dimension of multicultural education most prevalent in K-12 classrooms and schools. Many K-12 school practitioners develop and implement lessons related to cultural diversity within the disciplines of social studies and language arts (Gay, 1994). As Sleeter and Grant (2003) point out, teachers must ensure that whole concepts, as opposed to portions of information, pertaining to diverse groups are taught. Oftentimes, content integration in K-12 classrooms and schools resembles the contributions and additive approaches related to the integration of ethnic content into the curriculum. The contributions approach refers to teachers’ implementation of lessons that emphasize foods, celebrations, and other rudimentary aspects of ethnic cultures (Banks, 2001). The additive approach is manifested in teachers’ introduction of content and implementation of lessons/units pertaining to ethnic groups (Banks, 2001). However, the implementation of the contributions and additive approaches does not change the
structure of the mainstream curriculum (Banks, 2001), which portrays the dominant White culture as the norm. Thus, with the extensive employment of the contributions and additive approaches, the mainstream curriculum remains rather static, and lessons and content pertaining to various marginalized groups and cultures serve as mere appendages to the curriculum.

Content integration should be inclusive, seamlessly incorporating the myriad perspectives, experiences, and contributions of various groups (Sleeter & Grant, 2003). It is imperative that the perspectives taught are those espoused by the group(s) presented. In order to promote an accurate portrayal of groups, the content should depict both the historic and contemporary cultures (Sleeter & Grant, 2003), thereby recognizing that cultures endure continuous change. Content integration is effective when taught within a transformative curriculum (Banks, 2007), in which “the structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups” (Banks, 2001, p. 264). Nonetheless, it is the knowledge construction process that serves as the integral foundation for transformative curricula.

The knowledge construction process entails opportunities for students to critically examine how knowledge is socially constructed (Banks, 2007). More specifically, it encourages students to examine how knowledge is shaped by biases, cultural norms, and perspectives embedded within a field (Banks, 2007). Numerous lessons and pedagogical methods could be developed to actively engage students in the knowledge construction process. For example, during a lesson on Thanksgiving, students could research and reflect upon the Native American perspectives on the aforementioned holiday, while
simultaneously investigate how the depiction of “The First Thanksgiving” in mainstream curriculum has been influenced by Eurocentric notions.

The knowledge construction process fosters opportunities for students, as well as teachers, to develop, enhance, and employ the use of critical thinking skills, which are inevitably necessary in order for individuals to actively address social issues. Gollnick and Chinn (2009) discuss the importance of critical thinking in multicultural education, particularly mentioning that critical thinking enables students to question the dominant culture that pervades mainstream curriculum. Questioning the status quo and examining various groups’ perspectives, both of which constitute examples of critical thinking, are fostered within a transformative curriculum. It is transformative curriculum that serves as the catalyst for the social action approach, in which students serve as positive agents of social change in society (Banks, 2001). Certainly, critical thinking skills enable students to “focus on their community problems and concerns with the tools needed to embrace justice and responsible social action” (Bennett, 1994, p. 26). Henceforth, students’ participation in social action is contingent upon their cultivation of critical thinking skills.

Representing a liberatory pursuit, the knowledge construction process recognizes all individuals, including teachers and students, as active participants in the construction of knowledge. As Swartz (1994) mentions, rather than supporting the mere reiteration of information, multicultural education promotes students’ and teachers’ production of knowledge. Hence, students are not perceived as mere recipients of “deposits of information” (Freire, 2009, p. 76), and the hegemonic features that often characterize teacher-student relationships are eradicated. Indeed, multicultural education affirms the cyclical nature of knowledge construction.
A holistic multicultural education embodies democratic and social justice values, including equality, equity, justice, and respect. Thus, the prejudice reduction dimension consists of facilitating opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate democratic values and attitudes (Banks, 2007). Teachers should develop lessons and establish classroom communities that enable students to engage in positive interactions and collaboration. The democratic skills and attitudes developed throughout active collaboration are necessary in order for students to eliminate individual prejudice and negative racial attitudes.

In order to implement a curriculum that addresses issues of prejudice, it is necessary for teachers to examine students’ racial attitudes (Banks, 2007). Hence, K-12 teachers must not underestimate or disregard the detriment of negative racial attitudes and prejudices. Evasion of these issues contributes to the proliferation of prejudices, stereotypes, egregious generalizations, and negative racial attitudes, which negatively impact the school environment and student learning. As Grant and Sleeter (2007) point out, it is imperative that teachers prepare instruction and develop curricula that address stereotypes and prejudice, thereby promoting unity and ameliorating intergroup communications.

The development of curricula that constructively address negative racial attitudes and prejudices and promote democratic dispositions is an ongoing process. Therefore, Banks (2007) has identified several curriculum strategies, including cooperative learning and the employment of multicultural resources, which contribute to students’ development of democratic values and attitudes. Gollnick and Chinn (2009) recommend the use of cooperative learning, emphasizing that it fosters reciprocal learning and cross-cultural
interactions. Cooperative learning fosters collaborative efforts and the invaluable exchange of knowledge and skills. Moreover, cooperative learning promotes recognition and appreciation of the knowledge and skills proffered by diverse groups. Sleeter and Grant (2003) mention that cooperative learning, fostered through heterogeneous grouping, enables all students to assume leadership roles. This helps to destabilize power relationships and stereotypes enforced within society.

The use of multicultural literature that accurately portrays the experiences and perspectives of various racial, ethnic, economic, and cultural groups contributes to prejudice reduction. Multicultural literature can foster the construction of knowledge through classroom conversations pertaining to prejudice, stereotyping, and the systemic oppressions (e.g., racism) in society. Galda (as cited in Glazier & Seo, 2005) describes how multicultural literature serves as “mirrors and windows,” therefore presenting students with “both a window to other cultures and a mirror reflecting their own” (p. 686). The use of multicultural literature, when accompanied by constructive dialogue, can foster an appreciation for diversity and the cultivation of democratic values and attitudes.

Equity pedagogy consists of the instructional methods and the development of classroom environments that promote the learning and academic achievement of all students (Banks, 2007). Moreover, equity pedagogy enables students from diverse groups to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to participate in and contribute to a democratic society (Banks, 2007). Equity pedagogy, which is interrelated with and significantly undergirds the other four dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 2007), affirms the importance of building on all students’ cultures and prior knowledge to support student learning.
The implementation of equity pedagogy requires K-12 teachers to recognize students’ cultures, languages, and prior knowledge and skills as strengths that serve significant roles in student learning. However, it is not uncommon for teachers, whether intentionally or inadvertently, to subscribe to the flawed cultural-deficit, or deprivation, theories. The cultural-deficit paradigm erroneously attributes the academic struggles of students, particularly from marginalized populations, to their home and community cultures (Banks, 2007; Oakes & Lipton, 2003). Thus, it is imperative that all K-12 teachers become cognizant of and deliberately challenge implicit and explicit cultural deficit beliefs and dispositions (Bartolomé, 2001) in order to foster multicultural education, and therefore support the learning and academic achievement of all students.

Knowledge of students’ cultures represents a prerequisite to the implementation of equity pedagogy (Banks, 2007). It is not unusual for teachers to pay no heed to students’ home cultures and prior knowledge, claiming that their curricula, instructional methods, and learning environments are “cultural neutral” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 207). However, as Bartolomé (2001) contends, the development and implementation of pedagogical methods are not generated in a vacuous state. Moreover, the concept of “cultural neutral” education and schooling is flawed and misleading. As Gollnick and Chinn (2009) point out, the majority of schools reflect and give strength to the norms and perspectives of the dominant, European American middle class. Henceforth, a critical investigation and reconstruction of the widespread assumptions and beliefs pertaining to society, students, teaching and learning are prerequisites to the implementation of equity pedagogy (Banks, 2007).
Learning is a cultural process imbued with nuances and spontaneities that cultivate the growth of the intellect. Equity pedagogy recognizes the complexities of learning, while simultaneously fostering emancipating learning experiences. As Banks (2007) mentions, equity pedagogy establishes an environment conducive to unremitting knowledge construction and production. Certainly, equity pedagogy underscores the significance of student and teacher narratives and cultures in the construction of knowledge. It facilitates classroom and school environments in which “students—no longer docile learners—are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (Freire, 2009, p. 81). Thus, equity pedagogy redefines the student-teacher relationship (Banks, 2007) and discourse.

Equity pedagogy supports several teaching methods that build on students’ languages and prior knowledge (Chubbuk, 2010), which inevitably fosters the learning process. More specifically, equity pedagogy encompasses culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1997), which is described as “an approach to teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 62). Culturally relevant pedagogy is student-centered and multi-faceted, thereby recognizing and building on students’ prior knowledge, skills, and interests. Moreover, it embraces the various learning styles of students.

Equity pedagogy entails the development and establishment of classrooms that promote knowledge construction and critical thinking. As a result, equity pedagogy is transformative, and it “advocates empowering students to think critically and act upon their convictions” (Kumar, 2004, p.142). Praxis, which represents the pivotal nexus
between action and reflection (Freire, 2009), is initiated and sustained by critical thinking fostered through equity pedagogy. Through praxis, students and teachers can collaborate in a concerted effort to establish viable democratic classrooms and schools that embody social justice. Equity pedagogy enables students to develop the empowerment skills (e.g., critical thinking) that enable them to serve as agents of social change to create a democratic society (Banks, 2007). However, an effective implementation of equity pedagogy requires a systemic view of education reform that endeavors to eradicate “existing school structures that foster inequality” (Banks, 2007, p. 93).

The empowering school culture and social structure dimension explicates schools as social institutions that are complex (Banks, 2007). Moreover, this dimension fosters a systemic understanding of schools and school reformation efforts, recognizing that the multiple facets of schools are interdependent (Banks, 2007). Indeed, schools are comprised of numerous pertinent including, but not limited to, curriculum and instruction, assessment, professionalism, and school-community relations. Thus, the systemic examination of schools essentially engages all school staff in a comprehensive reformation (Banks, 1997) in which all facets of the school structure are addressed to promote educational equity.

The pursuit of educational reform efforts undergirded by the systemic view of schools requires administrators and teachers, as well as other school personnel, to interrogate and challenge the presuppositions pertaining to schools. Indubitably, this should yield critical questions regarding the hidden curriculum, which constitutes “the elements of the deep structure of schools” (Banks, 2007, p. 95). These elements of the hidden curriculum, such as school bells that dictate class schedules, inculcate a factory-
based model of schooling that impedes student learning. The development of an empowering school culture and social structure includes the deconstruction of common schooling practices, such as tracking and ability grouping. As Kumar and Maehr (2007) mention, research has posited that these practices do not support equality. In order to diligently support the learning of every student and establish an equitable environment conducive to transformative pedagogy, tracking must be dismantled (Kumar & Maehr, 2007).

An empowering school culture and social structure is not readily common because as Sleeter and Grant (2003) mention, the majority of schools do not reflect democracy. To develop schools that represent bastions of democracy and work to address social issues, critical pedagogy must take precedence. Critical pedagogy entails “linking learning to social change, education to democracy, and knowledge to acts of intervention in public life” (Giroux & Giroux, 2006, p. 28). Thus, critical pedagogy calls for an empowering school culture and social structure in which learning is a social justice tool that serves an authentic and meaningful purpose.

The multicultural and social reconstructionist education (Sleeter & Grant, 2003) and critical pedagogy share a similar vision in developing an empowering school culture and social structure. The multicultural and social reconstructionist education is fostered through the concurrent implementation of the five dimensions of multicultural education. It prepares and enables students to serve as agents of social change and fosters a school structure that facilitates equal opportunity for all students (Sleeter & Grant, 2003). Inevitably, a multicultural and social reconstructionist education prepares students to constructively address social issues (e.g., systemic oppressions) and to contribute to the
development of a democratic society. Thus, an empowering school culture and social structure should serve as a repository for social change and cultural pluralism.

2.4 Multicultural Education in Teacher Education

The student populace in the United States’ schools has experienced a significant increase in ethnic, language, and religious diversity (Banks, 2007). However, White teachers continue to constitute the majority of the teacher force (Sleeter, 2001). Martin (1995a) points out that many pre-service teachers attended predominately White, middle-class schools and therefore possess a paucity of understanding pertaining to diversity issues. Henceforth, teacher education programs serve an integral role in preparing pre-service teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to foster a holistic multicultural education for all students in all K-12 classrooms and schools.

Since its early development in the 1970s, multicultural education has represented a component of teacher education. Supplemental courses and workshops were developed to prepare pre-service teachers to serve diverse student populations (Banks, as cited in Kumar & Karabenick, 2009). Albeit the purpose and conceptualization of multicultural education in teacher preparation programs have significantly expanded, Vavrus (2002) notes that many teacher education programs have not instituted “multicultural across-the-curriculum changes” or implemented “multicultural reforms with depth” (pp. 18-19). Multicultural education in many teacher preparation programs focuses on a “human-relations approach” (Sleeter & Grant, 2003, p. 64), in which pre-service teachers learn about tolerance and cultural differences, but the Eurocentric orientation towards the curriculum remains unchallenged.
The role multicultural education serves in teacher preparation can often be determined through the examination of conceptual frameworks that undergird teacher education programs. Numerous teacher education programs at colleges and universities foster conceptual frameworks that reflect the standards established and delineated by NCATE. Since 1978, NCATE has mandated the implementation of multicultural education in NCATE-accredited teacher education institutions (Gollnick, 2001). The current NCATE standards (NCATE, 2008) include various competencies linked to multicultural education. For example, a part of NCATE standard 1c, Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates, states that teacher candidates (pre-service teachers) must “consider the school, family, and community contexts in which they work and the prior experience of students to develop meaningful learning experiences” (NCATE, 2008, p. 18). While this statement does not explicitly make reference to multicultural education, it emphasizes the importance of context and building on students’ prior experiences, both of which represent key elements of instruction in multicultural education. Moreover, NCATE standard 1g, Professional Dispositions for All Candidates, asserts that teacher candidates must demonstrate fairness and the “belief that all students can learn” (NCATE, 2008, p. 20). The aforementioned dispositions are requisites in the facilitation of a holistic multicultural education. However, as Chubbuck (2010) points out, “the belief that children can learn, the opposite of a deficit view of students, may or may not be as prevalent” (p. 199) amongst pre-service teachers.

In order for pre-service teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and “multicultural perspective” (Nieto, 2009, p. 61) needed to implement all five dimensions of multicultural education in tandem, it is imperative that teacher preparation programs...
design education paradigms that reflect a holistic multicultural education. Teacher education programs should facilitate a milieu that fosters opportunities for all pre-service teachers to engage in prejudice reduction by confronting their “own racism and biases” (Nieto, 2009, p. 61). More specifically, the construction of autobiographies (Ladson-Billings, 2000) enables pre-service teachers to candidly reflect upon and interrogate how their own biases, prejudices, and perspectives have been significantly influenced by their positionalities in society. This critical analysis of biases, perspectives, and individual prejudices should serve as the prelude to discussions related to the inequities that pervade the structure of numerous societal institutions, including schools. It is imperative for pre-service teachers to recognize that most schools transmit the norms, values, and perspectives of the White, middle-class culture, thereby marginalizing a colossal number of students. Classroom conversations pertaining to systemic oppressions and institutionalized discrimination may initially render contentious debates, resistance, and discomfort amongst many pre-service teachers. However, discourse pertaining to critical issues, such as racism, White privilege, and the status quo, will enable pre-service teachers to “understand their roles in the institutional dynamics of power in which issues of diversity are rooted” (Martin, 1995a, p. 67). This could represent the impetus for pre-service teachers to serve as active participants in educational reform efforts.

Field experiences constitute an important facet of pre-service teachers’ preparation in education programs that lead to teacher licensure. Many teacher education programs require pre-service teachers to conduct a field experience in a school that consists of diversity (Ladson-Billings, 2000). As Ladson-Billings (2000) points out, these field experiences could exacerbate racial stereotypes and prejudices. Henceforth, the need for
pre-service teachers’ construction of autobiographies and classroom discussions pertaining to issues of diversity and social justice emerges. Nonetheless, field experiences could proffer pre-service teachers opportunities to engage in critical reflections, while simultaneously demonstrating the use of multicultural competencies. Field experiences conducted in community settings enable pre-service teachers to learn of the viable strengths, both tangible and intangible, embodied by a culture (Ladson-Billings, 2000) and/or community. Service-learning, which embodies elements of multicultural education, fosters the development of cross-cultural relationships, serves as an educational vehicle to promote equity and social justice, and seamlessly transforms theory into practice (O’Grady, 2000). Evidently, field experiences serve a pertinent role in the facilitation of multicultural education in teacher education programs.
Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. Moreover, this study examined the impact of an introductory education course on the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. The data collected from the study was analyzed within James A. Banks’ comprehensive typology, “the dimensions of multicultural education” (Banks, 2007).

3.2 Research Questions

Qualitative research studies essentially provide “a greater understanding of perceptions, attitudes, and processes” (Glesne, 2006, p. 29). Therefore, the research questions should be “open-ended, evolving, and nondirectional” (Creswell, 2007, p. 107). This qualitative research study sought to address the following questions:

- What is pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education?
- How did the Introduction to Education course, EDU 1700, influence the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education?
3.3 Significance of Study

The student populace within the United States’ schools is becoming increasingly diverse (Banks, 2007), but the majority of the teacher force is comprised of White teachers (Sleeter, 2001). Sleeter (2001) cites research that mentions how White pre-service teachers often “bring very little cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experience” (p. 95) to classrooms and schools. Henceforth, it is imperative for teacher education programs to prepare all pre-service teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary in order to foster a holistic multicultural education in K-12 classrooms and schools. However, in order to achieve the aforementioned, teacher educators must have an initial awareness of pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. Thus, this research study provides insight into a small, but relevant, sample of pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. The results of this research study have the potential to contribute to the improvement of the EDU 1700 course within the UT JHCOE. Moreover, this research study contributes knowledge to the fields of multicultural education and teacher education.

3.4 Research Design

The examination of pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education requires a research methodology that enables the researcher to develop a “complex, detailed understanding of the issue” (Creswell, 2007, p. 40). This thorough understanding is fostered through the collection and analysis of data gathered from various sources. As Creswell (2007) points out, one of the hallmarks of qualitative research is the use of “multiple sources of data” (p. 38). More specifically, this qualitative research study is
descriptive (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), particularly since it sought to provide evidence of and describe pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education.

This study entailed the combination of the ethnographic and case study approaches to qualitative research. An ethnography, conducted through engagement in fieldwork, provides insight into the beliefs and issues of a particular cultural group (Creswell, 2007). In this study, pre-service teachers represent the cultural group, and insight into their understanding of multicultural education was sought through fieldwork conducted at the research site, or more specifically, the EDU 1700 class. A case study entails “the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). This ethnographic case study was conducted during Fall 2009 and within the EDU 1700 course, and thus bounded by time and space. Thus, conducting this ethnographic case study fostered the invaluable opportunity to explore the pre-service teachers’ varied perspectives and reflections pertaining to multicultural education that emerged from the copious amount of data collected.

3.5 Researcher’s Role

In this qualitative research study, the researcher recruited the participants; explained the informed consent to the participants; collected and secured the informed consent signed forms; distributed, collected and secured the pre- and post-questionnaires; conducted participant observation and wrote jotted, descriptive, and analytic field notes; collected and secured copies of the class assignments to gather data; conducted the data collection; and managed, analyzed, and interpreted the data.

Although the researcher was a graduate student in the JHCOE during the time this study was conducted, her role in the research was entirely that of researcher. This role
was established through her discussions with the students and faculty involved in the research. The researcher also served as a graduate assistant in the assessment and accreditation function of the JHCOE, which cultivated her interest in teacher education. These additional roles provided the researcher with additional frameworks that influenced the design of the study, as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data.

3.6 Research Setting

Marshall and Rossman (2006) emphasize the importance of site selection, mentioning how it serves a pivotal role in “the design of the study and serves as a guide for the researcher” (p. 61). This qualitative research study was conducted in the EDU 1700 course at the UT JHCOE during the fall semester of 2009. The class occurred three days per week for 50 minutes each day, and the field observations were conducted beginning the fifth week of class through the last week of class. All undergraduate students enrolled in teacher licensure programs must complete EDU 1700.

The EDU 1700 course represents a TAG (transfer assurance guarantee) course, and therefore must meet certain requirements mandated by the Ohio Board of Regents. As a result of mandates delineated by the Ohio Board of Regents, six integral themes must be explored throughout the coursework: professionalization; standards-based education; democratic issues/social justice; legal and organizational issues; diversity; and curriculum and instruction. The themes of democratic issues/social justice and diversity are particularly integral aspects of multicultural education. The EDU 1700 course at the UT JHCOE requires participation in a service-learning experience (total of 10 hours) that enables the pre-service teachers to tutor students, while simultaneously learning about the complex and inextricable connection between urban communities and schooling. The
service-learning experiences are conducted at various urban educational settings, including traditional public schools, charter schools, and a community center. As previously mentioned in the literature review, service learning experiences can serve an invaluable role in the facilitation of multicultural education in teacher education programs.

3.7 Research Participants

The participants in this research study were all pre-service teachers enrolled in one section of EDU 1700, which was taught by an experienced and tenured JHCOE faculty member who had been involved in the course design in 2008 and its piloting and development in the 2008-2009 academic year. More specifically, all of the pre-service teachers in the study were pre-professional, which indicates that the pre-service teachers had not yet applied and/or been admitted into their respective licensure programs within the JHCOE. Successful completion of EDU 1700 constitutes one of the requirements for entry into the professional education program at the JHCOE. During the second week of the semester, the researcher visited the class, briefly discussed the research study, and invited all of the pre-professional, pre-service teachers in this course section to participate in the study. In order to take part in this study, the pre-service teachers were required to sign the IRB informed consent form, which lucidly explicated the purpose of the study, description of the procedures, potential risks, potential benefits, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the contact information of the researcher and UT Social, Behavioral, and Educational Institutional Review Board (SBE IRB). It was made clear that the instructor would not know who chose to participate in the study, and that the course
requirements for those participating would be exactly the same as for those not participating.

3.8 Data Collection

Qualitative research entails the use of “multiple sources of data” (Creswell, 2007, p. 38), thereby providing researchers with opportunities to acquire more detailed and substantive insight into the issue or phenomena being researched. As an ethnographic case study, this qualitative research study employed the use of “multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73), including questionnaires, documents, and field notes. The utilization of various data collection methods—participant-observation, administering of questionnaires, and document collection—in this study supported triangulation, which inevitably “contributes to the trustworthiness of the data” (Glesne, 2006, p. 36).

During the second week of the EDU 1700 class, the researcher administered a pre-questionnaire to the research participants. The pre-questionnaire [See Appendix A; Pre-Questionnaire] required the participant’s name, demographic information, and the completion of four open-ended questions. The pre-questionnaire was distributed and collected by the researcher. Original names on the cover sheets of the pre-questionnaires were removed and replaced with pseudonyms. The demographic section sought basic information including gender, ethnicity, age range, major in education, and confirmation of pre-professional, pre-service teacher status. Most of the sections requested participants to select from prescribed items. The ethnicity part though requested the participants to complete the following written statement: “I would identify myself as ____.”

Moreover, the pre-questionnaire contained the following four open-ended questions:
1.) How would you describe multicultural education?

2.) What experiences did you have with multicultural education during your K-12 school years?

3.) What role(s) will multicultural education play in your future classroom?

4.) What role(s) do you think multicultural education should play in K-12 schools?

During the last week of the EDU 1700 class, the researcher distributed a post-questionnaire to the research participants. The post-questionnaire [See Appendix B; Post Questionnaires] also required the participant’s name, demographic information, and completion of four open-ended questions. The post-questionnaire was distributed and collected by the researcher. Original names on the cover sheets of the post-questionnaires were changed to the pseudonyms previously assigned to the students’ pre-questionnaires and assignments. The demographic section on the post-questionnaire was a facsimile of the demographic section on the pre-questionnaire. The post-questionnaire contained the following four open-ended questions:

1.) How would you describe multicultural education?

2.) What role(s) will multicultural education play in your future classroom?

3.) What role(s) do you think multicultural education should play in K-12 schools?

4.) Do you feel that EDU 1700 has changed and/or enhanced your understanding of multicultural education? If so, how? Please elaborate.

Three of the questions were also on the pre-questionnaire. These questions were repeated in order to compare how the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education changed or remained the same following enrollment in the course, and how the EDU 1700 course may have influenced their understanding of multicultural education.
The open-ended questions on both questionnaires were intended to enable the participants to provide detailed responses related to their perspectives, knowledge, and experiences pertaining to multicultural education.

Beginning the fifth week of September, the researcher attended every class for the remainder of the semester. During the classes, the researcher served as an observer and conducted field observations. As an observer, the researcher wrote jotted field notes, which were utilized to write descriptive and analytic field notes. The actions and words of students who did not consent to participate in the research study were not included in the field notes.

At the end of class periods, paper copies of various assignments were submitted to the course instructor. The researcher collected the following assignments: 1.) Daily reflections; 2) Service-learning pre-experience papers, experience notes, and final papers; and 3) Philosophy papers. To facilitate confidential data collection, the course instructor collected the assignments. As usual, following the class, the researcher obtained the assignments of all students from the instructor and Xeroxed the assignments of the research participants. The researcher then immediately returned the original assignments to the course instructor. Also, the researcher changed the names on the copies of the assignments to the pseudonyms assigned to the research participants.

3.9 Data Management

Glesne (2006) discusses the importance of data management, particularly accentuating the need for “methodical organization” (p. 151). Qualitative research studies often generate copious amounts of useful data and therefore, a researcher may become engulfed with the data. Marshall and Rossman (2006) emphasize the importance for a
researcher to develop a data management system that facilitates an uncomplicated “retrieval for analysis” (152).

In this qualitative research study, the pre- and post-questionnaires were typed into Word documents, and the data was stored on the researcher’s flash drive, which contained only data and information pertaining to this research study. The pre- and post-questionnaires were placed in a three-ring binder. The jotted field notes were hand-written in the researcher’s notebook and utilized to write and type descriptive and analytic field notes into Word documents that were stored on the aforementioned flash drive and printed and placed in a three-ring binder. The copies of various assignments (documents) were also placed in a three-ring binder. The data was stored in a secure file cabinet in the researcher’s home.

3.10 Data Analysis

The sheer volume of data generated through the utilization of various data collection methods requires inquisitive reflections and meticulous analysis during the qualitative research process. Due to the rather multifaceted nature of qualitative research, the data analysis process can yield complexities and ambiguities. Thus, the task of systematically coding data was imperative in the data analysis process.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) succinctly define the coding data process as “the formal representation of analytic thinking” (p. 160). For this research study, coded data was represented by various colors of page markers that signified specific a priori codes, i.e., codes that were based on Banks’ conceptual framework. Emergent codes were written on the aforementioned page markers. The unit of analysis was dependent upon the data being coded: the pre- and post-questionnaires were coded statement by statement,
whereas the field notes and pre-service teachers’ assignments (e.g., philosophy papers) were coded by paragraph. The researcher began the data analysis by assigning *a priori* codes and emergent codes. The *a priori* codes, which served as categories in the initial coding system, represented the following dimensions of multicultural education identified by Banks (2007): “(1) content integration, (2) the knowledge construction process, (3) prejudice reduction, (4) an equity pedagogy, and (5) an empowering school culture and social structure” (p. 83). However, as Creswell (2007) points out, even though *a priori* codes may be utilized, researchers should “be open to additional codes emerging during the analysis” (p. 152). The emergent codes were based on the analysis and interpretation of the research data. The coding system was then revised, a process through which the most prevalent emergent codes from the data, the themes, were identified and a list of sub-codes was generated.

### 3.11 Sources of Data

Since this research represented an ethnographic case study, the researcher collected various types of data, including field notes, pre- and post-questionnaires, and students’ assignments (documents). For this specific analysis, the researcher chose to analyze the data from the pre- and post-questionnaires, field notes, and the pre-service teachers’ philosophy papers.

### 3.12 Confidentiality

During the verbal explanation of the research study and in the UT Social, Behavioral, and Educational Institutional Review Board Informed Consent Form, the researcher assured all of the pre-service teachers that the instructor of the course, who also served as the principal-investigator and advisor for this research study, would not see the names of
any students attached to the data. The consent forms, distributed and collected by the researcher, were kept separated from the data. Moreover, it is imperative to elucidate that the researcher replaced the students’ real names with pseudonyms on the pre- and post-questionnaires, field notes, and assignments. The principal-investigator only saw the data, which contained all pseudonyms, after all course grades were submitted and the semester was finished. Furthermore, the researcher assured the students that participation was voluntary and the course instructor would not know and would not care if they chose not to participate. During the administration and collection of the pre- and post-questionnaires, the course instructor left the classroom. It appeared to both the instructor and the researcher that the pre-service teachers were comfortable with the process and accepted that the instructor was not involved in the actual data collection and analysis.

With this plan laid out, the researcher requested and received approval from the UT Social, Behavioral, and Educational Institutional Review Board to conduct this qualitative research study.
Chapter 4

Data Analysis

In this chapter, the data presented in chapter three are analyzed in order to answer the following research questions: 1) What is pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education? 2) How did the Introduction to Education course, EDU 1700, influence the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education? Considering the data of the entire case (the course itself and all the students who chose to participate in the research) rather than considering the data in terms of individual students allows the researcher to present the ideas about multicultural education as generalized to the course and all the pre-service teachers in it.

The first section of this chapter presents the demographics of the participants, followed by an analysis of the pre-questionnaire that reveals the pre-service teachers’ pre-existing conceptualizations of multicultural education. The latter section of the chapter, which contains a detailed analysis of the post-questionnaires, philosophy papers, and field notes, presents the pre-service teachers’ developing understanding of multicultural education. At the end of the chapter, a section pertaining to the impact of the EDU 1700 course is presented.
4.1 Demographics of the Participants

As previously mentioned in chapter three, the participants in this study were pre-professional, pre-service teachers enrolled in EDU 1700 at the UT JHCOE during the fall semester of 2009. A total of 18 pre-service teachers participated in this study. Basic demographic information—gender, ethnicity, age range, major in education, and confirmation of pre-professional, pre-service teacher status—was collected on the pre- and post-questionnaires. The specific data pertaining to the demographics of the participants can be viewed below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Demographics of the Participants (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>*Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male: 7</td>
<td>“African American”: 3</td>
<td>18-24: 16</td>
<td>AYA Language Arts: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female: 11</td>
<td>“Caucasian”: 8</td>
<td>25-34: 1</td>
<td>AYA Mathematics: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Latino”: 1</td>
<td>35-44: 0</td>
<td>AYA Science: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“White”: 3</td>
<td>Over 44: 1</td>
<td>AYA Social Studies: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“White/Caucasian”: 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Childhood: 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[European]: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Early Childhood: 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Education: 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health Education: 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Foreign Language: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. On the pre- and post-questionnaires, the ethnicity part of the demographic section requested the participants to complete the following written statement: “I would identify myself as ______.” Some pre-service teachers self-identified using ethnic terms (e.g., “African American”), while some pre-service teachers self-identified using racial terms (e.g., “White”).

4.2 Pre-existing Conceptualizations about Multicultural Education

Effective teacher educators seek to understand pre-service teachers’ prior knowledge, skills, and experiences. Thus, it is imperative to discuss the pre-service teachers’ initial understanding of multicultural education. The most relevant data source for this was the pre-questionnaire, which was administered in the EDU 1700 class during the second week of the semester. All 18 participants completed the entire pre-questionnaire.
The pre-questionnaire contained the following four questions, which were designed to yield open-ended responses: (1) How would you describe multicultural education? (2) What experiences did you have with multicultural education during your K-12 school years? (3) What role(s) will multicultural education play in your future classroom? (4) What role(s) do you think multicultural education should play in K-12 schools?

The aforementioned questions, which generated various responses, revealed the nuances and subtleties of the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. The initial question enabled the pre-service teachers to discuss their background knowledge and dispositions pertaining to multicultural education. The second question was specifically designed to provide the researcher with insight into the pre-service teachers’ prior experiences, as well as to implicitly encourage the pre-service teachers to engage in the construction of autobiographies (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Since classrooms often reflect a milieu of teacher autonomy, the third question enabled the pre-service teachers to reflect upon the role multicultural education would play in their individual classrooms. The latter question provided the pre-service teachers with the opportunity to reflect upon the complex and institutional role of multicultural education in schools.

Every written response on the pre-questionnaire was carefully perused, analyzed and coded. Henceforth, each written answer represented a unit of analysis on the pre-questionnaire. During the initial stage of analysis, the data was assigned *a priori* codes, which represented Banks’ (2007) five dimensions of multicultural education. The *a priori* codes were color coded using page markers. The researcher wrote emergent codes, which consisted of words and phrases taken directly from the data, on the page markers. The *a*
priori codes then represented categories under which the emergent codes were listed. Next, through further diligent analysis of the data, the researcher identified themes, under which sub-codes were listed.

Throughout the analysis of the data in the pre-questionnaire, three main themes pertaining to pre-service teachers’ initial understanding of multicultural education emerged. The themes include the following: multicultural education as curriculum and instruction, multicultural education as fostering intercultural dispositions, and multicultural education as having and teaching diverse student populations.

4.2.1 Multicultural Education as Curriculum and Instruction

Multicultural education as curriculum and instruction represents one of the themes that emerged from the careful analysis and coding of the data. This theme is congruent with the a priori category of content integration. As previously mentioned, content integration entails the use of lessons that contain examples and content from various cultural groups in order to teach and explain the subject matter (Banks, 2007).

The majority of the codes generated from the pre-service teachers’ responses to the questions were listed under the a priori category of content integration. In the responses to the first question, these codes included the following words and phrases: variety of courses, curriculum involving diverse population, teaching about other culture, lesson plan, teaching about different cultures, teach about different cultures and the people involved, learning a different language, traditions, reading and writing, activities [of] that culture, and educate these students on variety of different cultures not just Western Society’s culture. In the responses to the second question, these codes included the following words and phrases: high school Spanish, never learn other cultures, world
history, history books, Spanish class, history, social studies, English novels, not much multicultural learning, classroom curriculum, languages, different cultures in history, learned a little about the Native American Indian & about African Americans, and multicultural week. In the responses to the third question, these codes included the following words and phrases: teach about multiple cultures, religions, lessons relevant to all cultures, literature from different cultures, teach my students about other countries’ customs and views, big part of the social studies curriculum, teach, learn about other cultures, teaching Spanish, English lesson plans and explore many types of writings in different cultures, health education—health issues can effect [sic] people w/different ethnic backgrounds differently, and teach multicultural education. In the responses to the fourth question, these codes included the following words and phrases: offer foreign language, history class for other cultures, know where other people come from, learn about other cultures, and taught more about cultures surrounding them, taught more, learn more about other cultures, educate them on other cultures, taught multicultural studies, weekly plans, teach multicultural education, aware of different cultures and traditions.

Based on the aforementioned codes, many of the pre-service teachers described and regarded multicultural education as a part of curriculum and instruction. Throughout the responses to all four questions, there was an overt focus on the integration of multicultural content through lessons, instructional materials, activities, and courses. For example, in response to the first question, John wrote, “When learning about it [multicultural education], I feel that students should participate in activities that culture might take part in, as well as reading and writing about it.” Moreover, Chris wrote,
“Multicultural education to me is learning anything about another culture other than your own. Anything from learning a different language or culture to learning about other People’s [sic] traditions and such.”

In response to the third question, all of the pre-service teachers indicated that multicultural education would play a role in their future classrooms, thereby recognizing its importance. Many of their responses indicated that multicultural content would be incorporated into the curriculum. For example, Patrick wrote, “As an integrated social studies teacher I could teach my students about other countries’ customs and views. I could teach my students about other national governments of these countries.” Furthermore, Lisa wrote, “I hope to be able to help students relate to and learn from one another’s very different backgrounds. I will integrate literature from different cultures into the class and not avoid the reality of diversity.”

The pre-service teachers’ initial understanding of multicultural education as content integration within curriculum and instruction could be attributed to their prior experiences with multicultural education, or lack thereof. In their written responses regarding their experiences with multicultural education in K-12 schooling, the majority of the pre-service teachers indicated that their experiences with multicultural education were minimal and characterized by instructional activities and lessons pertaining to language arts, social studies, and foreign languages. For example, Marissa wrote, “We learn[ed] different languages such as Spanish or Russian. And we learned different cultures in history.” Moreover, Chris wrote that he “went to a very diverse school system” and that his high school organized a “multicultural week” in which “students from other cultures would bring in food and set up a booth in the cafeteria and you could try the
food.” Based on the various responses, it could be suggested that many of the pre-service teachers’ experiences with multicultural education were superficial and bereft of transformative educational practices.

Several of the pre-service teachers implicitly underscored the role the teacher serves in the implementation of multicultural education. Throughout the written responses, the verbs *teach* and *teaching* were mentioned several times and thus, there was a particular emphasis on content integration, or more specifically, the instruction of multicultural content. For example, in her description of the role multicultural education will play in her future classroom, Sarah wrote, “I would love to be able to teach about multiple cultures religions etc.”

Throughout their responses, the pre-service teachers used the term *culture* quite frequently. However, albeit a few pre-service teachers mentioned terms such as *ethnicities, backgrounds, and religions*, the term “culture” appeared rather amorphous within their responses. For example, when describing multicultural education, Adam wrote, “Education of multiple backgrounds and demographics. This does not only mean teaching them but teaching about other culture [sic].” When discussing the role multicultural education should play in K-12 schools, Claire wrote, “We should educate them on other cultures because if they understand the culture they will be more likely to accept it.” As demonstrated by the aforementioned responses, the term “other cultures” was also included several times throughout the pre-service teachers’ responses. One must question what “other cultures” constitutes. In response to the first question on the pre-questionnaire, Claire described multicultural education as educating “students on a variety of different cultures not just the Western Society’s culture.” When the pre-service
teachers wrote the term “other cultures,” it could have been a reference to historically-marginalized populations in the United States.

The responses to the pre-questionnaire indicated that the pre-service teachers entered the EDU 1700 course with an understanding of multicultural education as content integration. There was a focus on the instruction of multicultural content through the implementation of lessons, instructional activities, and courses. Nonetheless, the pre-service teachers recognized the importance of multicultural education.

4.2.2 Multicultural Education as Fostering Intercultural Dispositions

Some students also entered the EDU 1700 course with the idea of multicultural education as fostering intercultural dispositions, another theme that emerged from the analysis and coding of the data. This theme aligns with the a priori category of prejudice reduction. In K-12 classrooms and schools, the prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education represents the facilitation of opportunities that enable students to develop and demonstrate democratic values and attitudes (Banks, 2007), such as equality, justice, and respect. In order for students to develop and demonstrate positive intercultural dispositions and interactions, it is imperative for all school staff, including teachers, to develop pedagogy and a democratic school environment that actively addresses and eliminates prejudices, discrimination, and stereotypes.

Several of the codes generated from the pre-service teachers’ responses were listed under the a priori category of prejudice reduction. In the responses to the first question, these codes included the following words and phrases: interacting w/other students, respect, and tolerance and respect. In the responses to the second question, these codes included the following words and phrases: multiculturalism through the diversity of my
peers, racism, friends of different cultures, experience in diversity, and exposed to many different people. In the responses to the third question, these codes included the following words and phrases: respect, respect other cultures, taught to respect, and understand diversity. In the responses to the fourth question, these codes included the following words and phrases: healthy understanding of cultures, reduce fighting/assumptions, tolerant, stamp out prejudices, respectful to all people, and what it means to be “different.”

Based on the aforementioned codes, a few of the pre-service teachers described multicultural education as teaching and promoting intercultural dispositions, such as tolerance and respect. A few of the pre-service teachers’ suggested that the development of these dispositions should be fostered through learning about “cultures.” For example, when describing the role multicultural education should play in K-12 schools, Brian wrote, “All students should learn about other cultures to become tolerant of them.” Julie, in her description of the role multicultural education will play in her future classroom, wrote how it is important “for all students to learn about and respect other cultures.” Thus, it could be implied that these pre-service teachers place an emphasis on the role of content integration in helping students develop intercultural dispositions. The former response emphasizes tolerance, while the latter one accentuates the importance of respect. It is imperative to elucidate that there is a significant difference between tolerance and respect. Nieto (2009) mentions that tolerance does not always signify the embrace of differences, but rather it refers to “the capacity to bear something, although at times it may be unpleasant” (p. 62). As for respect though, Nieto (2009) points out that “when diversity is respected, it is used as the basis for much of the education offered” (p. 62).
A few of the pre-service teachers specifically emphasized the importance of cultural understanding in order to address more complex issues, such as prejudice. For example, Julie wrote, “It is important to learn about a variety of cultures to stamp out prejudices and the unknown so we aren’t as ignorant.” Sarah wrote, “I think it is important for all students to have a healthy understanding of cultures. I feel it would help reduce fighting and assumptions amongst students.” These pre-service teachers’ responses imply that simply learning about cultures will contribute to the elimination of prejudices and reduction of assumptions. However, Jamal, who mentioned that he attended urban and suburban school systems and had “experience in diversity,” wrote, “Every student should know major ethnicities, cultures, etc in American…young children should be taught multicultural studies and what it means to be ‘different.’ It provides understanding of society, the world & the world we live in.” Jamal’s response underscores the importance of cultural understanding beyond the school context, mentioning how it fosters understanding of both society and the world. Moreover, Jamal placed the word “different” in quotation marks. Thus, in his response, Jamal may be implying that the concept of “different” is dependent upon perspective.

In response to the second question, a few of the pre-service teachers mentioned their K-12 schooling experiences with multicultural education in relation to cross-cultural interactions. For example, Lisa, who mentioned that multicultural education “should also open students up to cultures other than their own…through interacting w/ other students,” wrote that she was “educated about multiculturalism more through the diversity of my peers than through the curriculum.” Patrick mentioned that his experience with
multicultural education was “very little to none, aside from Spanish class and having friends of different cultures.”

The responses to the pre-questionnaire indicated that some of the pre-service teachers’ ideas about multicultural education were related to prejudice reduction. The pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of teaching and promoting intercultural dispositions, as well as fostering cross-cultural interactions. Evidently, the responses indicate the Human-Relations approach to teaching (Sleeter & Grant, 2003).

4.2.3 Multicultural Education as Having and Teaching Diverse Student Populations

Multicultural education as having and teaching diverse student populations was the third most prevalent theme that emerged from the analysis and coding of the data. Unlike the previous themes, this theme did not align with any of the a priori categories. However, it represented a significant and noteworthy theme that was reflected in many of the pre-service teachers’ responses.

The theme of multicultural education as having and teaching diverse student populations emerged from the analysis of the various codes that were generated from the first question. In the responses to the first question, these codes included the following words and phrases: *education of multiple backgrounds and demographics, educating students who are from various cultural backgrounds about various cultures, classrooms/schools/learning environments with students from different cultures, education that teaches students of many cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds, having a lot of diverse students, having people of diverse cultures in the classroom, education where students of different cultures engage in educational environment, educate students...*
from all different backgrounds together, education/schooling involving numerous cultures & diversities, and teaching students.

In their descriptions of multicultural education, approximately half of the pre-service teachers described multicultural education as having and/or teaching diverse student populations. Evidently, many of the pre-service teachers regarded the implementation of multicultural education as contingent upon having a diverse student populace. For example, Patrick explained multicultural education as “Education that teaches students of many cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds; either in one class or in multiple classes.” Julie wrote, “I would describe it having people of diverse cultures in the classroom…” Furthermore, Jane wrote, “I would describe multicultural education as having a lot of diverse students with different backgrounds and cultures.” For many of the pre-service teachers, the interpretation of multicultural education as having and teaching a diverse student population may be related to their K-12 schooling experiences. When describing her K-12 schooling experiences with multicultural education, Julie detailed how she attended a mainly White, suburban school where her experience with multicultural education was limited. Jane’s comment, which reflects the cultural deficit theory, read, “The only multicultural group I encountered was Mexican-American and their culture and lifestyle did not interfere with education and they all had adopted a lot of American practices.”

The responses to the pre-questionnaire indicated that approximately half of the pre-service teachers entered the EDU 1700 course with an understanding of multicultural education as having and/or teaching diverse student populations. This is a significant finding because it implies that many of the pre-service teachers regarded the diversity of
the students as the key variable that determines the implementation of multicultural education. For many of the pre-service teachers, this could be attributed to their previous K-12 schooling experience or limited experiences with multicultural education.

Thus, the pre-service teachers entered the EDU 1700 course with various ideas about multicultural education, and discussed some of them as emergent from their own experiences. Despite their myriad experiences, the pre-service teachers’ discussion showed very consistent and similar conceptualizations including multicultural education as the integration of multicultural content into curriculum and instruction, multicultural education as promoting intercultural dispositions and interactions, and multicultural education as having and teaching a diverse student populace.

4.3 Developing Ideas about Multicultural Education

In order to examine the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education following their enrollment in EDU 1700, as well as how the course influenced their understanding of multicultural education, the researcher analyzed the data generated from the post-questionnaires, philosophy papers, and field notes. Analyzing multiple sources of data fostered triangulation. The post-questionnaire was administered in the EDU 1700 class on Wednesday during the last week of the course. A total of 16 participants completed the post-questionnaire. However, it is important to mention that when the post-questionnaire was initially administered by the researcher, it accidentally contained the first page of questions that belonged to the pre-questionnaire. Albeit the first question on the first page of the pre- and post-questionnaires is the same, the second question is different. Therefore, on Friday during the last week of the course, the
researcher administered the first page of the post-questionnaire. Therefore, a total of 12 participants completed the entire post-questionnaire.

The post-questionnaire contained the following four questions, which were designed to generate open-ended responses: (1) How would you describe multicultural education? (2) What role(s) will multicultural education play in your future classroom? (3) What role(s) do you think multicultural education should play in K-12 schools? (4) Do you feel that EDU 1700 has changed and/or enhanced your understanding of multicultural education? If so, how? Please elaborate.

The first three questions of the post-questionnaire were also on the pre-questionnaire. The last question provided the pre-service teachers with the opportunity to reflect upon whether or not the EDU 1700 course influenced their understanding of multicultural education. The written responses to the first three questions on the post-questionnaires were perused, analyzed and coded. Similar to the coding of the pre-questionnaire, each written answer represented a unit of analysis on the post-questionnaire. At the beginning of the analysis, the data was assigned a priori codes, which represented Banks’ (2007) five dimensions of multicultural education. The a priori codes were color coded using page markers. The researcher then wrote the emergent codes, which consisted of words and phrases taken directly from the data, on the page markers. Next, the a priori codes represented categories under which the emergent codes were listed. The researcher conducted a more detailed analysis of the data, which yielded a few themes. The responses to the fourth question were analyzed and coded to determine whether or not the pre-service teachers’ identified the EDU 1700 course as having an influence on their understanding of multicultural education.
The post-questionnaires, the pre-service teachers’ philosophy papers, and the researcher’s field notes provided the most relevant and usable data for understanding the pre-service teachers’ developing ideas pertaining to multicultural education. It should be noted that throughout the EDU 1700 course, the pre-service teachers also wrote analytic reflections on their service-learning experiences, in which they discussed their own detailed observations through the lenses provided by the course readings. These reflections constituted rich data, but of such a great volume that they could not be included in the current analysis.

The philosophy papers, which represented the culminating assignment for the course, were carefully perused, analyzed, and coded. The philosophy papers consisted of various section; for this analysis, the researcher analyzed and coded the data generated from the sections pertaining to social justice and diverse learners. The descriptive field notes written by the researcher were also carefully perused, analyzed and coded. The participant-observation provided the researcher with detailed insight into the classroom instruction and discussions. The field notes generated by the participant-observation enabled the researcher to analyze how the course may have changed and/or enhanced the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. The procedures for the analysis of the data from the philosophy papers and field notes were the same as those previously discussed for the pre- and post-questionnaires.

During the analysis of the data in the post-questionnaire, three main themes related to the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. These themes include the following: multicultural education as understanding and building on students’ background knowledge, multicultural education as fostering intercultural dispositions,
multicultural education as curriculum and instruction. The former two themes were also salient in the philosophy papers.

4.3.1 Multicultural Education as Understanding and Building on Students’ Background Knowledge

Multicultural education as understanding and building on students’ background knowledge constitutes one of the themes that emerged from the analysis and coding of the data. This theme is congruent with the *a priori* category of equity pedagogy. Equity pedagogy entails the instructional strategies and development of classroom environments that foster the learning and academic achievement of all students (Banks, 2007). More specifically, the implementation of equity pedagogy is contingent upon the recognition of students’ cultures, prior knowledge, and skills as strengths that facilitate the learning process.

Many of the codes generated from the pre-service teachers’ responses to the first three questions were listed under the *a priori* category of equity pedagogy. In the responses to the first question, these codes included the following words and phrases: *suites all kinds of ethnical backgrounds, teaching to each students needs, aware that all students are different, education that is diverse, appeals to all cultures, differences in cultures, backgrounds, learning abilities, and learning and observing how other people learn*. In the responses to the second question, these codes included the following words and phrases: *culture is relevant and important, incorporate students’ backgrounds, understanding of students’ backgrounds, learning tool for all, teach my lessons, reaching & appealing to every student, important learning source, and people learn differently*. In the responses to the third question, these codes included the following words and phrases:
Several pre-service teachers recognized the importance of taking into account and understanding student diversity in the classroom. For example, for her description of multicultural education, Julie wrote, “I would describe it as being aware that all students are different. They come from different backgrounds, different ethnicities and different family structures. Also, that these differences should be respected, valued, and a learning experience.” Moreover, for his description of the role multicultural education will play in his future classroom, Jamal wrote, “Understanding of diversity. Understanding of student’s backgrounds. Learning tool for all. Better climate of learning.” In the philosophy papers, some of the pre-service teachers discussed the relevance of diversity as it pertains to student learning. For example, Marissa wrote, “I want to step into my classroom and realize that my students have come from so many diverse backgrounds and that there [sic] styles are going to reflect that.”

Some of the pre-service teachers indicated how their knowledge of student diversity would influence their pedagogical practices. For example, Lisa wrote, “I want my students to know I think their culture is relevant and important. I plan to incorporate students’ backgrounds into class discussion. As an English teacher, I plan to choose literature from various cultural backgrounds.” Moreover, in her philosophy paper, Mary wrote, “There are many types of diversity in the classroom such as culture, language, gender, ability, and exceptionalities….I believe we should value cultural differences and build on their backgrounds to make education important to them individually.”
The field notes describe how the professor of the course readily discussed the importance of building on students’ cultures, prior knowledge, and experiences. Moreover, the professor emphasized how it is imperative to understand the students’ cultures. For example:

The students break into discussion (small groups of 2-3 students) regarding the diversity chapter they were assigned in their textbook. The professor asks the students what was important and interesting….Another participant discusses the building on students’ background—she read in the book how the teacher brought culture in. The professor discusses “funds of knowledge.” The professor mentions disabilities, gender (boys/girls and ladies/gentlemen) and how gender is “learned.” (field notes, September 21, 2009)

The professor provides an example of how a student might have 4 or 5 siblings and is used to helping, but then attends school and has to work independently, which might cause a culture conflict. (field notes, September 25, 2009)

It’s 8:00 a.m. and the professor mentions to the class that they will be talking about socioeconomic status and watching a video about how SES affects schools. The professor proceeds to discuss the service-learning assignment, emphasizing that students should have focused on “listening to the kid.” The professor tells the students to get into groups (two or three students per group) and discuss: “What is the most interesting thing you learned from a kid?” and “What have you learned from a kid? How will it affect you as a professional?” Voices fill the classroom, as the students discuss the aforementioned questions….Julie, who tutors at the community center, mentions how she discussed sports with the children at the center. In response to
Julie’s comment, the professor mentions “culturally relevant teaching” and how teachers must find what works. (field notes, October 7, 2009)

In order for equity pedagogy to thrive in schools and classrooms, the structural dynamics and inequalities fostered within schools must be addressed and eliminated (Banks, 2007). Moreover, in order to implement equity pedagogy, teachers must demonstrate democratic dispositions that promote and foster social justice. In the philosophy papers, specifically within the section pertaining to social justice, the pre-service teachers reflected upon and expounded on the importance of social justice. When describing the role of social justice, the pre-service teachers used words and phrases such as fairness, equal opportunity, everyone is equal, equality, and treating everyone in my classroom the same.

Within their philosophy papers, the pre-service teachers’ discussed the role social justice would particularly play in their future classrooms. Casey wrote, “I want to make sure to reinforce fairness and equality in my classroom. I do not want anyone in my class feeling like they are treated unfair or unlike someone else.” Moreover, Adam wrote:

A major issue in modern schools is being socially just. I cannot say what the policies will be in my future school system but I can account for my own actions. My classroom will be one of equal opportunity for all races, religions, disabilities, and all other characteristics that differentiate a student or groups of students from the mainstream. It is extremely necessary to start showing equality to students at a young age….An example of this came in my service learning hours.
In the aforementioned response, Adam mentioned the salience of social justice in schools. However, like many of the other pre-service teachers, he focused on how social justice would manifest in his future classroom. A few of the pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of focusing on social justice at the institutional level within schools. For example, Jamal wrote:

I will strive for the equality in school. Every student should be treated fairly. If there is a student who is having problems with the school, I will not be afraid to intervene and help the student with their problem. I value equality….Equality and fairness is important in any school setting.

Moreover, albeit a few of the pre-service teachers mentioned the societal impact on student learning and schools, they focused on the role social justice would play in their future classrooms.

For instance, Julie wrote:

In a society where it is said that everyone is treated equally not [sic] matter what, this is not the reality. There are differences that are emphasized such as gender and social class and that many opportunities may not be the same for everyone based on various factors. In order to eliminate this in my classroom, I have to treat everyone the same and emphasize it doesn’t matter where the person is from or what kind of family they have. They are still learners that want to do their best to succeed so need to be treated with respect.

Moreover, Tracey wrote:

I will that all students get an equal opportunity to an education as everyone else no matter their race, gender, or socioeconomic status…but I know in some areas with
lower socioeconomic status students do not always feel this way, because their school building is run down or the teachers might act like they do not care about their students. I can make sure that I treat my students equally.

In the philosophy papers and responses to the post-questionnaire, several pre-service teachers recognized the various components of student diversity. This could be attributed to the class discussions that occurred throughout the EDU 1700 course. The field notes describe how the professor of the course incorporated issues pertaining to diversity throughout class discussions. For example:

The professor discusses how discrimination is “institutional” and not merely individual. She also mentions how everyone has “cultural diversity.”

(field notes, September 21, 2009)

The professor, referring to students’ discussions, says, “You didn’t realize how diversity encompassed so many things.” The professor shows the students the “dimensions of diversity” presented in the textbook, mentioning how culture includes ethnicity, race, religion, and socio-economic status….The professor mentions how “race” is “an inventive concept,” and how it is derived from system in which “one group was taken advantage by other groups.” (field notes, September 23, 2009)

The professor asks students to get into their groups (previously organized on Wednesday) and to discuss the main five points. The five groups each discuss a category pertaining to diversity—culture, ability differences, gender, language, and exceptionalities. (field notes, September 25, 2009)
The field notes highlight how the professor elaborated on the complex scope of diversity and the importance of students’ cultures and background knowledge and experiences. This is important because in order to understand and build on students’ cultures and background knowledge, and thereby facilitate an equity pedagogy, it is necessary for pre-service teachers to develop an understanding of the various components of diversity. The professor also emphasized the importance of understanding systemic issues (e.g., discrimination is “institutional” and not merely individual). In their philosophy papers, several pre-service teachers mentioned systemic issues and school structure (e.g., “In a society where it is said that everyone is treated equally not [sic] matter what, this is not the reality,” and “I cannot say what the policies will be in my future school system”). However, in their philosophy papers, the pre-service teachers focused more on the facilitation of social justice at the classroom level rather than at the institutional level.

4.3.2 Multicultural Education as Fostering Intercultural Dispositions

Multicultural education as fostering intercultural dispositions constitutes another theme that emerged from the analysis and coding of the data from the post-questionnaire. This theme aligns with the *a priori* category of prejudice reduction, and it was also a theme that emerged from the pre-service teachers’ pre-existing ideas about multicultural education as analyzed above. Many of the codes generated from the pre-service teachers’ responses to the questions were listed under the aforementioned *a priori* category. In the responses to the first question, these codes included the following words and phrases: *importance of each culture’s equality, differences should be respected, valued, and students of all cultures work together.* In the responses to the second question, these
codes included the following words and phrases: respect, accept the cultures of others, and understanding of diversity. In the responses to the third question, these codes included the following words and phrases: understand other people better, conversation, learn about the people around you, better understanding of people they interact with, a dominant role against slander and bullying, acceptance & knowledge, prevent hate/prejudice, relieve biases/prejudice, and open mind.

Within their responses on the post-questionnaire, a few of the pre-service teachers focused on the role of multicultural education in promoting cross-cultural interactions. For example, in her description of multicultural education, Lisa wrote, “Stressing the importance of each culture’s equality and the importance for students to understand cultures other than their own. The curriculum goes beyond what the teacher says though; students teach each other about culture all the time.” Moreover, in his description of the role multicultural education should play in K-12 schools, Mike wrote, “You will meet many people from different cultural backgrounds so it would be nice to have a conversation with them about each other’s cultures.” Furthermore, during one of the classes, the professor initiated discourse pertaining to cross-cultural interactions. The following excerpt, taken from the field notes, highlights the class discussion:

The professor talks about the human-relations approach (mentions that it emerged during the 1970s). She asks the students to think and talk about how many times they’ve had interactions with people of the opposite gender, people with different sexual orientation, people with disabilities, and/or friends of other ethnicities/race. She asks the students if these interactions are commonplace nowadays. Students are asked to briefly discuss the aforementioned in small groups. During the
proceeding large group discussion, Mary mentions how her high school even in the ‘70s was culturally diverse and how she had a friend with multiple sclerosis and how they attended school events together. (field notes, November 18, 2009)

Several of the pre-service teachers underscored the importance of promoting intercultural and democratic dispositions, including respect, acceptance, and understanding. For example, in his description of the role multicultural education will play in his future classroom, John wrote, “There will be respect for everyone’s belief in my class.” Moreover, a couple of the pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of students’ development of intercultural dispositions in order to eliminate prejudice. For example, in her description of the role of multicultural education in schools, Claire wrote, “Multicultural education should play a large role in K-12 because acceptance & knowledge of something is how we can prevent hate/prejudice & the earlier we start the more effective an outcome we will have.” In the philosophy papers, several pre-service teachers expounded on the role that intercultural dispositions will serve in the facilitation of social justice in their future classrooms. For example, Dolores wrote:

I want the students in my future middle school to appreciate the different social classes, races and cultures in the building, without alienating anyone. I want them to realize that everyone is equal and that they are all there for one reason: to get an education. It is important to appreciate diversity and embrace social justice in schools because otherwise, kids would only harm each other based on misunderstandings and stereotypes.
The pre-service teachers understanding of multicultural education as fostering intercultural dispositions is directly related to the \textit{a priori} category of prejudice reduction. In both questionnaires, the pre-service teachers focused on promoting intercultural dispositions, such as respect, and cross-cultural interactions. However, several philosophy papers indicated that the some of the pre-service teachers were reflecting upon intercultural dispositions in relation to the facilitation of social justice in the classroom.

### 4.3.3 Multicultural Education as Curriculum and Instruction

Multicultural education as curriculum and instruction is another theme that emerged from the analysis and coding of the data on the post-questionnaire. As previously mentioned, this theme is congruent with the \textit{a priori} category of content integration. In the responses to the first question, these codes included the following words and phrases: \textit{classes that reflect other cultures}, \textit{teaches about various religions, ethnicities, assimilates all cultures into one curriculum}, \textit{teaching about various cultures, learning about different cultures, education that covers issues, experiences and history of a variety of cultures, studying and learning about not only diversity, and values/traditions}. In the responses to the second question, these codes included the following words and phrases: \textit{diverse curriculum, learn the many different cultures, literature from various cultural backgrounds, learn about different cultures, teach my students about different cultures, and multicultural education will be included in my curriculum}. In the responses to the third question, these codes included the following words and phrases: \textit{multicultural courses, history classes, incorporate it into the curriculum, should be a part of K-12 education, and learn and teach multicultural education}. 

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In the responses to the first three questions on the post-questionnaire, many of the pre-service teachers described multicultural education as a facet of curriculum and instruction. Their responses suggested that multicultural education should be facilitated through lessons, courses, and instruction on various cultures. For example, Sarah wrote, “I plan to use a diverse curriculum and educate my students about different races, religions, ethnicities, etc.” Moreover, Tracey wrote, “I will incorporate multicultural education in my classroom by letting students learn about different cultures by teaching it or having facts posted up around the room for students to read.” Furthermore, Casey wrote, “Multicultural education to me is studying and learning about not only diversity but also different aspects of different cultures. It would allow students to have background information on all different cultures in our society.”

During the EDU 1700 course, the professor discussed the role of multicultural education within the curriculum. More specifically, the professor expounded on Sleeter and Grant’s (2003) five approaches to multicultural education. For example:

The professor discusses and distributes sample lesson plans. She asks the students to select a subject and to discuss the lesson plans in small groups consisting of 2-4 people. After the students’ small group discussions, the professor distributes a handout pertaining to the five approaches of multicultural education identified by Sleeter and Grant. (field notes, November 16, 2009)

At the beginning of class, the professor mentions that some students wrote in their daily reflections that they are interested in learning more about lesson plans. The professor says they will learn more about lesson planning in their methods courses. The professor talks about “teaching exceptionally & culturally different”—how
many students will not relate to the dominant culture; she discusses assimilation in regard to this approach….The professor talks about the human-relations approach (she mentions that it emerged during the 1970s)….The professor reads about the single-studies approach from the handout. She mentions how the extracurricular activities discussed on Monday were examples of this approach….The professor reads about the multicultural approach from the handout….the professor mentions how people’s experiences need to be included in curriculum (she mentions how the students’ in the class write about their small group discussions in their daily reflections). (field notes, November 18, 2009)

The professor discusses the multicultural and social reconstructionist approach, particularly relating it to the service-learning that the students are conducting. (field notes, November 20, 2009)

As detailed above, many of the pre-service teachers discussed multicultural education as a part of curriculum and instruction, particularly with an emphasis on “teaching” about cultures. Hence, there was a focus on the integration of multicultural content into lessons and instruction. In their responses on the post-questionnaire, the term “cultures” was often preceded with words such as “different” and “various,” thereby implying that the pre-service teachers recognize the complex scope of diversity.

4.4 Impact of EDU 1700 Course

At the inception of the EDU 1700 course, the pre-service teachers discussed multicultural education in terms of the dimensions of content integration and prejudice reduction. Moreover, many of the pre-service teachers perceived multicultural education as having and teaching diverse student populations. By the end of the course, albeit the
pre-services teachers still discussed multicultural education as content integration and prejudice reduction, they also discussed multicultural education as understanding and building on students’ background knowledge. Thus, the pre-service teachers described multicultural education in terms of the equity pedagogy dimension. Moreover, as the philosophy papers demonstrated, the pre-service teachers reflected upon intercultural dispositions and building on students’ background knowledge in relation to the facilitation of social justice in classrooms.

The responses to the post-questionnaire highlight the change that transpired. In their responses to the fourth question, the vast majority of the pre-service teachers indicated that the EDU 1700 course either changed and/or enhanced their understanding of multicultural education. Several pre-service teachers attributed their understanding of multicultural education to their engagement in the service-learning field component of the course. For example, Casey wrote, “I think diversity deals with multicultural education, and we learned a lot about diversity. Our field experience taught us a lot about this topic along with the course in general.” Moreover, the pre-service teachers’ responses reflected various ways in which the EDU 1700 course enhanced their understanding of multicultural education. For example, Julie wrote that the EDU 1700 course enhanced her understanding of multicultural education “because it provides specific examples of how multicultural students’ learning can be affected by many different factors and how teachers can break down those barriers that may interfere with learning.” Moreover, Mary wrote, “I do believe it did enhance my understanding. I did not think about the many uses for multicultural education & how you could use it to educate your students.” Furthermore, Lisa wrote, “It has enhanced my understanding of
the importance of it. I don’t think my understanding of multicultural ed has changed, but I find it more valuable now.”

The detailed analysis of the data described the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education and, more specifically, the changes that occurred. The responses to the pre-questionnaire revealed how the pre-service teachers’ initial ideas about multicultural education were related to content integration and prejudice reduction, as well as having and teaching diverse student populations. The philosophy papers, field notes, and responses to the post-questionnaire indicated a change in the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. The pre-service teachers described multicultural education in terms of understanding and building on students’ backgrounds, in addition to fostering intercultural dispositions and the integration of multicultural content into curriculum and instruction. Thus, the pre-service teachers’ developing ideas about multicultural education reflected the dimensions of content integration, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy. Moreover, in the post-questionnaire, the majority of the pre-service teachers indicated that the EDU 1700 course enhanced and/or changed their understanding of multicultural education.
Chapter 5

Results

In chapter five, the researcher summarizes the findings presented in chapter four and discusses their significance. Moreover, the researcher suggests possibilities for future research. Lastly, this chapter concludes with specific recommendations.

5.1 Findings

This research study generated several findings pertaining to the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. These findings resulted from the analysis of the data generated from the pre- and post-questionnaires, philosophy papers, and field notes. The data analysis indicated that, by the end of the EDU 1700 course, changes in the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education were prevalent.

As the responses on the pre-questionnaire suggested, at the beginning of the course, the majority of the pre-service teachers regarded multicultural education as a facet of curriculum and instruction. The responses on the post-questionnaire indicated that many pre-service teachers regarded multicultural education as a facet of curriculum and instruction, and they discussed how it should be facilitated through lessons, courses, and
instruction on various cultures. On the pre-questionnaire, several pre-service teachers made reference to “other cultures.” However, on the post-questionnaire and in the philosophy papers, many of the pre-service teachers made reference to “various cultures” and “different cultures.”

On both questionnaires, the theme of multicultural education as fostering intercultural dispositions emerged. The pre-service teachers’ responses on the post-questionnaire emphasized the importance of respect, as well as understanding and acceptance. Several of the pre-service teachers also accentuated the important role that intercultural dispositions serve in the facilitation of social justice. However, on the pre- and post-questionnaires, only a few of the pre-service teachers’ emphasized the development of intercultural dispositions to eliminate prejudice and stereotypes. On both questionnaires, as well as in the philosophy papers, the pre-service teachers’ writings indicated the Human Relations approach to teaching, which generates “positive feelings among students and reduce[s] stereotyping, thus promoting unity and tolerance in a society composed of different people” (Sleeter & Grant, 2003, p. 79).

The theme of multicultural education as having and teaching diverse student populations emerged from the analysis of the data generated from the responses on the pre-questionnaire. Approximately half of the pre-service teachers indicated that the facilitation of multicultural education was dependent upon having a diverse student population in the classroom. This implied a limited conception of multicultural education. Moreover, it implied that many of the pre-service teachers viewed themselves beyond the context of multicultural education. On the post-questionnaire though, while some of the
pre-service teachers described multicultural education as having and teaching diverse student populations, this was not an emergent theme.

On the post-questionnaire and in the philosophy papers, as well as within the field notes, multicultural education as understanding and building on students’ background knowledge was a salient theme. This theme is directly related to the dimension of equity pedagogy, which entails the development of a classroom milieu and pedagogical strategies that promote the learning and achievement of all students (Banks, 2007). Most of the pre-service teachers focused on how they would build on their students’ backgrounds in their future classrooms. As evidenced in the field notes, throughout the semester, the professor continuously emphasized the importance of understanding and building on students’ cultures, background knowledge, skills, and experiences. Hence, the professor encouraged the pre-service teachers to “become learners of their students’ realities” (Nieto, 2000, p. 184). This theme particularly underscored how the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education was enhanced.

The majority of the pre-service teachers indicated on the post-questionnaire that the EDU 1700 course changed and/or enhanced their understanding of multicultural education. Several pre-service teachers underscored the importance of the service-learning field experience. Moreover, the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education was enhanced, as demonstrated by their emphasis on understanding and building on students’ background knowledge.

As mentioned in the other chapters, the data were analyzed within Banks’ (2007) comprehensive framework for multicultural education. At the end of the course, the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education, while not holistic, was
congruent with the following dimensions from Banks’ framework: content integration, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy.

5.2 Significance

The student population in the United States’ schools is becoming increasingly diverse (Banks, 2007) and thus, multicultural education is of the essence. However, as Martin (1995a) points out, many pre-service teachers attended predominately White, middle-class schools and therefore possess a dearth of understanding pertaining to diversity issues. The literature review describes extant research that demonstrates the importance of multicultural education, as well as the role teacher education programs should serve to consistently help pre-service teachers develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to foster a holistic multicultural education in K-12 schools.

The analysis of the data shows that the pre-service teachers’ pre-existing conceptualizations of multicultural education were related to the dimensions of content integration and prejudice reduction. However, at the end of the course, the pre-service teachers’ developing ideas of multicultural education not only reflected the dimensions of content integration and prejudice reduction, but also the dimension of equity pedagogy. This change demonstrated growth, particularly since effective teaching requires that teachers understand and build on their students’ cultures and background knowledge and experiences. Nonetheless, the analysis of the data also indicates more growth is necessary in order for the pre-service teachers to foster a holistic multicultural education, one that encompasses all of Banks’ five dimensions of multicultural education.
5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

In order to further investigate the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education, the researcher could analyze the additional data generated by the pre-service teachers’ other assignments, including the service-learning reflections and daily reflections. Moreover, analyzing the data generated by the service-learning reflections could provide further insight into how the service-learning field experiences influenced the pre-service teachers’ developing ideas about multicultural education. Furthermore, the researcher could analyze the data within individual case studies of the pre-service teachers.

5.4 Recommendations

The analysis of the data generated from the pre- and post-questionnaires, philosophy papers, and field notes indicated that the EDU 1700 course influenced the pre-service teachers’ understanding of multicultural education. The EDU 1700 course, including the class discussions and service-learning component, particularly facilitated opportunities for the pre-service teachers to reflect upon the importance of recognizing and building on the students’ cultures and background knowledge. As mentioned in the field notes, the professor introduced terms such as “culturally relevant teaching” and “funds of knowledge.” Nonetheless, it would be beneficial if these terms were used more consistently, thereby encouraging the pre-service teachers to develop a core set of educational terms. Moreover, although the professor spoke quite frequently about the structure and culture of schools (e.g., tracking), the pre-service teachers’ reflections in the philosophy papers and responses on the post-questionnaire reflected an emphasis on their role in the classroom.
The pre-service teachers should be encouraged to actively reflect upon their role as agents of social change not only within their classrooms, but also within schools and society. Moreover, very few of the pre-service teachers’ responses in the questionnaires and philosophy papers discussed the importance of helping students investigate how knowledge is socially constructed. Thus, it would be beneficial to foster classroom discussions pertaining to the process of constructing knowledge.

Both of these recommendations could be facilitated through a final recommendation, that is, at the beginning of the semester, it would be beneficial to introduce the pre-service teachers to Banks’ five dimensions of multicultural education, thereby encouraging the pre-service teachers’ to reflect upon the comprehensiveness of multicultural education. Banks’ comprehensive framework for multicultural education promotes the learning and academic achievement of all students. Moreover, the simultaneous implementation of all five dimensions supports the development of democratic dispositions and supports educators and students in becoming agents of social change in school and society. Furthermore, the six themes discussed in the EDU 1700 course could be analyzed within Banks’ framework for multicultural education.

The results of this research study could be utilized to develop or contribute to the further development of an introductory education course. More specifically, the results of this research study highlight the importance of developing courses and teacher education programs that help pre-service teachers develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to implement a holistic multicultural education in K-12 schools.
References


Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.


Appendix A

Pre-Questionnaire

Questionnaire #1

Name:
Demographic Information

1. _____ Male _____ Female

2. Ethnicity
   I would identify myself as _____________________________.

3. Age: _______ under 18 _______ 18-24 _______ 25-34 _______ 35-44 _______ over 44

4. Are you currently a student in Professional Education at the UT Judith Herb College of Education? _______ Yes _______ No

5. Education Major:
   _____ Art Education
   _____ AYA Integrated Language Arts
   _____ AYA Integrated Mathematics
   _____ AYA Integrated Science
   _____ AYA Integrated Social Studies
   _____ Career and Technical Education
   _____ Early Childhood
   _____ Foreign Language Education
   _____ Health Education
   _____ Middle Childhood—please specify subject areas:
   _____ Music Education
   _____ Physical Education
   _____ Special Education
Questions

1.) How would you describe multicultural education?

2.) What experiences did you have with multicultural education during your K-12 school years?
3.) What role(s) will multicultural education play in your future classroom?

4.) What role(s) do you think multicultural education should play in K-12 schools?
Appendix B

Post-Questionnaire

Questionnaire #2

Name:

_____________________________
Demographic Information

1. _____Male   _____Female

2. Ethnicity
   I would identify myself as ____________________________.

3. Age: ______under 18 ______18-24 ______25-34 ______35-44
   ______over 44

4. Are you currently a student in Professional Education at the UT Judith Herb
   College of Education? ________Yes   ________No

5. Education Major:
   _____Art Education
   _____AYA Integrated Language Arts
   _____AYA Integrated Mathematics
   _____AYA Integrated Science
   _____AYA Integrated Social Studies
   _____Career and Technical Education
   _____Early Childhood
   _____Foreign Language Education
   _____Health Education
   _____Middle Childhood—please specify subject areas:
   _____Music Education
   _____Physical Education
   _____Special Education
Questions

1.) How would you describe multicultural education?

2.) What role(s) will multicultural education play in your future classroom?
3.) What role(s) do you think multicultural education should play in K-12 schools?

4.) Do you feel that EDU 1700 has changed and/or enhanced your understanding of multicultural education? If so, how? Please elaborate.