



AIM

- 1. To consider ways in which preservice teacher candidates discover and discuss their own biases
- 2. To evaluate classroom activities undertaken by candidates for this purpose
- 3. To explore the ways in which children’s and young adult literature can be utilized

INTRODUCTION

Critics of teacher education programs have suggested that preservice teacher candidates are inadequately prepared to teach diverse populations (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Recent studies have continued to indicate that despite the fact that faculty in teachers colleges designed courses related specifically to diversity and equity, preservice teacher candidates still held limited understandings, especially with regard to an awareness of the connection between race and class after exiting these courses (Lee & Hemer-Patnode, 2010).

While there is evidence that preservice teacher candidates receive coursework addressing issues of diversity and multiculturalism, the content focus varies significantly (King & Butler, 2015). Research appears to indicate that, regardless of these varied ways teachers colleges may attempt to prepare preservice teacher candidates to teach for diversity, research appears to indicate that the knowledge, sills, and dispositions needed for this are difficult to acquire (Lee & Hemer-Patnode, 2010).

Children’s and Young Adult Literature:

AN INVESTIGATIVE CRITICAL LITERACY TOOL FOR PRESERVICE TEACHER CANDIDATES TO AVOID THE “SINGLE STORY”

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Grand Question: How might teacher education programs promote the development of cultural awareness and responsiveness?

- How can critical literacy activities be used?
- What is the value of linked text sets for this purpose?

RESEARCH SITE / CONTEXT

The study centered on two undergraduate courses: Foundations in Early Childhood Education and Young Ault Literature and Other Forms of Media. The activities in the two courses varied, but data were collected on the following:

- 1. Linked Text Sets
- 2. Cultural Diversity Self-Assessments (pre and post)
- 3. Critical analyses of children’s and young adult literature



LINKED TEXT EXAMPLE:

#BLACKLIVESMATTER MOVEMENT—
padlet found at
<https://padlet.com/stephtm/blacklivesmatter>

Essential Questions:
“What does it mean to be a Black person in American today?” and “Who is the face of the Black Lives Matter movement?”

Aydin, A. & Lewis, J. (2013). *March: Book one*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions.

Coates, T. (2015). *Between the world and me*. New York, NY: Spiegel and Grau.

Crow, C. (2003). *Getting away with murder*. New York, NY: Dial Books.

Hoose, P. (2009). *Claudette Colvin: Twice toward Justice*. New York, NY: Square Fish.

Magoon, K. (2014). *How it went down*. New York, NY: Square Fish.

Myers, W. D. (2009). *Monster*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Nelson, M. (2005). *A wreath for Emmett Till*. Indianapolis, IN: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Taylor, K.Y. (2016). *From #Blacklivesmatter to Black Libertarian*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

DATA COLLECTION

- Linked Text Sets
- Written summaries describing reasoning for the collections
- Critical reflections of the Linked Text Sets
- Cultural Diversity Self Assessment Inventories (pre and post)
- Critical analyses of Children’s Literature texts

REFERENCES

King, E. & Butler, B.R. (2015). Who cares about diversity? A preliminary investigation of diversity exposure in teacher preparation programs. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 17(1),46-52.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Multicultural teacher education: Research, practice, and policy. In J.A. Banks & C. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp.747-759). New York:Macmillan.

Lee, Y. A. & Hemer-Patnode, L. (2010). Developing teacher candidates knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach diverse students. *Journal of Instructional Psychology* 37(3), 222-235.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

LINKED TEXT SETS: Most preservice teachers noticed that they created curricular decisions, such as the Linked Text Sets with Whiteness I mind. They noticed that most of their stories, texts, and characters within these texts were White, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied people, and they expressed anger at the lack of available resources to highlight characters that were not represented.

Most importantly, by reviewing their own Linked Text Sets with a critical stance, they recognized the imbalance their positionalities might have on current choices and they now realize they will view decisions they make in the classroom with a more critical lens, asking themselves, “Whose voices am I leaving out in this unit? Who needs to be better represented in the text selections I encourage in my classroom?”

CRITICAL ANALYSES: Many preservice teachers identified some issues regarding the representation of marginalized populations in the critical analysis of children’s literature text, but failed to identify all of the problems inherent in the texts provided to them. Much of the identification was surface in nature, while illustrations were not considered and issues that were not specified in the reading guide were not addressed.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY SELF-ASSESSMENTS: The mean of five statements were determined from the pre- and post-assessments. Three statements were “attitude-oriented,” while two were “action-oriented.” While the mean increased from pre- to post-assessment on the attitude statements, indicating an improvement in cultural awareness, the mean either remained consistent or decreased in the action statements, indicating little to no change in culturally responsive behavior.

