The purpose of this descriptive/interpretive qualitative case study is to understand and make sense of preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity through case-based pedagogy. Six case studies were conducted using within and cross-case analysis of three preservice and three experienced teachers enrolled in elementary science courses at a university in the Southeastern United States. Data was collected during the fall semester, 2002 and was constantly compared and reduced using Kennedy’s categories for analyzing application of theory to cases – flexibility, connectedness, and perceived meaningfulness, together with that of Lundeberg and Fawver – perspective-taking. Banks’ dimensions of multicultural education – content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure – were also used as a framework for analysis.

Findings indicate that preservice and experienced teachers confirm or challenge their knowledge, beliefs, and teaching practice about diversity through case-based pedagogy. The participants enthusiastically evaluated case-based pedagogy as an interesting, vivid, and productive vehicle for in-depth reflections about diversity and multicultural education. In order to help preservice and experienced teachers confront their hidden knowledge and beliefs about
diversity, the study provides suggestions for teacher education and professional development regarding diversity and case-based pedagogy. Considering that teachers are continuously evolving beings, this study is not an endpoint; rather it is situated in the midst of a continuing professional development process.

INDEX WORDS: Case study, Case-based pedagogy, Diversity, Early childhood education, Multicultural education, Practical knowledge, Social constructivism, Teacher education
PORTRAIT OF PRESERVICE AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS’ PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DIVERSITY THROUGH CASE-BASED PEDAGOGY

by

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KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DIVERSITY THROUGH CASE-BASED PEDAGOGY

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Thank you, Kate, Lisa, Shazia, April, Tiffany, and Karla! Your splendid voices about your “self” and “cultural others” invent this voyage about diversity and multicultural education. During the evolving journey between your “past” and “future” with the “present” experience, you shared your fears and hidden feelings and questions about children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Your valuable time, effort, enthusiasm, and willingness to share your knowledge, beliefs, values, and assumptions about diversity and multicultural education are of timeless value for teacher educators as they work to develop preservice and inservice teachers’ intelligence, wisdom, and support of children with diverse backgrounds.

Thank you, Dr. Butler! “We are not seeking for the truth in the world.” Your philosophy about teaching and learning has caused me to reflect upon what my personal and professional truth is regarding diversity. Digging beneath the layered multiple meanings about diversity cases with you, I am surprised at my own understanding and conflicts about the uncertain issues of diversity and multicultural education. Your awareness and sensitivity in working with diverse students through case-based pedagogy stimulate my way of seeing the world and interacting with people who have different perspectives from me.

Thank you, Dr. Thomson! Being introduced to “Banks” by you, I witnessed myself opening eyes toward diversity and multicultural education. The attempt to appreciate and gain insights about Banks’ ideas filled me with questions in relation to school curriculum and pedagogy, home and community knowledge, the unique nature of children and teachers, equality and personal backgrounds, reform of school and the culture of each other’s lives. Banks’ work
continues to guide and challenge me in my future endeavors regarding diversity and multicultural education.

Thank you, Dr. Koballa, for your insightful comment – “What makes you change in terms of the perspective of diversity?” In a life marathon that is not long but never short, no one knows what waits for him/her in a second. Without fully considering others’ situations, I am never able to criticize a word from him or her. In the analytical course of living and perceiving crucial life experiences in teaching and learning, I become more modest in my thoughts and attitudes towards other individuals’ “abnormal-looking” conditions, straining my pre-assumptions and pre-judgments about other cultures.

Thank you, Dr. Powell, for causing me to reflect on the question of “How can your beliefs about diversity be transferred to real classrooms in teaching and learning?” Recalling my former students in kindergarten and universities and reflecting on my future students in teacher education programs, I have examined myself as a teacher educator working with diverse students who will teach children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Sharing authority in perspectives, knowledge, and beliefs about diversity with my co-learners, I now believe myself to be more “culture-wise,” crossing others’ cultural borderlines.

Thank you, Dr. Tippins, for making me acknowledge the power of interpretation and the mistake of confidence about my meaning making. “So what? Why is the point important in this study? What does it mean in relation to diversity and early childhood teacher education?” Your teasing questions place me closely to my social, cultural, and political frameworks and assumptions for the study. Playing with your timeless questions of “So what?,” I become more reflective about the nonsense of “right” sense making and “precise” understanding for readers regarding the diversity portrait.
Thank you, all the people in my world! I have been educated within you and journeying through your eyes within me. Thanks to you, I have been awakened as to how diverse the world is and how human beings are in the relationships of ongoing negotiation with one another.

It is the weakest moment when I, myself, say, “I am strong.” When you say, “You are strong,” however, I am truly encouraged and gain ability to “live” and “work” diversity. I am inspired to love children from diverse cultural backgrounds, reflecting on your passionate life in education. I wish to engage “others” to think differently and make a difference in the world and to reconstruct my voices through “their” eyes to “celebrate” one’s own strengths, weaknesses, similarities, and differences. I am assumed to belong to myself but your never ending love, support, and concern enables me to get freedom with other worlds.

I appreciate all of your lessons with the point that diversity and multicultural education is not a single academic discipline but a field to recognize and learn to understand and welcome “all” people of the world. When you say to me, “I am very proud of you,” I whole-heartedly feel pride about myself having each of you as “my teacher,” “my friend,” and “my hero.” Thank you for having prepared me to share your trust and confidence in me with others in terms of diversity. Thank you for accompanying me on this voyage.

With love,
Seungyoun
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CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Teaching is an uncertain, unstable, unique, moral, value laden (Gillespie, 1996), unpredictable, intentional, multi-faceted, difficult, and demanding process. Teaching involves complex endeavors of applying pre-known information and creating new knowledge for educational problem solving within specific situations, rather than simply a static set of fixed techniques or strategies. Teaching is also a social process within a particular context (Clarke, 1995). “The acquisition of expertise in teaching is the acquisition of event-structured knowledge, which teachers obtain through their actions as teachers in classrooms” (Griffith & Laframboise, 1997, p. 10). Then, what is a good teaching? Who are good teachers? What makes the difference between experienced teachers and preservice teachers? How can teaching be improved? How can teachers become better in teaching?

Arguing that teachers should be professionals, this study will examine the three different types of teachers described by McGinn and Cummings (1997). According to these researchers, ‘teachers as educational artisans or artists,’ first, give learning to children by modeling knowledge, skills, actions, arguments, or products through their “inspiration or creative talents” (p. 4) rather than through outstanding instruction in their field. Children learn from this approach by replicas or imitations of teachers but are
expected to develop their ability in even more creative ways than their teachers. This perspective of teaching assumes that the educational process is an apprenticeship.

According to McGinn and Cummings (1997), ‘teachers as skilled workers’ are adept at applying particular techniques needed to facilitate conceptual understanding and develop coherent curriculum. In this sense, in order to achieve specified goals of education, teachers play various roles to distribute certain knowledge in their subject fields. In this traditional view of the profession, teaching is evaluated based on the implementation of specified curriculum and on children’s accomplishment of preset goals with teachers’ limited autonomy. “The school would be like a factory, producing large numbers of high-quality products, standardized in their knowledge, skills, and values. ….with teachers hired as skilled workers to implement the production processes designed by management” (p. 22).

Finally, McGinn and Cummings (1997) suggest that ‘teachers as professionals’ are experts in developing the unique abilities of children. Teachers as professionals enable children to become independent in their learning and to construct their own understandings by active interaction among people. This requires that “both students and teachers are actors, or subjects, in the teaching-learning situation, and the interaction of their sets of choices produces essentially unpredictable processes” (p. 7). This view of the teachers as professionals emphasizes the shift from the content of learning to the development of children’s abilities involving diagnostic, analytic, and critical thinking. From this perspective, teachers as professionals are aware of the importance of situations in teaching and learning and plan and guide according to children’s capabilities and
development. Within any given situation, teachers must employ various information and resources about psychology of learners, curriculum, teaching methods, and so on.

In recent years, the notion of teachers as professionals has taken on new meaning as teachers confront the challenge to teach children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds (NAEYC, 1996). How can teachers be professionally prepared in teacher education programs for meeting the needs of children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds? In a context of rapidly changing cultural, social, and economic patterns, how can teachers develop respect for themselves and others? How can teachers be socioculturally sensitive to the diverse needs of all children from various sociocultural groups? How can teachers understand diversity developing the meaning of diverse sociocultures, identifying the similarities and differences between themselves and others, getting rid of stereotypes, biases, and prejudices, and establishing the equity and justice? How can teachers recognize their practical knowledge, including personal beliefs, values, and knowledge related to diversity issues? What kind of personal practical knowledge on diversity do preservice and in-service teachers bring to teacher education programs? What kind of personal practical knowledge about multicultural contexts do preservice and in-service teachers construct from their teacher education programs?

This study will explore preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity as it shapes their decision-making and reasoning about educational dilemmas involving issues of diversity. Clandinin (1992) describes personal practical knowledge “as in the person’s past experience, in the person’s present mind and body and in the person’s future plans and actions. It is knowledge that reflects the individual’s prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher’s knowledge” (p.125).
The practical knowledge is constructed and reconstructed through a person’s life and processes of reflection.

The remainder of this chapter will include a statement of the problem, rationale, research purposes, research questions, subjectivities statement, and overview of the dissertation.

Statement of the Problem

More children diverse in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family configuration, language, and culture enter P-12 early childhood education programs every year. Research has shown that many of these children feel difficulty, loss, un-safety, alienation, isolation, and depression (Congress & Lynne, 1994) when struggling to adapt to diverse languages, knowledge expectations, traditions, attitudes, values, and beliefs between their family and educational settings (NAEYC, 1996). As our schools and society become more diverse, it becomes increasingly important for teachers to be well prepared for teaching and learning in cross-racial, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural situations. Teachers who are teaching in this multicultural era should be sensitive to the diverse sociocultural backgrounds of children and should possess socioculturally relevant knowledge, values, decision-making ability, strategies, and actions. This is essential if teachers are to help these diverse children learn more securely and meet their needs more equally in the learning setting by providing a safe, challenging, and nurturing environment. Diverse children should be part of a learning community where people acknowledge, help, and support one another. However, preservice and in-service teachers “often lack knowledge about cultural issues and sensitivity to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds” (Miller, Miller, & Schroth, 1997, p. 223).
Is the teaching method using lectures and textbooks effective for teachers to develop the sense of multicultural context and to acknowledge their practical knowledge about diversity? Is the lecture/textbook teaching method in teacher education programs sufficient to educate teachers to be responsive in diverse children’s learning and learning contexts?

In most teacher education programs, preservice teachers are expected to acquire knowledge from individual courses, isolated from the classroom context in which the knowledge is to be applied. Furthermore, the lecture/textbook format, through which information is typically “delivered” to the prospective teacher, gives little opportunity for students to engage in dialogue, problem identification, and integration of information from multiple sources (Goldman, Barron, & Witherspoon, 1991, p. 28).

According to Black and Halliwell (2000), preservice teachers are not well prepared for real everyday situations in teaching and learning, finding it difficult to apply their formal knowledge from teacher education courses to complex teaching practices. Noting that teachers’ knowledge is holistic with much personal meaning that cannot be taught in a linear and fragmentary fashion, many scholars emphasize the importance of teachers’ meaningful learning and application to practice within a context, rather than passive acquisition of educational knowledge (Elbaz, 1991; Harrington, 1995; Jones & Jones, 1998).

Even though lectures and textbooks are effective “for communicating a large number of concepts to a large number of students” (Cadotte, 1995, p. 9), and they may be “important for students to acquire a certain amount of baseline knowledge so that their
actions will be grounded theoretically” (Wright, 1996), they are not enough to promote teachers’ creativity, problem solving, and decision-making in educational settings (Cadotte, 1995; Wright, 1996). Lectures and textbooks are not enough to connect theory to practice and to provide the opportunities for analytical and critical thinking (Shulman, 1992). Teachers’ theoretical knowledge, concepts, and principles are not transferred automatically to complicated classroom contexts (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994). In addition, field experiences without appropriate education about theories may widen the gap between theory and practice.

Shulman (1987) suggests that teachers’ actions in teaching and learning are based on practical knowledge that is related to the wisdom of practice as well as on their theoretical knowledge from textbooks or others’ research. In this sense, teachers’ practical knowledge is the combination of their theoretical knowledge, experiences in practice, and personal beliefs and values (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Shulman, 1987). Teachers’ recognition of their personal beliefs, values, and knowledge is important to understand, examine, and in restructuring their practice.

How then can preservice and in-service teachers enhance their experience about diversity in teaching and learning more professionally and critically in order to enlarge the positive influence on their future students’ lives? How are preservice and in-service teachers able to get deeper understanding that cannot be developed by taking multiple choice or essay tests in teaching and learning? What is an effective way to bridge gaps among preservice and in-service teachers’ personal experiences, classroom lectures and textbooks, and problem-solving experiences in educational settings? What are the means for preservice and in-service teachers to practice their problem solving and decision
making? What are some ways to promote preservice and in-service teachers’ reasoning with respect to their practical actions and decisions? With the effort of teacher education to seek new direction for professional development, which is able to would resist the 'dead knowledge' that can result from teachers' passive learning (Shulman, 1992), case-based pedagogy is being advocated as a valuable method to prepare preservice and in-service teachers for the complex contexts of teaching and learning (Harrington & Garrison, 1992) and as “a promising way of converting research and other knowledge of teaching into practice” (p. 716). Shulman (1986, 1989, 1992) and Berliner (1986) assert that opportunities for analyzing multiple cases are needed for teachers to promote their decision making by understanding theories, practice, and complex situations in classrooms.

Case-based pedagogy focuses on preservice and in-service teachers’ problem solving, decision making, reflective practices (Carter, 1988; Dewey, 1904; Koballa & Tippins, 2001), and their own personalized theory in teaching and learning. Cases in teaching and learning show educational problems and dilemmas where teachers need to make decisions within specific situations. Research has shown that case-based pedagogy enables teachers to improve their actions in teaching and learning from multiple perspectives, reflective thinking (Shulman & Colbert, 1989), active participation and motivation for learning (Shulman, 1992), and intellectual strategies. Through case-based pedagogy, teachers can learn the essence of educational dilemmas, seek the most appropriate solution in a given and informed context, assess the results of problem solving, and reflect on meaning (Ross, 1989). In this sense, cases mediate teachers’ higher order thinking by applying and modifying the theories and practice in education.
Accordingly, this study will investigate the experiences of preservice and experienced teachers who engage in reflective examination of their own practical knowledge about diversity and multiculturalism through the case-based method.

Rationale for the Study

Considering that teachers’ practical knowledge including their personal beliefs, values, and knowledge is closely connected to their practice in teaching and learning, this study is important for teachers to acknowledge their practical knowledge on diversity. This study will provide teachers with opportunities to develop deeper understanding about diverse sociocultural issues and confront their personal biases and prejudices on those issues through socially shared interactions among colleagues. This study will help teachers reconstruct their practical knowledge about diversity by confirming or disconfirming prior practical knowledge through individual and social reflection. This study has the potential to make it possible for teachers to transform practical knowledge to their practice in teaching and learning.

This study has significant implications because it provides opportunities for teachers to test their assumptions on diversity in teaching and learning in the context of actual classroom scenarios rather than through generalized knowledge about diversity transmitted by lectures and textbooks. This study will help teachers consider their own meaningful practical knowledge through reflective thinking, decision-making, and reasoning about case dilemmas, and could potentially empower them as future teacher researchers in complex teaching and learning contexts.

This study is timely because current research shows that preservice and in-service teachers feel the gap between academic theory and practice; it is recognized that teachers’
knowledge cannot be constructed by ignoring their personal beliefs and cannot be built
individually in a vacuum. Teacher education programs have to confront the critical need
and challenge for preparing preservice and in-service teachers to teach diverse children
from different sociocultural groups sensitively and effectively. This study will benefit
both research and practice in the field of teachers’ thinking and knowledge through case-
based pedagogy by offering a better understanding of preservice and experienced
teachers’ personal experiences and epistemologies about multiculturalism. For teachers,
teacher educators, university researchers, and educational administrators, this study may
offer insights into an alternative teaching method for preservice and in-service teachers’
professional development in teaching and learning. Based on the fundamental assumption
that there is no universally correct solution for an educational problem, the process and
findings of this study will stimulate multi-dimensional discussions of teaching and
learning.

Statement of Research Purposes

The purpose of this study is to understand the dynamics of teachers’ practical
knowledge of issues of diversity through case-based pedagogy. This study aims to
develop a portrait of preservice and experienced teachers’ epistemological stances
regarding diversity, and their decision-making and reasoning about case dilemmas related
to multicultural issues.

In particular, this study investigates how preservice and experienced teachers’
practical knowledge of diversity, including the personal beliefs, values, and knowledge
derived from their own sociocultural contexts, influences case inquiries through the
discussion and written narratives. Conversely, this study also examines how the case-
based experiences, including case discussion and written narratives, affect preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge regarding diversity.

**Research Questions**

This study examines the practical knowledge and case-based experiences of preservice and experienced teachers with respect to issues related to diversity in teaching and learning. Specific research questions are posed in light of this purpose.

**Research Question I**

How does preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge regarding diversity influence their decision-making and reasoning through case-based pedagogy?

- How does preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity compare?
- How does preservice and experienced teachers’ reflection about sociocultural dilemmas regarding diversity compare through case-based pedagogy?

  - How flexible are preservice and experienced teachers in reflection through case-based pedagogy?
  - What multiple perspectives do preservice and experienced teachers express through reflection involving case-based pedagogy?
  - How do preservice and experienced teachers connect theoretical principles in reflection through case-based pedagogy?

**Research Question II**

How do the inquiries of case-based pedagogy influence preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity?

- What are preservice and experienced teachers’ perceptions of case-based pedagogy?
What learning do preservice and experienced teachers gain through case-based pedagogy? Where do they perceive their learning comes from? How does their learning compare?

Subjectivities Statement

“Epoche is a process that the researcher engages in to remove, or at least become aware of prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Epoche enables the researcher to investigate the phenomenon from a fresh and open view without prejudgment or imposing meaning too soon. This suspension in judgment is critical in phenomenological investigations and requires the setting aside of the researcher’s personal viewpoint in order to see the experience for itself” (Katz, 1987, pp. 36-37). My subjectivities statement shows that this study is bound by myself as a researcher and reflects my perspectives for this study. I am consciously listening to my voice in order for me and for my readers to better understand this study.

I believe people have multiple persona as I have. People are identified through their relationships with others. People do not exist by themselves nor do they think and behave in the same manner in different situations. Although people act similarly even in diverse circumstances, they are not considered as the same people by different people from diverse backgrounds. People become different in different contexts.

I have been a student for more than twenty years, an early childhood teacher for three years, and a teacher educator for three years. During the entirety of my life in schools, I have experienced many teachers, friends, and students. How different they were from my perspective! Some of my teachers have been pretty ‘high-quality’ and some of them have been really ‘at-risk.’ Similarly, one teacher’s problem child may be
another teacher’s highly creative student. “Different teachers see the same students as different kinds of people, just as they see principals, parents, classroom management procedures, and merit pay plans differently” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 727). Different people’s understandings about their own personal backgrounds and experiences in certain sociocultural contexts make different interpretations possible even on the same event.

“Go for manipulation play,… Go for role-play,…”

After morning greetings and plans of the day, Ms. Kim who was a classroom teacher for five-year-old children with seven years of teaching experience was calling the name of each learning center in order for children to initiate free play with little confusion. When Ms. Kim called the name of each center, several children who wanted to do the center play left the large beige carpet. By the way, whenever Ms. Kim called out the name of each center, Taeyoung and Paul stood up to run like starting athletes for field and track events, eventually sitting back on the carpet with disappointment. Taeyoung and Paul concentrated on the shape of Ms. Kim’s mouth and voice waiting for their chance to run.

Eventually Ms. Kim said “Go for block play!,” and Taeyoung and Paul ran to the block center like bullets shot from a gun. Some of the other children ran to the block center, too. Taeyoung shouted, “I got it.” Taeyoung expressed the look of victory, holding up a red Santamo mini car. Paul breathed heavily, stopping his running with tearful eyes. Paul said in English, “I planned to play with it today. I intended to catch it first.” Paul was not very familiar with speaking Korean because he lived in the United States for the first five years of his life, prior to moving to Korea. His father was a
Korean-American and his mother was a Korean. But even at his home, their primary language was English. Taeyoung was filled with pleasure and began to play with the mini car without even trying to understand what Paul was saying or how Paul was feeling.

Typically, most children who were interested in block play wanted to get the red Santamo mini car during free play. The child who had the red Santamo felt like the day’s “chief” for play. Taeyoung, being a fast runner had grabbed the red Santamo ‘yesterday’ and ‘the day before yesterday.’ Taeyoung had it ‘today,’ too. Paul repeatedly insisted that he planned to get the Santamo first on that day. But due to his English, no one attended to Paul’s words. Some children said in Korean, “What is he saying?” Even Ms. Kim did not seem to understand what Paul meant. Ms. Kim just smiled at Paul with empathetic eyes. Paul seemed to be lonely. Paul seemed to be alone in the group of people who used a different language from his.

Looking at Paul’s angry face, Ms. Kim asked Taeyoung in Korean, “Why don’t you give the red Santamo to Paul for today? You frequently have played with it, but Paul has not.” Taeyoung showed his firm will not to yield it by yelling in Korean, “I picked it up faster than Paul today. If Paul wants to play with this, he could try it tomorrow.” Ms. Kim said to Paul in Korean, “Paul, we cannot help it. Today, Taeyoung picked it up faster than you. Let’s play with other things, okay?” Ms. Kim, who usually does not leave these kinds of conflict without tough mediation, quickly left to help other children. Even though Paul did not comprehend what Ms. Kim was saying perfectly, it was enough for him to recognize he was a stranger to them in the class.

It was not easy to solve this conflict. Taeyoung, who was so fast in his motor development, picked the red Santamo first on this day, but Paul thought that he was the
one who first planned to play with it. Thought is not seen to us. We cannot confirm whose thought or plan was the first. But if we ignore Paul’s argument because his claim cannot be verified, couldn’t it be interpreted that the moral which is unseen is useless?

However, we cannot necessarily say that Taeyoung was late in thinking about getting the Santamo for block play. Taeyoung’s claim that he should play with it is right, too, since he picked it up first. What is right? What is Solomon’s best solution for this problem? I cannot recall any good theory or information from textbooks for solving this dilemma.

I believe that knowledge is socioculturally constructed and is developed with meaningful experiences that stimulate thinking. Therefore, teachers need to have meaningful experiences for true learning to take place. I believe that it is important for teachers to experience educational cases that connect theory and practice in education through ambiguous conflicts and dilemmas. Cases provide contexts that enable teachers to make decisions. I remember that many of my students with field experiences felt the gap between theory and practice as I did. I was questioned frequently by students, “What should I do in that case? How do I have to act then in classrooms?” I could not answer with an absolutely single right solution for resolving the problem. I just told them, “I feel…., I think…., In my experience…..,” and “If I were you…” In my memory, my professors’ responses did not satisfy me when I asked similar questions of them. I strongly believe that case-based pedagogy in teacher education programs is a good tool for facilitating teachers’ professional development, knowledge construction, and own meaning making in teaching and learning by offering them realistic classroom contexts.
I believe teachers’ knowledge grows based on their personal beliefs through experiences as well as through formal academic learning involving textbooks or lectures. Teachers’ personal beliefs play the role of filters when the teachers meet new knowledge, ideas, experiences, and situations (Zanting, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2001). Teachers do not construct knowledge in the same ways, even though exactly the same information may be transmitted to them. This delivered information is distorted and constructed within their own practical knowledge, including experiential knowledge, formal knowledge, and personal beliefs. Accordingly, teachers restructure their personal beliefs, values, and knowledge from the new knowledge, ideas, and experiences in teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers’ practical knowledge is evolutionary and developmental.

Teachers gain practical knowledge from multiple sources such as university classes, their professional readings, personal experiences in school, community, society, and culture. In complex teaching and learning situations, teachers bring their own beliefs, values, experiences, and knowledge to their children in classrooms. In this way, teachers make their classrooms more unique. Teachers are not machines that transmit subject knowledge for children’s higher academic achievement. I strongly believe that teachers act powerfully on their own practical knowledge. I believe that cases can provide teachers with opportunities to be aware of their personal beliefs, values, and experiences as the basis for their knowledge construction in teaching and learning.

If other teachers experienced the dilemma of Taeyoung and Paul, what would they do? Even with the same event, different teachers can interpret and resolve it in different ways. Is it good to appeal to Taeyoung’s concession? Should Taeyoung yield the red Santamo to Paul? Why or why not? Is there any possibility for Paul to pick it up
faster than Taeyoung or other children tomorrow? Is any truth of their assertions able to be confirmed? Is it just a matter of mind? Can the dilemma be solved by removing the Santamo? Is it resolved by placing enough Santamos for all children to play? Does the conflict end by building rules with the children for playing with the Santamo?

“I am at a loss. Somehow the more I think about my questions, the bigger and messier the problem gets” (Rosaen & Wilson, 1995, p. 51). I believe that the discussion of educational conflicts and dilemmas facilitates preservice and in-service teachers’ reflective problem solving, decision-making, and reasoning by creating a context for understanding the nature of the situation and the most appropriate solutions with the given information in a specific context, recognizing that there are no magical solutions for most problems. Case discussion with colleagues can expand thoughts in multiple dimensions. As they explore a case at a deeper level, various issues will be raised with more uncertainty. “At the end of the discussion, ambiguities have been heightened and no issue has been resolved” (Wassermann, 1994, p. 603).

As textbooks point out, that kind of dilemmatic play situation provides good opportunities for children’s moral and socio-emotional development. Was Ms. Kim’s attitude appropriate so as not to lose the opportunity for children’s development in terms of cognition, morality, ethics, and socio-emotions? Do teachers have to help children negotiate by language, avoiding aggressive words or behaviors? Should teachers mediate with “necessary” help? What basis of teachers’ thought and beliefs makes it possible for them to solve the dilemma? Does Taeyoung lack the awareness that other peers want to play with the Santamo, too? Is it fair that Taeyoung always has what he wants to play with, when he possesses better motor ability and development than other children? What
does ability mean? Because people live together in a society and culture, should Taeyoung consider others’ opportunity to get something that he values?

Ms. Kim could not mediate Taeyoung and Paul’s conflict, at least through language. Taeyoung and Paul could not solve the problem for themselves, at least by conversation. If Paul’s language was different from others in class, was there any effort to find similarities between Paul and other children? Although Paul’s and other classmates’ language was different, was the classroom environment safe and secure for Paul? Did the classroom promote Paul’s well-being and encourage his expression of thoughts? Did Paul get equal opportunities for learning in the class? If Paul’s different language and culture interrupted his learning opportunity in this setting, should he be mainstreamed in this class?

I believe that creating a safe environment in the learning setting is important for children from diverse backgrounds. Teachers’ encouragement, support, higher expectations, and interaction among children are required for psychological and emotional safety, successful learning, and being away from the “humiliation, isolation, stigmatization, and alienation from the group” (Sapon-Shevin, 1995, p.102). I believe that all children should feel comfortable to express themselves and to know others in a learning setting. Some children do not speak at all in school, even though they are perfectly bilingual. Some children cannot speak at all in school due to their sociocultural and linguistic non-fluency. I believe that teachers should check the “temperature” of themselves and their classrooms in terms of diversity.

My reflections remind me of an observation in a United States kindergarten class. The classroom teacher was teaching the concepts of “more than” and “less than.” To
build understanding of these concepts, the teacher did an activity with the children. The teacher asked children what color they liked. Seven children voted for purple, five children for red, three children for green, … After counting several times, the teacher found out that one child, Jiwoo, did not respond. He was the only Asian child, and could not speak English. The teacher asked him in English, “What color do you like, Jiwoo?” There was no answer. The teacher asked him again what color he liked, showing the color table that she had prepared. No response again. Then the teacher smiled at Jiwoo and told him, “Oh, you like green. You are wearing a green T-shirt.” However, Jiwoo still seemed as if he did not know what was going on. Then the teacher and children stood up to show their answers by making a big human color graph. Jiwoo also left the pink carpet along with the other children to stand in line. But Jiwoo did not have any sense of which line he should stand in. Then the teacher told Jiwoo, “Jiwoo, stand in the color line you like.” Jiwoo responded with nothing but a confused look. The teacher smiled at him again and pulled him over to stand in the green line.

One of my friends told me, “When my son began to go to kindergarten, his English was really poor. He could speak just a few words in English. One day when I picked him up at the kindergarten, he said in Korean, ‘Mom, I want milk. I am thirsty. I have been thirsty all day today.’” When she told that to the classroom teacher, the teacher responded to her, “Oooohhhhh--, oh, thirsty. Thirsty. He said something repeatedly today and kept looking at me. It was thirsty. Oh, thirsty.” Even though his English in terms of vocabulary or pronunciation was humble, my friend said that she was troubled at that time, feeling that kindergarten did not satisfy even the basic needs of her son.
She remembered other experiences in the class. “My son was assessed at the kindergarten when he started the school. The teacher asked him some questions such as if he could distinguish who was a girl or a boy, if he could pile up three blocks, and if he could stand up with one foot. His test score was very low. At that time, he had communication problems. He did not know even a simple word in English. However, one year later on the same test, his score was much higher, corresponding with his increased ability to speak English.”

I am wondering to what extent teachers are prepared to meet the needs of culturally diverse children and how sensitive they are to the multicultural issues in classrooms. How many children from diverse sociocultural contexts feel confusion, uncertainty, loneliness, and difficulty in adjusting to these different sociocultural environments? Is the adjustment simply the children’s responsibility? What are teachers’ roles in the adjustment process? How can teachers help children feel happy and learn safely in an unfamiliar learning environment? How do diverse cultural groups exist in terms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family configurations?

I believe that teachers have to be well prepared for diversity and multicultural contexts by examining their own thinking, attitudes, and actions in classrooms and in broader sociocultural contexts, in addition to subject matter preparation needed to enhance children’s academic achievement. I believe that teachers have to contribute to equality and justice for children in schools and society. I believe that teachers should have culturally relevant knowledge and understanding of their children and communities. I believe that preservice and inservice teachers have to share various views, perspectives, and assumptions about diversity issues in teacher education programs in order for them to
gain new knowledge and insight, and to construct new beliefs and values. I believe that case-based pedagogy can be effective in providing them with opportunities to share ideas about the issues of culturally diverse classrooms and children.

A plethora of researchers (Kagan & Tippins, 1991; Levin, 1995a; Wassermann, 1994; Wood & Bennett, 2000) suggest that experienced teachers possess more practical knowledge in teaching and learning, strategies and solutions in classrooms, knowledge of children and their community, flexibilities in their thinking and attitudes, reflective problem solving and decision-making in multiple dimensions, etc., than preservice teachers do. Is it true that experienced teachers are necessarily more sensitive and mindful in their decision-making, their reasoning, problem solving, and teaching actions on diversity and multicultural issues in classrooms than preservice teachers? Possibly, or possibly not, because patterns of experience between preservice and inservice teachers may show multiple realities. I believe that preservice and experienced teachers’ individual differences in terms of personal beliefs, values, and knowledge derived from their own prior experiences may interrupt the patterning of preservice and experienced teachers’ thinking in diversity and multicultural contexts.

According to Banks’ (1998) categories, I position myself as an external-insider in the research process. I am an outsider. I am living in a sociocultural context where different perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, values, and knowledge, present harsh challenges to my identity, raising the issues of multicultural education in the United States. I do not exist as a whole entity, being separated from others in a society, culture, history, and institution. My own perspectives and perceptions toward the reality and the world have been constructed from the sociocultural situations of Seoul, Korea, a country
that is basically homogeneous. In the cultural context of my home, I cannot recall spending any time thinking about diversity and multicultural education.

However, in the United States society and culture, I am an alien and a marginal person. As an international student in the U.S., I have experienced frustration, confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty in terms of identity, beliefs, knowledge, and assumptions in this foreign cultural context. At times, I have felt that I was like a powerless baby who had wonderful thoughts but lacked the ability and confidence to express my thoughts. One of my friends told me that she would like to return to her home country soon because she felt uncomfortable living in a “stranger’s home.” Also another friend pointed out that we are just international students or foreign students who are travelers here, not even minority students who have a voice for right, duty, and responsibility in this society and culture.

I have experienced at least two different sociocultural contexts, my home in Korea and the United States. My previous cultural context where I was socialized works as the “pre-existing personal sense-making framework” (Clark, 1998, p. 93) even though I am currently in the United States far away from the sociocultural context of my home. In meeting different experiences and ideas in the U.S., sometimes the new beliefs and knowledge cause conflicts, confusions, and difficulties which are added to my prior conceptual framework.

In this sense, I am an insider. My study focuses on issues of diversity in classrooms, communities, and teacher education contexts. Reflecting on my experiences in this unfamiliar society and culture, I understand the marginalization of children and adults from diverse cultural groups within this mainstream culture and community.
Considering that individuals in terms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc., often feel alienation, stigmatization, humiliation, and depression in their learning setting, I empathize with their powerful emotions and feelings as one of the members of those marginalized groups.

As an ‘adopted’ insider in this society and culture, I recognize and reinterpret the sociocultural context of my home more diversely. I remembered that young children in my home country asked about the kinds of cars of their peers’ fathers as a symbol of socioeconomic status. I recall that young children preferred to play with Caucasian dolls, not with dolls having African American or Asian features. I also noticed that young children of my home country, who are now living in this diverse U.S. culture, describe only Caucasian people as Americans, already possessing stereotypes and prejudices about diverse groups. Even in my home society and culture the children have never been truly homogeneous and consequently safe.

I am also an insider on the basis of my professional experiences in early childhood education and teacher education. As I have gained more experiences of my own in the U.S., as a member of the field of education, I have come to believe that education should help build a just and equal society and culture for diverse groups of children. I believe that both teachers and children have to examine explicit and implicit beliefs, knowledge, and assumptions that come from prior experiences by constructing and deconstructing their understanding and perspectives about diversity. I believe that teachers should be professionally prepared in teacher education programs for multicultural education.
As a researcher in this study, I constantly inspect my sensitivity to acquiring and interpreting accurately and plausibly the participants’ beliefs, knowledge, and perspectives about diversity. At the same time, I, as a researcher, continue to make my subjectivities and perceptual framework for conducting this research more explicit, because research is influenced by an individual’s personal beliefs, values, knowledge, and experiences. Knowledge construction is not neutral, objective, and universal.

I am an outsider and insider at the same time. Depending on the nature of certain situations or contexts, my position and role may change. The boundaries that determine the categorization of outsider or insider are increasingly ambiguous and problematic, taking into account shared beliefs, knowledge, and values in diverse sociocultural situations and a person’s complicated identity.

Overview of the Remainder of the Dissertation

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework and a review of the literature on multicultural education and case-based pedagogy for this study. As the theoretical framework, social constructivism, teacher belief and practical knowledge are discussed. The chapter emphasizes that teachers should be well prepared in diversity and multicultural contexts by assessing their personal beliefs, values, and knowledge about teaching and learning and by reconstructing their practical knowledge about diversity. Case-based pedagogy is reviewed as a promising tool to help preservice and in-service teachers examine and restructure their practical knowledge about diversity and multicultural issues.
Chapter three contains theoretical and practical discussions about methodology and methods for this study. Design of the study, participants, procedures of the study, and trustworthiness are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four discusses three preservice teachers’ – Kate, Lisa, and Shazia – beliefs, experiences, and practical knowledge about diversity. This chapter explores these preservice teachers’ initial beliefs and practical knowledge about diversity before case-based experiences, their experiences about diversity during the case experiences, and their perceived meaningfulness about diversity and visions about case-based pedagogy after the case-based experiences.

Chapter five describes the experiences with diversity of three experienced teachers – April, Tiffany, and Karla. Following the same pattern of chapter four, this chapter presents the experienced teachers’ beliefs and practical knowledge about diversity before, during, and after case-based pedagogy.

Chapter six is a discussion of what was learned from the cross-case analysis of beliefs and practical knowledge regarding diversity between three preservice teachers and three experienced teachers. The chapter compares and contrasts the preservice and experienced teachers’ beliefs and practical knowledge with respect to emergent themes.

Chapter seven discusses implications drawn from the findings of the study for early childhood teacher education, multicultural education and case-based pedagogy. This chapter also presents implications for research, including methodological issues regarding the use of cases and the need for further research addressing issues of multicultural education and case-based pedagogy.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on the theoretical framework of social constructivism which was pioneered by Vygotsky and Bakhtin arguing for “the importance of culture and context in forming understanding” (McMachon, 1997, p. 3), with respect to teacher beliefs and practical knowledge. ‘Social constructivism’ will help frame the phenomena of interest in this study as it assumes that knowledge is socioculturally mediated and that there may exist multiple realities in teaching and learning. Teachers’ belief systems, a subset of their practical knowledge, are not developed separately from the sociocultural context. Therefore, case discussion is an important aspect of teachers’ knowledge constructions, fostering interactions that let them make sense socially; this is a far cry from the typical isolation of teaching.

This study also draws on assumptions surrounding what is known about teacher beliefs and practical knowledge. The processes of decision-making and reasoning in teaching and learning are not separated from teachers’ personal beliefs, formal knowledge from university, and contextualized knowledge of classrooms. In a complex interaction between teachers’ prior practical knowledge and new experiences in teaching and learning, teachers reconstruct their practical knowledge in sociocultural contexts by filtering the new ideas based on their personal beliefs.
Dimensions of Social Constructivism

Action

“Learning is not a purely internal process, nor is it a passive shaping of behaviors (McMachon, 1997, p. 3).” Learning is an active process between an individual and one’s “cultural, historical, and institutional settings (Wertsch, 1991, p. 6).” This is quite different from a view of learning where knowledge is externally transmitted from others or one that assumes only an individual’s internal mental functioning. People’s learning does not occur passively by a simple stimulus and response process. Rather, people actively construct their knowing by interacting with others in a particular sociocultural context and by filtering through their prior beliefs and values. People’s learning is individual, social, and collaborative and forms a basis for knowledge construction and meaning making. People continuously make sense of their experiences. Learning includes “action on the world and interpretation about the consequences of our actions within a personally constructed sense-making framework…. Individual learners will inevitably interpret what they read, write, see, hear, and feel using their pre-existing personal sense-making frameworks (Clark, 1998, p. 93).”

Vygotsky’s concepts of ‘zone of proximal development’ and ‘scaffolding’ are the “critical constructs in a social constructivist view (Thomas & Oldfather, 1997, p. 110)” of learning because the notions emphasize that learning is constructed by social mediation and affected by sociocultural interaction. According to Vygotsky (1978), the ‘zone of proximal development’ refers to “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as
determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer” (Wells, 1999, p. 1).

Teaching and learning is meaningful when it moves toward learners’ (in this study, teacher learners’) upper level of their developmental zones. When learners come to know, social interaction with the learning environment is necessary for an individual’s knowledge construction and meaning making (Jaworski, 1993). Social interactions may include the immediate interaction with others, the influence of sociocultural structure such as family or school, and general sociocultural characteristics such as the use of language, number, science, and so on (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). People can benefit from the social interactions because they may “internalize the cognitive processes that are implicit in the interactions and communications with others” (Levin, 1995a, p. 65).

Considering the importance of social interaction in learning, ‘scaffolding’ is believed to have an important role in the construction of knowledge. Scaffolding occurs “when a more experienced person supports the efforts of a less experienced learner through careful, individualized instruction of a new skill. It is the sensitive, responsive transfer of skills and knowledge, via physical or verbal interaction, from one who is motivated to share to one who is motivated to learn” (Elicker, 1995, p. 29). Learners’ personal interest, curiosity, and initiation are important in scaffolding. In the process of scaffolding, meaningful connections are created between a more experienced person’s sociocultural knowledge and the “everyday experiences and knowledge” (p. 137) of a less experienced person (McCaslin & Hickey, 2001) within particular sociocultural situations and contexts. A more experienced and knowledgeable person who has “the future-oriented presence of mind that student novices have yet to develop” (McCaslin &
Hickey, 2001, p. 137) encourages a less experienced person to enlarge their realities within their own sociocultural and historical context, rather than transmitting the ‘true,’ ‘universal,’ and ‘taken-for-granted’ knowledge.

“When action is given analytic priority, human beings are viewed as coming into contact with, and creating, their surroundings as well as themselves through the actions in which they engage.” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 8). Learning is initiated in the social plane and then in the intrapsychological plane, i.e., social relationships or group interactions trigger individual’s learning internally. A focus on social interactions in human learning assumes that humans are never isolated individuals. All humans are ‘becomings’ rather than ‘static beings’ because humans become and develop dynamically during their lives. In the becoming process, humans’ thoughts, cognition, values, emotions, feelings, hopes, needs, and actions are never alone. “Knowledge is not something people possess in their heads, but rather something people do together” (Gergen, 1982, p. 270).

Situatedness

All the ways of understanding from the perspective of social constructivism are socioculturally, historically, and institutionally specific and differ across cultural groups exhibiting diverse beliefs and values. This sociocultural difference makes people hold different concepts, knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, perspectives, observations, interpretations, and understanding.

People cannot be separated from their environments. People are not the products of pre-given biological traits. At the same time, people are not the passive products of just cultural and historical environments. According to McCaslin and Hickey (2001), knowledge is a “…cultural entity that is distributed across the physical and social
environment in which that knowledge is developed and used (Hickey & McCaslin, see press, p.18)” (p. 137). People’s knowledge is situated in the context in which the knowledge is learned and used.

The unidirectional influence of people or environment is not possible in social constructivism. In this sense, situatedness (Wertsch, 1991) of an individual’s higher mental functioning, such as “thinking, voluntary attention, and logical memory (p. 27),” should be considered important. An individual’s higher mental functioning is mediated and internalized actions by shared education and social relations within specific sociocultural contexts. However, situatedness does not necessarily mean specific places but sociocultural, historical, and institutional contexts of people. Humans’ experience value lies in their sociocultural and historical context. Situatedness provides the explicable frames of reference of social phenomena. As members of a particular social, cultural, and historical context, humans make their own meaning of life, teaching, and learning in multiple ways beyond deliberating “eternal truths.”

Mediation

“Higher mental functioning and human action in general are mediated by tools (or “technical tools”) and signs (or “psychological tools”)” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 28). Vygotsky, in particular, emphasizes “human language in intermental and intramental functioning (p. 29).” Through the verbal forms of mediation, human actions and experiences are mediated and made meaningful in a specific sociocultural, historical, and institutional context. Language mediates between humans and the world constructing their thought, knowledge, and meaning within a particular sociocultural context (Hirtle, 1996).
In the social constructivist view, language plays an important role of constructing a person or person’s thought. Social constructivism emphasizes the active role of language as a pre-condition for ways of understanding and forming knowledge, not just a passive vehicle to express human thought. Teachers’ experiences are linked to the meaning making process through language. Particularly, in the Vygotskian view, verbal forms of mediation such as discussion and dialogue are emphasized (Wertsch, 1991). “Language is a fabric of relationships that links people, not a vehicle by which individuals communicate meanings. To understand language data from this point of view, the researcher must investigate where the words come from, their sources, and how they are blended together (Freeman, 1996, p. 749).”

Language is important to the construction of teacher learning communities, enabling teachers to exchange their experience, knowledge, understanding, values, beliefs, and judgment for problem solving. “Ideas which are not communicated, shared, and reborn in expression are but soliloquy, and soliloquy is but broken and imperfect thought” (Dewey, 1954, p. 218, see Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 731).

Voices

“Voice is social and not individual, thus individuals assume, participate in, and in a sense are made up of the various voices available to them… .In Bakhtin’s view, an essential aspect of the construct of dialogicality is that multiple authorship is a necessary fact about all texts, written or spoken” (Freeman, 1996, p. 747). Bakhtin argues that meaning of language can exist “only when two or more voices come into contact: when the voice of a listener responds to the voice of a speaker (Bakhtin, 1986, see Wertsch, 1991, p. 52).” People’s meaning making is not self-sufficient, but it is reciprocally
reflecting and linking multiple voices one with another in a sociocultural context. At this point, “addressee can be an immediate participant – interlocutor in an every day dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth. And it can also be an indefinite, unconcretised other (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 95).”

In this sense, there exist diverse ‘voices’ involving different viewpoints and intentions in a specific sociocultural milieu. In a certain society at a particular time, “how one is situated with respect to others and toward the world” (Bruner, 1986, p. 130) is valuable in comprehending “how participants in society are controlled and shaped” (Gillespie, 1996, p. 58).

**Social Constructivism and Case-based Pedagogy**

From a social constructivist perspective, reality is produced by social interaction and sociocultural context rather than existing as an absolutely objective to be discovered. At this point, Harrington and Garrison (1992) maintain that case-based pedagogy should be based on ‘genuine objectivity’ avoiding extreme objectivism and subjectivism. In objectivism, object/subject, theory/practice, cognition/emotion, and fact/value can be sharply distinguished. However, without considering one’s subjective experience and values, the distinction can direct ‘false objectivity.’ “Problems are filtered through our ‘subjectively reasonable’ theories of the world” (p. 723). In contrast, ‘genuine objectivity’ argues the importance of “reflective awareness of one’s subjective, cognitive, and evaluative structures and biases” and “objectivity that arises from taking one’s subjectivity including one’s subjectively reasonable theories” (p. 726).
However, genuine objectivity cannot be obtained by accepting one’s subjectively reasonable theories and ignoring the cognitive content. Even though problem solving and decision-making of cases are based on local and concrete understandings of teaching situations, this does not imply that there is no guide at all. “There grow up traditions of interpretations, paradigms, precedents, and analogies, which can be encapsulated in maxims and rules. Still, rules and maxims can be general only, not universal or invariable” (Gillespie, 1996, p. 54). Therefore, for attaining genuine objectivity, cases should be constructed and used, not in an objectivist or subjectivist way, but in an objective manner reflecting teachers’ own subjectivities in theoretical reasoning and interpretations derived from their preexisting beliefs and values in teaching and learning.

What, we might ask, are universality and neutrality in teaching and learning? What are the definitive aims and effective methods for achieving the ultimate aims in education? What is the desirability of students? Isn’t value neutrality in education a value stance itself? How can we distinguish between theory and practice? How are value and fact distinguished clearly? What are neutral ‘facts,’ not filtered by people’s personal lenses?

Case-based pedagogy assumes that knowledge is constructed based on teachers’ prior knowledge and experiences. Teachers can develop other solutions and reasons for educational problems transforming their insights in complex educational settings through the case-based method. According to Richardson (1999), the case-based method helps teachers examine their beliefs and practices and develop meaningful learning. Cases should be considered within specific situations and personal experiences of teachers. Teachers’ interpretations or resolutions for problem solving are not ‘the’ answer in the
dilemmatic situation but ‘a’ possibility among numerous competing interpretations. Even with the same interpretations, the solutions may not be the same.

Different people coming from different personal, sociocultural, historical, and institutional contexts may feel differently about the same things. Teachers’ different prior knowledge, cognition, and personal experiences in varied sociocultural contexts may lead to diverse inquiries and interpretations including different theories, values, and beliefs, even in the same practical situation. Teachers’ multiple epistemologies support their diverse voices in problem solving.

Cases provide preservice and in-service teachers, and teacher educators opportunities to communicate their experience in teaching and learning. The value-laden discourse from cases contributes to the building of common meanings through intersubjectivity. When the learning community, as a social and intellectual being, shares ideas and inquiries about goals and actions through language, teachers can get, challenge, and change theoretical and empirical propositional knowledge in teaching and learning (Richardson, 1999). “The teacher does not lead students (including students of teaching), in linear fashion, to the ‘correct’ answers but instead establishes an environment wherein the students test rival alternative hypotheses” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 721). Through teacher educators’ guidance, teachers can be responsible for the meaning making of their own learning. Preservice and in-service teachers are encouraged to see multiple ways for their problem solving and decision-making, examining their personal theories, beliefs, and values in teaching and learning more deeply.
**Teacher Beliefs and Practical Knowledge**

“That something ‘is’ never implies that it ‘ought’ to be, and that something ‘is not’ never determines that it ‘should not be’” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 727).

**Teachers’ Knowledge, Context, and Practice**

What is the aim of education? What knowledge is the most worthwhile? Is human behavior and thinking able to be explained by cause and effect? Are educational laws and principles universal in the world? Are scientific and objective knowledge able to be adapted and generalized to anyone and to any situation? What kind of knowledge should be taught for preservice and in-service teachers in teacher education? What should teachers understand in the teaching profession? What should preservice and in-service teachers be encouraged to do or to be in order to be a good teacher? In education, what is the ‘absolutely right’ answer or interpretation in every situation? Can we generalize that ‘A’ is the best solution to cure the problem ‘A’? Should preservice and in-service teachers always apply teaching technique ‘B’ for solving the problem ‘B’? What should preservice and in-service teachers be supported to apply in teaching and learning? How can preservice and in-service teachers come to know about teaching and learning? What is known as the standard and validated as truth in teachers’ knowledge?

Questioning what qualities, understanding, categories and types of knowledge competent teachers should have, Shulman (1987) assumes that knowledge in the teaching profession has to go beyond academics. Arguing that teachers need to understand ‘what is to be learned’ and ‘how it is to be taught,’ this researcher categorizes knowledge base as the following:
Content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter; curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as ‘tools of the trade’ for teachers; pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (p. 8).

These categories of teacher knowledge show that teachers should be knowledgeable in the subjects that they teach, in structures of materials to present for teaching and learning, in the theoretical literatures on teaching and learning, and in learners’ diverse interests, abilities, and ways of thinking. Shulman (1987) said that teachers should have flexible and complex understanding regarding learners’ diversity, and should be able to explain the same ideas or principles differently, depending on learners’ diversity. In addition, teachers must have the ‘wisdom of practice’ emphasizing specific contexts within which learning occurs.

Teachers’ knowledge cannot be measured quantitatively “by the number of courses that teachers have taken in teacher education programs or their scores on standardized tests” (Even & Tirosh, 1995, p. 2). As Shulman (1986) notes, teachers’ simple subject knowledge alone is not sufficient for their better teaching. If teachers’
roles were to deliver instruction and learners’ roles were to listen to teachers, teaching and learning would be much simpler. Teacher education does not aim to train teachers to perform in prescribed or skillful ways. Rather, the goal of most teacher education programs is to educate teachers to make sound decisions and to grow their pedagogical reasoning within certain practical contexts (Fenstermacher, 1986). The knowledge that was categorized above does not define technical standards in teaching and learning. “We must achieve standards without standardization” (Shulman, 1987, p. 20).

However, teachers’ formal knowledge acquisition from research is not enough for their professional development in teaching and learning. As Elbaz argues, we need to recognize “what teachers know and understand as a result of training, experience, and reflection, not what a teacher should know in order to be successful or effective” (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 15). If we take a top-down approach without considering teachers’ beliefs and views and particular situations or contexts that guide their decisions, reasoning, and actions in teaching and learning, then education will be hard to reform (van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001).

Teachers’ knowledge learning in classrooms of teacher education programs or their practice alone in real educational settings is not enough to challenge, cause experimentation, and reinterpretation of their beliefs and intellectual restructuring (Even, 1999). Practical context and situations involving real problems make general theoretical knowledge more particular, tangible, and relevant for teachers. “Conditional knowledge and a way of knowing that reflects and addresses the complex context and moral embeddedness of teaching and learning” are required (Harrington, 1995, p. 203). A particular context makes knowledge situated. Knowledge is obtained and used based on
contexts. The integration of theoretical knowledge and specific practical contexts provides teachers with opportunities to be more reflective and analytical in their thoughts for practical decision-making and for change in their knowledge and beliefs.

“Knowledge is not an affair of coming directly into the presence of the really real once and for all. Knowing is temporally conditioned. It grows with the varying circumstances as we become more sensitive to the possibilities that can be realized” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25, see Field & Latta, 2001, p. 894) in the circumstances that we intend to understand. What teachers know and how teachers use the knowledge are framed and determined in practical contexts. The particular contexts in teaching and learning are important because they connect teachers’ knowledge to practice. Specific situations justify teachers’ practical reasoning that is the basis for their actions in teaching and learning. As Cooney (1999) points out, teachers’ teaching and learning is shaped by the particular context within which learning occurs and by each teacher’s own learning experiences. The personal identification and meaning of a specific situation is mediated by the sociocultural contexts of teaching and learning, and teachers’ subjective participation in them (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999).

Context is a mediator in the creation of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs. “The practice of teaching means understanding specific cases and unique situations. In practical knowing, this understanding is mainly formulated in concrete and context-related terms” (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999, p. 912). In this process, Cooney (1999) mentions that teachers’ reflection is an important medium to permit the flexible construction of knowledge and beliefs. Regarding the characteristics of teachers’ reflection, Cooney, Shealy, and Arvold (1998) categorized isolationist, naive idealist,
naive connectionist, and reflective connectionist. An ‘isolationist’ is likely to construct beliefs by him/herself, rejecting others’ beliefs. In this approach, teachers see little value in beliefs if the beliefs are not consistent with theirs. The ‘naive idealist’ receives others’ beliefs without analysis or critique and accepts knowledge in others’ voices. The ‘naive connectionist’ and ‘reflective connectionist’ focus on their reflective thinking and context comparing the beliefs between others and themselves. However, the naive connectionist is unsuccessful in resolving conflict in beliefs, whereas the reflective connectionist succeeds in solving the conflict or differences in beliefs, integrating the voices of others and themselves.

“Teaching involves making an immense number of decisions, and all these decisions have an impact on how students will learn, how they will treat one another, and what the classroom atmosphere will feel like” (Sapon-Shevin, 1995, p. 99). Teachers’ ‘right’ or ‘good’ decision-making cannot be determined in isolation from certain contexts in teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers’ theoretical knowledge and practical wisdom should be applied to specific situations concurrently (Field & Latta, 2001).

*Teacher Beliefs and Practical Knowledge*

“Teaching is close to commonsense, not only because we very early form beliefs about it, but also because teaching is a general human activity. The continuum comprises knowledge, beliefs, expectations, concepts, etc., which guide and determine our seeing” (Kvernbekk, 2000, p. 358). Teaching is a personal (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999) and social vocation. Fenstermacher (1994) describes the dictionary definitions of knowledge as “familiarity, awareness or understanding gained through experience or study; the sum or range of what has been perceived, discovered, or learned” (p. 29). Cooney (1999)
maintains that categories of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs are blurred. Teachers’ knowledge and beliefs are not distinguishable. Wood and Bennett (2000) indicate “teachers’ knowledge is a teachers’ personal stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs, memories, and the assumption that sets of knowledge of different aspects of their work combine to become a theory or ideology” (p. 637).

Kessles and Korthagen (1996) argue that what preservice teachers need to become teachers is practical wisdom rather than scientific knowledge that is generalized by research for applying to broad contexts. That is, what preservice teachers need is not conceptual knowledge but perceptual knowledge within specific situations. At this point, Kvernbekk (2000) points out that it is hard to distinguish teachers’ observation and theory because our perceptual knowledge is theory-laden, because seeing with our own eyes is recognized by the theoretical concepts, and because personal beliefs may be expanded by academic knowledge.

Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) agree, arguing that teacher knowledge is derived from personal experiences, that teacher knowledge is “not something objective and independent of the teacher to be learned and transmitted but, rather, is the sum total of the teacher’s experience” (p. 666). According to Field and Latta (2001), teachers’ knowledge should be conceived of as experience, not simply as an accumulated ‘thing’ in academics. Because teachers’ knowledge and beliefs are closely connected to their every teaching act in practice, and because teachers construct or reconstruct their knowledge and beliefs from various sources (Connelly, Clandinn, & He, 1997; Richardson, 1996; Wood & Bennett, 2000) within their sociocultural contexts, teacher belief is critical to research on teachers’ knowledge.
Teachers are “creators of knowledge as they engage in the world beyond the self” (Tirri, Husu, & Kananen, 1999, p. 912). Teachers build their practical knowledge from their personal experiences and reflections on actions and experiences (Fenstermacher, 1994; Richardson, 1996; Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999) in practice by deciding and changing possible actions based on concrete situations. Practical knowledge is “bounded by time, place, or situation. To claim to know something practically is to claim to know something about an action, event, or situation in this particular instance.” (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 28). Teachers’ practical knowledge is “not a property of formal propositions but instead as a property of a mind contemplating and reflecting on action” (Tirri, Husu, & Kananen, 1999, p. 912). According to Connelly and Clandinin (1988), practical knowledge is defined as “a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions for the future to deal with the exigencies of present situations” (p. 25). Practical knowledge refers to “an amalgam of all teachers’ cognitions, such as declarative and procedural knowledge, beliefs, and values, which influences preactive, interactive, and postactive teaching activities. This means that it also includes reasons underlying teaching, considerations, arguments, personal motives, and zeal” (Zanting, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2001, p. 726). According to Elbaz (1983), teachers’ practical knowledge includes knowledge of self, milieu, subject matter, curriculum development, and instruction. She states that teachers’ practical knowledge can be embodied in teaching practice as rules of practice that state clearly what or how to do something in a specific context, as practical principles that are less explicitly articulated, and as images that are formulated descriptively and metaphorically about teachers’ perception of themselves, their teaching,
the teaching context including the subject matter, and the relevant areas that help their knowledge construction.

Teachers’ practical knowledge that makes teachers’ decision-making possible is obtained through multiple sources including their formal academic courses and personal experiences (Black & Halliwell, 2000). Teachers’ knowledge and beliefs are a major influence on their problem solving and practical actions in classrooms. According to van Driel, Beijaard, and Verloop (2001), teachers’ practical knowledge is ‘action-oriented’ because it is obtained from their experiences in teaching and learning with no direct assistance of other people. Teachers’ practical knowledge is ‘person- and context-bound’ because teachers get the practical knowledge from their own context in teaching and learning on the basis of their own personal values within the particular situation. In this sense, practical knowledge is ‘implicit or tacit.’ Practical knowledge is ‘integrated knowledge’ that connects “formal knowledge, everyday knowledge, including norms and values, as well as experiential knowledge” (p. 142). Practical knowledge is constructed by teachers’ formal academic or personal experiences linking formal theory to practice in teaching and learning. According to Clandinin (1985), theories and practice are inseparable. In practical knowledge construction, ‘teachers’ beliefs’ are important as the best indicators of teachers’ decision-making and as filters to understand new knowledge and ideas and integrate them to the prior knowledge frameworks (Pajares, 1992). However, in integrating new information and ideas, teachers restructure their beliefs and practical knowledge, rather than simply adding the new ideas to the existing conceptual frameworks. Teachers’ practical knowledge helps teachers “involve more complex decision-making than the one-way action of applying theory to practice” (Black &
Halliwell, 2000, p. 104). Practical knowledge is the knowledge that reflects people’s previous knowledge and personal experiences in teaching and learning within specific contexts and situations and is constructed and reconstructed through more experiences and reflection.

Teachers’ practical knowledge is formulated in teachers’ “ways of working and their ways of talking” (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999, p. 911) in the teaching profession. Fenstermacher (1994) claims that teachers’ practical knowledge “is generally related to how to do things, the right place and time to do them, or how to see and interpret events related to one’s actions” (p. 12) on the basis of a specific situation or context. Teachers’ practical knowledge is perceptual rather than conceptual (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999). This means that teachers’ belief is not a separate entity from their knowledge and practice in teaching and learning. Teacher belief is a crucial element in practical knowledge. As van Driel, Beijaard, and Verloop (2001) suggest, teachers’ practical knowledge comprises teachers’ beliefs and knowledge that are results of their personal and professional experiences in teaching and learning.

In the process of constructing and reconstructing practical knowledge, teachers’ belief systems play a role as filters to assess the new knowledge and ideas. According to Richardson (1996), teacher beliefs are defined “as a subset of a group of constructs that name and define mental states thought to drive a person’s actions; they include conceptions, perceptions, perspectives, orientations, theories, and stances” (Hanrahan & Tate, 2001, p. 76). For a deep understanding of knowledge and beliefs in teaching and learning, teachers’ beliefs have to be realized in teacher education programs (Richardson, 1996).
Teachers perceive and attend to personal and professional experiences selectively and intuitively within sociocultural contexts rather than cognitively (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999). Jackson (1986) indicates that the sociocultural context means “the awareness, presuppositions, expectations, and everything else that impinges upon the action or that contributes to its interpretation by the actors themselves and by outsiders as well” (p. 96) rather than “the simple physical setting where events occur” (Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999, pp. 920-921). These authors mention that teachers’ “selves” in individual and social levels are the central tools for their thinking to deal with what is known and how the knowing is justified in teaching and learning contexts. This epistemological stance makes it possible for teachers to recognize, understand, interpret, and constitute the knowledge and experiences of the world.

Wood and Bennett (2000) maintain that teachers may modify their knowledge and beliefs in practice through the processes of ‘reflective consideration, problematizing practice, and changing theories and practices.’ In the ‘reflective consideration’ stage, teachers consider that knowledge is contextually situated and that theories and practices are examined and analyzed within complex contexts. In the ‘problematizing practice’ stage, based on reflection of good and successful teaching, teachers challenge and problematize their epistemology, personal beliefs, theories, and practices acknowledging the constraints to their teaching and learning. Reflecting on their theories and practices, teachers are concerned with how to improve the quality of their teaching and learning, and what may be changed in their actions. In the stage of ‘changing theories and practice,’ teachers have a more conscious recognition of their theories and practices. As teachers develop deeper understanding of their professional knowledge with more in-
depth reflection, they reconstruct the knowledge and beliefs that form a theoretical framework and their everyday practices. “Knowledge and beliefs are inextricably intertwined, but the potent affective, evaluative, and episodic nature of beliefs makes them a filter through which phenomena are interpreted” (Pajares, 1992, p. 325).

**The Capture of Practical Knowledge**

In order to capture or develop teachers’ practical knowledge (van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001) by stimulating reflection on sensitive experiences (Black & Halliwell, 2000), storytelling (Elbaz, 1990), conversation or direct dialogues, drawing, metaphor (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Hanrahan & Tate, 2001), story writing, journal writing (Black & Halliwell, 2000), networking for learning and professional development, peer coaching, collaborative action research, and cases (van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001) can be used in teacher education programs. Because teachers’ knowledge can be understood in their own terms, these strategies can help teachers develop their personal beliefs and self-image as teachers by recognizing emotions, tensions, and past experiences, by challenging their own or others’ ideas with mutual support, and by connecting personal experiences to the sociocultural context (Black & Halliwell, 2000). This reflective process opens doors for both teachers, themselves, and teacher educators to think, clarify, and refine their beliefs and knowledge explicitly in teaching and learning.

According to Bruner (1986), there are two ‘modes of thought’ – ‘logico-scientific thought’ and ‘narrative modes of thought’ (Gillespie, 1996). ‘Logico-scientific’ thought is represented through scientific reasoning and propositional knowledge. In this form of knowledge, formal generalizable and abstract laws, concepts, and principles that can be
universally applied in multiple situations are stressed. In contrast, ‘narrative modes’ of knowing is contextualized, situated, particular, concrete, more connected with meaning and understanding than with “truth.” Narrative knowledge helps teachers examine alternative possibilities in certain situations. “Our sensitivity to narrative provides the major link between our own sense of self and our sense of others in the social world around us. The common coin may be provided by the forms of narrative that the culture offers us” (Bruner, 1986, p. 69, see Gillespie, 1996). The turn to narrative helps teachers and teacher educators figure out their personal practical knowledge. Teachers’ narrative descriptions and stories make it possible to understand what they know, how they act in a certain contexts or situations, and why they act as they do in teaching and learning.

In particular, cases enable teachers to make meaning in teaching and learning through the “vicarious normative and cognitive content and context for conducting teacher-centered inquiry and democratic conversation” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 733). Cases are a powerful means for discussing and analyzing “content-related, pedagogical and philosophical issues” (van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001, p. 151) with peers and teacher educators. “From an epistemological perspective, cases may be more congruent with the forms of practical knowledge that undergird the varieties of practice, in teaching and other fields” (Shulman, 1992, p. 21).

Cases make it possible for teachers to convert “propositional knowledge (research and theory) into practice, and tacit practical craft knowledge into propositional knowledge” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 733). Cases assist teachers in acquiring what Shulman (1986) called ‘case knowledge and strategic knowledge.’ Case knowledge is “knowledge of specific, well-documented, and richly described events” (Shulman,
Strategic knowledge is the knowledge that “comes into play as teachers confront situations or problems, whether theoretical, practical, or moral, where principles collide and no simple solution is possible. Strategic knowledge must be generated to extend understanding beyond principle to the wisdom of practice” (Shulman, 1986, p. 13). Strategic knowledge “appears to be skilled adjudication of conflicts between the rules or principles (developed out of propositional knowledge) and the specific instances encountered in practice (cases or case knowledge)” (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 16).

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to identify preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge regarding diversity issues and to investigate the development of their practical knowledge through case-based pedagogy. The review of the literature includes two major sections: diversity and multicultural education and case-based pedagogy. The diversity and multicultural education section emphasizes that teachers need to be well-prepared in teacher education programs, recognize diversity in teaching and learning, confront their biases and prejudices, reflect on their prior practical knowledge, including beliefs and knowledge about diversity, and restructuring the practical knowledge on diversity through deep understanding and reflection. Case-based pedagogy is reviewed in the context of exploring teachers’ beliefs and assumptions about diversity. Teachers’ reflective thinking, problem solving, and decision-making through case-based pedagogy can facilitate educational inquiry that considers and challenges teachers’ interpretive frameworks and filters regarding issues of diversity in teaching and learning.
“Diversity in our country is fast becoming the norm. What does this mean for today’s early childhood classroom?” (Wright, Chang, & Rocha, 2000, p. 1). Race, gender, ethnicity, ability, language, culture, socioeconomic class, family configurations, interests, or combinations of these produce enormous diversity issues. According to the above authors, there is more variation in family patterns than anytime in history, including single-parent, blended, children living with relatives, children living in poverty, and so forth. A reflection of this huge sociocultural diversity, children coming from different ethnic backgrounds, has significantly increased in the United States in recent years. Miller, Miller, and Schroth (1997) reported that 25% of children in the typical K-12 classroom in the U.S. are currently ethnic minorities and the number of ethnic minority children will grow to 39% by the year 2020. About 9.9 million school-age children among 45 million school-age children are living in a family using non-English languages (Waggoner, 1994, see NAEYC, 1996). “In New York City today, about one of every seven residents has arrived from a foreign country within the past ten years, and it is expected that another million immigrants will enter the city by the year 2000. Furthermore, one out of every three New Yorkers is foreign-born” (Friedman, 1990, see Miller & Tanners, 1995, p. 3).

More diverse children in various sociocultural groups enter early childhood education programs experiencing feelings of difficulty, loss, un-safety, alienation, isolation, and depression (Congress & Lynne, 1994) in struggling to adapt to multiple languages, knowledge expectations, traditions, attitudes, values, and beliefs which differ between their family and educational settings (NAEYC, 1996). Each sociocultural
group’s patterns of behaviors, thinking, values, ideas, and symbols that are transmitted by their cultures and that are differentiated from other groups (NCSS, 1992) may cause difficulty in communicating with people in different sociocultural groups, because people do not live in a universe vacuum.

Definitions and Dimensions

“A major goal of multicultural education is to reform the school and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality” (Banks, 1995a, p. 3). Multicultural education is “a way to help students of different backgrounds communicate, get along better with each other, and feel good about themselves” (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, p. 426). According to Manning and Baruth (1996), multicultural education “is designed to teach learners to recognize, accept, and appreciate cultural, ethnic, social class, religious, and gender differences and to instill in learners during these crucial developmental years a sense of responsibility and a commitment to work toward the democratic ideals of justice, equality, and democracy” (p. 3). Diversity and multiculturalism are frequently used interchangeably with valuing differences of culture, morality, multiple needs, inclusion of diverse groups of people, and equal educational opportunities and responsibilities (Miller & Tanners, 1995). According to Baker (1994), understanding is the most important thing in diversity. If people do not stereotype particular cultural groups, they could better understand, accept, and trust diversity, appreciating differences and similarities about different cultures.

Arguing for meaningful, holistic changes of schools rather than the narrow conceptualization and implementation of multicultural education, Banks (1995a)
describes five dimensions of multicultural education programs – content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. First, in the dimension of ‘content integration,’ teachers infuse various content, examples, and data from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic classes into the existing curriculum in order to communicate the core contents in the subject field. The content integration dimension focuses on “what information should be included in the curriculum, how it should be integrated into the existing curriculum, and where it should be located within the curriculum (i.e., whether it should be taught within separate courses or as part of the core curriculum), and who should be the audience for ethnic content (i.e., whether it should be for all students or primarily for students of non-dominant groups)” (p. 5).

Second, the ‘knowledge construction’ dimension describes the procedures and ways that knowledge is created and influenced by different sociocultural groups in terms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, their assumptions, perspectives, and biases. In this approach, knowledge is regarded as the reflection of “ideology, human interests, values, perspectives,” (Banks, 1995a, p. 12) and power within the sociocultural context. The notion that knowledge is objective, neutral, and universal is rejected. Rather, in this dimension, teachers focus on “the information and skills needed to teach students how knowledge is constructed, how to identify the writer’s purposes and point of view, and how to formulate their own interpretations of reality” (p. 12).

Third, the ‘prejudice reduction’ dimension illustrates the characteristics of children’s racial attitudes, and focuses on the design of strategies and interventions that can help children’s more positive and democratic development in their racial attitudes,
values, and behaviors. The fourth dimension, ‘equity pedagogy’ focuses on the search for more effective methods and strategies that increase the academic achievement of children from diverse groups in terms of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. This dimension is premised on beliefs that minority children’s cultural deprivation and disadvantages hinder them from accomplishing higher academic achievement and that the school should help children overcome the deficits from their early socialization experiences. However, these assumptions have been challenged. Recently, cultural difference theories, which indicate that children’s low academic achievement results from the serious cultural conflicts between their own cultures and values and the schools’ culture and values, is a better explanation for diverse minority children’s low-academic achievement.

The final dimension, ‘empowering school culture and social structure’ deals with the process of restructuring the school culture and organization for equality and cultural empowerment of diverse children from multiple racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic class backgrounds. According to Banks (1995a), school is a cultural and social system “with a specific set of values, norms, ethos, and shared meanings” (p. 17). Within this system, teachers need to examine their knowledge and attitudes on diversity as well as concentrate on their instructional materials. The cooperative decisions among teachers, principals, other school professionals, and parents are helpful for empowering schools (Comer, 1988, see Banks, 1995a).

Schools need to be more socioculturally, politically, economically, and psychologically responsive (Katz, 2001). Schools need to connect to the needs of their children and their families from diverse backgrounds. Katz maintains that rather than terming socioculturally and linguistically diverse children and their families as strangers,
it is important for schools to build personal linkages and communication with them in particular contexts which respect the diversity.

*Five Teaching Approaches to Multicultural Education*

We believe that educators need to be very clear about what multicultural education means to them. What goals they actually have in mind? What target student populations? What vision of society? What ideas about how to achieve a better society? What assumptions about learning? It is important for you to be clear about your own beliefs to achieve what you are attempting (Sleeter & Grant, 1999, p. viii).

Sleeter and Grant (1999) suggest five approaches to multicultural education that shape how schools and teachers make different choices in working with diverse groups of children. The five approaches – teaching the exceptional and culturally different, human relations, single-group studies, multicultural education, and education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist – are offered asking how schooling and teachers work for increased equity and equality for children.

Teachers who emphasize multicultural education as ‘teaching the exceptional and the culturally different’ believe that they should help children mainstream into existing society by remediating their ‘deficiencies’ that occur from diverse sociocultural backgrounds (see Table 1). In this approach, the diverse groups of children including immigrants, the poor, or any other alienated members of the society are considered as people who lack the ‘right’ thoughts, values, knowledge, language, concepts, and skills. Therefore, the goal of schooling in this teaching approach is to assimilate children into
the society by promoting their academic achievement and acquiring taken-for-granted-knowledge in the dominant society.

Teachers who conceptualize multicultural education as ‘human relations’ emphasize facilitating children’s positive feelings, interactions, and relationships among people in the community and society (see Table 2). In this approach, human relations skills include feeling good about themselves and others, acknowledging and respecting differences and similarities, and eliminating prejudices.

Table 1

*Teaching the Exceptional and the Culturally Different (p. 38)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal goals:</th>
<th>Help fit people into the existing social structure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School goals:</td>
<td>Teach dominant traditional educational aims more effectively by building bridges between the student and the demands of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target students:</td>
<td>Lower-class, special education, limited English proficiency, female, or students of color who are behind in achievement in main school subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Make relevant to students’ experiential background; fill in gaps in basic skills and knowledge; teach content in language students can understand; use first language as basis for teaching standard English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Build on students’ learning styles; adapt to students’ skill levels; teach as effectively and efficiently as possible to enable students to catch up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects of classroom</td>
<td>Use decorations showing group members integrated into mainstream society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School services</td>
<td>Use traditional bilingual education, ESL, remedial classes, special education as temporary and intensive aids to fill gaps in knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other schoolwide Concerns</td>
<td>Involve lower-class and parents of color in supporting work of the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers who characterize multicultural education as ‘single-group studies’
concentrate on their teaching in order to empower one specific oppressed group such as

Table 2

*Human Relations (p. 77)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal goals:</th>
<th>Promote feelings of unity, tolerance, and acceptance within existing social structure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School goals:</td>
<td>Promote positive feelings among students, reduce stereotyping, promote students’ self-concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target students:</td>
<td>Everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices:</td>
<td>Teach lessons about stereotyping, name-calling; teach lessons about individual differences and similarities; include in lessons contributions of groups of which students are members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Use cooperative learning; use real or vicarious experiences with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Decorate classroom to reflect uniqueness and accomplishments of students; decorate with “I’m OK, You’re OK” themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects of classroom</td>
<td>Make sure activities and school policies and practices do not put down or leave out some groups of students; promote schoolwide activities, such as donating food to the poor, aimed at peace and unity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, women, gay or lesbian, people
with disabilities, etc (see Table 3). Teachers of the single-group studies attempt to
diminish social stratification and discrimination, and raise the status and power of the
group that is the focus of their concerns.

In the ‘multicultural education’ approach to multicultural education, teachers
focus on cultural pluralism and equal opportunity (see Table 4). The multicultural
education approach focuses on social change and educational reform, not simply on
integration and assimilation of diverse groups of people into the existing society. A
tossed salad or a patchwork quilt is a metaphoric representation of this approach because various materials and objects of multiple sizes, colors, and shapes are unique but dependent on each other so that they form a distinguished collective unity. This particular approach is characterized by the goals of facilitating “the strength and value of cultural diversity, human rights and respect for those who are different from oneself, alternative life choices for people, social justice and equal opportunity for all people, and equity in the distribution of power among groups,” (p.150) and assesses the groups, curriculum, tests, staffs of schools.

Table 3

*Single-Group Studies (p. 111)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal goals:</th>
<th>Promote special structural equality for an immediate recognition of the identified group.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School goals:</td>
<td>Promote willingness and knowledge among students to work toward social change that would benefit the identified group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target students:</td>
<td>Everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Teach units or courses about the culture of a group, how the group has been victimized, current social issues facing the group – from the perspective of that group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Build on students’ learning style, especially the learning style of that group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects of classroom</td>
<td>Use decorations reflecting culture and classroom contributions of the group; have representatives of the group involved in class activities (e.g., appearing as guest speakers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other schoolwide Concerns</td>
<td>Employ faculty who are members of the group being studied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers who conceptualize multicultural education as ‘education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist’ focus on social justice, equality, and
empowerment of children (see Table 5). This approach attempts to teach children skills of social critique that are needed as democratic citizens, to reform educational programs for reflecting concerns of diverse groups of children, and to reconstruct society by eliminating oppression and by distributing equal power among groups.

Table 4

*Multicultural Education (p. 153)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal goals:</th>
<th>Promote social structural equality and cultural pluralism (the United States as a “tossed salad”).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School goals:</td>
<td>Promote equal opportunity in the school, cultural pluralism and alternative life styles, respect for those who differ, and support for power equity among groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target students:</td>
<td>Everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Organize concept around contributions and perspectives of several different groups; teach critical thinking, analysis of alternative viewpoints; make curriculum relevant to students’ experiential backgrounds; promote use of more than one language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Build on students’ learning styles; adapt to students’ skill levels; involve students actively in thinking and analyzing; use cooperative learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects of classroom</td>
<td>Decorate classroom to reflect cultural pluralism, nontraditional sex roles, disabled people, and student interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services</td>
<td>Help regular classroom adapt to as much diversity as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other schoolwide concerns</td>
<td>Involve lower-class and minority parents actively in the school; encourage staffing patterns to include diverse racial, gender, and disability groups in nontraditional roles; make use of decorations, special events, and school menus that reflect and include diverse groups; use library materials that portray diverse groups in diverse roles; include all student groups in extracurricular activities, and do not reinforce stereotypes; make sure discipline procedures do not penalize any group; make sure building is accessible to disabled people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5

*Education That is Multicultural and Social Recontructionist (p. 189)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal goals:</th>
<th>Promote social structural equality and cultural pluralism.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School goals:</td>
<td>Prepare citizens to work actively toward social structural equality; promote cultural pluralism and alternative life styles; promote equal opportunity in the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target students:</td>
<td>Everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Organize content around current social issues involving racism, classism, sexism, handicapism; organize concepts around experiences and perspectives of several different American groups; use students’ life experiences as starting point for analyzing oppression; teach critical thinking skills, analysis of alternative viewpoints; teach critical thinking skills, analysis of alternative viewpoints; teach social action skills, empowerment skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Involve students actively in democratic decision-making; build on students’ learning styles; adapt to students’ skill levels; use cooperative learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects of classroom</td>
<td>Decorate room to reflect social acting themes, cultural diversity, student interests; avoid testing and grouping procedures that designate some students as failures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services</td>
<td>Help regular classroom adapt to as much diversity as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other schoolwide concerns</td>
<td>Involve students in democratic decision-making about substantive schoolwide concerns; involve lower-class and minority parents actively in the school; involve school in local community action projects; make sure that staffing patterns include diverse racial, gender, and disability groups in nontraditional roles; use decorations, special events, school menus to reflect and include diverse groups; make sure that extracurricular activities include all student groups and do not reinforce stereotypes; use discipline procedures that do not penalize any one group; make sure building is accessible to disabled people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teacher Education for Diversity*

Most teacher education programs have confronted the challenge of preparing teachers to teach children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. Teachers’ awareness
of cultural diversity is increasingly becoming important. As diversity and multicultural pluralism grow in the world, teachers are faced with complex challenges and responsibilities. We need teachers who are professionally prepared for socioculturally and linguistically pluralistic classrooms.

Preservice and in-service teachers who are teaching in this multicultural era should be sensitive to diverse sociocultures and should possess socioculturally relevant knowledge, values, decision-making ability, strategies, and actions in order to more equally meet the children’s needs in the learning setting and for the children to learn more comfortably. However, “preservice teachers often lack knowledge about cultural issues and sensitivity to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds” (Miller, Miller, & Schroth, 1997, p. 223).

Critical knowledge and reflective mind. Emphasizing how to prepare multiculturally sensitive teachers and how to build schools and educate children with honor, Grant (1997) suggests that teachers need critical knowledge on diversity. According to this scholar, teachers need knowledge of the important influence of culture and language on learning and teaching; in-depth subject matter knowledge of at least one academic discipline; knowledge of the history and culture of the different ethnic groups; knowledge of race, class, and gender, and an understanding of their interconnectedness; knowledge of how to develop a classroom context that fosters learning and enhances self-development; knowledge of the specific students being taught, and the culture of the local school, community, and school district; knowledge of one’s cultural identity and multiple ascribed characteristics and their influences; knowledge of the influence of one’s privileges and socialization upon one’s life circumstances; knowledge of the importance
of using formal and informal research to identify and remedy classroom problems; and knowledge of the importance of an active partnership between the home, community, and school. According to Hunt (1999), knowledge in multicultural education means to develop understanding of culture and diversity, to remove stereotypes, and to figure out how to facilitate children’s awareness in diversity.

As Wurzel (1998) indicates, to reduce cultural conflict and to expand interpersonal and intercultural understanding requires more than simply knowledge of differences and similarities in diverse cultures. Rather, it should be a continuous reflective mind about “oneself, others, and the contradictions encompassed in historical and contemporary culture” (p. 2). One’s mental and emotional consciousness cannot be static or absolute and can be enriched by others because the reflection occurs within sociocultural contexts. Teachers’ beliefs, expectations, and values, constructed during the continuous reflective process within their own sociocultural context, effect how they interact with diverse children. Teachers need to have thorough knowledge, understanding, and respect for children and their sociocultures (Katz, 2001).

Multicultural man is the person who is intellectually and emotionally committed to the fundamental unity of all human beings while at the same time he recognizes, legitimizes, accepts, and appreciates the fundamental differences that lie between people from different cultures. This new kind of man cannot be defined by the languages he speaks, the countries he has visited, or the number of international contacts he has made. Nor is he defined by his profession, his place of residence, or his cognitive sophistication. Instead, multicultural man is recognized by the configuration of his outlooks and world views, by the way he
remains open to the outlooks and world views, by the way he remains open to the

Strategies for understanding and respecting. How can teachers help children from
diverse backgrounds reduce the conflict between their sociocultural concerns and goals of
better assimilation or adjustment in the dominant culture? How can teachers promote
children’s multiculturalism? The National Association for the Education of Young
Children (1996) argues that early childhood teachers have to acknowledge the culturally
and linguistically diverse children’s ‘feeling of loneliness, fear, and abandonment’ in
educational settings that are isolated from their home cultures and languages.
Accordingly, they propose the goal of early childhood education as “equal access to high
quality educational programs that recognize and promote all aspects of children’s
development and learning and enabling all children to become competent, successful, and
socially responsible adults” (NAEYC, 1996, p. 175). As the school population continues
to change, education has to focus on diminishing the conflicts between diverse cultural
and linguistic children and others in the major socioculture (Miller & Tanners, 1995).

Facing this challenge and responsibility in early childhood education, NAEYC
(1996) made recommendations for children’s diversity in language, culture, and learning
needs. Their recommendations emphasize that most of all, early childhood teachers have
to recognize the diverse characteristics of children in language, culture, and cognition,
and connect home and school by supporting home language and culture. It is important
for teachers to be sensitive to sociocultural differences and to accept these differences
(Congress & Lynne, 1994).
NAEYC (1996) also proposed that whatever language and culture children have acquired, they should be able to express their capabilities, feeling success and strengthening the potentiality in educational settings. Early childhood teachers have to build a responsive learning environment to diverse children and to understand children’s difficulty and the need for teachers’ help in learning a second language. Collaboration and support between parents and teachers will help children become more knowledgeable in diverse language, culture, learning, identity development, and understanding of the relationship with others. In addition, the need for early childhood teachers’ sociocultural and linguistic understanding and knowledge is important. Early childhood teachers have to provide children with various opportunities to be involved in learning activities and social interactions. Early childhood teachers’ ability to take risks in learning different languages and cultures will be helpful in creating a more respectful learning environment. Furthermore, Baker (1994) points out that to teach children to understand diversity is a significant role for teachers. By offering children opportunities to experience other cultures and to interact with others from diverse sociocultural situations, children will develop more positive and respectful attitudes about diversity. Understanding and respecting themselves and others from diverse sociocultural backgrounds (Hunt, 1999) will help children have a deeper understanding about their way of living and socioculture. “Young children need to develop positive self-concepts and group identities without feeling superior to other ethnic groups. Early childhood educators must help them achieve this goal” (Rodd, 1996, p. 326). “Early childhood educators should stop and reflect on the best ways to ensure appropriate educational and developmental experiences
for all young children. Just as each child is different, methods and strategies to work with young children must vary” (NAEYC, 1996, p. 176).

*The socioculturally responsive learning environment.* Creating a multiculturally rich environment is important in decreasing children’s stereotypes. Is it beneficial to add multicultural books in the reading area? Is it good to add clothes, cooking objects, dolls, pictures of families, music, puzzles, and objects that are used to celebrate holidays from diverse cultures, in a housekeeping center? (Hunt, 1999). While these may be useful ideas, teachers’ simple preparation of materials or activities from different cultures in classrooms is insufficient to create a socioculturally diverse learning environment. As the author indicates, teachers need positive attitudes to help children construct knowledgeable and confident self-identity, interact with diverse people comfortably and empathetically, foster critical thinking and the ability to support themselves and others confronting bias.

Tourist curriculum is both patronizing, emphasizing the ‘exotic’ differences between cultures, and trivializing, avoiding the real-life daily problems and experiences of different peoples, but with surface aspects of their celebrations and modes of entertainment. Children ‘visit’ non-White cultures and then ‘go home’ to the daily classroom, which reflects only the dominant culture. The focus on holidays, although it provides drama and delight for both children and adults, gives the impression that that is all ‘other’ people do. What it fails to communicate is real understanding (Derman-Sparks & A. B. C. Task Force, 1989, p. 7).
Considering multicultural curriculum, Banks (1995) advocates four approaches which he describes as ‘contributions, additive, transformation, and social action.’ The ‘contributions approach’ deals with “heroes, heroines, holidays, and discrete cultural elements” (p. 13). In the ‘additive approach,’ teachers include “ethnic content, themes, concepts, lessons, and perspectives to the existing curriculum without changing its basic structure” (p. 12). The ‘transformation approach’ changes the structure of the curriculum in order for children to be taught how knowledge is constructed, and facilitates children’s understanding of various issues, events, concepts, and perspectives from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. The ‘social action approach’ extends the transformation approach by providing children with opportunities “to make decisions on important social issues and take action to help solve them” (p. 12).

Early childhood classrooms should be safe and caring communities where diverse children are valued and admired. Sapon-Shevin (1995) argues for a safe community for learning. Children need to feel “the safety to learn and to fail; the safety to show oneself fully and be appreciated or at least supported; the safety to succeed and the safety to be imperfect; the safety from humiliation, isolation, stigmatization, alienation from the group” (p. 102). Children should feel physically, psychologically, and emotionally safe enough to open themselves, to know one another, to share their emotions such as fear, need, loneliness, etc. They should have more positive, deeper, and richer social interactions with people, and feel secure in showing their cultures in diverse sociocultural contexts, connecting their personal experiences, prior knowledge, interests, and needs.

Thus it is important for teachers to learn particular ways that enable children from diverse sociocultural contexts to contribute in class. This will be essential for them to feel
competence, responsibility, and a sense of belonging (Levin, 1995b). Additionally, teachers need the ability to help children share sociocultural perspectives and construct new understandings by communicating with others; this, too, is essential in creating a culturally responsive learning environment (Rodd, 1996). As Levin (1995b) suggests, teachers have to ask themselves how they can provide opportunities for children to be acknowledged and to be celebrated by their diversity in classes, and how they can create a safe and comfortable learning environment for all different children with friendship, trust, respect, and caring.

*The recognition of teachers’ personal experiences and beliefs.* Early childhood teachers, themselves, are members of diverse linguistic and cultural groups. Can we say that teachers are value-free and objective? Whatever teachers’ social, cultural, linguistic, and historical groups are, they bring their own beliefs and values about the world to their children (Rodd, 1996). Multicultural education can be considered as the diverse ways of perceiving sociocultural situations as well as the narrow concept of ‘minorities’ (Garcia & Pugh, 1992) which focuses on the recognition of sameness and differences. If there are no children from different ethnic or racial backgrounds in classrooms, are there no multicultural matters there? Are non-minority faculties or classroom teachers, as educators, able to avoid the issues of diversity in education?

According to Pugh, Garcia, and Margalef-Boada (1991), multiculturalism refers to a more complex and expanded view emphasizing individual decisions about all issues of human welfare. Multiculturalism is “a layered concept that includes not only the experiences of particular individuals and groups but also their shared interests and relationships, which in turn are embedded in the interconnectedness of all peoples of the
world. In its full complexity, then, multiculturalism implies the cultivation of a global view of human affairs.” (p. 3, see Garcia & Pugh, 1992, p. 39).

Therefore, it is essential for teachers to recognize their own sociocultural and linguistic background in working with diverse children. They need to be open to critiquing their unique experiences, values, and beliefs regarding equity, justice, freedom, and welfare in education, keeping in mind that all learners have to be provided with equal opportunities for learning regardless of their personal backgrounds and different thoughts. From this point of view, Tamura (1996) asserts that teachers have to reflect on what beliefs and values they have, what personal experiences have figured into their views about themselves, others, and the world, what kind of attitudes, biases, and prejudices they have about diversity and multiculture, and the nature of their relationships with others.

*The need for better multicultural teacher education.* Even though the population of children is becoming more diverse, the demographics of teachers are becoming less diverse, maintaining the prototypes of white, middle class, and female (Dilworth, 1992) whose sociocultural beliefs, expectations, and experiences differ markedly from diverse groups of children. Dean (1989) indicates “the further a child’s culture is from the culture of the school, the less chance for success. Classroom environments that do not value the home culture of the students lead to decreased motivation and poor academic performance” (pp. 24-25). Considering that teachers teach children on the basis of their beliefs and interpretive frameworks, there is an urgent need to teach teachers to reflect on multicultural education and in ways which enable them to confront their biases and prejudices (Dilworth, 1992). As Baptiste, Baptiste, and Gollnick point out (1989),
teachers need to develop their analytical abilities to confront diversity issues including “participatory democracy, racism and sexism, and the parity of power” (p. 3); develop their abilities to clarify latent transmission of values and “examine the dynamics of diverse cultures and the implications for developing teaching strategies; and examine linguistic variations and diverse learning styles as a basis for the development of appropriate teaching strategies” (p. 3).

How well then do teacher education programs prepare preservice and in-service teachers toward diversity and multicultural education? Among many other things, Garibaldi (1992) suggests that teacher education programs should prepare teachers and preservice teachers to be competent in various instructional practices, educational assessment, classroom management, motivational techniques as well as content areas based on contexts; to understand the individual children’s learning differences from cultural differences and to have enriched experiences about sociocultural diversity through real school situations. Teachers and preservice teachers have to be open and sensitive to knowledge and attitudes about diversity. However, this process of understanding is not automatic, and simply recruiting diverse people into teaching is not a perfect solution to accomplish the goal of multicultural teacher education (Zimpher & Ashburn, 1992). Rather, individual teachers have to broaden their learning awareness of diversity.

From a study investigating practicing K-12 grade teachers’ perceptions about multicultural teacher education training, Miller, Miller, and Schroth (1997) found that teachers believed that their teacher education program did not satisfactorily deal with race, gender, sexual orientation, and social class issues in teaching and learning.
Additionally, teachers indicated that the faculty in the teacher education program did not appropriately discuss problems and consequences of cultural differences, and did not properly prepare them to understand different sexual orientation.

Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that faculties in teacher education programs need to improve their awareness, knowledge, and skills related to multicultural issues in teaching and learning by completing a ‘university-sponsored and competency-based course of training.’ By extension, Miller, Miller, and Schroth suggest that teacher educators need to be aware of the sociocultural biases they have and the strategies needed to decrease prejudices; they should be knowledgeable of the norms, values, beliefs, traditions, behaviors, and learning styles of diverse sociocultural learners, and should have techniques to teach diverse learners from different sociocultural contexts more effectively. Preservice teachers should also have multicultural training with the same purpose as teacher educators. In addition, universities and departments of teacher education should offer opportunities for discussion or workshops for multicultural issues and should examine whether their policies benefit all cultural groups. It would be helpful for teachers to have the opportunities to discuss, debate, share the experiences of sociocultural dilemmas relating to the issues of multiculturalism and diversity, and communicate ideas for solving problems with other colleague teachers and other practitioners or educators.

Jensen and Chevalier (1990) emphasize that teachers have to be advocates who protect children’s rights, sensitizing and understanding children’s diverse communities. Children do not have sufficient ability to claim their own rights against society. Therefore, teachers, as people who represent children for their rights, should
acknowledge their problems and debate them, make ethical and valuable decisions, be
sensitive to others, and continuously collect information about children.

Curly hair. Different – Mm-mmm, but the same, Ah-ha! Now isn’t it delightful, simply
out-of-sightful, bein’ with you this way!” (Jessen, 2000, p. 58). If we celebrate the
differences and similarities among people from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, if we
continuously reflect ourselves questioning and modifying our voices and minds more
multiculturally, isn’t it delightful, simply out-of-sightful, bein’ with you this way!

*Multicultural Teacher Education and Case-Based Pedagogy*

Cases are considered as an important vehicle to explore preservice and in-service
teachers’ beliefs, assumptions, and biases and to facilitate teacher inquiry through
reflective thinking involving problem solving and decision-making. While teachers’
beliefs and knowledge work as interpretive frameworks and filters for problem solving
and decision-making, they are the least developed field of research in teaching and
learning (Greenleaf, Hull, & Reilly, 1994). Therefore, for better preparation for diversity,
teacher education could be improved (Greenleaf, Hull, & Reilly, 1994; Shulman, 1996)
by “focusing more on teachers’ mental lives – on the socio-cognitive activities underlying
teachers’ behaviors and the ways in which teachers’ thinking about multicultural issues
can and should grow and develop” (Greenleaf, Hull, & Reilly, 1994, pp. 521-522).

Arguing that teachers’ beliefs and assumptions should be surfaced, examined, and
reconsidered, Shulman (1996) proposed the case-based method as a powerful means to
confront and challenge their views and feelings on diversity in richly contextualized
situations. Shulman (1996) investigated the impact of case discussions on beginning
teachers’ cross-cultural learning and on the feasibility of implementing case discussions. In this study, Shulman found that it was difficult to facilitate case discussions because they cause strong emotions and personal reactions, where some discussants may be hurt by other members’ perceptions. Therefore, by building a safe environment and monitoring participants’ emotions through the case discussions, teachers could reframe the problems of cases with new understandings from different perspectives, both personally and professionally.

As the findings of the study suggest, Shulman specified that teachers had deeper understanding, awareness, and sensitivity of their children and their own cultural biases through case-based instruction. Teachers reported the importance of open communication with children’s parents beyond their classrooms, too. Some teachers stated that the case-based instruction changed their behaviors, communication patterns with children or parents, and lesson plans in teaching practices both directly and indirectly. Throughout this study, teachers felt the importance of continuous learning by analyzing and reflecting on their problem solving and building a support group for their ongoing learning.

Greenleaf, Hull, and Reilly (1994) analyzed the reactions and interpretations of 36 teachers by having teacher educators, teachers, tutors, and preservice teachers who had participated in five different kinds of teacher training activities (a National Writing Project seminar, a Writing Project-based teacher-researcher group, a national workshop on multicultural education, a teacher education program in secondary English, and a university tutor-training program) discuss and solve the problems of cases that contained students’ literacy performances and classroom participation. They found that cases were effective in promoting teachers’ reflective and critical thinking through analysis of
problems featuring teaching and learning practices. The participants engaged in shared inquiry for problem solving through cases by socially interacting with different perspectives and understandings with colleagues. During the discussion of the literacy performances, participants addressed the cultural differences and diversity of experiences and perspectives between teachers and students, power and authority in classrooms, and instructional practices. The cases allowed teachers’ multiple interpretations and opportunities to expand the basis for their knowledge and beliefs by furthering the opportunity for inquiry into their practices. The authors point out that “building a community of reflective practitioners around the practice of presenting and diagnosing problem cases” (p. 537) is valuable for teachers’ reflection and inquiry about teaching and learning practices.

*Case-Based Pedagogy*

“Case method is the practice of using cases as a pedagogical tool in fields such as law, business, medicine, and education. Case-based teaching is a method of instruction that focuses on the use of cases as either a part of or the central focus of the curriculum” (Levin, 1995a, p. 63).

Case-based pedagogy is considered as a promising way to recognize, expand, and reconstruct teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity. Teachers’ reflective thinking through problem solving and decision-making about case dilemmas featuring issues of diversity may prepare them as sensitive, reflective, and critical teachers regarding diversity in teaching and learning.
The Concept of Cases

A synthesis of definitions (Gillespie, 1996; Harrington & Garrison, 1992; Kagan, 1993; Rosaen & Wilson, 1995; Shulman, 1992; Wallace & Louden, 1995) reveals several fundamental characteristics of “cases” in teacher education. First, cases are typically written in detail with in depth description of contexts, participants, problematic dilemmas, and so on. In this sense, cases are conditional research reports of specific dilemmas within particular situations including certain place, time, actors, purpose, and action for problem solving. The context specificity of cases provides opportunities for preservice teachers to think like teachers. Good cases suggest complex and rich detailed contexts for explorations and challenges of learning instead of proposing a single completed correct answer, by showing teachers that teaching and education for young children require complicated and difficult decisions. As Harrington (1995) suggests, “cases conveying contextual knowledge to students provide them with opportunities to develop an understanding of the situatedness of evidence, the interrelationship between theoretical and practical knowledge, and the moral nature of teaching” (p. 203).

According to McNergney, Herbert, & Ford (1994), these complex contexts and situations lend themselves to multi-layered analysis and interpretations of cases. These authors would maintain that without understanding of particular complexity, there cannot be knowing in general.

Kennedy (1991) argues that conditions – connectedness, flexibility, and perceived meaningfulness – should be regarded as of great importance to the transfer of theoretical knowledge to classroom practice.
Connectedness (ability to connect theories and/or concepts to situated problems) refers to the extent to which an idea is embedded within a larger network; multiple connections make the idea easier to access at a later time. Flexibility (ability to identify several issues and generate optional activities/approaches/decisions) is the ability to use ideas in several contexts, not just in a limited situation. Perceived meaningfulness (ability to explicitly state how particular theoretical principles confirmed or conflicted with prior self-reported beliefs) enables learners to understand and appreciate the usefulness of knowledge, including the social, cultural context in which it is embedded (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994, pp. 289-290).

A second characteristic of cases centers around the idea that they are abstract transformations, reinterpretations, and recreations of meaning about educational experiences. Cases focus on the part that is considered valuable rather than on mere factual characteristics of educational problems and dilemmas. Cases show teachers' emotional conflicts, frustrations, failure, success, motivations, feelings, behaviors, and thoughts that are frequently experienced in everyday educational settings. According to Levin (1995a), “cases should be sufficiently substantive and complex to allow for multiple levels of analysis and interpretation” (p. 63). Cases show theoretical claim by dealing with theoretically arguable content, not just with simple stories. Therefore, cases may involve educational theories, principles, and dilemmas for reflective thinking of fundamental principles behind the problems and dilemmas. However, the theories and principles do not necessarily mean that the scientific knowledge obtained from research on teaching and is fundamentally separated from teachers’ practical knowledge. Rather,
“cases are about inquiry – inquiry bounded by experience, framed by theory, and informing practice” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 717). It is not easy to distinguish between theory and practice. As Fenstermacher (1986) indicates, case-based pedagogy is one way to improve teachers’ practical reasoning and practical arguments.

A third characteristic of cases concerns their value-ladeness. Cases “reveal layers of meanings, large scale assumptions about knowledge, imagination, and action in the context of contemporary institutions” (Gillespie, 1996, p. 49). It is a value action to frame problems from experience. Problem solving about educational dilemmas assumes value decisions depending on teachers' practical reasoning, prior knowledge and experiences, and their own beliefs and values. “The choice of interpretations is often a function of necessity and sufficiency, that is, simplicity. Simplicity, however, is not a cognitive consideration; it is an aesthetic value” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 722). Teachers’ identifying, interpreting, and resolving problems are all value-laden actions that cause ethical, social, political, economic, and personal debates.

In summary, cases are ‘vicarious experience’ (Stake, 1987) of problematic events that are developed to analyze, reinterpret, and reinvestigate in multiple levels based on particular situations and contexts. Case-based pedagogy provides teachers with opportunities for value-laden decision-making by experimenting and enhancing practical performance, beliefs, and meanings with specific, concrete, and psychological problems in teaching and learning.

Kagan (1993) suggests that cases can include all kinds of reports, with themes of teachers, such as written cases, recorded classes, journals, novels, movies, video cases, CD-ROM cases, hypermedia cases, and so forth. However, as Shulman (1992) notes, the
raw data for case development and the originally developed cases for teaching have to be
distinguished. Written cases can be developed at any time and place without particular
materials other than paper and pencil. However, written cases might not describe the
classroom practice in detail and may be more distorted than other case formats due to the
authors' misunderstandings, prejudices, personal sociocultural and historical experiences,
or individual beliefs. By contrast, video cases may depict the classroom situations more
clearly but may not show people's background information, feelings, intentions, or other
emotions. In addition, preservice teachers and beginning teachers might not understand
what is going on in the videotapes (Carter, Sabers, Cushing, Pinnegar, & Berliner, 1987).
Hypermedia cases enable preservice and in-service teachers to integrate the information
from text, graphics, audio, or video by having access to related computer data bases to
support teachers’ inquiries for problem-solving in teaching and learning (Goldman,

A Brief History of Case-based Pedagogy

Case-based pedagogy was notably used in the education for professions such as
law, business, medicine, and social work. In the 1870s, Christopher Columbus Langdell,
who was the first dean at the Harvard Law School, advocated case-based pedagogy as the
best way to learn theoretical knowledge, principles, and reasoning of law and to provide
students with the chance to think like a lawyer since the analysis and discussion for
decision-making using cases could explore the inherent ambiguities of the law (Carter &
Unkelsbay, 1989; Tillman, 1992). In 1908, the Harvard Business School stressed case-
based pedagogy as a teaching method with the purpose of helping students improve their
analysis, decision-making, and problem solving skills (Merseth, 1996). Business cases
emphasize actions and consequences, as well as knowledge, while legal cases stress the significant discussion of principles (Shulman, 1992). Within medicine, beginning in 1984, the American Association of Medical Colleges focused on students’ active individual learning experiences through cases, reducing lectures (Christenson & Hansen, 1989). Students’ small group discussion and analysis of cases facilitated students’ active and interactive learning, decision-making and reasoning ability, and the reduction of stress.

The use of cases in teacher education has a long history which has evolved since the late 1920s when they were used by New Jersey State Teachers College (Doyle, 1990). Three events have increased the interest in using cases in teacher education. First, Shulman in 1985 argued that case knowledge should be emphasized in teacher education (Merseth, 1996) because it is a type of knowledge needed to enhance professionalization of teaching by showing specific, well-documented, and richly described practice in education. Second, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) strongly recommended that case-based methods be included in the curriculum of graduate schools of teacher education for the professionalization of teachers. Third, in 1987 and 1988, Shulman, in the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, published classroom cases centered on mentoring for preservice teachers.

**Cases as a Context for Instruction**

Cases are mirrors that demonstrate educational issues that cannot be shown by simple techniques and methods from textbooks or lectures and by simple field experiences (Sudzina, 1997). They are educational instructional tools that include multi-dimensional complex practice, information, and data in specific subject areas (Lacey &
Merseth, 1993; Wassermann, 1994) that cause thoughtful and in-depth examination about the issues. Cases are not simple explanations but theoretical assertions (Shulman, 1986) that contain unsolved significant problems or conflicts (Shulman, 1992).

Cases present the complex situations of teaching and learning (Carter & Richardson-Koehler, 1989; Shulman, 1986). Fenstermacher (1986) states that through cases preservice and in-service teachers can consider related factors and multiple solutions to solve educational problems, reflect on and understand theories and principles based on particular situations, assess potential results of various teaching actions practically and morally, and recognize their own beliefs, prejudices, and misunderstandings. “Case method teaching promotes knowledge acquisition in a way that is more closely connected with students’ perceived need to know more” (Wassermann, 1994, p. 611). As such, cases stimulate preservice and in-service teachers to acquire and use the contextual and conditional knowledge connecting theories and practices in education.

“Cases can be used to teach educators about principles or concepts of a theoretical nature, precedents of practice, morals and ethics, strategies, and dispositions and habits of the mind” (Shulman, 1992, see Levin, 1995a, p. 64). Cases can show exemplary practice (Broudy, 1990) of how propositional knowledge that involves general principles can be applied to teaching and learning practice (Shulman, 1992). Cases can be used for analyzing and reviewing experienced teachers’ teaching and learning. In other words, cases extend the educational strategic repertoire of preservice and in-service teachers needed to address dilemmas frequently encountered in teaching and learning (Kleinfeld, 1992).
Many cases are accompanied by a list of study questions that are proposed at the end of each case. These questions can help teachers investigate issues of cases and the consequences of problem solving (Wassermann, 1994). These study questions facilitate teachers’ understanding and analysis of the issues of cases more deeply, challenging their thinking and decision-making, rather than emphasizing recall of simple information. Study questions require teachers to apply what they know in analyzing detail information and in deciding appropriate solutions.

Lundeberg and Scheurman (1997) suggest that when analyzing cases, teachers should read through a case many times. Their research has shown that teachers’ ability to analyze cases is improved when they read through them more than once. When reading even the same case repeatedly at a deep level and trying to see those problems and solutions from various perspectives, rather than reading many cases at a superficial level, teachers can develop perspectives in macro systems including the school, community, etc. beyond the classroom itself (Munro, 1999).

The importance of the case discussion. A “good” case is portrayed by Lawrence (1953) as “the vehicle by which a chunk of reality is brought into the classroom to be worked over by the class and the instructor. A good case keeps the class discussion grounded upon some of the stubborn facts that must be faced in real life situations.” (p. 215, see Wassermann, 1994, p. 604). The instructive value of case-based pedagogy can be expanded by group discussions of teachers about cases. Cases are strong instruments that can stimulate discussions because they include complex and multi-layered structures and thinkable topics for multiple reasoning, specific conflicts that can cause arguments, situations and contexts that enable teachers to analyze, plan, make decisions, and act, and
relevant research (Barnett, 1991; Levin, 1995a; Merseth, 1992; Shulman & Colbert, 1989) challenging their presumptions. Cases are effective tools for discussion, stimulating preservice and in-service teachers’ appropriate decision-making in various ways and research of educational problems and practical complexity. Through the case discussion, as Copeland and Decker (1996) and Wright (1996) maintain, preservice and in-service teachers can analyze and reflect on teaching and learning, construct clear meaning in education, compare their own understanding to others’ meaning, and get the best solutions considering the given situations and contexts. Discussions with other colleagues using cases enable teachers to make meaningful changes by transforming and restructuring their thinking styles. Case discussions provoke teachers to challenge their existing hidden beliefs and value various alternative ideas (Carter, 1992).

Teachers’ beliefs and values may change when experiencing conflicts between prior beliefs and alternative beliefs, especially when they prefer the new beliefs to prior ones (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994). “Our individual cognitive schemas and scripts and our shared social practices, whether held tacitly or explicitly, allow each of us independently and all of us together to see some situation as some thing or event and not just as disconnected noise, color, and confusion” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 722). Through case discussion, a social activity for communication, teachers can facilitate professional development by recognizing their beliefs, values, knowledge, and experiences. With cooperative efforts to examine their knowledge both individually and socially, discussing cases provides preservice and in-service teachers with opportunities to construct new meanings of teaching and learning, to reframe their personal beliefs, values, knowledge, and practice, and to plan for future actions (Clarke, 1995). Cases help
teachers “join with others, to respond, and to become better teachers by learning from one another” (Gillespie, 1996, p. 65).

Teachers build and reconceptualize their pedagogical knowledge collaboratively within learning communities. According to Wood and Bennett (2000), “the discourses generated within communities of practice create shared ways of thinking and communicating, thus building knowledge from an ‘inside-out’ perspective.” Creating such communities addresses the problem of enacting policy changes from a ‘top-down’ perspective in which teachers are viewed as mere implementers of recommended or fashionable approaches” (p. 636). Shared ways of thinking and practice enable teachers to socially and culturally construct their pedagogical knowledge and practices within a specific situation. “Dialogue and conversation stresses not only the common bond and the genuine novelty that a turn in a conversation may take but the mutuality, the respect required, the genuine seeking to listen and understand what the other is saying, the openness to risk and test our own opinions through such an encounter” (Bernstein, 1983, p. 162, see Gillespie, 1996, p. 64). According to Vygotsky (1968), these social interactions are important for teachers’ meaning making process. Through dialogue, teachers can be sensitized to their selves by sharing their experiences with others. Small group discussion provides teachers with opportunities to think and interact with others in more comfortable and safe contexts (Lee & Greene, 1999). Discussing in a small group helps preservice and in-service teachers’ thinking be triggered and expressed more thoroughly prior to large group discussion.

Cases are interpreted and employed in relation to specific audiences. Even with the same cases, teachers may think differently and learn differently from them. Cases
“assume high levels of participation, especially careful listening, patient dialogue and openness to multiple levels of meaning, qualities that might not characterize interactions in typical meetings of university faculty” (Gillespie, 1996, p. 62). It is essential for preservice and in-service teachers to engage in sharing interpretations and creating multiple solutions about cases. As Wassermann (1994) claims, there is nothing neutral in teaching and learning. Teachers cannot be indifferent and cannot absorb transmitted knowledge and information. With the communication about cases, teachers’ views, beliefs, and values in teaching and learning develop. “Exploring together our lives as teachers through cases and narratives might help us reconnect with our reasons for becoming teachers and scholars in the first place” (Gillespie, 1996, p. 58).

**Empirical studies involving cases as a context for instruction.** With the purpose of promoting preservice teachers’ cognitive growth, Lundeberg and Fawver (1994) assessed the effectiveness of using cases in a course that employed them as the primary pedagogical tools. The main data source for this study was preservice teachers’ pre- and post-written analysis of a case at the beginning and end of the semester, their reflections on changes between their pre- and post-written case analysis, and their self-reported written explanations of changes in beliefs at the end of the units. The results suggest that most preservice teachers became more knowledgeable and flexible in analyzing cases, identified different particular issues, became more focused on important issues of cases, and proposed more alternatives in cases on the post-written case analysis. Preservice teachers reported that their decision-making abilities were enhanced and that they became more open-minded after experiencing cases. The post-case analysis, indicated that preservice teachers use more various perspectives, connected certain relevant theories to
the situation of the case with more in-depth discussion, and concentrated on the changes in their own beliefs and thinking. In general, Lundeberg and Fawver (1994) found that preservice teachers became more constructive in their beliefs, recognizing their own values, characteristics, cognitive development, and personal experiences.

Goldman, Barron, and Witherspoon (1991) investigated how the use of a videodisc case centered on the topic of fractions was used in a mathematics methods course at Vanderbilt University to show how children construct meaning in mathematics and how preservice teachers understood the subject or beliefs in teaching and learning during this process. “In many classrooms, learning is conceived of as a process in which students passively absorb information, storing it in easily retrievable fragments as a result of repeated practice and reinforcement. But in many situations individuals approach a new task with prior knowledge, assimilate new information, and construct their own meanings” (NCTM, 1989, p. 10, see Goldman, Barron, & Witherspoon, 1991, p. 31). Through cases of mathematics, preservice elementary teachers became more empathetic in understanding children’s difficulty with fractions by remembering their similar experiences. Preservice teachers’ prior personal experiences with empathetic emotions were a good starting point to resolve cases. The authors argue that teachers need to recognize multiple instructions for teaching and to develop insights into various senses on problems in specific contexts. Flexibility on interpretation of cases leads teachers’ discussions in teaching and learning and helps the construction of their own learning in education.

In a study which explored the dynamics of case discussions, Griffith and Laframboise (1997) found specific discussion structures such as “refer to text of case,
agree, use humor, consult, refer to own experiences, disagree, negotiate, summarize, question, identify task, conciliate, support group or individual, interpret based on prior knowledge” (p. 15), etc., in their analysis of twelve elementary teachers’ pre-discussion writing, small group discussions, large group discussion, and journal writing of cases. The researchers indicated that teachers’ meaning making occurred more in small group discussion than in the discussion of large group. They also described that teachers could connect theory and practice more successfully by discussing cases, and that teachers’ integration of theoretical content knowledge in a course was less popular than when they related their own experiences in case discussion. The authors concluded, “As theory is introduced at different times, in new contexts, and in multiple ways through case discussions, teachers learn to assemble knowledge to fit the needs of unique situations” (p. 20).

Cases as a Context for Reflection

“Knowing is an ongoing process of evaluation, which the ever-present possibility of new evidence and new arguments leaves always uncompleted. Central to this process is reflection on one’s own thinking – metacognition in its most basic and important sense – and beneath its surface is the structure of argument….It is this structure that must be in place for someone to hold a reasoned belief or make a reasoned judgment, which we can think of as the building blocks of educated thinking” (Kuhn, 1992, pp. 173-174, see Harrington, 1995, p. 204). Reflection enables teachers to identify their personal beliefs and interpretations in teaching and learning by problematizing, questioning, and making sense of their theories and practice (Wood & Bennett, 2000).
Considering that one of the important purposes of teacher education programs is “to prepare reflective teachers who can learn from their own experience” (Shulman & Colbert, 1989, p. 44), cases are promising tools for facilitating preservice and in-service teachers’ reflective thinking and action (McNerney, Herbert, & Ford, 1994). Preservice and in-service teachers need to recognize what they do, how they do, and why they do for solving educational dilemmas in teaching and learning.

Cases are used for the purpose of improving teachers’ decision-making and problem solving. However, as preservice and in-service teachers investigate cases, uncertainty and frustration of not knowing positively grows. “We cannot know ‘what to do’ or ‘what is the right way’ until we debate, until we reflect, until issues have been examined in their complexity, until more data are gathered” (Wassermann, 1994, p. 607).

**Definitions, types, and levels of reflection.** Reflection is essential for professionalization in teacher education. Reflection is defined as “involving certain contexts, processes, attitudes, and contents that lead to the development of new understandings about teaching and learning and to the solving of problems of practice” (LaBoskey, 1993, see Abell, Bryan, & Anderson, 1997, p. 492). Ross (1989) refers to reflection as “a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices” (p. 22). Reflection demands that teachers review their experiences and consequences in teaching and learning. Ross (1989), integrating Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983), argues that the process of reflective thinking includes: recognizing educational problems or dilemmas; responding to problems by noting the similarities and differences with other situations and contexts; redefining problems based on analyzed situations and contexts; trying
various solutions for problem-solving; and evaluating the consequences. However, these phases do not necessarily occur in clean and linear ways (McNergney, Herbert, & Ford, 1994). Knowles, Cole, and Presswood (1994) define reflective thinking as an on-going process carefully considering the individual, pedagogical, social, political, historical, and economic contexts related to reviewing teachers’ multiple roles in classrooms and practical actions.

Killion and Todnem (1991) distinguish three kinds of reflective thinking: reflection-on-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-for-action. ‘Reflection-in-action’ occurs while teachers are doing some action; they can change teaching content or method during actions by reflective thinking. It articulates “a need to find access to knowledge that is not typical of commonly accepted versions of knowledge in the institutional contexts of professional life. It also expresses an opportunity provided in part by the growing awareness of the limitations of technical rationality as an exclusive depiction of decision-making activities” (Gillespie, 1996, p. 50). ‘Reflection-on-action’ means thinking reflectively about past events or experiences. ‘Reflection-for-action’ is a more active concept for more desirable consequences of reflective thinking.

Berliner (1986) suggests that reflective thinking cannot be acquired by preservice teachers or beginning teachers, considering their professional development level with limited field experiences and the complexity, multiplicity, and dynamics of classrooms. Berliner argues that the important thing for preservice teachers is not the reflective thinking but the techniques and skills for surviving in classrooms. In contrast, Killion and Todnem (1991) propose that reflection-on-action or reflection-for action is possible for preservice teachers even though reflection-in-action is difficult for them. They also
maintain that the chances for reflective thinking of preservice teachers will be increased if the reflective experiences are not restricted to direct teaching actions in real classrooms but expanded to reading literature and discussion about education. It is important to facilitate preservice teachers’ reflective thinking despite the difficulty.

The levels of reflective thinking – technical level, professional level, and critical level outlined by Van Manen (1977) – show the quality of the content of reflection. The first level of reflective thinking is the technical application of pedagogical knowledge for the accomplishment of educational goals. At the second level of reflective thinking, teachers act after analyzing the assumptions and reviewing the long-term results of their actions in teaching and learning. However, this level is still based only on pedagogical principles. The third level of reflective thinking relates various situations that occur in classrooms to educational, social, political, ideological, economic, moral, and ethical contexts, shifting the focus from the effectiveness of teaching to justice, equity, and equality. Using cases to explore the three levels of reflective thinking as reciprocal relationships, rather than simply considering them as separate levels of development, is important.

The importance of case writing. “Case-based pedagogy is intended to begin the development of habits of mind that enable teachers to recognize specific events as problematic, gain an understanding of them, reflect on them and on the consequences of action, and devise sensible, moral, and educative ways of acting” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 718). Cases offer good opportunities for teachers’ reflective thinking by providing flexible contexts and interpretations about educational problems. The contexts initiate teachers’ more thoughtful and reflective actions. Cases that include
potentially confusing examples with certain contexts provide teachers with opportunities to clarify the concept of relevant issues and promote a higher level of understanding of teaching and learning. Cases help preservice and in-service teachers observe and reflect on their own knowledge, assumptions, values, and beliefs (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994).

As well as reading and analyzing the educational principles and concepts from case literatures, preservice and in-service teachers’ case writing about their own experiences in teaching and learning or about others’ experiences of educational decision-making gives them reflective moments to record what they know about the educational events and how they came to know them. Richert (1992) states that teachers’ case writing offers them opportunities to review their decision-making about a particular problem. Teachers who write cases rethink important educational events, making meanings actively. Case writing is not just a simple recalling of important problems, but recreating the meaning from new perspectives reflecting themselves and their actions by distancing themselves from the problems. During the writing of cases, by revealing, analyzing, and rethinking critically about the conflicts in teaching and learning, teachers can overcome their emotional stress and frustrations (Rosiek, 1994).

Case writing helps preservice and in-service teachers develop their identities as teachers by seeing themselves objectively and becoming reflective practitioners. Whatever the topics of case writing are, teachers who write cases need to analyze the pedagogical, moral, and ethical meanings embedded in the selected topics. Rosaen and Wilson (1995) argue that through writing their own cases, preservice and in-service teachers are provided with opportunities to inquire about their own beliefs and practices that are particularly relevant to them. “Writing a case about their own or someone else’s
practice was a first occasion for them to step back from the particulars of their work and examine their thinking” (p. 49).

Empirical studies involving cases as a context for reflection. Harrington (1995) examined whether using dilemma-based cases in preservice teacher education programs for elementary education helped the development of preservice teachers’ reasoning. The author was interested in determining if preservice teachers’ written case analyses could be used to gain insights into how they reason about dilemmas and if their analyses would become more grounded, warranted, inclusive, and critical over time. For this purpose, preservice teachers’ written case analyses were examined with a focus on dimensions of reasoning such as the following: identification of the case, the variety of perspectives and the type of evidence provided to support the various perspectives, the connection between the solution and how they identified the case, how broadly the preservice teachers considered the consequences of actions, and the preservice teachers’ critique of their solution and analysis about their reasoning.

The findings of this study suggest that case-based pedagogy can be used to gain and foster insights into the development of professional decision-making in preservice teachers. According to the analysis, preservice teachers improved their reasoning in areas such as identification of cases, awareness of alternative perspectives, and warranting the solution by using evidences. However, preservice teachers failed to improve higher level reasoning, such as considering the possible consequences of their solutions and reflection on their own assumptions.

Incorporating the concepts of cases and reflection, McNerney, Herbert, and Ford (1994) introduced the Invitational Competition program emphasizing teachers’
cooperation and competition for their professional development. They stressed the “wisdom of practice – a kind of wisdom not developed, transmitted, or acquired in isolation, and the kind of wisdom essential to the resolution of real problems” (pp. 340-341). During the Invitational Competition, diverse team members analyzed a given case together, focusing on ‘issues, perspectives, knowledge, teaching actions, and consequences.’ Culturally and ethically diverse practitioners from education, law, business, etc., judged and critiqued the teams’ case analysis. Then, team members presented and defended their analysis orally before the judges and other observers. The team members had post-competition discussion to communicate their ideas about the experience informally. Results of this programmatic study indicate that preservice teachers can reflect and argue on educational dilemmas, can cooperate with each other for problem solving, and that case-based methods facilitate teachers’ reflection and development of social self.

To be aware of teachers’ personal beliefs, assumptions, values, and knowledge is essential to reflect their actions and views in teaching and learning. Without changing teachers’ beliefs and values that are constructed within their own sociocultural contexts, their practices are not likely to be modified. Teachers can alter their personal beliefs when experiencing alternative beliefs. “Consciousness changes when the relationship between self and social experiences is reinterpreted and seen in a new light: when what was formerly taken for granted, unremarkable, scarcely visible, becomes obtrusive and problematical, when old and well-worn distinction and categories lose their usefulness and new typifications and definitions are brought into play” (Musgrove, 1977, pp. 5, see Harrington, 1995, p. 211).
Cases as a Context for Research

Case-based pedagogy helps preservice and in-service teachers to consider teaching as problem-oriented inquiry – “shared inquiry that incorporates cognitive, practical, and normative components; inquiry that facilitates the development of more open, integrated, and inclusive meaning perspectives; and inquiry that leads them to question not only what is and why but what could be” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 719). Cases are considered as one way to provide teachers with opportunities to initiate research in order to find better solutions from among various possibilities by connecting theory and practice rather than suggesting the ‘right’ solution for problem-solving (Harrington & Garrison, 1992).

Teachers should be autonomous decision makers. They need to be researchers for themselves in their own classrooms. As Koballa and Tippins (2001) state, educational research has been a university-initiated effort that has been theoretical and distanced from the classroom. Preservice and in-service teachers have been used as data for university-controlled research and have not conducted research themselves. Preservice and in-service teachers have been knowledge consumers, while university researchers have been knowledge producers (Santos, 1994). However, “in contrast to the technical model of professionalization wherein the teacher is an increasingly sophisticated consumer of other people’s knowledge, the teacher-researcher movement is based on the notion that a professional plays a participatory role in the creation and use of knowledge in the field. (Smyth, 1987, p. 12)” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 88). When teachers confront educational problems, they have to understand deeply and interpret the situations and contexts, use relevant knowledge, theories, and skills, consider their own beliefs and
values within a sociocultural context, and make the most appropriate resolutions for problem solving. “Teachers are more than simply passive consumers of knowledge; they are producers of it as well, and users of their own knowledge as well as that produced by others….Practical inquiry yields a form of knowing just as formal inquiry does” (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 18).

One of the responsibilities of teacher education programs is to improve preservice and in-service teachers’ professional decision-making ability (Griffin, 1989), as well as to let them develop as much knowledge and learn as many effective strategies as possible. Teachers should be reflective practitioners and researchers by deeply recognizing their limited understanding and by questioning all complex experiences in classroom and education (Kleinfeld, 1992). At this point, cases in rich contextual details are effective tools to educate preservice and in-service teachers; reflective decision-making ability, as say something about their research ability.

In order for teachers to become researchers, it is necessary for them acknowledge their own personal beliefs, values, and knowledge in teaching and learning. A great deal of action in teaching is effected by teachers’ thinking processes or belief systems. This practical knowledge of teachers, including thinking processes and pedagogical beliefs, can be studied through cases (Koballa & Tippins, 2001). However, it is hard to perceive teachers’ beliefs and meanings because those beliefs and meanings change continuously, are interpreted differently according to applied situations and contexts, and cannot be explained with one theory or principle. Cases present the chance to reveal and review preservice and in-service teachers’ beliefs and thinking processes by interpreting experiences reflectively.
Emphasizing the holistic and conditional knowledge within a specified context, and teachers as reflective practitioners and as researchers, action research may be called for as a paradigm of teacher research. Santos (1994) states that all educational situations are problematic and redefined from classroom teachers’ perspectives for their better understanding and professional practice. In action research, preservice and in-service teachers recognize what the problem is, plan the methods for problem solving, apply the resolutions to practice, and review the consequences (Hubbard & Power, 1999). Action research can help teachers gain new insights into teaching, sharpen their reasoning, improve problem-solving and decision-making abilities, and develop open attitudes for change with flexibility (Hanna, 1986).

Cases as a basis for action research help teachers’ personal learning and communication with other members of the educational community (Koballa & Tippins, 2001). Using cases as tools for critical investigation of theories and alternatives for practice, teachers may have opportunities for research based on self-direction. This could provide more opportunity for teachers’ personal growth (Santos, 1994) and for testing their knowledge of theory with practice (Shulman, 1987).

The Notion of Teachers’ Experience, Knowledge, Beliefs, Practice, and Cases

“What counts as experience? Mastering subject matter? Building a repertoire of teaching strategies? Developing the concrete skills of teaching like planning lessons, managing classrooms and deploying elaborate, ‘objective’ assessment schemes (Field & Latta, 2001, p. 885)?” In the article ‘What constitutes becoming experienced in teaching and learning?’, Field and Latta (2001) assert that even though technical knowledge and abstract theoretical knowledge are not invalid or inappropriate for teaching, teachers’
practical wisdom through their experience is necessary in teaching and learning. Experience is not simply episodes of life that may be remembered or added through recall. Rather, teachers’ experience is something that may surprise teachers and may transform them as they begin to question themselves as teachers and what has been taken for granted in teaching and learning. Expert teachers use knowledge of teaching and learning to gain deep insights into subject and learner.

Wood and Bennett (2000) investigated teachers’ theories, practice, and reasoning through teachers’ narrative accounts, interviews, observation, stimulated recall using videotaped episodes, and group meetings. They found that all teachers in the study were in the ongoing process of reflection and change for professional development. The results of their study suggests that experienced teachers are less teacher-directed, much more focused on children’s perceptions and ideas, and consider children’s schemas more in their planning. Experienced teachers pointed out the significance of their in-service courses in giving opportunities for in-depth reflection by talking with other teachers. Experienced teachers felt the importance of learning within specified contexts and situations. They considered various practical solutions to educational problems by identifying multiple problems and demonstrated more extensive knowledge and confidence from their experiences in teaching and learning than novice teachers. The experienced teachers in this study also recognized what works through their teaching and reorganized their plans for better teaching, whereas novice teacher participants were more concerned with implementation and the consequences of teaching. Experienced teachers used multiple repertoires of techniques and strategies that could be applied flexibly in different situations.
By analyzing preservice and in-service teachers’ written narratives including closed and open cases, and written solutions to cases, Kagan and Tippins (1991) found out that written case reactions revealed teachers’ pedagogical beliefs whereas written solutions to cases did not.

The experienced teachers chose as problems some of the most mundane interactions that can occur between pupils and teachers. For these teachers, the quotidian events of classroom life appear to constitute the dilemmas of teaching, becoming problems when they provoke internal conflict: frustration, ethical choices, a questioning of values. They are problems because they affect the internal lives of teachers and because they are situations with which teachers must live over time. As they persist from day to day, they evolve. In contrast, the preservice teachers appeared to define a classroom problem as external, an event that causes a disruption in classroom routine but does not impinge upon a teacher’s internal life. In this sense, a classroom problem is superficial and without moral significance: void of emotion and neatly solved (p. 288).

Levin (1995a) investigated how the thinking of student teachers, beginning teachers, and experienced teachers differed in analyzing cases with and without discussion. Both experimental and control groups experienced reading cases and writing an analysis of them whereas the control group did not have discussions about cases. In the analysis of cases, they wrote their summary and understandings, issues and questions, their reasons for raising issues and concerns, alternative solutions, and answered the teacher’s list of questions at the end of cases. The author reported that the more experienced teachers demonstrated “more complex, multi-dimensional, more reflective,
more metacognitive or conditional understandings of the issues of cases,” (p. 69) rather than more propositional knowledge or simpler judgment such as ‘good or bad, or right or wrong.’ Teachers with different levels of experience showed differences in “cognitive complexity, perspective-taking, and metacognitive awareness and thinking of teachers” (p. 69). Student teachers showed simple analysis of cases describing their judgments and criticism of teachers’ roles very didactically. Beginning teachers were less judgmental of teachers and concentrated on teachers’ lessons and interactions with students. They illustrated more sophisticated thinking and were able to explain reasons for their actions and thought, whereas student teachers focused on propositional knowledge without clarifying reasons. Experienced teachers were more non-judgmental and empathetic, struggling even with the same issues, thinking about them multi-dimensionally, and giving reasons for their actions and statements. Wassermann (1994) indicates that experienced teachers acknowledge the uncertainty about their practice and decision-making and tolerate it, whereas beginning teachers feel stressful about the ambiguity of problem solving in teaching and learning. However, the individual differences and the differences of previous experiences and personal beliefs influence teachers’ thinking differently, too.

Case discussion facilitated for student teachers and beginning teachers increased reflection, and clearer and more explicit elaboration about the issues of cases. For experienced teachers, case discussion was a stimulus for reflection and metacognition. Through case discussion, experienced teachers mostly assimilated “any new ideas to their current ways of thinking, and continued to display evidence of conditional understandings and metacognitive thinking about the issues in cases…. [However,] some
experienced teachers rethought certain issues, and even elaborated upon new ideas that were spawned by the discussion” (p. 73). During the social interactions with discussion, conflicting ideas among members of groups promoted teachers’ thinking. Case discussion was understood differently as a result of teachers’ personal experiences and background, and individual differences.

**Summary**

This literature review has discussed the issues of diversity and multicultural education and case-based pedagogy. Diversity and multicultural education were discussed in the context of classroom settings for children and in the context of teacher education programs. Case-based pedagogy was been reviewed as a context for instruction and discussion, as a context for reflection and writing, and as a context for research. In addition, this section reviewed the relationship of case-based pedagogy with teachers’ experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and practices.

**Teacher Educators as Participants and Collaborators**

Cases are not “a matter of controlling the content with a question-answer format. Instructors can help the group identify issues by rethinking and revisiting ideas. The instructors’ role in the discussion shifts from one of the evaluator, who decides what counts as acceptable interpretation, to one of the participant, whose contributions guide the group to moments of insight and collaboration” (Griffith & Laframboise, 1997, p. 19). In case-based pedagogy, teacher educators’ roles do not focus on the transmission of existing prior knowledge (Lacey & Merseth, 1993).

For the success of case-based pedagogy, preservice and in-service teachers’ disagreement and reflective thinking should be encouraged. Teacher educators should
facilitate preservice and in-service teachers’ thinking as deeply as possible about cases in multiple situations. They should assist teachers in learning to tolerate the ambiguity and uncertainty in teaching and learning (Clarke, 1995). Teacher educators should also help preservice and in-service teachers construct their own learning more meaningfully by observing themselves metacognitively in terms of what they know, what they do not know, what they want to know more, and what kind of help they need for deeper learning.

Teacher educators have to create safe learning environments in order for teachers’ various thinking to be respected. Teacher educators should emphasize problem solving, decision-making and reasoning from multiple perspectives rather than seeking ‘correct and right’ solutions to cases. In this approach, teacher educators are co-researchers and collaborators engaging together in the inquiry of teaching and learning with preservice and in-service teachers. Rather than seeking the right answer for solving educational conflicts and dilemmas, preservice and in-service teachers have to be asked if they “learn to process data more intelligently; become more informed; and develop habits of thinking” (Wassermann, 1994, p. 156).
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand preservice and experienced teachers’ personal practical knowledge and the development of their practical knowledge of diversity through case-based pedagogy. This study is conducted as a qualitative case study of six elementary teachers. This chapter presents the methodological framework of the study through discussion of the following sections: design of the study, participants, procedures, data collection, and data analysis and interpretation.

Design of the Study

This study is conducted as a qualitative case study because this methodology concentrates on gaining in-depth understandings and insights into educational practice and its meaning of situation and context, and because the study “seeks to understand a larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case and therefore focus on the particular” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 70). Merriam (1998, p. 1) states that “choosing a study design requires understanding the philosophical foundations underlying the type of research.” Since the case study is a form of qualitative research, I start with the assumptions of qualitative research. First, qualitative research is interested in an in-depth understanding of the “nature of the setting – what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what is going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting” (Patton, 1985, p. 1). It
does not attempt to predict the future or generalize an outcome from the study; rather, it seeks to understand people’s contextualized situations and their uniqueness. Second, qualitative research is an inductive approach that leads to findings in the forms of themes, categories, or concepts by observing and intuitively understanding data from the field. It builds theory by exploring open questions rather than testing hypotheses taken apart from a phenomenon under study. Third, the qualitative researcher concentrates on understanding the phenomenon from the emic – perspective, that is the insider viewpoint of research participants. Qualitative research aims to understand “the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Fourth, in qualitative research, the meaning of the phenomenon is made by the etic or scientific observers’ perspective. The researcher’s professional experience and perspective help make meaning of the human experience theoretically and conceptually. Fifth, the researcher is important as the primary instrument in collecting and analyzing data by responding to the context, being sensitive to the nonverbal, processing data immediately, clarifying and summarizing as the study evolves, and exploring anomalous responses. Sixth, qualitative research is intensively descriptive because it concentrates on the ongoing meaning and in-depth understanding (Merriam, 1988, 1998).

According to Merriam (1988), case study is defined as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 16) without controlling the situation of events. Case study is particularistic because it “concentrates attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation. In essence, the case study is a problem centered, small
scale, entrepreneurial endeavor” (Shaw, 1978, p. 2, see Meriam, 1988, p. 11). The case is considered as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). A “case study” could focus on a program, an event, an activity, or individuals bounded by time and place (Merriam, 1998). Generally, a case study is situated in natural settings, making it possible for questioning practical problems based on real world situations and everyday practice.

Case study research involves a rich, intensive, and thick description of the phenomenon, and the interpretation of the meanings of the phenomena being studied with extensive knowledge and information that are gathered in the process (Merriam, 1998). However, thick description does not mean a mere simplistic description of everything. “Description entails both art and science and seems to suffer more in the absence of the former, for it is an intuitive as well as an objectifying act. It requires not only a sense of what to observe and report but exquisite judgment about what not to report, a keen sense of what is focus, what is periphery, and how to maintain a perspective and balance between them” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 56). Researchers have the responsibility to be selective in answering what is being studied, including the full and literal description but realistic range of the study. As Merriam (1998, 1988) indicates, the case study is holistic and lifelike.

The case study is also heuristic because the approach is intended to extend a reader’s experience, understanding, and new meaning of the phenomenon being studied, or confirm what they already know. Merriam (1998) notes that a case study provides a more vivid and lifelike experience within a more contextual situation; knowledge of the case under study is developed by the reader’s interpretations and insights. As an
exploratory form of research, the case study emphasizes the investigation of what is going on and the search for new insights about questions and phenomena (Robson, 1993). The case study approach is ultimately concerned with discovering “new relationships, concepts, and understandings” (Merriam, 1988, p. 13) inductively rather than verifying a deductively determined hypothesis. The purpose of a case study is “not to find the ‘correct’ or ‘true’ interpretation of the facts, but rather to eliminate erroneous conclusions so that one is left with the best possible, the most compelling, interpretation” (Bromley, 1986, p. 38).

Among the three types of case studies – descriptive, interpretive, and evaluative – (Merriam, 1998, 1988), this study will be a descriptive/interpretive qualitative case study of teachers’ practical knowledge of diversity through case-based pedagogy. Descriptive case study is useful to present basic and rich information in educational areas where little is known. It focuses on thick description but not on theorization. Interpretive case study is interested in ‘developing conceptual categories or in illustrating, supporting, or challenging theoretical assumptions’ (Merriam, 1988, p. 28) in order to interpret or theorize about the human experience being studied.

Participants of the Study

This study employs purposeful sampling that is based on “the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Because all cases should meet the criteria for study, this study utilizes criterion-based sampling (Lecompte & Preissle, 1993).
Three preservice teachers and three experienced teachers participate in this study. They are enrolled in teacher education programs in a large university located in a southeastern state of the United States during the 2002-2003 school year. The preservice teachers are enrolled in an undergraduate course entitled ‘Elementary Science Education.’ The experienced teachers are enrolled in a graduate course which is a similar version of the undergraduate course, ‘Elementary Science Education.’ Both classes are taught by science education faculty who are well versed in the use of cases for pedagogical purposes in teacher education.

The experienced teacher group includes three females with teaching experience ranging from four to fifteen years in elementary school levels. The preservice teacher group also includes three females who intend to teach at the Pre-K or elementary level. They are seniors and have over 10 weeks of experience in the form of student teaching/classroom practicum/volunteer work in schools or substitute teaching.

The criteria used for selecting participants of this study are as follows: a) both preservice and experienced teachers are enrolled in undergraduate or graduate teacher education programs in the same southeastern university during the 2002-2003 school year; b) the experienced teacher participants are currently teaching in elementary schools and have at least three years of teaching experience; c) both preservice and in-service participants of this study have an expressed interest in expanding their knowledge and experiences with diversity in their school and community; and d) both preservice and experienced teachers in this study are willing to participate in the research procedures such as interview, reflective writing responses, and case discussion that may involve some extra time and effort on their part.
Procedures of the Study

“Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). At the beginning of fall semester 2002, a face-to-face in-depth interview with each participant is conducted. Overall, two individual interviews are conducted with each participant. The interviews are focused on each participant’s practical knowledge of diversity including their personal beliefs, values, and knowledge regarding diversity that stems from their personal experiences in the school, university, community, and larger sociocultural context. The interviews are semi-structured in order to have conversation with participants exploring the research interest broadly. Each interview session lasts approximately one to one and one half hours. The interviews are audiotaped in order to accurately record the language of the interviewees.

During the course of the semester, and as part of their respective elementary science courses, preservice and experienced teachers read five selected cases featuring dilemmas that address issues of diversity. Both groups of teachers independently read each case. After reading each case they write a 1 ½ - 2 page, single-spaced reaction. In addition, they respond in writing to the following questions: “What do you remember most vividly from the case? Why do you think the teacher in the case made the decision that (s)he did? What do the teacher’s practices tell you about his (her) assumptions, values, beliefs, and knowledge about multiculturalism? What are the similarities and differences about the assumptions, values, beliefs, and knowledge regarding multiculturalism between the teacher in the case and you?” The purpose of asking the above questions is to provide participants with the opportunities to realize, reflect, and
reexamine their personal practical knowledge about multiculturalism and issues of diversity. The written responses to cases are considered to provide participants with opportunities to reflect on their own inner experiences as juxtaposed with the related issues of each case. Through these written responses to cases, it is believed that participants reflect on practical knowledge and individual perspectives. Merriam (1998) provides further support for this assertion in stating that “personal documents are a reliable source of data concerning a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world” (p. 16).

After completing the written responses to each of the respective cases, participants discuss the case. Case discussion is held in the form of two focus groups - the preservice teacher group of three members and the experienced teacher group of three members. Each group discusses the selected cases at intervals throughout the semester. Each focus group discussion is audiotaped and transcribed as soon as possible. Guiding questions at the end of each case serve as a semi-structured protocol for the focus group discussions. The case discussions enable participants to share their ideas and their thoughts about the dilemmas and relevant problem solving. The focus group discussions are an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own practical knowledge, confirming or disconfirming their beliefs and knowledge about diversity.

During the focus group case discussions, the researcher observes each participant and keeps anecdotal notes as each teacher looks for information and expresses ideas that reflect their practical knowledge of diversity. These anecdotal notes are utilized later for in-depth interviews in order to get at deeper understandings about teachers’ practical knowledge of diversity.
At the conclusion of the focus group discussions, participants respond in writing to one additional question: “What, if anything, has changed after discussing the case in terms of your personal assumptions, values, beliefs, and knowledge about multiculturalism?” Again, the purpose of the writing response to focus group discussions of each case is for participants’ individual reflection and re-examination of their personal practical knowledge about diversity.

Finally, participants have a second face-to-face in-depth interview with the researcher focusing on their personal practical knowledge about diversity. In particular, this interview concentrates on teachers’ perceptions of any change, and development of their practical knowledge and learning about multicultural education that has occurred through their involvement in the case-based pedagogy experiences. The interview with each participant lasts about one to one and one half hours. The interview with each participant is audiotaped and transcribed.

*Instructors’ Philosophies about Case-Based Pedagogy*

In order to help contextual understandings of this study, the two elementary science course instructors’ philosophies about case-based pedagogy are as follows:

*The Philosophies of the Instructor of the Undergraduate Elementary Science Course*

The instructor of the preservice elementary science education course considers cases as a vehicle to promote teachers’ development of problem-solving, decision-making and reflective practice. She thinks that cases can help preservice teachers in subject-specific courses develop understandings of embedded epistemologies related to science teaching and learning.
Moreover, she feels that cases can contribute to preservice and inservice teachers’ professional development by stimulating them to think critically about the complex tensions of teaching and learning and to search for possible solutions. She thinks that cases challenge the norms of teaching and learning practice. “Because the cases are embedded contextually in the elementary science learning environment, they bring a slice of reality to the reader and offer no “right answers” or tidy solutions. They provide the data to provoke careful thought and meaningful discourse, allowing readers to develop the skills of classroom analysis, decision making, and problem solving that are so essential for today’s elementary teacher.” (Tippins, Koballa, & Payne, 2002, p. xii)

In her elementary science methods class, she uses both ‘open cases’ that include unresolved problems or challenges and ‘closed cases’ that illustrate possible solutions for the case dilemmas or challenges. In reading, writing, and discussing cases, she emphasizes that preservice teachers should put themselves in the shoes of others. She feels that without fully understanding the case contexts, preservice teachers cannot fully analyze all aspects of the case dilemmas. Reflecting on the messiness of teaching where there are often “no clear solutions,” she emphasizes the need for teachers to realize their own perceptions and pedagogical beliefs about teaching and learning practice.

*The Philosophies of the Instructor of the Graduate Elementary Science Course*

The three experienced teacher participants are enrolled in the graduate course entitled ‘Elementary Science Education.’ The instructor of the course uses cases in order to provide teachers with the opportunities to explore and conceptualize their professional knowledge. He thinks that cases enable teachers to reflect on their understandings about teaching and learning by analyzing case dilemmas within real contexts. Furthermore, he
believes that cases can develop teachers’ own knowledge about pedagogical practice.

Experiencing ambiguity and complexity through teaching and learning cases, he believes that teachers can link abstract educational theory with real world teaching practice.

Using cases in his class, he attempts to build teacher-learning community. He facilitates teachers’ discussions and prompts reflections that create various interpretations regarding case dilemmas. Accordingly, he tries to stimulate teachers’ own inquiry, self-reflection, and critical reasoning about teaching and learning practice using the vehicle of cases.

To teachers experiencing cases, he stresses, “We are not looking for a right answer. Cases are open ended so we do not know what came of the case. All we know is that this is something that actually happened in a teacher’s classroom, and we are here to try to reflect upon our own experiences. If we disagree, that is perfectly okay – professionals disagree all the time.” Because cases are contextualized in the life worlds of the authors and can foster the development of a learning community, he believes that they are useful in creating a transformative curriculum for professional teaching and learning.

_Data Sources_

Data are nothing more than ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment. They can be concrete and measurable, as in class attendance, or invisible and difficult to measure, as in feelings. Whether or not a bit of information becomes data in a research study depends solely on the interest and perspective of the investigator….Data are not ‘out there’ waiting collection, like so many rubbish bags on the pavement. For a start, they have to be noticed by the researcher, and treated as data for the purposes of his or her research….The data
Data collection for this study commences in fall 2002 and is completed by the end of fall, 2002 academic semester. The data is obtained from multiple sources including the following: a) primary data sources include teachers’ interview transcripts, written responses to cases, and case discussion transcripts, b) secondary data sources include the researchers’ personal journal, interviews with course instructors and anecdotal notes.

The researcher’s personal journal writing is collected throughout the course of the study. This serves as a source of brainstorming and inspiration for the researcher as she records thoughts, ideas, and reflections for the study including the research procedures, participants’ practical knowledge, their reactions during the research, and so on. The journal helps the researcher collect and analyze data focusing on participants’ comments and actions, keep notes on the questions that require further investigation, and develop ideas on how best to represent data during the “writing up” phase of the study. The anecdotal notes that are collected during case discussions are utilized later for in-depth interviews in order to get at deeper understandings about teachers’ practical knowledge of diversity. In addition, the transcripts of interviews with course instructors are used to develop deeper understandings and reflections on preservice and experienced teachers’ development of their practical knowledge and the use of cases as a tool for multicultural education.
Table 6

*Final Data Collection Table*

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<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<td>Teachers’ Interview Transcripts, Researcher’s Personal Journal</td>
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<td>Before</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>Discussion: Teacher’s Case Discussion Transcripts, Researcher’s Personal Journal</td>
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<td>After</td>
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<td>After: Teachers’ Written Responses to Cases, Researcher’s Personal Journal</td>
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<td><strong>Perspective-Taking</strong></td>
<td>Before</td>
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<td><strong>Perceptions of Case-based Pedagogy</strong></td>
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<td>Teachers’ Interview Transcripts, Researcher’s Personal Journal</td>
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<td>Teachers’ Interview Transcripts, Researcher’s Personal Journal, Researcher’s Anecdotal Notes</td>
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*Data Analysis*

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning. Data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits.
of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between

Analysis commences immediately with the initial gathering of written case
responses. All interview and focus group case discussions are fully transcribed. All data
is analyzed to look for patterns and themes relative to Banks’ (1995a) and Kennedy’s
(1991) categories with the additional category of Lundeberg and Fawver (1994)
described previously. I begin the data analysis by reading and re-reading the entire
transcripts and documents. In order to organize all information from participants, data is
analyzed by selective coding and sorted into themes and categories regarding personal
practical knowledge about diversity.

Preservice and experienced teachers’ preexisting practical knowledge about
diversity and their reflection on sociocultural dilemmas in the cases is analyzed in
relation to research question I, “How does preservice and experienced teachers’ practical
knowledge regarding diversity influence their decision-making and reasoning through
case-based pedagogy?” In order to identify preservice and experienced teachers’
preexisting practical knowledge about diversity, interview transcripts with each
participant are analyzed focusing on the kinds of thinking and experiences the
participants have had personally and professionally with the issues of diversity.

In order to examine participants’ reflection and problem-solving about
sociocultural dilemmas involving issues of diversity, data is analyzed relative to
Kennedy’s (1991) categories with the additional category of Lundeberg and Fawver
(1994) – flexibility, perspective-taking, and connectedness. Kennedy and Lundeberg and
Fawver use these categories as a guide to look at how teachers apply theory to practice.
With respect to the analysis of preservice and experienced teachers’ ‘flexibility,’ I concentrate on their ability to identify a number of issues and generate several possible solutions, ideas, decisions, or activities for solving the problems across multiple possible contexts. In terms of preservice and experienced teachers’ ‘perspective-taking,’ I examine participants’ ability to view a case from various perspectives such as that of teachers, children, parents, principals, etc. The ‘connectedness’ of preservice and experienced teachers’ ideas is analyzed by focusing on their ability to make connections between multiple theories, principles, or concepts and the situated problems in cases. Because this study focuses on issues of diversity, the quality of ‘connectedness’ is also analyzed in relation to Bank’s (1995a) dimensions of multicultural education – content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure.

In relation to research question II, “How do the inquiries of case-based pedagogy influence preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity?,” I focus on preservice and experienced teachers’ perceptions of case-based pedagogy, including both case discussion and written reactions. I consider how they think about case-based pedagogy as a tool for multicultural teacher education programs. Additionally, I examine preservice and experienced teachers’ self-report of their learning about diversity through the use of case-based pedagogy.

As I analyze additional data, new themes and categories emerge and are added to the list of codes. Themes refer to units derived from patterns such as “conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1989, p. 131). Themes are discovered by ‘bringing together
components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone’ (Leininger, 1985, p. 60). Themes that emerge from the informants’ stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience and developed as individual case narratives.

In order to understand the commonalities or differences between the preservice teachers and experienced teachers, cross-case analysis is conducted. The preservice and experienced teachers’ experiences about diversity before, during, and after case-based pedagogy are contrasted looking for broader emergent themes relative to diversity and multicultural education.

I discuss and share the findings of data analysis and the interpretation with my participants in order to confirm and expand the depth of my understanding and interpretation. When I need to clarify the meaning of participants’ verbal and written responses, I check my understandings and interpretations with them. I constantly think about the ways of interpretation and meaning-making within the larger research context.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness of the study involves the concepts of credibility, transferability, and confirmability. ‘Credibility’ deals with the issue of compatibility between the researcher’s constructions and informants’ reality. In terms of credibility, this study uses triangulation by collecting multiple sources of data through multiple methods. Because teachers’ practical knowledge is not easily encapsulated by a single method (van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001), “the use of multimethod approaches appears to be superior, not simply because they allow triangulation of data but because they are more likely to capture the complex, multifaceted aspects of teaching and learning” (Kagan, 1990, p.
Hanrahan and Tate (2001) also point out that “the accessing of teacher beliefs is best done using multiple methods” (p. 84). The multiple sources of data for this study include the transcriptions of face-to-face in-depth interviews with six individuals, the transcriptions of focus group case discussions, written responses to cases, observations, anecdotal notes, and the researcher journal.

“In a qualitative study, the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information” (Merriam, 1998, p. 20). As Wolcott (1994) indicates, during the research, the researcher listens a lot to provide opportunities for participants to talk and share their ideas. The information from participants is recorded precisely and as soon as possible to minimize the influence of the researcher. Even though the researcher may reveal feelings or personal reactions whenever relevant to a case, they should be judgmental.

To ensure credibility of the researcher’s interpretations, member checks and peer examination (Merriam, 1998) are used. The participants are asked to read the transcripts and tentative interpretations in order to ensure that they are plausible. The peer/collaborator examination is used to solicit feedback and suggestions from the researcher’s major professor and other individuals regarding changes or data analysis. In addition, the researcher’s subjectivities, including the experiences and biases related to this study, are stated.

‘Transferability’ is concerned with the degree to which a study’s findings can be applied in other contexts or with other participants. Because qualitative research is intended to get at deep understandings about the phenomenon being studied rather than to
generalize to many situations, this study is described in as rich and as thick terms as possible. The rich and thick description makes it possible for readers to apply some findings to their own situations.

‘Dependability’ is the degree to which a study’s findings would be repeated if replicated with the same subjects in the same setting. In addition, confirmability deals with the extent to which a study’s findings are the result of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher. In terms of dependability and confirmability, this study provides data-based evidence to support interpretations based on the paradigm assumptions and theories that undergird the study. Also, the data is able to be easily traced to original sources.
CHAPTER 4

PRESERVICE TEACHERS

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide in-depth understanding about Kate’s, Lisa’s, and Shazia’s experiences with diversity as it relates to their personal experiences within and beyond school settings. Data from interviews, written responses to each case, responses to case reaction questions, reactions to post case discussions, and case discussions with peers are analyzed to make sense of the three preservice teachers’ experiences with diversity.

Each preservice teacher’s story consists of three sections: background, experiencing cases regarding diversity, and experiencing case-based pedagogy. The background of each preservice teacher is discussed in terms of emergent themes that fall under the categories of ‘teaching experience,’ ‘experiencing diversity,’ and ‘thoughts about teacher education programs for diversity.’ In addition, the category of ‘teaching experience’ consists of the subcategories of ‘desire to become a teacher’ and ‘the important things for children’s learning.’ Following the description of each preservice teacher’s background, their views of ‘experiencing diversity’ are discussed with respect to the subcategories of ‘feeling of being a minority and about minorities,’ ‘experiencing ESL children,’ and ‘experiencing different races, cultures, and genders.’ Then, each preservice teacher’s ‘thoughts about teacher education programs for diversity’ are followed with the aspect of ‘seeing a need for a more practical approach of teacher education.’
The section of ‘experiencing cases regarding diversity’ discusses each preservice teacher’s experiences and thoughts about diversity in relation to five cases read and discussed as part of their elementary science methods course. The preservice teachers’ experiences with these five cases regarding diversity are discussed in terms of Kennedy’s (1991) categories – flexibility, connectedness, and perceived meaningfulness – and the additional category – perspective-taking – of Lundeberg and Fawver. The categories of Kennedy (1991), and Lundeberg and Fawver (1994) are significant conditions of understanding leading to transfer. Because this study focuses on issues of diversity, connectedness, which is one of the categories emphasized by Kennedy, is considered in terms of Banks’ (1995a) dimensions of multicultural education – content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure.

In the final section of ‘experiencing case-based pedagogy,’ each preservice teacher’s thoughts about ‘case-based pedagogy as a tool for multicultural education’ and ‘perceived meaningfulness about diversity from case-based pedagogy’ are discussed. The category of ‘case-based pedagogy as a tool for multicultural education’ interweaves the subcategories of ‘constructing knowledge with sensitivity to different cultures,’ ‘in-depth reflections on diversity and knowing personal beliefs,’ ‘suggestions for experiencing case-based pedagogy regarding diversity,’ and ‘source of learning through case-based pedagogy.’

‘Perceived meaningfulness’ is Kennedy’s (1991) category that relates learners’ understanding of the usefulness of related concepts or knowledge, including the sociocultural contexts of cases, and their confirmed or challenged beliefs. This construct
reflects a synthesis of themes that emerged relative to each case. Particularly, the section entitled ‘perceived meaningfulness about diversity from case-based pedagogy’ includes the subcategories of ‘creating awareness of diversity’ and ‘the importance of teaching approach.’ Several emergent themes are discussed with respect to these categories.

Kate

Kate’s Background

Teaching Experience: Desire to Become a Teacher

“I love children.” Kate is a senior in her early twenties majoring in early childhood education. As one of the reasons she wishes to be an early childhood teacher, she indicates the love of young children.

I’ve always loved working with children. I love being around the younger children. I love seeing children learning. I love seeing their eyes brighten up when they all of a sudden get something. I forget about everything else and concentrate on the children. I always knew that I had to do something with children (Initial interview)

These comments are in accord with those of Seefeldt (1980) who asserts that early childhood teachers typically have the personal characteristics needed to demonstrate love and emotional affections toward children, flexibility, and non-prejudicial attitudes towards humans and the world.

The Important Things for Children’s Learning

The importance of finding multiple ways to get through to different children. Kate started being interested in teaching in high school. She participated in a program called peer mentorship for two years in her high school which allowed her to work and assist
teachers of autistic children at local elementary, middle, and high schools. She has fond recollections of this experience.

Through her university teacher education program, Kate has many teaching experiences and related opportunities. She is currently completing technology training for In-tech certification, a program which emphasizes practical application of technology in the classroom. She worked with fourth and fifth grade classrooms during her sophomore and junior year and is currently participating in an internship in a first grade classroom. Looking across these varied field experiences, Kate is struck by a feeling of diversity in school environments in terms of parent involvement.

I’m at Columbus County School. It’s very different from the previous two schools I’ve worked at. The two schools I’ve worked at before were a little bit more country schools, like rural schools. It was hard to get the parents to come in for parent conferences. But the school that I’m working at now is still pretty much in the country but it’s a developing city. There’s much more parent involvement, which is nice to see (Initial interview).

In describing her teaching philosophy, Kate specifies that teaching children should, on a daily basis, connect to the real world. She feels that it is important to concentrate on individual children in order for them to set, understand, and accomplish their own goals. She emphasizes that finding multiple ways to get through to different children is more important than emphasizing test scores.

Kate credits much of her development as a teacher to previous teachers and friends who are becoming teachers. She feels that if she had just completed university courses, and then gotten thrown into an elementary school, she would have just been lost.
Along the way she has received strong mentoring support. For Kate, other teachers and peers are stepping stones to be able to think and deal with new teaching experiences.

*Experiencing Diversity*

*Feeling of Being a Minority and about a Minority*

*Moving to a different region in a country: Feeling alienated and isolated.* “I’m from Seattle. It was kind of culture shock going into a very small Southern country town. I just didn’t feel like I fit in.” After graduating from high school, Kate moved to the Southeastern United States for her university education. Kate always felt that she was in the majority until she attended this southern university. For her, being from Seattle and moving to the Southern region of the country was a culture shock.

I’d lived in Seattle pretty much all my life and was very comfortable there, knew everything and everyone. Then moving to this area, I didn’t understand Southern dialect at all. It was almost like hearing a completely different language, like hearing Spanish. I’d have to just sit there and ask a lot of questions about a lot of words and felt like I stuck out like a sore thumb. I felt like I was the only person there that didn’t know how to say “Ya’ll.” I was definitely a minority here (Initial interview).

Kate describes her university experience as the first time for her to feel what it is like to be a minority. She states that it was a good experience to understand how it feels to be a minority and how it feels to be different. Nevertheless, she notes that it was very hard and at times lonely, to be the “odd one.”

During her preservice teacher education courses, Kate recalls how one of her professors said, “You aren’t a minority!” Kate said, “Well, I feel like a minority because,
you know…riding down on MARTA, getting into the city of Atlanta, going to the classrooms…here’s this small little white girl that stands out.” The professor said, “But you aren’t a minority at the school.” She said, “Well, why not?” The professor said “Because the professors and the administration here are all white.” That made her think “Well, yeah, but, I still feel like I am a minority” because her life experiences were not limited to inside the walls of the university. Many of the experiences that contributed to her sense of isolation and caused feelings of being a minority took place outside the university setting.

Kate’s family eventually moved to a corporate, suburban area of Atlanta comprised of people from many parts of the country. “There are a lot of people in the same boat as me. That was kind of comforting.” She also tried to fit in academically with other students by joining study groups. This was an effort to place herself in a path similar to what she thought might be considered as “normal” and “majority.”

The importance of developing open-mindedness about one’s own culture and other cultures. “I’ve always been attracted to different cultures. I’ve always enjoyed it.” Unlike some of her peers, Kate believes that she is not scared about experiencing diversity because she is interested in others’ cultures. She loves to see different cultures’ art performances, even though she admits not always understanding what they really mean. She feels sorry for people who have no experiences with diversity.

Kate has a strong desire to associate with people who are different from her. Growing up in Seattle, in a very diverse community, she had many friends from different cultural backgrounds in school and in the neighborhood. She wishes she had learned
more about their culture. For Kate, different cultural backgrounds are no obstacles in forming close friendships.

One of my really close friends was African-American. I had never ever thought about any of these different cultures as being a big deal. They seemed like just the same as my family. I thought of them the same difference as my sister having blue eyes and me having brown eyes, or her having freckles and me having moles (Initial interview).

She again emphasizes that being interested in people and asking questions about their culture has contributed to her development of open-mindedness. She feels that her open-mindedness about different cultures definitely influences her practical knowledge in teaching and learning. “I just look at diversity as a gray line. It’s not really something that I think should separate us. I think that we should all be able to get together and celebrate all together.” Kate believes that people should be able to learn about and appreciate other people’s cultures. At this point, she maintains the need to be educated about different cultural practices and beliefs.

If you aren’t educated on different cultures and get in the classroom or if you’re in a situation and you meet somebody who’s a different culture, you’re going to maybe be afraid or scared (Initial interview).

At the same time, she stresses the importance of expressing pride in one’s own culture. For Kate, it is equally important to be aware of one’s own culture and that of others.

Kate acknowledges the role that people’s personal experiences play in constructing their knowledge and beliefs about diversity. She believes that people develop misconceptions that may come from relationships limited to within their own
sociocultural context; these misconceptions can contribute to feelings of fear or negative thoughts about culture and diversity. “Maybe it’s their family or peers…. and people are afraid of that culture and then react. Maybe they’re either afraid to approach the person or they have already negative thoughts about the person before they even meet them.”

Experiencing ESL Children

Sink or swim: The importance of getting close and interacting with ESL children and their families. Kate met three Hispanic children in a kindergarten class where she participated in an internship during the fall semester of her junior year. The children either spoke no English or very little English. Kate was interested in seeing the children’s progress of language development.

It was interesting to see how quickly they would catch on to the language as they started grouping up. At first they stayed very close. They all would talk together in Spanish, and wouldn’t really branch out to the other children. They slowly would start to go and hang out with other children and pick up English. It was just interesting to see (Initial interview).

Months after she left, she returned to visit them. By this time, they were running around, yelling, and running the whole class. Kate felt good to see these children come out of their shells.

Kate identifies and feels sad with the problems of children whose parents who do not speak English. During her field experiences, she notices how difficult it is for teachers to get in touch with parents. Kate notices that teachers try to find another teacher in the school that can write down a note and translate it in a language such as Spanish. Kate observes firsthand how parents are scared to come into the school. Kate also
observes that teachers’ difficulty in getting in touch with some of the families is related to the fact that many of them are living illegally in the country. She notes that sometimes the phone numbers and addresses they provide to the school are fictitious.

Kate emphasizes the importance of finding ways to get to know children who do not speak English as a first language. She points out the need to spend much time talking with them. She utilizes the expression ‘trying the sink-or-swim methods’ suggesting that teachers should not be afraid to get in there and interact with these children.

I sat at lunch with them. They just got a kick out me because I tried to pull out the little Spanish that I remember. They were just loving it because I just wasn’t saying anything right. I would want teachers just to jump in there, just not be afraid to get their hands wet, and learn and talk about the cultures, but of course doing it in a positive manner (Initial interview).

As a role model, Kate recalls a teacher who had an ESL class on Saturdays for the parents. The parents spoke only Spanish and did not speak English, and the teacher did not really speak much Spanish. The teacher and the parents simply got together over a period of Saturdays, got closer and closer, and learned each other’s languages. Kate believes that this was a good strategy to show the ESL children and parents the same attribute of vulnerability that they may experience.

The parents would see that he didn’t know much Spanish, he was as vulnerable as they were, so they had that same attribute to work on. It drew them a lot closer together. I definitely like the way that the teacher just jumped in and did that (Initial interview).
Related to the ESL issue, Kate points out that people from other countries always know at least another language along with their own language, but that people from the U.S. just know English. She expresses her feelings about this.

They’re always a little bit more globally aware than we are in the United States. In most countries you learn your country’s language, along with English. I think that that’s a little ignorant for us, to think that everybody should have to learn our language, but we shouldn’t have to learn anybody else’s language (Initial interview).

She is surprised with the increasing number of children and parents at school who speak Spanish and little English. She believes that future teachers should be required to have other language background as a requirement of their teacher education programs.

Experiencing Different Races and Cultures

Seeing conflicts among “White, Black, and Mixed”: The importance of having positive understandings and attitudes toward different cultures. During a teaching internship experience in a fourth grade class during spring of her junior year, Kate experienced a fight between children of different races and cultures. This particular fourth grade class was predominantly comprised of African-American and Caucasian children.

It was a lunch time. There was a white child that said something about a black child’s mother. The black child would hear it wrong, and would think they were calling their parent a racial slur. Then the other child proceeded with calling her mother a Cracker. Then another child, who was actually multi-racial, tried to
break up the fight, and then those jumping on him for saying he didn’t have the right because he wasn’t either white or black (Initial interview).

Kate feels that this kind of experience is emotionally harmful for many of the children. She thinks that all fights of this nature start with a misunderstanding about other cultures. At the same time, she confesses that she, as a student teacher, did not know exactly how to approach breaking the fight up. She implicitly articulates that classroom teacher’s personal beliefs influence children’s attitudes and thoughts about diversity. However, she felt that as a student teacher, she lacked the power to mediate the children’s fights or advocate her personal beliefs regarding this matter.

I went over to them and said, okay, we’re going to stop this conversation, let’s talk about something else, let’s just stop it right here. I’m only a student teacher…. I don’t even feel like it was really my place to get up on my soap box and talk about my beliefs about different races and different cultures, so I just let the teacher deal with that (Initial interview).

Kate noted that the classroom teacher was sensitive to issues of diversity and had, at the beginning of the year, conducted many talks with children about different races and different cultures. During these discussions the classroom teacher stressed what was appropriate or inappropriate to say at school. The teacher dealt with the fight saying that if it happened again there would be some consequences. Kate wonders if this was really the most effective intervention for the situation.

Obviously the situation happened when she wasn’t around, and there’s not normally somebody who sits with them at lunch. I’m not sure if it happened another time when I was not around (Initial interview).
At this point, in order to help children develop understandings about racial differences, Crary (1992) suggests guidelines such as acknowledging children’s fears, misconceptions, and rejections about differences, prompt response when conflicts occur, teachers’ verbal and nonverbal behaviors to model respect, meaningful activities using literature to address the issues, opportunities to share about experiences with real people, and so on. Classroom teachers’ awareness and tolerance about discriminatory thoughts and attitudes should be extended to challenge their own and their students’ beliefs and values about diversity.

“Nobody’s like her”: The importance of appreciating each child’s similarities and differences. Kate also recalls another classroom experience with diversity that has left her with a significant impression. This particular experience happened during her teaching internship in a kindergarten classroom, when the teacher posed the question “Who is the same as this child?” The teacher in this kindergarten class singled out one child to illustrate the concept of same-and-different. Then she asked all children to choose another child that was the same race or the same gender. Kate observed that “There was a child that was part white and part black. When this child was not chosen, the children were all like, “Well, nobody’s like her.”” It ended up that these kindergarten children were looking at similarity and difference through the lens of race and gender. Kate felt sorry for the teacher caught in this situation. Kate believes that even the small experiences of kindergarten are going to have a big impact throughout the children’s lives.

Kate implies that the similarities and differences of children from diverse sociocultural contexts should be discussed in more various ways and in deeper levels. On
this point, Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) assert, “the colorblind position results in denial of young children’s awareness of differences and to nonconfrontation of children’s misconceptions, stereotypes, and discriminatory behaviors, be they about race, culture, gender, or different physical abilities” (p. 7). As these authors suggest, children’s similarities and differences should be appreciated; it is important for children to have the opportunities to be aware of and comfortably discover the differences and similarities of themselves and others. “It is not differences in themselves that cause the problems, but how people respond to differences” (Derman-Sparks & the A. B. C. Task Force, 1989, p. 6).

**Considering families where both parents are working: The importance of understanding children’s family background.** Kate’s experiences with diversity in the classroom also lead her to consider family structure as an important dimension of culture. Recalling her experience with families where both parents worked, Kate reveals her thoughts about the relationship between parents and children. She describes the problem of parents who were not giving children much time and attention at home, using summer camp and other activities as a Day Care for their children.

Instead of their parents spending that time with them they would buy things for them to show that they care. It’s different to see it from an adult perspective rather than a child’s perspective—it’s more “Well, why can’t I get all that stuff. I wish my parents both worked.” It’s very sad to see (Initial interview).
Kate’s Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity

Seeing a Need for a More Practical Approach to Teacher Education

Being careful with holidays: The importance of providing a fair voice for every culture. Kate states emphatically that the teacher education program at her university helps to prepare her for diversity as it relates to teaching and learning. She perceives that the learning from classes expanded her ideas about diversity, even though she feels that she pretty much already had an open mind.

We were basically told not to be prejudiced and not to just focus on the stereotypical, to try to bring up as many things as possible. We have talked about it’s good to bring in these different cultures but try to do in a way that’s not adding to that stereotypical idea that we have (Initial interview).

In her teacher education program, Kate mentions that she has been taught to try to consider everything that culture brings to individual children and their families, not just focusing on one or two exotic or stereotypic differences of cultures.

“Being careful with holidays” is one of the themes that she notes is emphasized repeatedly in her teacher education courses. “You should keep the holidays out of the classroom.” Through her coursework, Kate learns the importance of providing a fair voice for every culture, including the religions or holidays of cultures. She has been taught that if she is going to celebrate Christmas, she should include all other religious holidays or cultural celebration such as Kwanza and Hanukkah in order not to offend any of the families.

We’ve been programmed to think no religion in the classroom, don’t preach anything, but bring as much multicultural issues into the classroom as we can.
Teachers need to keep an open mind, not only on encouraging talking about diversity, but also not overstepping any boundaries, like with holidays, that might offend people (Initial interview).

However, the reality of what Kate is learning in her teacher education coursework and what she is experiencing in classrooms created some tension. Kate feels a contradiction in relation to this matter between her university classroom learning and field experience. Kate feels that when she brings in a culture, she also brings in many religions. She gets confused in terms of how to deal with bringing cultures into the curriculum and keeping religions or holidays separate. For Kate, religion is an inseparable part of culture that should not be compartmentalized. Kate claims that how she acts on religious issue will depend on the school’s philosophy where she works rather simply on learning from the university classroom.

Whereas when I’ve gone to these schools in some county, they were very big into the Christian holidays. The halls were decorated with Santa Clauses and Christmas trees… But some county weren’t allowed to have Halloween or Christmas celebrations. In many county schools, I was shocked and said, “Well, you can’t do this!” Teachers said, “No, it’s okay for us to do this.” I felt “Wow, that’s not what my professors are telling me” (Initial interview).

The importance of learning more practical teaching methods with various materials. Kate believes that the teacher education program in her university needs to bring in different books and resource materials to help preservice teachers learn about culture and diversity. She assumes that it would be a good idea to bring the books of different cultures in classrooms for children who are in a major culture group as well as
children who have distinct culture in order to understand and incorporate their culture. However, she maintains that just learning each activity about diversity is not enough to prepare teachers to teach children of other cultures. She suggests that there is a need for a more practical approach to teacher education programs for diversity. This point of Kate is supported by Neuharth-Pritchett, Reiff, and Pearson (2001) contending that teacher education programs “should foster approaches that assist preservice students in developing a repertoire of culturally responsive or learner-sensitive strategies that focus on integration of events and materials” (p. 268)

I would like to see it actually done in the classroom because they give us many different ideas, just like with books and activities, but I haven’t seen it actually done in a classroom to see the children’s reaction and to see if they’re positive or negative (Initial interview).

Experiencing Cases regarding Diversity

This section illustrates Kate’s experiences and thoughts about diversity in relation to the following five cases. An abstract for each case is provided, with the complete case found in Appendix C.

“Who Eats the Mango?”

In this open case, my student teacher, Kim, develops a science lesson with our third grade students that explore the properties of edible plant parts. The students have been instructed to bring a fruit and a vegetable to class. The students come from a largely white, middle-class suburban area that is just beginning to experience some diversity from recent Central American immigration. Wanting to expose students to the plants grown and eaten in diverse cultures, this gifted novice teacher brings in many different
kinds of fruits and vegetables. Anticipating that our students will be excited and curious to learn about these unusual fruits and vegetables, she is surprised and disturbed when they reject learning about these plant parts because they are “strange” and “weird.” She is not sure how to handle the students’ reactions and wonders what went wrong. The story is told in Janice’s voice as she observed Kim’s lesson. Commentary following the case is provided by Pamela Fraser-Abder, a science teacher educator with much experience working with teachers in the design of science learning experiences that acknowledge and build on students’ diverse cultural backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Main dilemma of the case</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who eats the mango?</td>
<td>This case shows the dilemma of a student teacher, Kim, who attempts to design and implement a multicultural science lesson by incorporating unfamiliar fruits and vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The day the lobster died</td>
<td>This case includes the dilemmas of life and death, ethical issues about animal rights, and the questions about the treatment of these issues in an elementary classroom. The case centers around a 5th grade teacher’s implementation of a “lobster boil” as a culminating activity for an oceanography unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where have all the Ipil-Ipil trees gone?: Science education through the politics of poverty</td>
<td>This case illustrates dilemmas regarding the connections between the lifeworlds of children in poverty and school science. It raises the issues of the community of science and culturally relevant pedagogy. The case centers on values and beliefs associated with a teacher’s lesson on deforestation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El secreto de las Ninãs</td>
<td>This case raises questions about what access to science in school means for homeless children. The case features a dilemma that emerges when two homeless girls are unable to obtain materials needed for a science lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When do you perform Tuob?: Culture at the margins of the science classroom</td>
<td>This case portrays the dilemmas between the traditional beliefs of the community and the scientific knowledge that a school focuses on to teach. The dilemmas are figured when a 3rd grade teacher’s science teaching about health care and practice confronts the conflicted beliefs of children and herself.</td>
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*Figure 1. List of cases.*
The importance of understanding diversity rather than simply knowing academic content connecting different cultures to children’s learning through something concrete, familiar, and comfortable. In her personal reaction to the case, Kate evaluates the student teacher [Kim] positively on the basis of her attempt to have children experience diverse and different things by beginning the lesson with something the children felt familiar and comfortable with. For Kate, the student teacher [Kim] did a great job of getting the children interested in the classification activity because many of them wanted to go home and share the information they learned. “That was interesting to see the whole situation of getting the children to try things new. I don’t think there’s any harm that can be done from trying to get your children to experience different things in different cultures.”

While claiming the importance of experiencing diversity for children, Kate indicates that if people talk about culture, they are dealing with things where they may have limited knowledge. In most schools, children have been pushed towards knowing academic content rather than understanding diversity. Considering these points, Kate thinks that fruits and vegetables are a definitely good place to start to see how children will react when they are introduced to something unfamiliar. Kate also feels that fruits and vegetables can provide experience with diversity because they are the actual materials that foster understanding rather than abstract cultural ideas. Kate believes that children can connect diverse cultures to their learning through these concrete materials. Kate reiterates this point in both her case reaction questions and the reaction to the post case discussion question, noting:
The student teacher was trying to do a good thing by teaching them about diverse fruits and vegetables. She was trying to educate them and take their knowledge about fruits and vegetables away from their own home, and widen their knowledge (Responses to case reaction questions).

This excerpt shows how Kate considers the point of view of the student teacher [Kim] in discussing this case by explaining Kim’s intentions for the lesson. In addition, Kate reports the viewpoint of children in the case by showing their reactions to Kim’s lesson.

_The importance of not raising prejudices against different cultures._ At the same time, Kate points out the lesson started to go wrong when Kim separated and labeled the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables as “strange-looking.” “She separated the fruits and vegetables into: normal fruits and vegetables, and unknown fruits and vegetables. It bothered me. The students immediately shrugged at this idea.” Regarding the issues of “labeling,” Valles (1998) indicates the potential negative effects of labeling on children’s self-image and on teachers’ perceptions of the children with individual differences.

In answering the post case discussion question, Kate returns to this point. “We agree that she chose the wrong choice of action.” It is interesting to see that Kate writes that ‘everyone in my discussion group (dis)agreed that…’, or ‘we agreed that…’ when she responds to post case discussion question. She seems to try to find some unitary points or opinions in concert with her peers.

_The importance for student teachers to have teaching experiences in diverse classrooms._ From the case discussion, Kate describes her own perspective, as a student teacher, empathizing the student teacher’s [Kim’s] feeling of planning and implementing
the classroom activity. Kate recalls her teaching experience during the internship and considers Kim’s lack of teaching experience or no experience in diverse classrooms as reasons for the ‘unsuccessful’ part of the lesson rather than attributing it to the student teacher’s personal fault or lack of ability to teach.

Just the way that I planned my very first lesson it went the same way. I had worked with kindergarteners, and I hadn’t really worked with that age children with that sort of thing – texture – before and didn’t really know how to plan a lesson properly. It went the same direction—not good! It just seems to me that she just doesn’t have a lot of experience. And she may have never been in a class that wasn’t culturally diverse (Case discussion).

The importance of mentoring for student teachers to meet diversity in a class. In addition, in the case reaction questions, Kate contemplates the mentor teacher’s responsibility for the student teacher’s lesson. Kate thinks that the student teacher was trying to follow the teacher’s suggestions for making the curriculum more diverse. In Kate’s opinion, the student teacher was following the recommendations of her mentor teacher. In considering the perspective of the student teacher, Kate defends Kim’s ‘ineffective’ section of the lesson by highlighting the ultimate responsibility of Kim’s mentor teacher for the lesson.

Flexibility of Problem-Solving

Children’s participation in group works. Kate advocates children’s small and large group work instead of asking the children to participate in the classroom activity as a large group. She explains that, in a small group, even shy children can get the
opportunities to explore the fruits and vegetables and contribute to the group work, collaborating to write about their investigation.

If you set something in front of them in a small group, they would start to get curious and start on their own to look at it, touch it, and cut it open. This could help the students [be] more comfortable because some of the students maybe shy in a large group. Then they could come back together as a whole class and share what they learned about their vegetables (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction and case discussion, Kate also mentions that peers’ modeling can help children overcome their fears about new and unfamiliar things. The group work approach helps children participate in learning about the unfamiliar fruits, rather than relying on the teachers’ sole effort to provide explanations. In considering this possible solution, Kate considers children’s different characteristics with an emphasis on equal opportunities for each of them to learn with comfort and confidence.

Some could get over their fears of touching the fruit by perhaps one group member being brave, and then giving the other students confidence (Case discussion).

*Student teacher’s developing positive orientations to diversity.* Kate believes that if Kim would have introduced fruits and vegetables to the children as intriguing or with a more positive word the children may have been more willing to be involved in the activity. In the post case discussion question, Kate suggests that if the student teacher would have explained more about the diversity of the fruits and vegetables, such as the regions and the cultures they come from, it would have been a great lesson. This issue of more explanation is echoed in her personal reaction to the case:
The student teacher could also start out by talking about one of the fun parts of science is that you get to experience and see things that may be new or different to you. Explain that this is not something to be afraid of or shy away from, but something to be excited about (Personal reactions to the case).

After setting the stage for this kind of positive orientation of children’s emotion toward diversity, the student teacher could then introduce the fruits and vegetables that children may have not seen. Kate believes exposure to proper understandings and opinions about diversity is important for children’s new experiences regarding diversity. By establishing a positive orientation about diversity, in general, children can then discuss how the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables are similar or different to those that they are familiar with. Kate feels that making comparisons to fruits and vegetables children are familiar with may take away their anxiety about discussing or feeling different things. In discussing this possible approach, Kate focuses on the importance of erasing fear of different cultures and replacing that fear with an eagerness to learn about things that are strange or different.

*Connectedness of Theoretical Principles*

*Content integration: The importance of integrating diverse cultures into the daily teaching materials.* Kate criticizes Kim’s lesson because she simply introduces the exotic fruits and vegetables to children without making an effort to integrate diverse cultures with these teaching materials. Kate feels that experiencing diversity involves the development of a deeper sense and understanding of cultures that goes beyond the usual cultural artifacts.
It seemed like that the children already had the base of their culture and the teachers were integrating these lessons to it and then they were either deciding whether they agreed or not with these lessons according to their culture instead of having [it in] their curriculum and then the culture coming in and influencing (Exit interview).

Knowledge construction: The importance of student-centered teaching approaches in children’s knowledge construction on diversity. “I think the fact that knowledge is objective, neutral, and universal is rejected.” Kate believes that teachers’ planning and teaching approaches with respect to diversity are important. She feels that children can construct different knowledge about cultures according to the teaching and learning approaches. Kate thinks that how teachers teach is as significantly important for children as what they teach. Kate’s statement reflects the belief that teachers’ teaching approaches mediate the extent to which children can maintain, extend, challenge, or change their existing knowledge and beliefs about diversity. Kate believes that student-centered teaching approaches make the difference in children’s knowledge construction.

Prejudice reduction: The importance of in-depth understanding and mutual respect for other cultures. Kate states that teachers need to provide opportunities for children to think about other cultures. She emphasizes the teacher’s role in helping children have positive learning experiences with other cultures. At the same time, Kate thinks that teachers themselves need to understand that children’s cultures may be different from other cultures. In other words, there is no hierarchical order in cultures – there only exists difference. Kate believes, therefore, that it is important to share the “real cultures” and their spirits rather than just providing activities about other cultures, or
simply trying to make children learn about cultural materials. According to Kate, it is important for children to develop mutual respect for other cultures.

You would want to introduce the fruits or the vegetables that the children didn’t know in a non-prejudice manner. Then you should think about the other cultures and maybe not having ever tried a mango before instead of just saying ‘come and touch this gross thing’ (Exit interview)

“The Day the Lobster Died”

This open case raises questions about the ethical treatment of animals in the elementary classroom. Stan, an experienced fifth grade teacher, faces a number of dilemmas when the lobster cookout he has planned for the end of his oceanography unit takes an unexpected turn. Stan is left wondering how he got into the dilemma and how he might find a way out. Questions of life and death, the issue of animals as a source of food and clothing, ethical questions about animal rights, and the treatment of these issues with elementary students all come into sharp focus for Stan on the day the lobster died. Some thoughts on Stan’s dilemma are provided by science teacher educator Merton Glass after the case.

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of expanding children’s firsthand experiences with diversity. Kate explores the positive things that the teacher [Stan] in the case has done in the class. Evaluating Stan’s lesson, in terms of both her personal reactions to the case and the responses to case reaction questions, Kate describes Stan as an effective teacher because he tried to broaden the children’s knowledge of what people eat.
The teacher was trying to educate the children. Not only was he bringing in something they had been studying, but also opening their minds to something they had never before eaten (Responses to case reaction questions).

In her personal reactions to the case, Kate also indicates that it was good to see that Stan allowed the children to get hands on experience with materials and learn from a firsthand experience with diversity rather than learning about diversity from a science book. Kate feels that Stan was trying to allow the children hands on experiences. He was trying to give the children the chance to have a lobster cookout and taste his ‘Down East’ treat. In her responses, Kate considers the teacher’s point of view with respect to the case dilemma and voices her support for the goals of Stan’s lobster cookout lesson.

Kate feels that Stan and herself share similar beliefs because they both want to engage children in experiences that they may never have experienced in order to open their minds to cultural differences. Kate reflects on her own perspective as an educator for children as well as the viewpoint of the teacher in the case:

“He thought this would be a wonderful lesson to enhance what they already learned about oceanography. The enthusiasm Stan has about this lesson is wonderful.” In her personal reactions, Kate articulates that the teacher’s [Stan’s] passion and enthusiasm to share something meaningful or interesting regarding diversity always comes across to the children in a more fun and interesting manner, and makes a great lesson encouraging children to learn more about diversity.

*The importance of being sensitive to children’s personal background for a lesson.* However, in her personal reflections and responses to the case reaction questions, Kate expresses the belief that Stan is closed-minded about children who may come from
families where killing of animals is inappropriate or families who do not eat meat. Kate feels that Stan was not sensitive to the children’s personal background and could potentially offend children and families who have different beliefs from his. In her response to the case reaction questions, Kate recognizes the differences between herself and the teacher in the case:

We are different because I am a very strong believer in animals’ rights, and have actually spent a large amount of my life being a vegetarian (Responses to case reaction questions).

*The importance of considering children’s health issues in cooking a lobster.* In her post case discussion question, Kate adds that Stan should also carefully consider any shellfish allergies that children may have before conducting the lobster cookout activity. “What if some of the children were allergic to the lobster?”

*The importance of considering children’s emotions in planning and conducting a lesson.* In her personal reactions to the case, the responses to case reaction questions, and the case discussion, Kate points out that Stan was not sensitive to the children’s developmental level because he did not take into account that children in the fifth grade are emotional – they may feel strongly about killing a living organism in the classroom. Kate questions whether fifth grade children are at a maturity level where this would be an effective lesson. She considers children’s perspectives by empathizing with those who are sensitive to killing animals.

If this situation happened when I was younger I would probably have cried. How terrible it would have been if he had named it “Okay, say goodbye to Larry the Lobster!” (Case discussion)
Flexibility of Problem-Solving

*Teacher’s informing the lesson clearly to children.* Kate believes that Stan should tell the children in advance about what they will be doing in the lesson. She feels that this may give children a sense of purpose for the activity, reducing their fear of it.

*Teacher’s getting information about children’s experiences through permission slip or questionnaire.* In her personal reactions to the case, Kate also argues that Stan should get the parents’ permission for the classroom activity. This case reminds Kate of the experience of dissections in her childhood:

Send home a permission slip to see if they would allow their child to participate in the ‘lobster cookout.’ When I think about the dissections, I remember there always being a permission slip sent home (Personal reactions to the case).

Kate’s beliefs about communicating with children and families about the lesson did not change even after the case discussion. Kate emphasizes that if the families or children do not feel comfortable with the lesson, the teacher could find something else - doing a worksheet showing the same thing or writing about something related - for the children to do on that day. Kate adds that if there is a significant number of children or families uncomfortable with the lesson, then Stan could find another activity to do with the children. Kate strongly believes that classroom teachers should be careful not to offend the beliefs of children and their families.

Related to this, in her personal reactions to this case, Kate proposes that it is important to get information from children’s parents about children’s prior personal experiences concerning this kind of classroom activity. From Kate’s perspective, teachers have to understand that something they find interesting may not necessarily appeal to
children or their families. Kate believes that in order for teachers to plan and implement meaningful lessons, it is essential for them to know about children’s prior personal experiences. Kate suggests that parents are a good source of information about their children:

> Send a questionnaire to the parents to see if they have ever eaten lobster with their child. I understand Stan likes to eat lobster and thought a ‘lobster cookout’ would be fun, but he needs to think about the students and the way they may possibly react to this situation (Personal reactions to the case).

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

*Knowledge construction: The importance of avoiding death issues in classes not to offend others.* “The children’s knowledge wasn’t a part of that people cook lobsters live.” From Kate’s perspective, children in this case do not imagine that they can kill and cook live lobsters. The children are socialized in their sociocultural contexts and their knowledge is constructed within that group. Kate illuminates here that the lobster activity may offer opportunities for children to construct different knowledge from the knowledge that they already have or to expand their knowledge about diversity.

The conflicts associated with the lobster cookout activity are a reflection of differences in beliefs and knowledge between the teacher and the children. Kate perceives that the lack of understandings about each other’s beliefs and knowledge makes the children reluctant to embrace a different experience. Kate recognizes that knowledge can be constructed and validated differently depending on which groups the people belong to. Therefore, Kate believes that activities which involve death or dying should be avoided in the science classroom because each cultural groups’ approaches to these issues
are different; validating one group’s approach to death may offend other groups of
people. Kate explains,

I reconfirmed that killing an animal isn’t something that needed to be brought into
the classroom. I mean, it’s a part of life that young children don’t deal with death.
I thought we should try to keep death out of the classroom as much as possible
because cultures deal with death very differently and we don’t always know what
way to deal with it. I think that’s just going back to my little-girlness of wanting
to pet and play with the animals instead of look at them as lunch (Exit interview).

Prejudice reduction: The importance of interesting teaching approaches for in-
depth understandings about diverse cultures. “We’re gonna try something new. We’re all
gonna try to keep the attitude of being very positive about it and make it a fun thing.”
According to Kate, Stan tries to create a great lesson by providing children with diverse
experiences that they might not normally experience. Without diverse experiences and
real understanding about the other cultures that they meet, it is not easy for children to
lessen the prejudiced and stereotyped thoughts about cultures that they are not familiar
with.

At this point, Kate agrees that Stan explicitly tries not to convey prejudices about
certain sociocultural groups. No matter what the result of the ‘lobster cookout’ lesson,
Stan intends to plan and conduct a lesson on diversity in order for children not to have
prejudiced attitudes towards other cultural groups of people. In addition, Stan tries to
approach in a new and fun manner to achieve the lesson goal to construct children’s
positive attitudes, values, and behaviors about other cultures.
Equity pedagogy: The importance of effective teaching methods for each child’s academic knowledge considering their personal experiences. “There were more strategic ways to have the children try lobster than to have them to boil it in front of them I think.” Kate thinks that the intents and aims of the lobster cookout activity were appropriate. However, she feels that there are different strategic methods that could be used to achieve the same results that Stan originally planned to accomplish with this group of children through the lobster cookout activity. According to Kate, there are other effective ways of facilitating academic knowledge on the basis of children’s personal experiences that are congruent with children’s own sociocultural groups. Kate believes that it is important for teachers to notice that even for the same group of children, effective teaching methods differ. For Kate, equity does not imply that there should be a “one size fits all” type of pedagogy.

“Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”

The culture of poverty is reflected in the science education experience of young children throughout the world. In some cases, poverty is intergenerational, existing across several generations. In other cases, poverty is situational, an artifact of temporary situations. In either case, children living in poverty enter the science classroom carrying with them a set of values, beliefs, languages and struggles which contrast sharply with the typical science curriculum. Historically, the question of young children’s success in science has been framed as a question of availability of resources, access to the community of science and culturally relevant pedagogy. Teachers across many diverse contexts echo the common sentiment that “if only we had enough up-to-date textbooks, hands-on equipment and materials reflecting the natural resources of our own
communities, then all children would experience success in school science.” For children living and learning in poverty, however, success in school science is elusive and far more complex. Far too often their life experiences and ways of knowing, doing and communicating are devalued from a standpoint of what constitutes legitimate science. For teachers, worldwide, finding connections between the lifeworlds of children in poverty and school science is a daunting task. In this open case, Perla, a grade four teacher in a rural barangay community of the Philippines wrestles with the lack of fit between the home lives of her students and what she is teaching in science. Perla is a composite of many elementary teachers living and working in rural areas of the country.

**Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives**

Being benefited to learn and expand knowledge about different cultures and academic knowledge of science through cases. Kate expresses an interest in learning about different cultures, such as the Philippines, in her personal reactions to the case and case discussion. Her interest about this culture is even more pronounced because of her personal experience with an aunt whose home country is the Philippines. Feeling some difficulty in comprehending the cultural dimensions of the case, Kate considers her relative as a resource to further her understanding of the case:

I want to ask her if she knows that much about schools and a little bit more about everything there (Personal reactions to the case).

After the case discussion, Kate explains that she would like to learn more about how trees are being cut and how people use charcoal, in their daily lives. In this sense, the case has the potential to help Kate develop more academic knowledge as well as the diversity at the heart of the case.
Reacting to the case, from her perspective as an educator of young children, Kate recalls her personal experiences with poverty from her student intern experience and constructs a new picture of poverty. Kate acknowledged that she enjoyed reading the case because her thoughts about diversity, in particular, poverty were expanded. For Kate, the case-based experience provided an opportunity to reflect on specific phenomena from her own experience and relate them to her views about diversity:

When I think of some of the schools I have student taught at, I think of the low parental involvement and the parents’ low level of education. I look at the amount of children on free or reduced lunch, and the numerous children coming from public housing and I think of this as poverty. Then I read about other countries and feel ashamed. In these rural schools I see the limited resources…but at least they have some resources (Case discussion).

*No right or wrong answer: The importance of not offending the beliefs of children and their families in teaching scientific knowledge.* “What do you think will happen if all these trees are cut?” The class comes to the conclusion that the loss of trees will result in flooding. The flooding will occur because the tree roots will not be there to soak up the water from the rain, and the loose soil will flood their towns. In addition to this question, Antonio’s father explains that they need to cut down the trees to make and sell charcoal for money and food.

Kate feels that there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer for the child’s [Antonio’s] dilemma in the case. Kate suggests that Perla, the classroom teacher in the case, could say “Yes Antonio, sometimes we just need to do what we need to do to put the food on the table, no matter the long term effect,” and Antonio would feel better
about his father and what he does. However, Kate points out that this response would weaken the goals of the lesson. As an alternative, Kate suggests that Perla might say to Antonio, “That is absolutely terrible, you need to go home and tell your father the long term results of his actions.” Kate feels that this response would be terrible because Perla would be undermining Antonio’s father. Kate believes that teachers should be careful not to offend the beliefs of children and their families. But, at the same time, she feels that there is a need to teach this science lesson, even though it may hurt the feelings of children and their families. Kate is torn between considering the beliefs and values of the community or the professional judgment of the teacher.

In her personal reactions to this case, Kate links the case dilemma to real classroom contexts that were evident during her student intern experiences. She realizes that the dilemma in this case, the contrast in beliefs between the teacher and the children’s families, can happen even in rural Georgia communities. Reflecting on the case, Kate captured a delicate teaching and learning moments that otherwise might have been lost without the case experience. She considered how her own experience and feelings were very similar to this case:

The first grade at Spring Elementary uses different ways of helping them with “tricky” words. One is to [use] pictures. Last week a child came back to school after reading a book with her parents and said, “My dad said I’m not suppose to look at the pictures.” I waited anxiously to hear my teacher’s reply. She said, “Well things have changed since your dad has been in school. We learn to read differently. Tell your dad we use the pictures to help us.” I was shocked to hear
my teacher basically say, “Tell your dad we are right, and he is wrong” (Personal reactions to the case).

Even though Kate believes it is difficult to determine one definite answer for the dilemma in the case, she emphasizes Perla’s awareness and knowledge about the families and community:

The teacher seems to be very aware of her town, but maybe she is not very knowledgeable of the numerous families from her town who depend on the cutting down of trees to survive (Responses to case reaction questions).

Flexibility of Problem–Solving

Teacher’s making up a discussion about the problematic issue between the child and his father. In her personal reactions to the case and the case discussion, Kate suggests that Perla can have Antonio talk to his father more about the dilemma and the importance of replanting trees. Kate emphasizes this point again in her post case discussion writings, stating:

Maybe the two of them could equally benefit from the education of the other. They could talk things out and get a better understanding of where each was coming from and were empathetic instead of one person being in the right and one person being in the wrong (Post case discussion responses).

At this point, however, Kate begins to wonder if the Philippine culture is open to a father and son talking on such an equal level.

Teacher’s getting peer mentoring. Kate’s personal case reflections address the need for teachers to be familiar with the occupations of children’s parents in order to avoid the predicaments such as the one depicted in the case. Kate also proposes that Perla
discusses deforestation as a curriculum topic with other teachers in the same situation in order not to offend anyone in the community. Even after the case discussion, Kate affirms the sensitive nature of this issue, but maintains the need to address the issue since it effects the livelihood and well-being of the entire community:

Obviously they thought that that needed to be a part of the curriculum. Maybe there is a way of discussing deforestation and reflecting it to where they actually lived. Perla could get that idea across and then teachers individually could make that connection instead of attacking where they live, the evil-doers, that come and cut down their own trees (Exit interview).

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

*Content integration: The importance of considering children’s personal background rather than simply transmitting academic knowledge.* Kate thinks that teaching children about their region and the environmental issues their region faces are important lessons, even though she acknowledges they can be very sensitive. In her personal reactions to the case and the exit interview, Kate stresses that the issues such as deforestation should be considered in classes because they are significant in the larger community. However, in her post case discussion responses and her responses to the case reaction questions, Kate questions the teaching method of the teacher in the case. Kate assumes that Perla should more fully consider community, rather than simply transmitting to children academic knowledge from textbooks. Kate feels strongly that teachers’ planning, teaching, and assessing of lessons should not be separated from the prior knowledge and experiences of children. Kate acknowledges that the messages and examples of this case have important curriculum implications:
The most vivid details I remember from the case is simply how the teacher is trying to educate the children on erosion and saving the land in their town. She is trying to educate them that they can stop cutting down the trees and save the town from flooding since the erosion of the environment is so bad (Post case discussion responses).

Knowledge construction: The importance of school curriculum considering children’s community. Kate’s comments concerning content integration are extended to knowledge construction when she considers the diversity issues of the case. In her exit interview, Kate emphasizes her belief that children’s views of the world are strongly influenced by their interactions with people:

You might not personally be effected by your parents or somebody that you know but that’s obviously going to influence how you view that whole subject area (Exit interview).

From Kate’s perspective, children construct knowledge and attitudes through their individual experiences and relationships with people even though they may not be receiving direct instruction pertaining to an issue. In other words, Kate recognizes that knowledge is socially constructed within a cultural milieu. Therefore, according to Kate, teachers should decide what information should be included in the school curriculum and how the curriculum should be enacted by carefully considering children’s personal experiences. As Kate’s comments indicate, she advocates a knowledge construction approach to diversity. She feels that a simple content integration approach to diversity is not as effective because the same content may have different meanings depending on children who meet with the issues.
In this context, Kate believes that it is important for teachers to be familiar with the community in which they teach:

The teacher decided to teach this lesson on deforestation so she could teach the children how to prevent future flooding. She was trying to do a very good thing, however, she did not think about the parents and families who were in the business of cutting down trees (Exit interview).

Kate explains that when community knowledge is considered in developing the curriculum, children will be less likely to experience conflicts between family and community values and the knowledge of school science. In responses to the case reaction questions, she considers how knowledge of soil erosion or deforestation is constructed differently by each group of people. From her reaction to this case, Kate creates a personal knowledge and stance whereby she vows not to offend children or their families by making it her responsibility to know the community well.

I will try to be more educated of my children’s families and what the parents do. For example if I taught in a town where the main industry is tobacco, I would be very careful when talking about the dangers of cigarettes. I would not want to insult any of the children’s families (Exit interview).

“El Secreto de las Ninñas”

This story is written by Cynthia and Jessica, two fourth grade Mexican American girls, together with Angie, an adult white science teacher educator. As elementary students in an urban center in the southwest, Cynthia and Jessica are surrounded by many peers with life stories like their own. In this open case, Cynthia and Jessica, both children of immigrant parents and poor, tell the secret story (with Angie’s help) of why
they do not like science in school even though their teacher engages the class in many fun, student-centered projects. Cynthia and Jessica’s story raises questions about what exactly access to science in school really means, especially for poor, immigrant girls. This case is followed by a possible solution to the dilemma by Claire Hamilton, a former teacher and elementary education professor who works through a community service program to provide support for homeless children and their families.

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of being aware of and being sensitive to children’s personal backgrounds. Kate is provided with opportunities to experience unfamiliar and diverse issues with relevance to her teaching and learning through this case. In particular, she expresses a strong interest in this case, since she feels that she has not given much thought to homeless children in classrooms. From her own perspective, as an educator for children, Kate reveals her lack of awareness concerning issues of homeless children in the classroom:

I used to be completely unaware of homelessness and the reality of how many children are actually homeless. But now I am a little more aware, I will be more empathetic towards homeless children in my classroom (Case discussion).

In her personal reactions to the case and the case discussion, Kate indicates that the teacher in the case should recognize children’s personal situations and culture. Kate thinks that the teacher should consider in advance the possibility that children might not bring materials for the class project. She emphasizes the belief that it is not always right to place the blame on children when they cannot bring materials for the class. In this
sense, Kate considers the perspective of children, protecting their “misbehaviors” from others’ critiques. After the case discussion, she is even more harsh on this point:

The teacher in this scenario obviously does not know her children too well. She does not know much about homeless children, and their predicament with not being able to come with supplies for class (Personal reactions to the case & Responses to case reaction questions).

Kate extends her thoughts about this case situation to other cultures, in the case discussion, focusing on Angie’s unawareness of the culture of children and their family:

Americans you know everybody has a car if you're 16, and in other cultures that's not always the case. She's not thinking about that that might be besides the point that they don't have the money to have a car but that might also be a cultural thing (Case discussion).

The importance of considering the difficult situations of children’s parents. In the case discussion, Kate also considers the fact that the girls’ parents may have difficulties related to language communication. From the perspective of the girls’ mothers, Kate suggests that parents may be afraid to go somewhere and get the boxes because of difficulty with communication. Kate feels that she will actively address these kinds of situations as a teacher in the future. This case provides a simulated situation that Kate expects to encounter as a future teacher. Kate’s comments concerning this case also link back to her experiences with ESL children at schools that she described in her initial background interview:

I know in my classes we have similar situations with parents not speaking English. I'm sure we'll run into in the future and need to think of that maybe the
parents might either not get the message if we sent home a note instead of telling the children to tell the parents which then also the children will probably forget also but maybe they might get the message and then they won't be able to carry it out because of the block of the language (Case discussion).

*The importance of teacher’s attitude respecting children’s personal backgrounds.*

Kate continues the critique of the teacher, comparing her to classroom teachers she has met in the field. Kate criticizes the teacher’s behaviors in the case, taking the perspective of her [Kate’s] mentor teacher during her teaching internship experience.

From my experiences in the field, my teachers always seem to have a good idea about the child and the family (Personal reactions to the case).

From her personal reactions to the case, answers to the case reaction questions, and case discussion, it is apparent that Kate finds the teacher’s behavior rude and troublesome. Kate thinks that it is wrong for the teacher to announce one day before the activity that children need to get shoe boxes. In addition, Kate considers the teacher’s behavior improper because she charges children money for the supplies she requires for a project. Kate believes that the teacher’s actions in charging children money or making them work for the shoe box do not really instill work ethics and values. Considering the importance of children’s perspectives in this case, Kate thinks that the teacher does not know much about the situations of homeless children. Kate reiterated this point in her post case discussion.

It also bothered me how she told the children she would charge 50 cents per shoe box. What, is she running, a business here? Then to make the children who could
not afford to pay work for the shoe boxes, I just think it was very inappropriate (Post case discussion responses).

**Flexibility of Problem-Solving**

*Teacher’s announcing in advance for children’s and their parents’ enough time to prepare materials.* The issues and criticisms that are identified above are related to flexibility in problem-solving. Kate generates possible solutions for the case dilemma based on her belief that teachers should be aware of children’s individual situations and that no one should be offended in the classroom setting. In her personal reactions to the case, Kate suggests that more time is needed for children and parents to prepare the materials for the project:

The teacher needed to give more time for the children and parents to prepare for this activity (Personal reactions to the case).

*Teacher’s preparing and distributing the materials for the lesson.* Kate also feels that the teacher could ask other teachers for extra supplies.

She could have sent out a note or email to other teachers to please bring in any extra shoe boxes (Personal reactions to the case).

Kate, considering multiple solutions, also suggests that the teacher could make a trip to obtain supplies:

She could have made a trip to a shoe store, tell them she is a teacher, and ask for empty shoe boxes (Personal reactions to the case).

Kate also recommends that the teacher collect all shoe boxes and randomly distribute them to children. Kate thinks this will prevent children from feeling offended in the class on the basis of their individual situations:
She could ask the children to put all the shoes boxes in the back of the room. When it was time to hand out the boxes, she could just randomly hand out the boxes, that way it was no big deal about who got what box (Personal reactions to the case).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Equity pedagogy: The importance of well-planned lessons considering all children’s personal situations. Kate argues that children should have equal educational opportunities regardless of their socioeconomic status. From Kate’s perspective, it is not fair if homeless children do not get the same opportunities to participate in classroom projects and to improve their academic achievement. In order to enlarge the academic achievement of children from minority groups, Kate suggests the need for well-planned lessons that take into account the situations of all children in the class and school:

The teacher should increase the academic of the minorities children. They’re obviously not gonna get anything if they don’t have the resources. The teacher needs to find ways of setting up the lessons so that the lessons are beneficial and that they do get something out of the lesson (Exit interview).

“When Do You Perform Tuob?: Culture at the Margins of the Science Classroom”

As a teacher in a rural barangay school in the province of Antique, Esperanza Parcon enjoys a close relationship with her grade three students and their families. Esperanza was born and raised in the barangay and returned to teach science at the elementary school after graduation from the university. This case portrays the tension that Esperanza experiences when faced with two competing referents—the traditional health beliefs practiced in her home and the modern ideas of health care she has learned
at the university. Feeling uncomfortable with students’ questions, Esperanza begins to question the role of traditional knowledge in the science curriculum.

**Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives**

The importance of acknowledging both personal beliefs and scientific truth. Kate feels sorry for Esperanza Parcon, the classroom teacher of this case. In considering the teacher’s perspective in this case, Kate believes that Esperanza seems to want so badly to do the “right thing” in her discussion of *tuob*. In her responses to the case reaction questions and the case discussion, Kate points out Esperanza’s inner conflict between her personal beliefs and teaching obligation. Kate demonstrates awareness of the conflict from the teacher’s perspective, noting that Esperanza felt as though she would betray the science community if she validated children’s traditional thoughts about *tuob*:

She was raised with the *tuob* as a tradition of healing in her family. However, now she is a science teacher and feels responsible for teaching the children about the harmful effects of smoke. She believes one thing, but feels obligated to teacher another (Responses to case reaction questions).

Kate believes that both personal beliefs and scientific truth should be acknowledged and that whatever people believe in relation to these is a matter of individual choice. Kate illustrates her personal experience regarding a conflict similar to the situation of this case. Considering the case dilemma from her own perspective, Kate describes an inner conflict similar to the one in the case:

This reminded me in middle school learning about human evolution and the big bang theory. I didn’t agree with that because I think that God created man. But as Americans or humans we need to know the scientific point of view. Even if you
and the kids don’t want to believe that the smoke really hurt the fish, they still should know the scientific aspects of it and then have them pick which one they want to believe (Personal reactions to the case).

In her reactions to the post case discussion, Kate wonders how this kind of dilemma could have been entirely avoided. However, Kate again highlights the need to be aware of community beliefs. She maintains that a scientific approach that does not consider community values is problematic, stating:

She knows this community the children come from, and she shares their beliefs. I do not see any reason for her to squash these beliefs because science tells us something different (Post case discussion responses).

The importance of teacher’s contemplating their own personal beliefs for recognizing their influence on children’s learning. Kate’s personal reactions to the case and the case discussion reveal that she, as a future teacher, sees the difficulty in trying to teach something different from her knowledge and beliefs. Kate is concerned about the difference of beliefs between her and the school’s. In this sense, Kate is contemplating her own beliefs; juxtaposed with this is the consideration of where she will most likely teach in the future.

I can imagine it would be extremely difficult for me if I moved somewhere and [was] placed in a role which demanded me to teach *tuob* as the only way to help a child get better. I do not know if I could teach children that knowing and believing what I do. I can honestly say that I would not be able to teach this to children (Personal reactions to the case).
In response to the case, Kate expresses the opinion that teachers’ personal beliefs are revealed in classrooms even though they do not intentionally express them to children. From Kate’s perspective, teachers themselves cannot be separated from their personal beliefs and experiences. Children cannot avoid the influence of teachers’ opinions, thoughts, and behaviors. Interestingly, Kate reinforces her position through examples of her personal beliefs concerning Christianity and vegetarianism.

I know as teachers we are expected to keep our own personal beliefs out of the classroom, but I think that is impossible. Even though we may not be saying out loud our beliefs or having the children read about them, we do share our beliefs with our children. A teacher may not say she is Christian, but put up the Golden Rule. A teacher may not tell the children she is an animal rights activist and a vegetarian, but the children will see she does not eat meat (Personal reactions to the case).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Knowledge construction: The importance of recognizing different knowledge construction based on different cultures. Kate realizes that people’s personal beliefs are constructed differently depending on their group membership. She describes her intention to emphasize a knowledge construction approach to multicultural education with the children in her future classes.

If I was in this situation after a child brought up *tuob*, I would probably have had said yes, many people have different beliefs about how to treat illnesses.

However, since we are in science right now, let’s take a look at the scientific ways to solve this (Exit interview).
Kate is aware that there can be diverse beliefs about an issue. As Kate realizes above, Esperanza knows and shares many of the same beliefs and cultures in her community. However, Esperanza is torn between teaching the “scientific truths” and the community’s beliefs. In her responses to the case reaction questions, Kate thinks that Esperanza is a little harsh with her explanation of what smoke can do to our bodies. Kate expresses a belief that scientific knowledge is not an absolute ‘truth’ in the world. The potentially harmful effects of smoking are only the belief of the group of “science” people. Kate comments that there are no neutral beliefs in the world:

> It seems like that none of these lessons were completely neutral but every child was coming in with completely different ideas. Every individual’s gonna take something different based on their culture from the lesson (Responses to case reaction questions).

Kate’s comments underscore her belief that children will construct different knowledge on the basis of their different cultures, even when teachers expose them to the knowledge of only one group (e.g., scientists). Kate stresses that the knowledge from one group is not always necessarily true to other groups of people:

> All of these children were going to be looking at a completely different spiritual and cultural way, not the scientific health issue way. Instead of looking at the fact that the fish died, they would think, oh my gosh, I’m gonna die if I go home (Responses to case reaction questions).

**Empowering school culture and social structures:** The importance of empowering the community’s culture and social structures as well as the scientific culture. “The teacher felt that the whole school taught the scientific processes and really emphasized
the scientific thing. All the schools worked on the scientific culture.” Kate thinks that the school culture and structures need to change in order to empower the community’s culture and social structures in addition to the scientific culture. Because Kate thinks that there is no absolute certainty in the world, she argues that the community’s beliefs about tuob should not be ignored in the school culture. She believes they deserve attention equal to the scientific beliefs. Kate feels that without restructuring a school culture and social structure that emphasizes only scientific knowledge and beliefs, teachers cannot equally meet the multiple beliefs and values of various cultural groups.

Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy

*Case-Based Pedagogy as a Tool for Multicultural Education*

*Constructing Knowledge with Sensitivity to Different Cultures*

*Cases as tools for developing an open mind to think about diversity.* Kate feels excited about cases. The cases were easy to read and she was eager to read them. She feels that the case experience provides a lesson that she shares together with her peers and the teachers in each case. She notes that cases make it possible for her to recognize and be empathetic to situations of diversity.

I think it opens my mind to think, because I wouldn’t have always thought about those little things. I think you have to read and actually have experiences with it, actually make a meaning to yourself in order to be able to be empathetic in their situations (Exit interview).

In addition, Kate feels that the case experience helps her build on her prior experiences. She mentions that in Seattle, which is her hometown, lumbering is a big issue. She had always thought about lumbering as a terrible practice. But in reading the *Ipil-Ipil* tree
case, she realized there was another side to the lumbering issue that she needed to carefully consider. She states that she will never think of teaching deforestation in the classroom simply as a negative practice.

*Cases as tools for learning and constructing practical knowledge about diversity.*

Kate expresses the value of learning about different cultures through cases. She feels the case discussions enable her to go beyond superficial understandings at the “tip of the iceberg.” Kate notes that she does not always agree with the decisions made by the teachers in the various cases. The process of experiencing conflicts about the problematic situations in cases is evidence of Kate’s construction of practical knowledge about diversity in teaching and learning. Through this process, Kate learns how to think about individual cultures and situations. This is exemplified in the ‘mango’ case.

I immediately attacked the student teacher doing the lesson and thought that she was just not approaching it in the right way and just the closed mindedness of bringing it into a classroom where at that age, everything is traumatic. The student teacher just threw it at them and assumed that they are gonna be excited and want to explore and try something. It really bothered me. It made me really feel good that that did bother me and that I would be more open about something new (Exit interview).

Reflecting on the lobster case, Kate also demonstrates the ability to consider different cultures:

I’ve lived on the coast of Seattle but lobster wasn’t something that I was too familiar with to me. I would never have brought a lobster into the classroom or thought about having a lobster bake or anything like that (Exit interview).
For Kate, the ‘Ipil-Ipil tree’ case creates a context for wrestling with the issues of internal conflict. Kate feels the tensions characterized by scientific ways and the community’s ways of survival, as it relates to deforestation:

I don’t know what I would do in that situation because teachers want to teach children about deforestation, but teachers don’t want to demean their way of life at the same time. I think that would be very difficult to deal if I was in a situation like that (Exit interview).

Kate notes that reading and discussing the ‘El Secreto de las Ninñas’ case furthered her understanding of the culture of poverty and individual children.

I really don’t know that much about poverty and I don’t really know how much a teacher will know about her individual students. I guess the case teacher didn’t realize the situation they were coming from. But I thought that they really made me become more aware of all of those individual situations (Exit interview).

For Kate, the ‘tuob’ case also raised issues of internal conflict between science and community. She learns that teachers need to be careful in expressing their beliefs so as not to offend anyone in the class. She extends her views about this case to another situation.

I started thinking about Coca Cola, how that’s the big industry and how everybody’s pro Coca Cola. If we sat in the classroom and talked about the effects of caffeine, we’d have to be really careful because children might go home and say hey, dad, they’re saying that Coke is bad for you and that’s a staple in our house. It just made think a lot (Exit interview).
Kate states that she enjoys talking about other cultures, even going beyond the case dilemmas. Talking about other countries, Kate expresses the belief that her culture is not always the norm in the world. Kate feels that her culture is made up of relationships with the surrounding people.

We’re not always the norm we think that we are. I thought that was good that we were able to expand it to other areas that sparks our curiosity about other places and how we really don’t know that much. All we know is what we’ve heard from our family and our friends, not always experiences that we’ve experienced and actually be involved (Exit interview).

**In-depth Reflections on Diversity and Knowing Personal Beliefs**

*Cases as tools for instruction.* “It will be beneficial because I do know that there are cases I can go to and learn more through, instead of going and looking at an encyclopedia and looking about the culture.” Kate feels glad that there are actual cases that she can read of people in similar situations. She thinks it is valuable to have these cases in order to see how other teachers deal with various situations. She also finds it useful to critique the cases in terms of her own beliefs. Kate thinks that children will always benefit from a teacher who is willing to learn more about culture and education.

I think I’m able to relate with these case methods better than I would any other form of research because I can actually throw myself into that situation and understand how the teacher is feeling and also maybe not understanding the culture and learning through the situation (Exit interview).

Kate finds that the case experience requires more time for in-depth reflections because it is not easy to develop meaningful learning by simply reading through the cases a single
time without discussion. She perceives that there are things that she does every day but does not realize until she really takes the time to think about it.

I need to take the time to really think about it in depth. As myself it was easy to be critical of those, but I would see myself probably in the same situation maybe doing similar things and not realizing it until afterwards looking at it (Exit interview).

*Cases as tools for discussing and challenging existing theory or “truth.”* Related to this, Kate loves being able to talk things out and play the devil’s advocate because she loves making people think. Case-based pedagogy provides Kate and her peers with the chance to have genuine dialogues about situations related to teaching and learning.

I’m a very skeptical person. I love challenging everything. I’d like to say no. I don’t wanna say that there’s no truth at all but then everything can be challenged and we don’t know until we challenge something. I mean we can base everything in theory but nothing can be definite for sure until it’s been tested and tested and tested (Exit interview).

Emphasizing the importance of not conforming existing theory or so-called, “truth,” Kate extends her thinking about the ‘tuob’ case to her views about evolution. She does not like to teach about evolution because she thinks it is a matter of personal beliefs. However, based on her reflection of the ‘tuob’ case, she feels that if she teaches about evolution and encounters a child who disagrees with her teaching, she would answer the following:

I would probably teach evolution and if it was brought up and the child said, ‘no no,’ that’s not how it started, then I would say ‘that’s fine, you can have your
belief but inside the classroom we’re gonna talk about what, you know, what our textbooks discussed. You can either agree with it or disagree with it but this is just something you need to be educated. You can then voice your opinion. You need to know the other side of your argument just as though I’m learning. I’m trying to broaden my awareness of culture. I think you also need to broaden your knowledge of scientific beliefs as well (Exit interview).

*Cases as tools for learning to connect abstract knowledge and real classroom situations.* Kate emphasizes that case-based experiences make her clearly identify her own personal beliefs. Kate feels that her personal beliefs are mainly based on her prior education because when she approaches issues in the field, her initial thoughts are “what did I learn in the classroom?” Through case-based pedagogy, Kate feels she learns how to adapt abstract ideas to actual working examples in the classroom.

Case-based experiences really backed up that I know where my beliefs categorize. I see it more that I’m much more of a scientific thinker, that I go back to my education instead of going to religion. I always, whenever I ever talk about anything it has a lot to do about what I’ve learned in the classroom (Exit interview).

*Suggestions for Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy Regarding Diversity*

*Need more background information.* In her reading of cases, Kate sometimes faces difficulties seeing herself in the situations due to her lack of knowledge about other cultures. In the case discussion, Kate states that it would be helpful if the cases included more detailed background information about the situations portrayed. For example, in her reflections on the ‘tuob’ case, Kate mentions that she knows that the public schools in the
U.S. have separation of church and state. However, she does not know how schools in the Philippine are organized in terms of this issue.

   It looks like it came out of a chapter that talks about that in detail. This was like a case study that was cited in the chapter so maybe there’s more background information in the chapter (Exit interview).

Kate, however, further understands that reading and discussing cases is a good start to developing an understanding of particular cultures and to building an attitude of open-mindedness about that culture even though she may not have a thorough knowledge of information relevant to a particular dilemma:

   Make sure that when you’re given the case, this is an issue for this culture or this situation. It’s just a little slice of the whole piece. But if you’re really interested in being open-minded about culture, you need to not just look at bits and pieces that you need to but to look at a lot of different bits and pieces and really educate yourself (Exit interview).

*Sources of Learning through Case-Based Pedagogy*

*Reading, writing, and discussing as sources of reflections and meaning making about the case dilemmas.* Kate explains that her learning about diversity during the case-based experiences stems from the processes of reflections, meaning making, and making connections through reading, writing, and discussing the cases. Kate emphasized how she tried to feel and experience what the people of the cases were going through and consider whether it was how she would deal with the situation. Kate noted that putting herself in the position of the teacher in a case involved much more than simply reading or looking at the questions that followed the cases.
I think that when I read through these cases I was really connecting by looking through and writing down, trying to put myself in that teacher’s role or the student teacher’s role in the cases (Exit interview).

*Discussion questions as a crutch for reflection.* Kate states that discussion questions play the role of a crutch for her reflection. The discussion questions at the end of the case help her start to reflect and talk about the issues and expand beyond the initial questions.

When I sat down for the first time to write, I needed the questions as a crutch and guide for reflection (Exit interview). But Kate notes that the questions are simple guides which help her ideas and pose particular questions for herself.

I always thought that we did have the option of writing more than just the questions (Exit interview).

*Discussion as a source of expanding initial thoughts of case dilemmas.* In addition, during the case discussions, Kate finds herself in the role of facilitator, to think more about the case situations. The case discussions provide an opportunity for helping peers expand initial thoughts about the dilemmas by sharing her thoughts and opinions with peers. As she indicates above, many of her thoughts and reflections during case discussions are also based on ‘personal reactions to the case’ and ‘the responses to the case reaction questions.’ This point further demonstrates that opportunities to respond in writing to the cases provide wonderful opportunities for her to reflect on relevant issues.
Perceived Meaningfulness about Diversity from Case-Based Pedagogy

Creating Awareness of Diversity

The importance of celebrating similarities and differences of individual culture and person. Kate stresses that she never thinks about multicultural education simply as an issue of race or ethnicity. At this point, she recalls the feeling of being a minority and about minorities when she moved to a southeastern region from Seattle. She pointed out that she felt of being a minority and about minorities even though the majority was the same race as she moving within the United States.

It was very different cultures but the same race. We all have our own cultures. My individual personal culture might even differ from my sister who was raised the same exact way but just because my personal experiences might be different (Exit interview).

Kate claims that we cannot make assumptions about culture from people’s color skin, dress, etc. Even when people have the exact same skin color and dress that does not mean that they “automatically have had the same personal experiences and have the same individual culture.” In addition, Kate asserts that people are so much more the same than they are different. Kate believes that it is important to recognize both people’s similarities and celebrate their differences:

Obviously when we look at two people standing next to each other, we’re gonna notice the differences, but we’re also gonna notice the similarities. We want to talk about how we’re all different and we want to celebrate that but then we need to talk about how we’re all the same, too (Exit interview).
Kate underscores the importance of teachers learning about other cultures without making superficial generalizations:

A lot of times we do generalize just because it makes things easier when we’re trying to talk about things. But I think getting our students to talk to learn as much about them personally instead of just jumping into stuff is a good way to start. Looking through these cases, I felt some of the things that I just didn’t even think I’d never thought about before (Exit interview).

The importance of teacher’s acknowledging his/her own personal beliefs and school beliefs. In addition, Kate acknowledges that she has learned that teachers cannot always keep their personal beliefs in classrooms – they need to consider the school and community values. Explaining further, Kate notes that teachers expect to keep their beliefs out of the classroom. However, Kate now believes this is an unrealistic expectation because she feels that teachers cannot be separated from their beliefs. “I don’t know how I would deal with that situation of a particular belief that would definitely make a difference of where I would look for a job.” Kate believes that teachers should recognize their own personal beliefs and the beliefs of the schools that they work at to strive for a balance.

Becoming more aware of and sensitive to the people from diverse cultures. Through the case-based experiences, Kate comments that she has become more aware of and sensitive to the feelings of people’s different cultures.

When I started my field experiences the semester, I didn’t know really where I could jump in there, so I didn’t want to say anything. I think definitely that
reading all these cases just make me more aware of feelings in different cultures and to look out for them (Exit interview).

After experiencing cases, Kate participated in a classroom internship. She noted that she was more cognizant of diversity than before, citing the following example:

In class, the children were doing something on their hero. They could draw a picture and said this person was my hero and they’d write why. One child said Jesus and then it spread through the whole class, all the children were doing Jesus and there was one or two children that were asking, ‘Jesus, that’s your hero? Why Jesus?’ Then one of the children said well you have to have Jesus as your hero (Exit interview).

Kate wonders why the classroom teacher did not step in and say, ‘let’s change the subject’ because it was obviously bothering those few children that had not chosen Jesus – the other children were looking down on them. Kate’s expanded view of this issue was also raised in her first interview before experiencing cases, pointing out that she was taught in her teacher education program, that any religious issues should be avoided in classrooms.

*The Importance of Teaching Approach*

*The importance of not offending anyone in classrooms.* Kate believes that teachers should be careful as they talk about and implement controversial lessons so as not to offend children in classrooms. She comments that teachers should question themselves, ‘Is this something that could offend somebody in my classroom? Is this gonna be beneficial, because not everything’s always gonna be beneficial in the lesson?’ Through her case-based experiences, Kate confirms that it is important for teachers to consider...
how to approach sensitive issues in a culturally responsive manner. After experiencing case-based pedagogy, Kate feels even more the importance of learning about other cultures.

I don’t think it really changed too much other than the fact that we really need to learn as much as we can about other cultures. It really does change the way not that you’re really gonna teach things, but the way that you’re gonna approach things. There’s always more to learn about (Exit interview).

*The importance of knowing and integrating the home culture and other cultures.*

Kate also notes that as a future teacher she will educate children about other cultures they may have not had the opportunity to see or learn about in their home town. She supports the importance of integrating the majority culture with different cultures in the classroom.

When learning about a certain aspect of a culture, I would never separate the majority culture for one part of a lesson and the unknown culture for the second part. I think we need to integrate when talking about the same thing but different cultures (Exit interview).

In her personal reactions to the five cases, Kate articulates a personal theory which emphasizes the importance of teaching methods that will not cause any fear or rejection in terms of diversity. Kate also stresses the teacher’s role as a model of diversity for children in classrooms.

It is imperative for a teacher or student teacher to be aware of the way they introduce something new to children. Often a first impression with something new lasts a long time, and an impression left by any role model is even more so (Exit interview).
**Being in the Gray Area.** “There can be either a black or white answer, that’s how I feel about it or that’s not how I feel about it. Looking at the cases, I was really puzzled about the situation. I previously thought that should be an easy solution, you either teach it one way or you teach it the other.” In reading the five cases and reflecting about their complex situations, Kate realizes that she is now more aware of cultures where choices may be limited. In trying to understand the complicated contexts of cases, Kate finds that there cannot be absolutely right or wrong answers in any given situation. Kate does not feel afraid to be in the gray area any more.

Experiencing cases made me think about that. Well, maybe some people would look at it and think that there was a right or a wrong being very strong opinionated about one thing or the other. But I think that there is that gray area and you have to really not be afraid of being in the gray area but feel okay about it (Exit interview).

**Summary and Discussion**

This chapter told the story of Kate’s experiences with diversity through case-based pedagogy. Her story was shared in terms of Kennedy’s (1991) and Lundeberg and Fawver’s (1994) categories – flexibility, perspective-taking, and connectedness. The story was also told in relation to perceived meaningfulness through categories of Banks (1995a) – content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure. These categories, taken together, are what I refer to as a ‘phenomenal construct of multicultural awareness.’ In this chapter, I discussed Kate’s background, including her practical knowledge about diversity from and beyond her teaching experiences before experiencing case-based
pedagogy, her thoughts about diversity related to the five cases, her perceptions about the
method of case-based pedagogy for learning about diversity, and her perceived learning
about diversity through case-based pedagogy.

Kate raised multiple issues selectively about the cases regarding diversity. Her
issues included the evaluation of the teachers in the cases – positive aspects and critiques,
interest to learn, awareness of, and empathy with the case situations, conflicts concerning
the dilemmas represented in the cases, and attaining more knowledge of subject matter
particularly science. Across all data sources, Kate reveals her own experiences and
opinions related to the case situations.

Flexibility of identifying multiple issues was related to the flexibility of problem-
solving. Kate’s problem-solving strategies were created based on her ability to identify
the issues from the cases. The issues that Kate initially described were identified from the
perspective of Kate herself as a reader, analyzer, and story teller. However, her
perspective-taking ability increased as she analyzed whose thoughts, intentions, stances,
or situations should be regarded in relation to the case dilemmas. Kate ultimately viewed
the cases from the perspectives of student teacher, teacher, children, children’s families
and communities, her mentor teacher, and her own perspective as a student teacher, as a
future teacher, and as a member of a society.

Connecting Kate’s comments to Banks’ (1995a) dimensions of multicultural
education, it was difficult to clearly separate every situation according to these
dimensions because they all seemed to overlap. However, Kate did reveal specific
thoughts about diversity related to content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice
reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure approaches.

Case-based pedagogy helped Kate capture particular phenomena in teaching and learning as her own experience. ‘Experience’ does not mean all the events or moments that people meet in a daily life. Experience is a subjective and linguistic event that makes visible the past events by conscious observation and reflection (Scott, 1992). Through the various case experiences including reading, writing, and discussing, Kate shows that she recognizes her own assumptions and beliefs about diversity, comparing similarities and differences among the teacher in the case, peers, and herself. In the process, she generalizes her own feelings, opinions, and personal theory about diversity in teaching and learning by reflecting on the cases in relation to her own personal experiences.

For the most part, Kate’s personal experiences and beliefs about diversity could not be separated from the case experiences. Kate’s experiences with the five cases echoed her practical knowledge about diversity, making her confirm or challenge her prior experiences, beliefs, and knowledge. This was a continuing and developmental process, not a phase or a stage. Kate could not keep her personal and prior experiences about diversity separate from the case-based experiences.

At this point, reflecting on her teacher education program with respect to diversity, Kate characterizes the challenge as the need to investigate her own opinions and construct her own meanings about diversity based on the learning from her teacher education program. “We’ve all been processed through this program. We know what the right thing and what the wrong thing to say is because we’ve been trained through this
program to know exactly what to say. But I think we might have had different personal opinions about stuff and maybe [we] held back.”

Lisa

Lisa’s Background

Lisa’s Teaching Experience: Desire to Become a Teacher

“I love children.” Lisa is a senior at the university, having switched her major from nursing to education. She has taught pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and fifth grade at three county schools as part of student internship experiences and has worked with two-year old children at a center on campus. Lisa has always wanted to work with children. She desires to teach first grade but mentions the difficulty in teaching children of that age level.

I like the younger ones. I love children. But I think it takes a lot of energy out of you. I am just exhausted because I have to be on alert all the time because they don’t know the norm of school. Some of them are still trying to stick their fingers in the electrical sockets (Initial interview).

The Important Things for Children’s Learning

The importance of being aware of and sensitive to individual children’s learning needs and interests. Recalling personal experiences in her childhood, she criticizes teachers’ unawareness of and insensitivity to the needs of each individual child and constructs the label of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ teacher.

I went to seven schools in eight years growing up, and I had a lot of different experiences of different schools and different teachers. For some teachers, when I would move in the middle of the year, I was a very big inconvenience to them to try and restructure or get me used to their schedule, and introduce that. Sometimes
they just didn’t do anything—they just kind of threw me in and let me do it

(Initial interview).

With each new school, she experienced difficulty because she was not even familiar with usual practices such as lunchtime routines. She thought that she interrupted classroom schedules and felt like a minority in these schools. She expresses, with some difficulty, the feeling that she was different from other children, exemplifying curricular differences between schools.

I never learned to write cursive because we moved in the middle of the year and my old school had not started cursive and my new school had already finished learning it. I was expected to write in cursive but I was never taught how to, so I didn’t do well in handwriting (Initial interview).

Lisa’s difficulty in adapting to new schools was linked with the classroom teacher’s and children’s disregard of her learning needs. From the following memory, Lisa constructs her idea of a ‘good’ teacher as one who takes much time to meet the individual child’s needs and interests and who loves children.

I still visibly remember that teacher didn’t wanna take any extra time to help me. There were cursive letters written across the chalkboard, but it was really all I had to go by. Since then I’ve talked to people and they said that they had letters that had arrows with direction on how to draw them. I was kinda like, how do I make that figure? How do I do that? There are too many teachers out there that don’t love children and just do it because they think it’s a convenient job if they have children of their own (Initial interview).
The importance of a teacher’s being a nurturer for children’s emotional support.

Lisa believes that a teacher’s role as mother of the group, or nurturer, is important for the development of children’s self-esteem and emotional support.

My friends call me Mom, as a nickname because I’m the mother of the group.

Perhaps I baby them too much, but I think the children’s self esteem is very fragile and a lot of children don’t get the extra nurturing at home that they need, not because their parents don’t love them but because maybe they both work, they have busy things going on—they’re trying to get food on the table. I think teachers should be very nurturing and be like a mother (Initial interview).

The importance of in-depth time for children’s learning. She also believes that teachers should facilitate children’s learning by giving in-depth time for assignments and projects rather than simply touching on many different subjects. She discusses her study experience in Italy and compares the Italian education system with U.S. education.

I studied in Italy this summer. They weren’t stressing to do things one way and this way, and it was very much like laissez faire, getting the children would get things done, but sometimes they’d get it done on their own time and it wasn’t a rush to get this assignment. They went real in depth with the assignments and the subject and found out about very interesting information about them. I think a problem we have in the US is where we just touch on a bunch of different subjects (Initial interview).

She feels that teachers should give children the opportunity to jump into a subject and fall in love with it and be immersed in it.
Experiencing Diversity

Feeling of Being a Minority and about Minorities

Recognizing diversity as a world-wide issue. Initially Lisa thought that diversity was just an issue unique to the U.S. When she went to Italy, at first, she felt that there was a lot less diversity evident than in the U.S. “I never saw a black person in the whole country of Italy when I was there.”

I think perhaps because every, particularly the town we were living in was a very small town, and probably 80% of the people in this town, their great-great-great-great-grandparents had lived in this town. Everybody had always lived in this town (Initial interview).

But gradually she began to notice that within the last 20 years Italy has received an influx of Pakistani, Afghanistani, and Indian immigrants. She perceived that even though they were completely legal immigrants, there was a lot of racism toward these particular adults and their children. She felt that the traditionally homogenous society and community of Italy actually produced a great amount of racism and prejudice toward other people. She recognized that diversity is an issue all over the world.

The schools were a lot of diversity. Most of the people there have lived in the town they lived in all their life. Everybody still lives there. But I found that this caused even more racism issues and prejudice—they would just assume things, even as far as like northern Italy versus southern Italy. It was a very eye-opening experience because I thought that was something that just happened in America. But it happens all over (Initial interview).
At the same time, Lisa confirms that the U.S. is still far more diverse than any other country.

This is more of a world-wide issue that it happens in each country but I was shocked to realize that we were more diverse than other countries. I had known that they call the U.S. the melting pot because of all the different cultures, but I realized it more when I went to visit other countries and saw that they were less diverse I thought than we are (Initial interview).

*Traveling to Italy and Spain: Feeling frustrations and difficulties as a language minority.* From her experiences in Italy, Lisa brings up the issues of language, particularly as a minority in a foreign country.

I was thrown into a completely different culture and completely different language that was not my own. I did not speak the language, and a lot of the people in the town did not speak English either, which I didn’t expect them to automatically know English at all (Initial interview).

She expresses feelings of frustration and difficulty with living, even for a short time, in a foreign country. She noted that she did not speak Italian and definitely was a language minority in Italy.

A lot of people think that when someone moves to a new country, they need to learn our language because they live here, and it is so hard. I knew it was going to be hard going over there, but it was so frustrating and hard. I’m sure it’s extremely difficult. I didn’t know how to say he, she, or it. When someone thinks you don’t know the language, they just talk louder to you, and I say I don’t
understand what you’re saying quiet. Talking louder is not going to make me understand more (Initial interview).

Lisa indicated that she believes submersion is the best way to learn about other cultures; however, she admitted that learning through submersion was frustrating and hard.

Related to the issues of different cultures and languages, Lisa recalls a visit with her brother who is currently living in Barcelona. When she went to visit him, she met his friends from Sweden, Japan, and northern Africa. She mentions, “It was so cool to sit around and talk. Particularly education is what I was interested in talking about. It was fascinating to me.” However, she again expresses a sense of frustration because they could speak her language but she could not speak their languages.

It made me feel dumb because I couldn’t speak to them in their native language, and they could speak to me in mine. It made me feel bad about American education that we don’t demand that children learn an extra language. They all knew French, Spanish, English, and their native language. It was like, Wow! It’s really awesome! (Initial interview)

Experiencing ESL Children

The importance of a teacher’s caring for and being open-minded about ESL children and their families. Through her experiences with ESL children, Lisa believes that teachers have to be sensitive to children’s culture, avoiding any stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes. For Lisa, the bottom line is that no children should have to experience discrimination in today’s classrooms.

We taught our unit of nutrition last week and I had a nutrition speaker come in. I wanted to make sure that I had three families where the parents’ primary language
is Spanish and they know some English but they’re not fluent ... it was very important to me to have a Spanish translator and the parapro in the class (Initial interview).

Lisa thinks that every cultural group that is different from the main culture should not be ignored or excluded from any lessons or activities in schools. She feels that teachers should care for and be open-minded about every child and his or her family, community, and culture. Emphasizing this point, Lisa mentions a classroom teacher who contrasts sharply with her own beliefs about good teachers.

She said don’t worry about it, they never know what we’re saying anyway. It’s not a big deal. When their child needed to go to the hospital and they don’t know what you’re saying (Initial interview).

Lisa thinks that, unfortunately, some of teachers don’t care and don’t even try to care. Considering the potential emotional harm for children, Lisa criticizes the classroom teacher’s “bad” attitudes as a teacher.

In the meantime the child is frustrated and you’re giving him bad grades and it’s not a measure of their intelligence, it’s a measure of your intelligence cause you’re not trying to make them understand, to help them understand and to give them the tools they need to understand (Initial interview).

*Experiencing Different Races and Cultures*

*The importance of a teacher’s equal attitudes for all children.* Lisa observed a teacher who was biased toward minority children, particularly African American children during her student internship experiences.
My teacher just had a bias against the children who were African American. She placed all the African–American children and minority children in the lower reading group, and the Caucasian children, even the ones that did not appear to be qualified in the upper reading group. The minority children could not get worked with as much. The minority children of the lowest one were independent, which was exactly the opposite of what they needed. They just kept getting further and further behind as they were supposed to do it on their own as opposed to having the one-on-one attention that the upper reading groups had. They were kindergarten. It was very suspicious to me (Initial interview).

In this classroom, Lisa always wanted to work with the lower reading group children because she felt that it was more important to give them extra time and help. The classroom teacher always said to Lisa, “Why do you want to work with those children?” Lisa answered “Well because they need it—they desperately need it and they want it.” Lisa often considers children’s self-esteem, emphasizing the importance of treating all children equally regardless of their race, ethnicity, or learning ability.

I don’t want to give them an impression at such a young age that they are in the lower reading group. If you do that then that will follow them forever, they will always think that they can’t read. If you . . . treat them just like they’re the rest of the group, then there’s a better chance that they won’t feel that way about themselves (Initial interview).

She thinks that children need equal attention, noting that their self-esteem and feelings are very fragile.
I mean their self-esteem is very fragile at this age. The look on their face, they were just hurt—they didn’t understand why. I felt very bad for them, and tried to make up for it and playing with them, giving affection towards the children that she ignored and spend more time with them so that they felt they had equal (Initial interview).

But Lisa’s supervising teacher had a very different opinion about the issue. Lisa was sad because, in her opinion, the classroom teacher played “favorites” a lot with the children. It was a kindergarten class so the Caucasian children she would always invite to come sit on her lap. I remember one experience where a little African–American girl came up to her and was trying to sit on her lap and she was just pushing her away. She said to me later that she doesn’t think they bathed very often. It’s sad (Initial interview).

Lisa did not like the classroom teacher’s prejudicial attitudes and found it difficult to bear the teacher’s manner. However, Lisa felt that she had to be careful to withhold her reaction because the classroom teacher was the person who would issue her grade.

I was very upset because this was supposed to be a teacher who was supposed to be a mentor of mine. I was not impressed with her actions at all, and many times I would just go home and cry to my Mom—these poor children. She’s so biased. She’s so blatantly biased (Initial interview).

Observing this classroom teacher’s blatant prejudice, Lisa mentions that she learned how not to conduct a classroom as far as attention to diversity. “She was very attuned to diversity in her classroom, but in a bad way, in an opposite way, and in a prejudiced way.”
Recognizing the generation gap in the beliefs about racism. “I think the new generations are more open-minded—just because the color of your skin is different doesn’t make you inherently a bad person or a less worthy person in any way.” Lisa’s grandfather was raised on a farm in the South in a very rural area. She perceives that her grandfather had a lot of racist views growing up and throughout his life. He thought that Caucasian people inherently were smarter than African–American people. Lisa thinks that he never put himself in situations where his beliefs would be challenged.

My grandfather was prone to use the “N” word [quietly] – n-i-g-g-e-r. He honestly didn’t think anything was wrong with it. He felt African American people were inherently less intellectual than Caucasian people. He wasn’t hateful about it in any way. He was just more what I would describe as ignorant about genetics (Initial interview).

Lisa’s mother grew up in Atlanta, more in a city environment. Lisa feels that her mother had fewer racist beliefs than her grandfather, but still held a residue of prejudicial attitudes.

Her friends are Black, White, Asian, Indian, and everything. I think in some ways, but more like my mom doesn’t have such racist beliefs; however, she’s told me that she would never be happy with me marrying a black man, because her attitude is that our children would have a very hard time growing up—they wouldn’t feel like they fit into either culture (Initial interview).

Lisa, however, thinks that her generation holds fewer racist beliefs and is more optimistic and open to diversity. She feels that with each successive generation there will be less and less racism.
I didn’t understand that and I was always the kind of person that you’d have to prove something to me before I’d believe it, and I just never fell into that belief. I thought that it was silly—I didn’t think that there was any difference (Initial interview).

*The importance of knowledge and open-mindedness in helping children understand diverse cultures.* Lisa perceives that she is more open-minded than her peers. She remembers a particular experience with diversity during her childhood. She lived in a small town in Connecticut that had about twenty-five hundred people in the whole town. There were only Caucasian people and the majority of them were Catholic, either Italian or Irish.

One day, the children in the class were talking about that they had a family that was moving from Africa to come, and it just turned out that it was an African–American family. They didn’t understand the concept that somebody could have darker skin and be an African American person (Initial interview).

The African-American children entering this fourth grade class had never been to Africa; their family had lived in this ‘homogenous’ country for generations, generations, and generations. The reactions of the children to the new African-American children seemed strange to Lisa. She attributes the children’s responses to a misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about other cultures.

That was very interesting to me because I had lived in many different places and was not that naïve to that subject that all the children were running around talking about the African family that was coming from Africa. It was just a misunderstanding, they just didn’t understand it (Initial interview).
Recognizing positive attitudes about diverse cultures in younger children.

Depending on the age of children, Lisa notices, behaviors and reactions to people from different cultural groups are likely to change. The high school that Lisa attended had a student population of sixty percent Caucasian and forty percent other. Lisa compares young children’s social behaviors and peer friendships with the attitudes and behaviors of children at other stages of schooling.

It was very interesting because when we went from middle school, everybody was friends with everybody, and maybe it’s a high school thing to become cliques. My friends that were African–American when we got to high school, they just wouldn’t really hang out with me—they only would hang out with the other African–American children. It wasn’t that they were, “I’m not going to be your friend,” but it was more people got into their own cliques (Initial interview).

In contrast to her high school experience, Lisa sees that young children have a tendency to play together with anyone. Observing this play behavior during her student internship, she noted that younger children seem to have less prejudices and biases about people from diverse cultural groups than older children.

This class, maybe because it’s 4 year olds and they’re so young, they all just play together and it’s so nice, what an ideal world. If everyone stayed as childlike, wasn’t influenced by ‘you live in a trailer and I live in a house, so I can’t be friends with you’ and that sort of thing (Initial interview).
Lisa’s Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity

Seeing a Need for a More Practical Approach to Teacher Education

The importance of experiencing more issues and in-depth learning about diversity. Lisa believes that her teacher education program should deal with a more diverse set of issues and cultures and provide preservice teachers with more in-depth learning about diversity. For her, multicultural education does not simply imply education about African American culture.

I took a class on diversity. It was supposed to be foundations of education across the board, but it was very much a foundations of African–American education. It didn’t end up being multicultural, it ended up being African–American, which was there’s plenty to talk about that, but I think there’s a lot more that has gone on as far as multicultural education (Initial interview).

Exemplifying her need to learn more about American Indians and other cultures, Lisa emphasizes the importance of learning about a variety of diverse cultures and events from different perspectives – not just from the perspective of the mainstream culture. Lisa feels that the class on diversity that she took was more like a history lesson with multiculturalism mixed into it.

I know that we forced American education on them at some point, but I didn’t really know much about it, but I know they were forced to learn English and not talk in their native tongue but we didn’t learn anything about that (Initial interview).

In addition, using an example of Irish people in 1900s, Lisa emphasizes the importance of recognizing prejudices and biases in public education. Lisa believes that awareness and
Lisa argues, “I think it’s important to teach future teachers so that we don’t repeat our same mistakes. We didn’t learn about multi-culture.” At this point, she recommends improvement and additions to the courses on diversity and multicultural education in the teacher education program.

You couldn’t do every single different culture, but more needs to be discussed on many different cultures in the U.S. and how they have been educated throughout the years (Initial interview).

*The importance of considering preservice teachers’ prior experiences and attitudes about diversity.* Lisa thinks that her teacher education program with
respect to diversity has not benefited her or her future students because she was already open-minded to the issues. She shares how she has been raised to examine the opinions which contrast with her own beliefs, and this has contributed to the development of her spirit of open-mindedness.

I think that my parents have always done a good job as far as trying to make us see both sides to each case. My mom’s very much the devil’s advocate, if you’re arguing one side of the case, she’ll find the opposite side and argue back to you even if she doesn’t believe it. She wants you to see that there are two sides that that other side does have valid points as well as your side, so I think that I do that, too (Initial interview).

*The importance of teachers demonstrating culturally sensitive attitudes.*

Criticizing her teacher education program with respect to diversity, Lisa reflects on her role as a future teacher.

I try to know the family, like a family involvement package in one of my classes. One of the sheets in the family involvement packets is asking questions about the family, and if there’s something about your family or your culture, if it’s unique that you feel I need to know… (Initial interview)

Emphasizing that she cannot experience all of the many cultures she may later encounter in her teacher education program, Lisa reflects on her understandings and how they will affect her decisions regarding diversity as a future teacher. In order to facilitate an equal education for all of groups of children and families, Lisa feels that it is important for teachers to know something unique in children’s cultural backgrounds and communities.
There was one Jehovah’s Witness child in one of our classes and they don’t celebrate birthdays, and they don’t recognize that, that was very important for my teacher to find out so that she didn’t come in with cupcakes for the girl’s birthday and freak the girl out because she’s just not used to that and not accustomed to that (Initial interview).

In order to create equal opportunities and not offend any children, Lisa, as a future teacher, believes that she will consider the differences of individual children, families and communities rather than labeling children as a group such as ‘Hispanic child,’ ‘African–American child,’ or ‘Asian child.’

I think that when I am a teacher, call the family and say, well you know it is my traditional practice in that classroom to recognize children’s birthdays. Although I won’t be recognizing your child’s, I’ll say of course the other children’s birthdays will be recognized. Are you comfortable with this? Would you prefer your child not be in the classroom to witness this? And try to accommodate and understand their side as much as possible (Initial interview).

Lisa reiterates the importance of human rights and equality. She thinks that every person should be judged by what is on the inside. She feels that cultural understanding is necessary in order to prevent pre-judgment and prejudice on the part of the teacher. In other words, Lisa concurs with the saying “Don’t judge a book by its cover.”

On the outside someone might have darker skin or something like that. Part of their culture does make them who they are. It does not mean you should pre-judge them on that because you don’t necessarily know that—you might assume their culture is one thing when it’s really something completely different, and you
don’t know that and you shouldn’t have prejudices towards people (Initial interview).

Experiencing Cases regarding Diversity

“Who Eats the Mango?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of a science lesson as a window to diversity. From her personal reaction to the case, Lisa suggests that the major dilemma the student teacher [Kim] faced was the reaction of the children to the introduction of fruits and vegetables that were not native to their area. Lisa describes the student teacher’s [Kim’s] perspective, highlighting positively Kim’s intentions for the lesson and associated activities.

The teacher knew that there was an increase in the population of Central American immigrants. And her intention was to expose these children to a culture that was becoming more common in the area in which they live (Personal reactions to the case).

From the casebook used in her science methods course, Lisa recalls the phrase “science curriculum as a mirror and a window.” In her response to the case reaction questions, she explains that the student teacher’s decision to attempt to create a science environment as a window was a positive one.

I think that the teacher possibly recognized the increased immigration not only in the community but perhaps in her classroom/school as well (Responses to case reaction questions).

Continuing to analyze the case of ‘Who Eats the Mango?’ from the student teacher’s perspective, Lisa reflects on Kim’s open-mindedness and values with respect to diversity.
The teacher’s practice of attempting to broaden her children’s minds about other cultures shows me that she herself is open-minded about other cultures as well. It shows me that she believes cultural awareness and acceptance as a value in her children (Responses to case reaction questions).

The importance of understanding about children’s prior experiences. At the same time, Lisa also criticizes the student teacher’s [Kim’s] lesson, pointing out Kim’s lack of understanding that the children in her class had not previously been exposed to fruits and vegetables that were grown outside of the area in which they live. Lisa continues to consider the perspective of Kim in her analysis of the case.

I think that the teacher was hoping that the children would be more of a ‘clean slate’ for her to work with. I think that she did not take into consideration the previous influences the children may have had. This is not to mention that children, like adults, are creatures of habit and often new and different things are thought of as weird to them (Personal reactions to the case).

Reflecting on children’s attitudes towards the strange or unfamiliar, Lisa recalls her mother’s attitudes to new and different things. Lisa thinks that her mother’s excitement about experiencing new and different things, without fear, was a model contributing to her own open-mindedness about diversity. Lisa uses the example of her mother’s education as one of the bases for criticizing the student teacher’s [Kim’s] attitudes toward the lesson, finding fault with Kim for not trying to show enthusiasm about the new fruits and vegetables. In this example, Lisa considers the perspective of her mother as her own role model and educator.
When my family moved to Connecticut, my mom introduced us to sauerkraut and
corned beef by giving us Reuben sandwiches. She was told by the locals in the
small town where we moved that sauerkraut and corned beef were eaten on a
regular basis in Connecticut. She acted like sauerkraut was the coolest thing in the
world. Her actions led us to be excited about the upcoming move, as well as the
new foods we would get to try there. I remember feeling like moving was going to
be like an exciting adventure (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of reflection-for-action. In addition, Lisa indicates that the student
teacher [Kim] should take more time to prepare the lesson by planning and researching
the topic more in depth. She emphasizes this point repeatedly in her personal reaction, the
response to the case reaction questions, and the reaction to the post case discussion
question.

I think that sometimes lessons just head in a different direction than you expect. I
think that perhaps some more preparation on her part would be helpful in the
future (Responses to case reaction questions).

Lisa’s point is supported by Killion and Todnem (1991) who argue for
‘Reflection-for-action’ along with the ‘Reflection-in-action’ and ‘Reflection-on-action.’
According to these researchers, ‘Reflection-for-action’ includes active notions of the
importance of thinking reflectively in terms of better preparation for lessons in teaching
and learning. They claim that preservice teachers should be encouraged to think
reflectively about teaching and learning, rather than simply being provided opportunities
to acquire more teaching techniques to “manage” classroom situations.
Flexibility of Problem-Solving

Student teacher’s modeling as a “tool” for capturing children’s interest.
Throughout all her case reactions, Lisa recommends that the student teacher [Kim] use a modeling approach, eating the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables to intrigue children’s interest in the lesson. Lisa feels that the student teacher could use a similar approach to the one her mother took.

Maybe she could have brought some mango or avocado in for her lunch or snack one day and show the children that she was eating it. At third grade, the teacher is usually still considered ‘cool’ and therefore the children would possibly be intrigued by the teacher eating a new food (Personal reactions to the case).

Teachers and children experiencing new ideas by communicating with immigrant populations. In her reaction to the post discussion question, Lisa suggests that the teacher should have talked with Hispanic people in the community about how they would approach the lesson. In her personal reaction, Lisa suggests that it would be a good idea to have a Hispanic person familiar with the fruits and vegetables visit and interact with the children in the class. A discussion with an immigrant who is originally from the place where the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables are produced may be a good opportunity for children to gain in-depth learning about the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables.

Another idea would be to have an immigrant from Central American come in and discuss the fruits and vegetables. Perhaps he/she could talk about what role fruits and vegetables play in the diet of a typical Central American immigrant (Personal reactions to the case).
In her case discussion group, Lisa elaborates, suggesting that it would be good for children to have the opportunity to taste some of the foods prepared using the unfamiliar fruits or vegetables.

Have some of the family members from Central America because they could cook it better than she could (Case discussion).

*Children’s experiencing similar but different fruits and vegetables.* In the group case discussion, Lisa suggests that when the child commented “this feels gross,” the student teacher [Kim] could have reduced feelings of anxiety by first giving children experience with similar but more familiar fruits and vegetables. Lisa indicates that other fruits or vegetables such as banana and plantain that are familiar to children would be good starting points.

She could have a plantain in there . . . and they might think it was a banana, but then it really wouldn’t be and she could have like fried plantains or something different (Case discussion).

She thinks that children will not dismiss plantains because they look similar to bananas. She says that children will further accept the ideas that other unfamiliar fruits or vegetables to them may be “gross” by seeing how bananas and plantains share similar characteristics. She feels that an approach which systematically allows children to compare similarities and differences can reduce children’s feelings of anxiety about the “strange” fruits or vegetables.

*Connectedness of Theoretical Principles*

*Prejudice reduction: The importance of integrating majority culture with diverse cultures.* “I felt that she gave the children an impression that the fruits were weird, rather
than new and cool.” From her personal reaction and reaction to the post case discussion question, Lisa points out that the student teacher should introduce the fruits and vegetables that are new and different to the children’s normal experiences in a more positive manner. Lisa criticizes the student teacher’s approach because Kim, herself, separated and introduced the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables as “new and different things” to children rather than integrating them as “normal and familiar” things to children. Lisa felt Kim’s approach made children feel afraid to experience the new fruits and vegetables, thinking of them as “weird” things. At this point, in her response to the post case discussion questions, Lisa worries about the feelings of immigrant children who come from where the “weird” fruits and vegetables are commonly produced and eaten.

Would the teacher’s Central American children be offended by the other children’s reaction? (Post case discussion responses)

**Knowledge construction: The importance of children constructing culturally appropriate knowledge.** Lisa thinks that people’s knowledge of other cultures is important, in order to prevent misunderstandings, prejudice, or stereotypes about others. She feels that if children have culturally appropriate knowledge, they would not show discriminatory feelings, attitudes, and behaviors toward other people and cultures. In her response to the case reaction questions, Lisa states that:

I firmly believe that ‘knowledge is power’ and that most discrimination against other cultures comes from simple ignorance. If we work to inform children about other cultures then perhaps that knowledge will open their mind to other cultures. Those cultures would not be so foreign or ‘weird’ to them (Responses to case reaction questions).
In her personal reaction, Lisa recommends that the student teacher research and share information and knowledge about the “unfamiliar” fruits and vegetables with the children. “Do these fruits and vegetables hold any special spiritual beliefs?” In her case discussion, Lisa adds her thoughts about this point.

Certain foods in certain cultures hold certain meaning and are considered, you know, like steak here, are considered like a really nice meal or whatever, you know like explain some of that behind it to really go for the culture. . . (Case discussion)

*Empowering school culture and social structure: The importance of a school’s empowering different cultures from the majority culture.* Lisa mentions on several occasions her thoughts about children’s attitudes toward the fruits and vegetables. In relation to the dimension of ‘prejudice reduction,’ Lisa thinks that even though prejudice typically has a negative connotation on an individual level, it is important to realize that prejudice can come from knowledge that people have constructed within the realm of their sociocultural experiences. “Without clear definitions of the common knowledge base and sets of experiences, misinterpretations occur” (Meir & Nelson-Barber, 1990, p. 7, see Tippins, Koballa, & Payne, 2002, p. 77). Therefore, Lisa feels that if the school culture and social structure would empower immigrant cultures that are not familiar to the majority of children and their families, the majority of children would feel differently about other people and the fruits and vegetables from their cultures.

I don’t think the children were necessarily prejudiced toward mangoes, ... people eat mangoes, it was their attitude. And they would not eat and their attitude towards it was ooh, that’s gross. If the teacher had approached the issue
differently, I think she would have had a different reaction from her children as well (Exit interview).

“The Day the Lobster Died”

*Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives*

*Eating lobster as a good opportunity to incorporate diverse experiences for children.* In her personal reaction, Lisa states that giving the children the opportunity to eat lobster is a wonderful idea. She feels that the chance to taste lobsters in school will be a diverse and enriching experience for children who might otherwise not have the opportunity to eat lobsters in their home lives. In addition, Lisa notes that the lesson is a good idea because it models for young children “how cooking incorporates science and math.” In reflecting on Stan’s intentions for the lesson, Lisa takes the perspective of the teacher in the case.

I think that the teacher in the case made the decision to bring in the live lobster because he simply did not think it would upset any of the children. He had probably seen live lobsters go into the boiling water many times as a child if he had grown up in the North Eastern United States or Louisiana, etc. He just was not thinking about the differences in himself as a child and his current children (Responses to case reaction questions).

*The importance of considering the difference in personal experiences between teacher and children when planning lessons.* Continuing to reflect from the perspective of the classroom teacher [Stan], Lisa tries to understand his lesson plan and what went wrong. Lisa believes that the idea of Stan’s lobster cookout lesson was derived from the personal experiences of his childhood. She thinks that the ‘mistake’ in the classroom
teacher’s [Stan’s] lesson can be attributed to the difference of personal experiences between children in his class and himself. In her response to the case reaction questions, Lisa constantly demonstrates her understanding of Stan’s goals.

I do not think he had a particular bias towards any culture at all. I do think that he was just naïve to the way his children were raised. He just was not thinking that seeing something like that would upset them (Responses to case reaction questions).

*The importance of being sensitive to children’s emotions in science lessons.*

Basing her thoughts about the teacher’s [Stan’s] lesson on the ideas mentioned above, Lisa criticizes his plan and implementation of the lesson. Lisa points out that Stan first went wrong when he introduced the lobster into the classroom as if it was a pet. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Lisa considers the perspective of children in the case reacting to Stan’s introduction of a lobster.

The children were all gathered around anxiously awaiting for Stan to reveal what was in the box. When Stan told them that there was in fact an animal inside the box, they naturally thought it was going to be a pet animal. Then Stan immediately told the young girl that they were going to cook, kill, and eat this live animal (Responses to case reaction questions).

Reflecting on children’s emotions about killing animals, Lisa recalls various personal stories about this issue. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Lisa empathizes with children’s feelings, recalling her childhood. In this sense, Lisa considers the case from the perspective of herself as a child.
I know that I personally have a hard time eating any meat that still looks like the animal it came from, for example, crawfish. I cannot handle eating a dish that has eyes staring back at me, and many people feel the same way (Case discussion).

Lisa constantly puts herself in the shoes of children in the case, most vividly remembering the little girl who was shocked, scared, and appalled that her classroom teacher was about to cook a lobster in front of her. From her personal reaction and the response to the case reaction questions, Lisa explains that Stan should not conduct any lesson if the cost is emotional pain of children.

I can understand why she is upset. Stan was not considering the sensitivity of his children. Some children are very sensitive in nature and would not be able to handle seeing something like that even in the fifth grade. Bringing in a live lobster is very different than bringing in chicken cutlets to make a dish with. First of all the lobster looks like an animal at that stage and second of all it was ALIVE! (Responses to case reaction questions)

Lisa further questions the lobster cookout activity by bringing in scientific knowledge about the screaming moment of the lobster’s death.

Let’s just say that Stan cooked the lobster. What would he do when the lobster starting making scream-like noises? Has he ever cooked a lobster before? Doesn’t he know that they make this noise, and was he not the least bit freaked out by it when he heard it? (Responses to case reaction questions)

In her personal reaction and case discussion, Lisa related the “lobster case” to the situation of her four-year-old cousin who was confronted with confusion over the turkey he eats on his sandwich everyday. Her little cousin knew that his turkey “stuffed” animal
was representative of a real animal, but he could not figure out the connection to the
turkey lunch meat. His mom was confused about what to tell him about this delicate
issue.

On the one hand she did not want to lie to him, but on the other hand she wanted
him to still eat his turkey sandwiches. She eventually just explained to him about
all the meats they eat and what animals they correspond to. She said that for a few
days he would ask her, “Mommy, what animal are we eating tonight?” and she
would respond “Beef” (hoping that he would be okay with that answer). He would
reply, “No! What ANIMAL mommy?” So she would tell him, but after a few
days he was over it and had moved onto something else (Personal reactions to the
case).

Although her cousin is much younger than the children in the case, Lisa’s story shows the
sensitivity of children, but also their resilience. This snapshot also sheds light on the
perspective of children in general, beyond the scope of the case.

**Recognizing the influence of culture on emotional development.** In a similar vein,
Lisa shared the story of her mother’s traumatic experience in childhood, emphasizing the
importance of children’s emotions. From her personal reaction and case discussion, Lisa
considers the perspective of her mother as a child, and the traumatic feelings of children
who think of animals as their pets.

When my mom was about nine years old, her grandmother took her out behind
the chicken house to do some chores. My mom says that her grandmother
suddenly grabbed the closest chicken and started swinging it around by its neck.
Then her grandmother picked up an ax and chopped off the chicken’s head. My
mom says that to this day she can still see that chicken hanging upside down on
the clothesline with the blood pouring out (Personal reactions to the case).

At this point, Lisa raises the issue of cultural difference in both her personal reaction and
response to the case reaction questions.

My mother’s father was never bothered by it because he had seen it all of his life.
It was a part of his culture, he was raised with it. But I was raised hearing the
story about my mom and the pet chickens (I heard it over and over and over
again) so I have a certain sensitivity to issues such as that (Responses to case
reaction questions).

Interestingly, this excerpt shows the difference in reactions between Lisa’s grandfather
and Lisa, herself, to the same incident. It explains that people’s sensitivity to an event is
influenced by the context in which they are educated and socialized. In her response to
the case reaction questions, Lisa notes that Stan would be wise to remember the first time
in his life he saw a lobster being cooked. Lisa remembers her mother’s experience
witnessing the killing of a chicken and empathizes with the feelings people have from
early fear-filled frightening experiences.

Would he as a teacher think to cut off a chicken’s head in front of an entire class
of fifth graders? Probably not, but my grandfather would not have thought twice
about it (Responses to case reaction questions).

Related to this, Lisa decides that she will not even dream of showing a live animal
to children in her class and feeding it to them after cooking. Her beliefs about this are
reflected in her response to the case reaction questions, “I was raised never seeing my
food before it was cooked.” From this point, Lisa takes the perspective of herself as a future teacher.

*The importance of considering health issues in science.* Additionally, in her reaction to the post case discussion question, Lisa raises the health issue the lesson may pose for children. “I didn’t even think about the possibility of children having allergies to shellfish. Many people have severe allergies that could be very dangerous. Once again Lisa is viewing the case from the perspective of the children.

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Teacher’s providing with lobster as a food not as a pet.* Basically, Lisa believes that the classroom teacher [Stan] should not show children the live lobster. In her case reaction, Lisa mentions that it would not be a good idea to introduce the live lobster in class.

I do not think he should have shown them the live lobster. If Stan had introduced the lobster right before putting it into the water, quickly showing it to the children, then they might not realize that it was alive (Responses to case reaction questions).

Along this same line, Lisa feels it is better to provide children with previously cooked lobster food such as lobster soup, etc.

I would have cooked the lobster ahead of time and given it to the children cooked. Although it will still look like an animal, it would not be moving. It also would automatically be introduced in a way where the children would not be confused as to whether the animal was a pet or food (Personal reactions to the case).
Parents as a resource for teacher planning. Lisa feels it is important to share the lobster cookout lesson plan with children’s parents and to obtain their specific opinions and information regarding the lesson or children’s health issues. In her response to the case reaction questions, Lisa stresses the significance of the communication between the classroom teacher and children’s parents.

If Stan had sent a note home with the children, he could have informed the parents of his plans and made sure that no one would have an allergic reaction. This would also give the parents a chance to talk to the children about seeing the lobster boil (Responses to case reaction questions).

Lisa suggests that written communication is important in working with children’s parents and creating meaningful dialogues with them in terms of diverse class activities. This point is supported by Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) who argue the crucial role of open communication between parents and teachers to understand and gain agreeable perspectives about children’s cognitive, physical, and socioemotional development regarding diversity matters. “Not only do parents have the right to know what we are doing and why, but their knowing also works to the child’s and the teacher’s advantage” (Derman-Sparks & the A. B. C. Task Force, 1989, p. 98).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Knowledge construction: The importance of sociocultural context in constructing diverse knowledge. In reflecting on this case, Lisa noted that “The children’s knowledge wasn’t a part of the knowledge that people cook lobsters live and everything was not a part of their knowledge bank.” Lisa believes that people’s knowledge can be different depending on their membership in diverse sociocultural groups.
I used to live in Connecticut, and I can completely see a teacher from my school doing that. I would have been petrified to have seen that but it reminded me of being there. It did give me more insight about the subcultures within the U.S. which I hadn’t thought of particularly. If I am up there and teaching there, I’m thinking that’s gonna be different because if I try to make vegetable soup with my children and I put okra in it, they’re not gonna know what okra is. Definitely, it’s something I think about now which I didn’t think of within like our own country before but now I do (Exit interview).

Lisa does not assume that there exists ‘absolute’ knowledge in the world. However, the case creates some unresolved tensions for Lisa. From her perspective, the fact that children have not experienced a live lobster boil is not a sufficient reason to ignore other cultures where people cook live lobsters. The reverse is also true in this case. From Lisa’s point of view, it cannot be said that the knowledge from one culture is more worthwhile to learn than that of another culture. In her case discussion, Lisa suggests that the issue of life and death perhaps is one which should be dealt with in children’s homes because of its sensitive nature.

Life experiences are different for people. It should happen in their homes. That’s not the place of the teacher to teach like life and death (Case discussion).

*Equity pedagogy: The importance of strategic teaching approaches.* In the section ‘flexibilities of identifying multiple issues,’ Lisa notes that tasting lobsters might be a new and diverse experience for children. However, Lisa points out that the classroom teacher in the case should consider children’s prior experiences and beliefs related to the lobster cookout lesson. Lisa notes that children are not ‘clean slates.’ Thus, according to
Lisa, if the classroom teacher plans to give a new and significant experience to children related to the oceanography unit, he should carefully choose the teaching approach most appropriate to the goals of the lesson. “There were more strategic ways to have the children try lobster than to boil it in front of them I think.”

“Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”:

*Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives*

*The importance of children’s knowing scientific knowledge.* “I do not think that the teacher has a bad view of multiculturalism.” In her response to the case reaction questions, Lisa evaluates the fourth grade classroom teacher [Perla] positively because Perla chooses to talk about the negative impact of deforestation as an essential piece of information that children needed to know.

*The importance of reflection-on-action.* Taking Perla’s perspective, Lisa illustrates her understanding of the tensions in the case – and her hope for the classroom teacher’s further development as an effective teacher.

I think that it was an innocent mistake that any teacher could have made. I think that she will be more aware of the situation from now on, and this will help her grow as a teacher. As a teacher it is essential that we take each experience and make it a learning experience, asking ourselves “What can I learn from this experience?” (Responses to case reaction questions)

*The importance of acknowledging children’s personal background as a potential influence on a lesson.* Lisa does not forget to indicate Perla’s lack of awareness of the home life of children and the potential influence of the lesson on children. In her personal reaction and the response to the case reaction questions, Lisa mentions that:
The teacher obviously knew a lot about the culture there because she had grown up there. But I am assuming that the teacher did not know that at least one of her children was the child of a charcoal farmer. I think that the teacher was unaware of the implication that this would have for the children, particularly children of charcoal farmers (Personal reactions to the case).

Related to this, Lisa believes that as a teacher it is essential to get to know the class and children’s families. In her personal reaction, Lisa cites an example of a pre-K teacher in her student internship. “The teacher in the classroom is a wonderful teacher who puts in every effort to get to know the children in her classroom, even scheduling home visits.” However, Lisa recognizes that it is not always possible to completely get to know about children and their families. In this sense, Lisa considers the case from the perspective of children’s families.

This is not because the families do not want to get to know her; it could be for many reasons. One reason could be that they are too busy working multiple jobs trying to put food on the table and simply do not have the time to get to know their child’s teacher (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of being sensitive to children’s emotions.* In her personal reaction, Lisa highlights another ‘wonderful’ teacher in a fifth grade classroom during her student internship period. Since this ‘exemplary’ teacher grew up in the same small town where she was teaching, she already knew many of the families and understood where the people were coming from in terms of values and beliefs. Lisa observed that the teacher in the “Tuob” case knew that many of the parents smoked; consequently she avoided scaring the children by talking about cigarette smoke as a cause of cancer. In discussing
this example, Lisa takes the perspective of a teacher beyond the context of this specific case.

When she was teaching Health, she talked to the children about the dangers of smoking. She briefly discussed the dangerous chemicals in cigarettes and the importance not to start and to be addicted to smoking, but did not go into gruesome detail (Personal reactions to the case).

Lisa compares this teacher to one in her childhood. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Lisa recalls her own learning about cigarettes. Lisa focuses on the importance of children’s feelings and the need to avoid scaring children when teaching a lesson. At this point, Lisa reacts to the case from the perspective of herself as a child.

I was a child of a smoker. My teacher told us all kinds of awful things about how smoking would lead to a slow painful death. I went home crying and begged my mom to make my dad stop smoking (Case discussion).

Lisa considers it a big challenge for teachers to be aware of each child’s background experiences. But from her response to the case reaction questions, Lisa shows her willingness to learn more about her future students and their family and community. At this point, Lisa reflects on the case from the perspective of herself as a future teacher.

I do consider Georgia my home and I feel like I know a great deal about the culture here. However like Perla, I do not know everything about it, and it is my job as a teacher to try to search out what I do not know and learn more for the good of my classroom (Responses to case reaction questions).
Flexibility of Problem-Solving

Dialogue and discussion as an important aspect of student learning. In her personal reaction, Lisa states that discussion about deforestation issues with children will help them share their experiences, and enable the teacher to get information that will enable her to better understand both sides of the issue. Lisa suggests that various aspects of deforestation should be discussed in class.

One way to prevent this situation would be to have a class discussion on trees and if they had ever seen how people cut down trees, etc. Another tactic would to talk to the children about how cutting down huge areas of trees is detrimental to the environment and animals that depend on that forest as a habitat (Personal reactions to the case).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Knowledge construction: The importance of being aware of and sensitive to children’s beliefs and personal backgrounds. Lisa believes that teachers should be aware of and sensitive to children’s personal backgrounds. She feels that each individual child has been raised in a unique sociocultural context which includes both home and community. Lisa is aware that children come to school with their own beliefs that have been constructed throughout their personal life experiences.

That was where the child’s parent or somebody chops down trees. Well, we didn’t know if she had the knowledge that this is something that happened a lot in the culture or not. If she did, then it was a somewhat insensitive way to approach the issue of knowing that there were children of parents who potentially chop down the trees (Exit interview).
In the case of ‘Where have all the *Ipil-Ipil* trees gone?’, some children live in situations of poverty where parents must cut trees in order to survive. Lisa feels that although information and scientific knowledge of deforestation are necessary for children to learn, the classroom teacher in the case should consider the individual situations of children whose families’ livelihood depend on cutting trees. Lisa strongly believes that teachers must not offend any of the children or their families in the context of school science.

“*El Secreto de las Ninãs*”

*Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives*

*The importance of empathizing with children’s emotions and considering their personal backgrounds.* Taking the perspective of children in the case, in her personal reaction and response to the case reaction questions, Lisa remembers the two girls were worried that they would be in trouble because they did not have a shoebox. She says that she was surprised at the statistics which reveal that the average person in a homeless shelter is a child. She feels that she was challenged in this case to think about how she will create accommodations for all of the children’s home lives. In her response to the case reaction questions, Lisa takes the perspective of the classroom teacher, and expresses her belief that she was unaware that her children lived in a homeless shelter.

I think that she was perhaps naive about the fact that some of the children at the local homeless shelter attended her school and perhaps naive that there even was a homeless shelter (Responses to case reaction questions).

In her personal reaction, although a shoebox seems like such a simple request, Lisa believes that the classroom teacher should have anticipated that it could obviously cause a lot of stress for young, elementary age children. Lisa takes the perspective of children
in the case, empathizing with the girls’ stress and concern for how they would locate a shoebox for the class science project.

*The importance of considering individual situations in deciding problem-solving approaches.* In her personal reaction, response to the case reaction questions, and the case discussion, Lisa states that the classroom teacher tried to instill values by having the children earn shoeboxes by cleaning erasers. However, Lisa also criticizes the classroom teacher’s thoughts by noting that it was inappropriate and unnecessary to lecture the children on the importance of being responsible. In her response to the post case discussion question, Lisa mentions that it was the group discussion with her peers that made her reflect on the insensitivity of the teacher in preaching work ethics before inquiring as to why the children did not have shoe boxes.

I think that's a view that a lot of people have of homeless people, that they're just lazy and they don't like to work for things and they want things given to them (Post case discussion responses).

Lisa indicates that the classroom teacher should realize how easy it is for someone to suddenly lose everything and be in a homeless shelter. In her response to the case reaction questions and case discussion, Lisa describes that feeling:

I have volunteered at soup kitchens before and heard the stories of “how people have lost everything.” These are people who had great jobs with the stock market and suddenly lost everything. The people I met were normal everyday hardworking people, who became homeless before they even knew it. They may have made bad decisions and [had] bad luck (Case discussion).
The importance of non-prejudicial attitudes to children from different backgrounds. Lisa focuses on the classroom teacher’s thoughts in telling the girls the eraser cleaning should be ‘their secret.’ She feels that the teacher did not intentionally mean to cause any harm. Considering the perspectives of both the classroom teacher and children in the case, Lisa contrasts the views of the teacher with those of the two homeless girls with respect to their feelings about the cleaning erasers.

The teacher thought this was a good idea in order to spare the child’s feelings and not let the other children know. If the other children were to find out that these two girls lived in a homeless shelter, then it is very possible that their peers would ridicule them. The two girls however did not see the situation this way and possibly felt that the teacher was implying that their living in a homeless shelter was something they should have been ashamed of (Personal reactions to the case).

In her case discussion, Lisa extends the issues of this case to poverty issues beyond the specific case situation. She remembers children whom she met in her student internship and who were on reduced lunch. She mentions their poverty, focusing particularly on children’s emotions and feelings about it. Through this snapshot, Lisa considers the perspective of children beyond the case situations.

We have a child whose mother is pregnant, and she's on bed for rest right now and so she had to quit her job. The child is on reduced lunch, it's not free lunch and so she hasn't been able to pay for the lunch. I'm probably going to pay for it because otherwise they'll starve because they can charge up to a certain number like that haven't paid and after that they give them like peanut butter and jelly every day from then on and children in pre-K, they don't know. But I remember that
children in the 5th grade, everybody knew if you got peanut butter and jelly it was because you weren't paying for your lunches, and so that was really hard for the children to have to deal with (Case discussion).

**Flexibility of Problem-Solving**

*Keeping the communication lines open with children.* Lisa criticizes the classroom teacher’s attitudes about homeless children in the case, pointing out that she saw the issue only as “black and white,” assuming that the children were wrong when they did not bring shoeboxes. Furthermore, Lisa notes that the classroom teacher simply ignored the children when they did not come to clean the erasers. Lisa thinks that as a future teacher she will deal quite differently with similar situations. Lisa argues that teachers need to develop more awareness of children’s home situations.

When that came up, then I would want to sit down and talk with the children about what’s going on. I would think obviously something had happened there and want to know what caused them to be upset and not want to come, and just being more aware of when those potential situations arise (Case discussion).

More specifically, Lisa believes that the teacher should talk to the children about the issue –their reasons for not bringing shoeboxes, their reactions to cleaning the erasers, and so on.

*Obtaining information about children’s personal background.* In addition, in her case discussion with peers, Lisa emphasizes the need for the classroom teacher to know whether the children in her class are homeless. She feels that “the only way to really know if your child is homeless or not is to look in their records for their address and look
up where they live.” Lisa states, however, that some families may see it as an invasion of privacy. Also, she inserts that it is not always easy to find the children’s living places.

You don't know the area so you go drive and find it. They may even write the grandparent's address or somebody else's address, if the shelter isn't in the school district (Case discussion).

Teacher’s preparing extra materials and distributing them randomly for the lesson. Lisa talked to her mentor teacher in her student internship about the tensions in this case. The mentor teacher said it was good planning to bring in enough shoeboxes for at least half of the class because many children forget to bring things to school. “Their parents may have busy lives and it's not that they don't care, it's not that they don't want their child to participate; things just happen and they forget or they're actually unable to get one.” This excerpt illustrates how cases can provide teachers with the opportunities for peer conference or mentoring about teaching and learning.

With the basic assumptions and belief that she would not criticize the girls for their ‘lack of responsibility,’ Lisa suggests that the classroom teacher should assume some responsibility to ask shops to collect shoeboxes. She mentions that if the classroom teacher would take the initiative to approach shops for boxes to be used in school, she would get all kinds of free stuff. “If you ask for it and leave a trash bag to put shoeboxes in, you would get 50 shoeboxes in a week when you come back.” In her personal reaction and case discussion, Lisa suggests that it is also a good idea to ask children and their families to bring extra shoeboxes.
I would have plenty of extra shoeboxes in case some children could not get them or forgot them. I might ask children/parents to bring in one or two extra boxes if they found them in their house (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction and case discussion, Lisa specifies that she would have the children pile the shoeboxes in the back of the room and would distribute them randomly. She reasons that:

This way no child would feel inadequate that they were unable to bring in a shoebox. And it wouldn't be, you know, you get the Nike shoebox and you get the Exhilaration shoebox (Personal reactions to the case).

Considering the girls’ living situations, Lisa says that if she were the teacher, she would have just given the children shoeboxes and not made a big deal out of the situation. She states, “I think that recess is an important part of a child’s appropriate development and other children were just given one by mom or dad and did not have to earn it.” She raises this point again in her response to the case reaction questions and her belief that it is a good solution is confirmed by the unanimous agreement of her peers.

If I were in the situation where two children came to me and told me that they lived in a homeless shelter, I would simply give them one of my extra boxes. I would not make a big deal out of it and would not make them clean erasers (Responses to case reaction questions).

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

*Equity pedagogy: The importance of awareness and sensitivity to children’s personal background for more equal learning environment.* Lisa believes that teachers have to consider each child’s personal background in teaching and learning and that they
should be aware of children’s specific situations. She believes that an awareness of and sensitivity to each child should influence the creation of more equal learning environments for children, regardless of their personal background.

If there were two children in just one class that were in the shelter, there were bound to be more in the school. It’s the teacher’s responsibility to be aware of the potential situations that her children could be in (Exit interview).

She feels unequal learning opportunities for children should not stem from situations where homeless children are not able to bring materials for a classroom project. Lisa uses an example of her internship school to illustrate how schools could respect and support each child’s sociocultural background.

Like having a supply closet for children who needed certain supplies….Our school has a clothes closet for children who need clothes to come and look and get them, then another children come and leave clothes, and that kind of thing (Exit interview).

“*When Do You Perform Tuob?: Culture at the Margins of the Science Classroom*”

*Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives*

*The importance of respecting both community beliefs and scientific knowledge.* In her personal reaction, Lisa identifies the dilemma in the case as one of scientific fact versus cultural tradition. She finds it interesting that the classroom teacher [Esperanza] calls the people performing cultural rituals such as *tuob* “quack doctors” instead of using the term “medicine men.” Lisa immediately sees that the term, “quack doctors,” has a negative connotation in her mind and this makes her wonder if Esperanza is insulting and
looking down upon the people of her community. In her personal reaction and case
discussion, Lisa expresses the perspective of children in the case.

    The teacher is setting herself up for conflict with the families of her children by
reacting this way. I remember the teacher running to get a fish tank and show how
\textit{tuob} smoke kills a fish. The children are going to see this fish die from the smoke
and assume that they might die from it, too (Personal reactions to the case).

    Taking the perspectives of both the teacher [Esperanza] and the children in the
case, Lisa argues that the classroom teacher should respect community beliefs and at the
same time acknowledge the importance of scientific knowledge for understanding the
issues.

    She should explain to the children why Caladryll helps with itch and red spots.
She could explain that some of the children may have experienced the \textit{tuob}
helping them, but that none of the scientists have figured out why. But we do
know why Caladryll helps, et cetera. She could briefly touch on the issue and then
bring it back to the science aspect of Caladryll (Personal reactions to the case).

Lisa assumes that Esperanza wants to “educate” the people of her culture. However, Lisa
is concerned that education may come at the cost of culture. In her personal reaction, Lisa
claims that “she should try to work to preserve her culture’s beliefs and traditions as well
as enlightening them to scientific beliefs as well.”

\textit{Flexibility of Problem-Solving}

    \textit{Teacher’s informing children the scientific facts about \textit{tuob} as well as not
offending the \textit{tuob} practice.} Lisa feels that the classroom teacher needs to discuss
scientific facts about \textit{tuob} with children. However, Lisa does not agree with the teacher’s
attempts to prove that traditional beliefs about health care are wrong. Rather, Lisa feels that the teacher should briefly touch on the practice of *tuob* by saying that ‘it may have worked for some of you and your families but science has not yet proven its effect.’

Then, the teacher could introduce modern scientific knowledge about health care. In her personal reaction, Lisa maintains:

> I do not like that the teacher was quick to show the children just how bad for you smoke can be. I would not have chosen to react this way. I would have taken the approach of telling the children about the scientific facts that have been proven to help the different ailments (Personal reactions to the case).

*Teacher’s experimenting in science using animals.* Lisa’s comments reflect a concern for animals’ rights. She does not think that it is appropriate to kill animals in classrooms for scientific experimentation. She also believes that children who see the death of fish from smoke may develop a belief that they could die from the smoke of this practice. In her case discussion, Lisa suggests that it is better to use plants than live animals in trying to illustrate the impact of smoking on living organisms.

> I did a science experiment and I did one with plants and cigarette smoke. I had two plants and one I lit a match or something and let the smoke stay in there. It was like in a little greenhouse thing or something and then I brought it in and showed how like one plant had wilted and died and the other plant was green and pretty. I think it’s better than using animals (Case discussion).

*Connectedness of Theoretical Principles*

*Empowering school culture and social structures: The importance of empowering both community knowledge and science knowledge.* Lisa notices that there are conflicts
between traditional rituals and modern scientific knowing with respect to health care. The classroom teacher has issues with her own cultural beliefs in relation to the scientific knowledge she has gained from university education. In her response to the case reaction questions, Lisa noted that the teacher is caught between the world of science and the world of her culture.

It appeared to be a real struggle there between what the culture believed and what the schools were teaching as far as science and the tuob (Responses to case reaction questions).

Lisa thinks that educating for scientific knowledge should not be done at the expense of disregard for traditional beliefs of the community. In order not to offend any of the children and their families, Lisa believes that school culture and social structures should empower the beliefs of both traditional and modern ideas of health care. She argues that it is important to teach science to children and at the same time preserve their traditional beliefs.

Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy

*Case-Based Pedagogy as a Tool for Multicultural Education*

_Constructing Knowledge with Sensitivity to Different Cultures*

_Cases as tools to develop awareness of and sensitivity to unfamiliar cultures._ Lisa believes that case-based pedagogy helps her construct knowledge and understanding about different cultures. Through the different case scenarios, she feels that case-based pedagogy has exposed her to many different cultural issues that she may not necessarily see during her university classroom or student teaching experiences. She explains that case-based pedagogy is essential for developing sensitivity to the cultures of the children in classes and for being an effective teacher.
It would definitely effect thinking through things, because the cases brought up issues that I hadn’t thought of and sensitivities that the different cultures might have that I had not thought of because it was not a part of the culture that I was raised with (Exit interview).

As an example, Lisa noted that the case of ‘El Secreto de las Ninãs’ was particularly helpful to her because she later encountered homeless children in the school where she was assigned for her student internship.

Through this case, I could read about, to talk about, and to hear what the homeless children’s opinions were of the problem and how they view the way the classroom teacher reacted (Exit interview).

As an another example, Lisa mentioned that previously she had never considered the issues in the case of ‘When Do You Perform *Tuob?’ The idea of treating illness using smoke was something that was totally new to Lisa’s experience.

I’d thought of issues of different religious theories of creation, the scientific theory of creation versus the Christian religious. But as far as like medical and health treatment, I’ve never been exposed to that so that was definitely a new issue that I thought of (Exit interview).

Reflecting on the various different cultural issues highlighted through the five cases, Lisa has come to value the importance of understanding the subcultures of each individual child. In particular, she now recognizes the illiteracy prevalent among parents of children. She is aware that illiterate parents cannot read the notes that come home about their child, the school calendar, or even the lunch menu.
It’s been an issue for my teacher. She really wants to make sure they’re involved and they know what’s going on with their child because she knows they want to know, but often they’re at times embarrassed to ask about it. So she tries to call them and find other ways of keeping them involved in the classroom and informed of what’s going on (Exit interview).

*Cases as vivid and interesting tools of teaching and learning.* Lisa comments that experiencing case-based pedagogy regarding diversity deeply effected her sensitivities towards children. She strongly recommends case-based pedagogy for future teachers as a means for discussing sensitive issues. Contrasting case-based pedagogy with a more ‘traditional instructional method’ using textbooks, she states that case-based pedagogy is a more vivid and interesting method of teaching and learning.

I think that I can definitely say that I have completely read this textbook because it’s interesting, it’s a story, it’s something you want to hear about. It really makes you think about your own beliefs. It makes you think of what you would do and forces you to have a dialog with your class, whereas if it was just a book that just gave instructions on what to do, it would be boring. Frankly, most of the class wouldn’t have ended up reading it (Exit interview).

*Cases as tools to construct one’s own personal truth.* Lisa sees that “things are very personal” and that “truth would be what a person personally believes to be true;” consequently, she believes that it is important to construct one’s own personal truth by experimenting and reflecting on how to handle the situations that cases provide, rather than memorizing the knowledge formally presented in textbooks.
I think each person has one’s own truth. I wouldn’t say my personal beliefs are true because I think that’s arrogant. I think my personal beliefs are my personal beliefs and I have reasons for them, but they’re not (Exit interview).

Lisa further perceives the impact of experiencing case-based pedagogy on her future teaching. She decides that she definitely would try to incorporate stories as a more personalized form of experience in teaching children.

I know that the science literature books that we have were always so much more interesting than the actual science book and that’s the same with all subjects because it was more integrated into a story that you got to listen to and it was kind of like subtle. It wasn’t obvious that it was teaching it to you but you were still getting it (Exit interview).

*Suggestions for Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy Regarding Diversity*

*The importance of more background information in cases.* Experiencing the case scenarios, Lisa encounters difficulty in completely understanding other cultures because she feels the need for more background knowledge about the cultural context certain dilemmas such as those reflected in the “tuob” case. In the case of ‘El Secreto de las Ninãs,’ Lisa poses questions relevant to her need for additional background information.

I am confused as to whether or not the teacher knew that some of her children lived in homeless shelter. Was it common in this area for a family to live in a shelter? Should the teacher have known better than to assume that all of the children had access to these materials? (Exit interview)

Similarly, in the case of ‘Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?’, Lisa feels that she does not know enough about Philippine beliefs and values to fully understand the cultural
nuances. In her reaction to the post case discussion question, she and her peers ask, “Should Perla have known that her classroom children’s father worked as a charcoal farmer?,” agreeing that they cannot criticize someone who wakes at 4 a.m. to feed her own children and animals before going to a full day of teaching.

Particularly in the case of ‘When Do you Perform Tuob?’, Lisa felt that she just jumped in and started thinking, “What is a tuob? It had all these words in italics. Should I go look this up on the internet?” While Lisa feels that she was able to figure out the meaning of tuob from the context, she would enjoy having more background information. She raises even more questions about the practice of tuob.

What exactly is burned and why do they believe it works? Could some of the smoke from the burned objects be beneficial to certain ailments? Are the same objects burned for all ailments, or different ones for different ailments? What is a parobra? Pababgon? Papukaw? She lists these but gives no explanation as to what they are. Are there extremely harmful chemicals in this smoke that we are supposed to know about? (Exit interview)

At this point, Lisa indicates that case authors should consider the readers or audiences for the cases. “Are we not her target audience? Should I already know what all of these are?” Lisa and her peers feel that that more information is needed in same cases to get a better sense about the situations.

The importance of readers’ not creating too much generalization about cultures from cases. Lisa points out that case readers should be cautious not to create too much generalization about a culture through the limited pictures of a particular vignette. She
thinks that hasty generalization about a culture can undermine understanding. She positions herself as an outsider to other cultures in the cases.

I think that perhaps because I am not a member of her culture and have not had the same experiences as she has. I am also a student who is reading this case looking for cultural sensitivities. As an outsider to this culture I would want to be particularly careful not to offend or disrepute [sic] it (Exit interview).

With respect to the ‘tuob’ case, Lisa believes that people may think that all people from the Philippines practice tuob. She feels that the case may engender a broad generalization of this particular culture.

Sources of Learning through Case-Based Pedagogy

Reading as a source of providing templars for one’s problem-solving. Lisa feels that reading and discussing cases has a personal impact on her learning because she can better relate to the characters in each story personally. For Lisa, cases are templars for her problem-solving that can be used when she encounters similar problems in teaching and learning settings. She sees how the teachers in the cases deal with conflicts that relate to issues she struggles with personally. “When an issue like that comes up, I know that will come back in my mind and I’ll go back to the case or look through it, on how I would like to handle that.” Lisa believes that by reading and discussing cases, she can examine and witness her own thought processes for problem-solving.

My learning came from reading the cases. As a teacher, when I read the story, I would be thinking about OK what would I do next and what is this person going to do next, and so it made more of like a personal connection. When I read through it that would be my thought process. I question myself in a good way as
to what I’m doing and what my thought process is and procedural processes are
(Exit interview).

*Dialogue as a source of recognizing new and different issues in teaching and
learning.* Lisa believes that reading and discussing cases are closely intertwined. “During
the case discussion, different people brought up and thought about different issues. They
may have been focused on this one part of the story, but they may have thought of a
different part and you forgot that that happened in the story, and then it makes you think,
well, what about that?” For example, in the ‘lobster’ case, Lisa contributed her firsthand
knowledge of the screeching and screaming sound lobsters make when put in boiling
water. “A few of the other girls did not know that, and they were like, oh gosh. By talking
about it, you give each other more knowledge and more information and it just expands
on all that.” She emphasizes that case discussion helps her and her peers recognize new
and different issues in teaching and learning. She thinks it is analogous to an effective
teacher’s peer mentoring.

I definitely think the dialogue is very important. That’s what teachers do in the
teachers’ lounge. I have a problem with this child, what do you all think I should
do? This is what happened and they discuss it with each other (Exit interview).

*Writing as a source of reflection on one’s own knowledge and beliefs about
diversity.* Lisa recognizes that writing case reactions helps her reflect on diversity issues
related to the cases that she has experienced. She emphasizes the importance of being
able to examine her own knowledge and personal beliefs about the issues in cases.
The writing is good because it makes you, when you write things out, it makes you think about what you really want to say, what you’re really personally believing and it prepares you for the group discussion (Exit interview).

*Perceived Meaningfulness about Diversity from Case-Based Pedagogy*

*Creating Awareness of Diversity*

The importance of being aware of and sensitive to children’s subcultures beyond racial issues. “In all of our classes up to this point, multicultural education has been about African–American education versus Caucasian education.” Feeling this is frustrating, Lisa learns that there are certainly subcultures within each main culture. She believes that multicultural education is not simply issues of African–American and Caucasian educations. She restates that people’s skin color does not determine anything and that people need to be aware of more specific cultures based on real experiences beyond just skin color.

Within all the African–American culture, there are cultures, because not everyone who has black skin is from the same culture and has had the same experiences. They have a very different kind of culture than someone whose family has lived here for generations, generations and generations (Exit interview).

Indicating that cases are important because they make people more sensitive to different cultures, Lisa mentions that she has become more open-minded and sensitive to the individual child’s culture.

It gives me more sensitivity and insight into the different cultures. Maybe now they might look at it and say well I was just blowing off what this child was doing as something that was wrong but maybe there’s a deeper meaning behind it,
maybe it has something to do with his or her culture and to him or her, it’s completely right to do (Exit interview).

“In one of my classes we had a child whose family did not agree with doing any kind of art work with food. But particularly for pre-kindergarten classes, we do a lot of noodle art work and you paint with apples, and so on.” Lisa points out that a teacher’s ‘great and wonderful job’ may confuse and upset some children by conflicting with cultural beliefs they have already constructed in their homes and communities. At this point, she reiterates her belief that classroom teachers should be sensitive to the individual child’s background. Lisa notes that initial information can be obtained by a questionnaire that asks about children’s allergies, religious practices, cultural beliefs, and so on.

That would be very important first of all to make a connection with the parents and the child, and to ask and make sure, is there anything about your religious beliefs or your culture that you feel I might need to know in the classroom, is there anything that’s come up in past years, is there anything you want me to know ahead of time about (Exit interview).

The importance of teacher’s independent research and reflection on children’s cultures. Lisa recognizes that in spite of teachers’ strong efforts to acknowledge children’s personal background information, it is not always possible to have enough information about diverse cultural values and beliefs. Therefore, she maintains that it would be important for teachers to conduct independent research on the culture of children in order to better understand the “funds of knowledge” they bring to the classroom.
You may be confused because a lot of times as a teacher in a situation, you may not get the whole explanation of what’s going on. I personally would have tried to research it and find out more through books or something on the internet to find out more to really understand and get a whole grasp as much as I could (Exit interview).

Related to this, Lisa admits that until the last minute teachers have to think about their lessons, change their lesson plans, and conduct the lesson so as not to offend any of the children in their classrooms.

Summary and Discussion

Before experiencing case-based pedagogy, Lisa referred to diversity as the differences that make up who we are. She felt that minorities are people who were not in the majority. “There are more of Caucasian American people.” She thought that minorities were people who were not Caucasian. This suggests that Lisa initially considered diversity and multicultural education solely in terms of racial issues.

However, after the case-based experiences with five cases, Lisa states “diversity is the amount of different, different cultures. Diversity in the classroom could be the amount of different races, the amount of different cultures, the amount of different family backgrounds, and so on. The multicultural education I think is more educating in a way that is not only sensitive to other cultures, but also gives some insight and information about different cultures, particularly of the children in the classroom” (Exit interview).

Her comments throughout the study illustrate the way in which her ideas about diversity broaden as she participates in case-based experiences. This does not imply a cause-effect
scenario; rather, this is just to suggest that the case experiences provided her with a valuable opportunity to reflect on and critique her own beliefs and those of others. As she indicates in her comments relative to the perceived meaningfulness about diversity, she does not think diversity and multicultural education should be dichotomized as an issue of Caucasian and African–American education. Rather than polarizing the issue of diversity, she believes it is better to deliberate on the various issues of diversity including race, family background, and numerous other aspects of culture. Even though people seem to be “in a culture,” she thinks that their subcultures should be regarded as equally important to the educational process. She also feels that it is important to understand other cultures. Without understanding and appropriate information about other cultures and people from those cultures, Lisa thinks that people will continue to view others as strangers who are not likely to be their friends.

Lisa’s practical knowledge about diversity seems to be influenced greatly by her personal experiences such as study abroad in Italy and her mother’s education and thoughts about diversity. She perceives that her mother’s open-minded attitudes toward other cultures and education help her see multiple sides of a phenomenon by taking on a devil’s advocate role which is influenced by worldview, sensitivity, beliefs, and attitudes about diversity.

In addition, Lisa’s mentor teachers during her student internship period have impacted her beliefs on teaching and learning regarding diversity. She does not think all the teachers she encountered were good role models of cross-cultural understanding. Nor does she simply replicate effective teachers’ approaches to dealing with diversity in teaching and learning. Whether her mentor teachers are perceived as effective or
ineffective, Lisa has filtered her observations and experiences with these teachers through her existing practical knowledge about teaching and learning regarding diversity. She constructs her desirable figure of a teacher with reference to her own sociocultural context. Lisa’s practical knowledge about diversity is “the construction of knowledge, knowing, beliefs and meaning within the minds of individuals and within social communities” (Richardson, 1999, p. 146).

Lisa observes that children’s age is likely to effect their behaviors and reactions to other people from different cultural groups. She thinks that younger age children are innocent because they do not easily distinguish differences among people. However, according to Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (1989), even four-year-old children internalize “stereotypic gender roles, racial bias, and fear of the differently abled” (p. 2). These researchers say that even young children support the socioculturally dominant norms and beliefs, and behave in ways perceived to be socioculturally appropriate. But as children get older, they seem to be more educated and socialized by the prevailing prejudices, stereotypes, and biases in their own sociocultural groups. Then, as Lisa indicates, older children do make cliques according to race, ethnicity, and so forth.

When discussing the five cases, Lisa reflects from multiple perspectives including student teacher, classroom teacher, teachers beyond the case, children in the case, children beyond the case, children’s families beyond the case, herself as a child, her mother as a child, Lisa’s mother as an educator for her, and herself as a future teacher. In analyzing this perspective-taking, I distinguish from the characters depicted in the case and the people or “characters” outside the bounded context of the case. In terms of the
perspective of ‘people beyond the case,’ Lisa draws from examples of her personal experiences. By analyzing the cases not only in terms of the characters close to the case situations, but also in terms of characters outside the specific realm of the case, Lisa shows a greater depth of understanding and thoughts about diversity issues in the cases.

In her reaction to the post case discussion question, Lisa usually responds in this manner: “My peers and I had pretty much the same opinion on the case discussed…” Like Kate, Lisa also tries to show an agreement with her peers. It seems like she is reinforced to confirm her beliefs and socially construct her meanings about diversity by discussing cases and cooperatively learning about multicultures. According to Moll (1990), Vygotskian social constructivism posits “a strong, dialectic connection between external (social) practical activity mediated by cultural tools, such as speech and writing, and individuals’ intellectual activity” (p. 12). Through the social interactive process, individuals internalize and construct understandings and learning to the extent of their zone of proximal development.

Personal reaction, case reaction questions, case discussion, and reaction to the post case discussion question helped Lisa reflect in depth on the issues embedded in each case. Responding to questions about the cases and discussing the case dilemmas, she had multiple opportunities to examine and reflect on her beliefs about diversity. Through the combination of processes involved in case-based pedagogy, Lisa learned about the case issues, other cultures, and her own personal beliefs.

Being aware of and being sensitive to other cultures is a main theme relative to Lisa’s case reactions. She believes that children’s cultures and beliefs should be respected. (Even when teachers try to share some new and different knowledge or
activities that contrast with the cultures of children in the class, Lisa believes that teachers should be sensitive to individual children’s cultures and beliefs. In essence, Lisa feels that teachers should not offend any child with respect to his/her culture.) At the same time, Lisa believes that teachers need to provide children with the chances to develop diverse knowledge, beliefs, and experiences about other cultures in order for them to have an open-minded attitude toward diversity and multicultural education.

Lisa’s experience with cases raises several questions. How much should teachers know about children’s personal background, including their beliefs and values, to be a culturally sensitive teacher? What issues should or should not be dealt with in classrooms in terms of this sensitivity? Is it children’s responsibility to construct their own personal beliefs by filtering new and diverse experiences in juxtaposition with their existing beliefs? These issues raised in this chapter present a big challenge for Lisa and other teachers faced with increasingly diverse classrooms.

Shazia

_Shazia’s Background_

_Shazia’s Teaching Experience: Desire to Become a Teacher_

_Getting a sense of diverse ethnic cultures through high school and internship: The importance of each child in the classroom._ Shazia is a senior in her early twenties. She was born in Rome, Texas, and went to elementary and middle school there. She moved to the southern area of the United States where she finished middle school and high school.

In high school she tutored young children, but her first real teaching experience was in a kindergarten classroom during her junior year of college. During this
kindergarten teaching experience, Shazia was particularly aware of differences in socioeconomic status among her young learners.

There were three Caucasian children, the rest were African–American.

Socioeconomically very low and most of the mothers were younger than I am.

Very different than I am. Their parents had been on drugs, had problems, so children were more like looking for love (Initial interview).

Shazia continues to recall the differences that she observed during this internship experience particularly in terms of race, children’s learning needs, and teachers’ teaching methods. Later during her junior year, she had an internship in a fourth grade classroom that was very diverse with respect to ethnicity. However, Shazia noted that the classroom teacher was strictly dependent on textbooks and did not do things to meet the needs of children from different backgrounds. Shazia thought that this class did not adequately build on the experiences of children from diverse cultures.

“I love children.” Coming from a big family with seven uncles, three aunts, and twenty seven cousins on her mother’s side, Shazia has two main purposes in life: to be a good teacher and to be a good wife. She wants to become a teacher because she loves children.

Children are like my passion, since I was five. Ever since I could pick up a baby, I knew that this is what I wanted to do. I don’t know what I would do without kids in my life. I know there are times when I get frustrated with my students. But there is never gonna be a time when I don’t care for those kids, and want what’s best for them (Initial interview).
Shazia desires to teach kindergarten through 2nd grade children because she loves to see their development starting at an early age.

**The Important Things for Children’s Learning**

*The importance of knowing children’s personal background.* As a friend and future teacher of young children, Shazia believes that it is important to know students’ personal background including their learning and education at home. She wants children to learn as much as they can from her and also wants to learn as much as she can from them – in this sense, she affirms that teachers are also learners. She thinks that she can arrange her future classrooms in ways which address children’s needs.

I have no idea what the child is learning at home, unless I go further and ask their parents. What is it that you all to do for fun at home? Does the child do any educational things at home? Some kids go home and watch TV for the whole night. It makes me know where the child comes from (Initial interview).

*The importance of meeting children’s individual learning requirements.*

Related to the above belief, Shazia stresses the importance of meeting children’s individual learning needs. She does not like worksheets or activities that do not take into account each child’s individual difference in terms of developmental level and interest for learning. She is open-minded in considering the importance of individuality and personal learning needs of children.

I am in K and some children already know their colors and they don’t need to sit there for two weeks and do the color units. There needs to be something that interests the child. I want them to teach me. I want to learn from them and mould my teaching around them (Initial interview).
Shazia also indicates that it is important to consider the varying rates at which children learn. “If I am teaching, I want to make sure that I don’t move on until my children know it.” Shazia points out that she believes American educational systems and curricula are too rushed for children to adequately develop conceptual knowledge.

Decimals…you have two days….if a child doesn’t learn in two days, too bad.

Everything builds on something else, basically you need someone who takes the time to sit down and teach it to you (Initial interview).

Recalling her own problematic experiences with mathematics in her childhood, she emphasizes the importance of teachers’ careful observations and attention to children’s development and learning speed.

I did have problems with math even up until high school and college. I knew that a topic or subject would be over in a week. I or rather my parents made sure that when I came home I took that time to make sure I learned because they didn’t want me to fall behind and they knew that if I did I would never learn it (Initial interview).

Her experiences make her reason that she will have more hands-on activities so that her future children can better grapple with things based on their individual needs, rate, and developmental level for learning.

The importance of motivation to children’s learning. In addition to her belief that teachers should consider individual needs and development in learning, Shazia feels that learning should be fun for children. “I won’t use textbooks. If we look at all the stuff in books, really there is no time for the child to enjoy what he is doing.” She wants there to be a sense of excitement and wonder in her classrooms. “It’s gonna be fun, obviously full
of academics, but I don’t want it to be pressure, pressure, pressure.” In this regard, Shazia emphasizes the importance of motivation. “Unless I truly want to do something I can not do it and I feel the same way about children and I think enthusiasm is a big deal.” She believes that if teachers approach learning with enthusiasm this will surely motivate children and help them meet their learning goals. She feels that teachers should capitalize on spontaneity as an ideal tool for motivating children’s learning. “Learn from children’s experiences, learn from things they saw yesterday, something they see outside of the classroom.”

*The importance of creating learning community.* For Shazia, mutual respect is another goal integral to the children’s learning. She views herself as an extended family member to children, and emphasizes the importance of creating a learning community in her classroom. She specifies that teachers, children, and parents should play active roles in this learning community. She hopes that every member in her “open” classroom feels safe and is able to share him/herself with others, learning to respect each other’s similarities and differences. She expects her classroom will be one which reflects children’s own personalities and uniqueness. Shazia believes that the “big deal” is to make a learning environment where children have ownership. Her beliefs about teaching and learning in this respect effect her vision for constructing the physical environment of her future classrooms.

I wanna start out my each year hopefully with empty and clean walls. I want them to bring their individual personalities and uniqueness into the classroom. Each one of us is going to bring something different to the classroom, so let’s do it (Initial interview).
Experiencing Diversity

Feeling of Being a Minority and about Minorities

Not fitting the norm as both an American and Pakistani. “My parents are from Pakistan. I have always been around different languages.” Shazia thinks that growing up in a bilingual family makes it easier for her to pick up new languages. However, she admits that her good potential for learning languages was not enough to make her feel comfortable in a foreign country, Italy.

Over summer I taught third grade in Italy for a month and my Italian skills are not that great…but I didn’t want to go into a classroom and not do anything because I was limited by my Italian skills (Initial interview).

Based on her experiences in Italy and her own cultural background, Shazia reflects often about the norm in a group and society.

Diversity is a big deal. I am someone who is not the norm most places. In my program there is no other Pakistani girl; in most places there is no diversity except me (Initial interview).

Shazia notes, however, that she has never experienced stereotypical problems because of her different sociocultural background. She feels that everyone has always been interested in her, as an individual.

I am very lucky in the sense no one has ever treated me in any way I wouldn’t want to be treated. I have always gotten respect, people have always been very respectful of my culture, my religion (Initial interview).

She thinks that her confident personality prevents her from being attacked by others in relation to aspects of her culture.
I am a very confident person, I think it makes such a big difference. I don’t think anyone would ever want to say anything negative to me because of who I am. My personality is not what someone would wanna attack me for being different. I am very proud of who I am (Initial interview).

*Good to learn from others from diverse cultures.* Shazia believes that it is “good luck” for people to learn from each other’s differences. “I think I have a lot to offer to people that I meet and I think they have a lot to offer, too. I think if you show respect to someone they will show it back to you.” She notes that if someone is not willing to listen to her or hurts her feelings, it would really be their loss. They would miss out on what she could offer.

I know I am blessed in that my parents have taught me everything about my religion and my culture and it was up to me to choose if I wanted to live my life that way (Initial interview).

Shazia feels that her life is a balance between American and Pakistani beliefs and practices, noting that “I am not just Pakistani and I am not just American.” She shares how within the Pakistani community, people perceive her as more of an American, not very Pakistani. “They think I am too western or too modern. I have traditional Pakistani values or morals but then I have other traits about me that are very American.” Reflecting on her own situation in the U.S. as an American and Pakistani, she believes that if she has children of different cultures in her classrooms, she will create opportunities for them to share with the class. “Because they not only know about the general American life, but they also know something else.”
While Shazia does not feel that she fits the norm of the groups she belongs to in the U.S., she poses questions regarding the meaning of majority and minority, focusing on the point that every person should be respected regardless of his/her sociocultural background. She questions whether “majority” simply means a large number of people or the norm of a dominant group.

If there are seventeen Caucasian children in the classroom, they are the majority and they are the best. But that just means there are a lot of Caucasian people here (Initial interview).

*Experiencing ESL Children*

_The importance of incorporating multiple languages into classrooms._ “It is not obviously a lot easier for me to work to do an assessment on two children that don’t speak English.” Having learned that she will change her teaching approach depending on the make-up of her class, Shazia focuses on the need to help the non-English speaking children learn and understand English. In working with second language learners, Shazia observes how different classroom teachers construct learning environments which take into account the various languages spoken by children in the class.

When there are some Spanish children limited English proficiencies in her [the teacher’s] classes, she does like calendar in English and then she does it in Spanish. I think that’s really good for the other children because there are so many Hispanics and many people in America that don’t speak English (Initial interview).

She finds that it is good for teachers to have the extra knowledge of multiple languages, even if applied only to something as simple as counting from one to ten.
In addition to her attention to foreign languages, Shazia points out that a multicultural learning environment should include the language of children with special needs such as sign language for the deaf.

They learn differently from me and they do things very differently from me.

What’s normal to me isn’t for them and what I am used to isn’t what they are used to and other kids should know why he can’t do it (Initial interview).

Shazia emphasizes, “That’s his thing. It’s not that he can’t do it.” For her as a future teacher, it is important to incorporate different kinds of languages from major cultures into the classroom.

Experiencing Different Races and Cultures

_The importance of knowing oneself and others._ “Not everyone is the same. Everyone is unique and different in one’s own way. Everyone is special. Everyone has one’s own thing. Everyone is equal.” Shazia focuses on the point that children should experience various perspectives that surround different learning concepts. She feels that it is extremely important to provide children with opportunities to connect with diverse societies and cultures.

I do believe multicultural learning and the perspective is very important. You can’t just teach we are right for doing this, you have to teach what is going on everywhere in the world. It’s not just Caucasian people everywhere….For me it’s not just Pakistani people everywhere…so why would I just teach about Pakistani people or their values or thoughts (Initial interview).

She feels that teachers should expose children to many beliefs, not just the specifics of a single group or culture.
I am Muslim. I don’t have a problem with teaching about Islam…some people say oh no, don’t teach about Islam, they don’t need to know that. I am not going to preach to them that they need to be Muslim. But I am gonna tell them this is what they do, this is their culture, this is their religion (Initial interview).

She thinks that no child or adult should be ignored by other, more dominant cultural groups of people. Shazia believes that if just one major culture is the focus in classrooms that are heterogeneous, there will be an unequal learning environment.

What if they meet a Muslim person, one day, and obviously they will because Muslims have a huge population in the U.S. I don’t want them to be ignorant about who that is or who is a Hindu or Vietnamese or African–American person (Initial interview).

She feels that lack of knowledge about other sociocultural groups may contribute to misunderstandings, prejudices, privileges, exclusive attitudes, etc. She again stresses that it is necessary for children to know other people as well as themselves.

I would never want any children in my class to think, oh they are slaves. I want everyone to know about everyone else and you can capitalize on children in your classroom to bring their things in (Initial interview).

*The importance of understanding children’s personal background.* Shazia perceives that it is vital for teachers to know where the children in their classes are coming from in terms of the lifeworlds outside of school. She views that teachers’ teaching can never be meaningful without understanding each child’s own cultural
background. Shazia believes that teachers should make a special effort to get further data about each child’s specific home culture.

If you never took initiative to know where your child’s from, and if you didn’t take an extra step to find out if the children are very westernized or Americanized and if they even celebrate their traditional holidays. If you come in one day and say like “today we are gonna learn about Kwanzaa” the child’s gonna think you are dumb because he doesn’t celebrate Kwanzaa and you just assumed that he does. But a lot of times teachers do that and [it] makes them look like they are not prepared (Initial interview).

Shazia believes that teachers’ genuine love and enthusiasm will help children develop attitudes which are open to learning about other cultures.

If you give your children love you will be able to teach them anything. Because if children know that you genuinely care for them, they will care for you and want to show you things they are doing (Initial interview).

The importance of teaching approaches which motivate children to learn about diversity. Shazia finds it personally interesting to learn about different cultural practices. She believes that it will also be interesting for children to learn how people do things in different or similar ways. She feels that teachers’ teaching approaches can go a long way towards boosting children’s interest in diversity. She suggests that teachers use children’s literature books as one method for facilitating their interest in learning about diversity.
There are a plethora of books and children love to read them. Don’t think that you can put out a book about Kenya or Bangladesh and the children won’t wanna pick it up and read it (Initial interview).

She repeatedly mentions, however, that it is better for children to choose what they would like to read rather than teachers picking and forcing children to read selected books. “If you approach it the right way, it can be a lot of fun for children. She emphasizes that children’s fun and interest should be important in reading – not just reading for the purpose of learning about diversity. She wants to incorporate many book activities for the benefits and fun they may bring to children in her class.

Obviously, I think fun is a big deal. If they are having fun, they are enjoying it and learning it. That’s not something I would do, fun book with characters it would still be about the country but not something that’s cut and dry and boring and basically to show the kids that you are doing something just cause you have to (Initial interview).

*The influence of Shazia’s parents on her learning about diversity.* Shazia notes that her parents value education and have done a great job in respecting that she is different from other children in aspects of her personality and learning style. She thinks that her parents play an ‘unimaginable amount of role’ in her life to ensure that she does not have any confusion about her status regarding race, ethnicity, and sociocultural background. “If they didn’t bring me up the way they did I would never be the person I am.”

They wanted to raise me to be a good person, a good daughter, and a good mother. They are who I have to thank for the person that I am and the teacher that
I have become and the daughter that I am. I have molded myself to who I am. My parents let me experience all that I wanted to as long as they knew what I was doing (Initial interview).

She remembers at times being confused by her parents being of a different culture and generation than hers. “I am a first generation American and my parents are more Pakistani than I am.” She feels, however, that she is proud to say, “I am very Pakistani.” She wants to raise her children in the same way her parents raised her, letting them know their original culture.

I want them to know their culture and where they came from. I believe that confusion arises when we say “Oh he is confused, he doesn’t know where he belongs.” I have never felt like that because my parents have always given me that sense of belonging, no matter if we wanted to be American or Pakistani. I think there is a very good mix of which I am….because I know what I want to do and what I don’t want to do, my limits (Initial interview).

Being taught where she is from and offered appropriate education and information about things, Shazia feels lucky. Her parents have never said her decisions are wrong; rather, they tell her “we don’t do this but you decide.” Shazia’s parents admire her faith, values, and beliefs.

That was just my good fortune. They don’t say we think you are bad, you need to get your act like this. They know that there are a lot of things I do because I want to….things about my religion. At a time in my life I want to be a good Muslim…I do have a lot of faith, but I want to follow my religion more closely. I do decently
but there will come a time when I will choose those things and my parents understand that (Initial interview).

She has an open relationship with her parents. “I talk to them everyday…my mom is one of my best friends…” Her parents always teach her to have an opinion. “Tell someone how you feel, don’t just keep it in. If you are confused about something, talk to someone and try to take that confusion away. Don’t just sit there and do nothing about something.” Thanks to her parents, Shazia thinks that she is outspoken.

My parents raised me differently from how they raised my sister. We both learned the same things but she got the info in a different way than I did. She and I are very different from each other (Initial interview).

Shazia adds that teaching approaches should be different depending on each child’s characteristics. She states that, therefore, a teacher should study children to understand how they best learn.

Being educated by her parents about Muslim values and beliefs, Shazia realizes that her parents also effect her teaching philosophy regarding diversity. Shazia emphasizes that she will never preach what she believes to the children in her classrooms. Rather, she feels that teachers should be “culture-wise” and know children in classrooms, schools, homes, communities, and larger cultural groups.

Things like culture wise….anything that is not a part of their daily routine. It’s fun to learn about what other people do or not do. When children were younger…what kinds of games they played and what their family life was like and it makes you a different person (Initial interview).
Appreciating diversity. Shazia desires to teach children that everyone is special and unique. “Maybe you are good at one thing and someone else is good at another. It doesn’t make you better than him or him better than you.” She wants children to know who they are and their uniqueness.

I want them to know that you are you and no one else can be like you and you can never expect anyone else to be like you (Initial interview).

Similar to this, Shazia wants the children in her classes to accept people for who they are. She asserts that children should know that there is no hierarchy are status associated with different cultures.

You have to accept culture and race and things for what they are. If something is different from your own, it doesn’t make yours any better than theirs and you may reflect that’s just not what we are to do (Initial interview).

“There is nothing you can do where you won’t encounter diversity, diversity in ability, diversity as far as color, race, religion, sex, anything.” She emphasizes, however, that all of these differences can not be equated with lesser values and morals. “Everything is so diverse and that’s what makes the group.”

My goal would be let every child know that things are done differently in different places. That doesn’t make what anyone else does less important or more important (Initial interview).

Therefore, Shazia notes that she wants her children to be open to other people so that they can learn and benefit from each other. She believes that there is so much people can learn from others.
I want them to know that there is a lot that a person could be bringing to the scenario, to a situation and I should let that person tell me what it is that he knows. I should be open to that person and open to what he has to say about diversity in thought. And maybe I don’t think you do, but do you wanna know what I think. You can learn from me and I can learn from you (Initial interview).

*Shazia’s Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity*

*Seeing a Need for a More Practical Approach to Teacher Education*

*The importance of experiencing more issues and in-depth learning about diversity.* “We really have not done anything very multicultural. It is very much like incorporate or combine two subject matters and make it a diversity thing like…talk, cater to what the children in your classroom are like or cater a lesson towards that if there is a lot of adopted children in your classroom, have a lesson on adoption.” Shazia perceives that her teacher education program does not satisfy her needs for multicultural education. “They place low effort or low emphasis on it in the sense that we don’t go out and teach multiculturally everyday.” She explains that the only thing she has learned from her multicultural classes is the standard lecture on the importance of multiculturalism. She mentions, “We haven’t really done anything with it….really. It does not prepare me to do it.”

Pointing out the limitations of her teacher education program for diversity, Shazia recommends ideas to teacher educators for future teacher education programs with respect to multicultural education. She indicates that teacher educators should use teaching styles which are multicultural for students in terms of incorporating diverse curriculum and methods.
I think that they should just be open to different styles of teaching because in a way that is multicultural, too. I mean the way you teach and the way I teach don’t have to be the same. Just be open to what is it that the children can learn (Initial interview).

She also suggests that teacher education programs should not be limited to just African–American issues, emphasizing the need to deal more with other issues concerning diversity. “Multiculturalism isn’t just learning about African–American history. There is a lot more to it and there is a lot more you can do with it.”

It doesn’t make sense to me to have one whole month dedicated to black history month and what about one whole month dedicated to Asian Americans or something like that. Every day in the month of February they talk about a certain black history person or whatever ….kids don’t even listen. They are not benefiting from it (Initial interview).

Pointing out that it is not fair to emphasize and place value on just one culture in classrooms with students from diverse backgrounds, she stresses that various cultural beliefs and practices should be taken into account and be weighed equally in classrooms, even at the university level.

Experiencing Cases regarding Diversity

“Who Eats the Mango?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of taking into account children’s prior knowledge and experience. “The case tells us that the community in which the children reside is one which is ‘largely white, middle class suburban’ and is just beginning to experience some
diversity from recent Central American immigration.” In her personal reaction, Shazia points out that the student teacher’s [Kim’s] dilemma comes from the assumptions she has made about the children’s previous experience and knowledge.

Kim wanted to include the fruits and vegetables of different cultures in her lesson and she thought the children would be eager and excited. She assumed that her children would be welcoming of the new fruits and vegetables because of the recent diversity in their community (Personal reactions to the case).

Shazia believes that Kim is trying to create a lesson which is multicultural but does not really take into account the cultures of the children in her class. Shazia believes that Kim’s feelings about her ‘unsuccessful’ lesson are a natural consequence of her lack of consideration for children’s prior knowledge about diversity. Shazia discusses this lack, focusing on the idea that children in the class have no knowledge about new immigrant cultures and that children’s knowledge about diversity is not built automatically.

We can never assume that children have been exposed to a certain culture just because there has been recent immigration in the area. Kim overlooked the fact, that maybe, her children were unaffected by the newcomers, place in the community, and even if they were affected, does not mean they had been exposed to these fruits and vegetables (Responses to case reaction questions).

The above comment reflects Kim’s perspective and illustrates her assumptions concerning classroom activity. She also takes the perspective of children in the case by explaining their reflections upon unexpectedly being exposed to new and different cultures as well. Criticizing Kim’s approach to the lesson in separating the “normal” fruits and vegetables from the “abnormal” ones, Shazia also shares her own perspective
as a future teacher regarding this point. “I would not present a certain culture under normal light and another as being different or strange.”

From Shazia’s perspective, Kim’s decision to include the ‘different’ fruits and vegetables in her lesson reflects an awareness of the recent influx of immigration, but is not based on the prior knowledge of children in the classroom. “Kim was using the science curriculum to serve as a mirror and a window, but her children were not ready to look through.” Considering the perspective of Kim, Shazia evaluates the student teacher’s intentions for the classroom activity positively; Shazia perceives that Kim makes an explicit decision to incorporate multiculturalism in her lesson.

*The importance of an appropriate introduction for the science lesson.* From her personal reaction and case reaction questions to the case, Shazia continuously demonstrates the perspective of Kim, noting how Kim is following her supervising teacher’s opinion, “making connections between children’s science experiences and daily life.” In her case reaction questions, however, Shazia criticizes Kim for not thinking carefully about the different aspects of the activity.

I do not think that Kim did any preliminary thinking on how the lesson should be taught, or how the children would react (Responses to case reaction questions). Shazia also challenges Kim’s assumption that children will voluntarily make connections between the common and uncommon fruits and vegetables. In both her case reactions and discussion, Shazia consistently condemns Kim’s teaching approach to the classroom activity, pointing out the ramifications of distinguishing between common and uncommon fruits and vegetables for the children in her class.
She presented the new fruits and vegetables in a way that made them seem separate from the rest. She presented the fruits and vegetables as different, and in a way [that] led the children to believe that the fruits and vegetables they brought in were “normal” and these new ones the opposite, “abnormal.” She didn’t realize that at their age children consider “different” to be “weird” and “strange” (Personal reactions to the case).

In considering Kim’s teaching approach to the lesson, Shazia also criticizes her lack of a smooth transition from the familiar to the unfamiliar labeling of fruits.

Kim’s practices reflect that she did not take into consideration the daily lives and culture of her children when introducing them to new material from a different culture. In fact, I do not feel that she had an introduction when she went from familiar (oranges, apple, bananas) to unfamiliar (mangoes, etc.) (Responses to case reaction questions).

Along this same line, Shazia again touches on the issue of children’s prior knowledge about the classroom activity. In her personal reaction, Shazia states that:

Kim’s frustration is understandable; I believe that many times we overlook simple facts about our children’s previous knowledge. We take for granted that their excitement will extend to any material, this is true, but the presentation of the material must be thought out and planned. Transitions should be smooth and introductions should be meaningful (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of clarifying lesson purposes to children.* Emphasizing the importance of a good transition when introducing the common and uncommon fruits and vegetables to children, Shazia assesses Kim’s assumptions for the classroom activity,
stressing the need for teachers to clarify the purposes and intentions of a lesson using appropriate introductions. The following excerpt illustrates Shazia’s perspective with respect to the assumptions made by the teacher in this case.

She just made a really big assumption that the children would know that this is why we’re doing it because there has been a local increase of Central American residents to your neighborhood. Kim actually was trying to make it like a multicultural lesson by doing, by having the Central American fruits or whatever, but the children didn’t know that (Case discussion).

*The importance of developing ability for preservice teachers to handle unexpected situations during a lesson.* In spite of all the criticisms posed above, Shazia demonstrates an understanding of the positive aspects of Kim’s lesson, especially noting the intentions of the lesson.

Often times, lessons don’t go as planned. Although I do not think she planned much, I do think her intentions were right. She had the right idea; her follow-through just wasn’t good enough (Case discussion).

In addition, Shazia thinks that the case dilemma might occur because children in the classroom did not trust the student teacher [Kim] as their teacher. In the case discussion, Shazia considers the dilemma from the perspective of children.

It was very like children didn’t trust the student teacher like they might trust her. I think if it was their teacher, they would have gone along with a lot of it. They don’t really consider Kim the teacher (Case discussion).
**Flexibility of Problem-Solving**

*Student teacher’s discovering children’s personal experiences and cultures.*

Shazia suggests that teachers should find out what each child’s life is at home and the nature of his/her personal environment and cultural practices. During the case discussion, Shazia states the value of in-depth information about children and the need for teachers to avoid hasty conclusions or generalizations.

My parents were Pakistani, but it doesn’t mean that I was raised with those kinds of traditions and values. I could have very well been raised as an American. But you get to learn a lot about what kids’ interests and what their cultural tendencies and what not are from talking to parents, and not just filling out a sheet of paper that says what language they speak in the home and where they are from (Case discussion).

*Student teacher’s providing enough guidelines for children to prepare a lesson.*

From the case discussion, Shazia mentions, “I’m sure a lot of the children brought in apples and bananas which are typical stuff.” In her personal reaction and case discussion, Shazia indicates that instead of generally asking children to bring in some fruits and vegetables, Kim could have asked children more specifically to try and bring in uncommon fruits and vegetables that they are not used to eating in their home or they have never seen before. Furthermore, Shazia describes what she considers to be a desirable approach to the lesson. She feels that Kim should first conduct a mini-lesson about a variety of fruits and vegetables in order for children to get a sense about common and uncommon ones.
If I were doing this lesson, I would have explored common fruits and vegetables in class, and then I would have done a mini–exploration on the fruits and vegetables of a different culture. In this way, the children would already be familiar with the variety of fruits and vegetables, and it would be easier for them to bring in a fruit and vegetable that was different from ones we are accustomed to (Personal reactions to the case).

*Student teacher’s introducing children to different cultures through various ways.*

As illustrated in the flexibility of identifying multiple issues, Shazia maintains that Kim’s intentions for the lesson were good. However, she continues to point out Kim’s failure to smoothly plan a way to make the transition from familiar to unfamiliar. Shazia believes that Kim is misguided in thinking that children will react positively to new cultural items without getting a proper introduction to Central America or its native fruits and vegetables. In her reactions, Shazia comments as follows:

I feel that a multicultural lesson can be developed for children, regardless of whether all the children come from the same culture, so long as their backgrounds are considered. However, multicultural lessons should have a good beginning, middle, and end, as well as smooth transitions and introduction (Responses to case reaction questions).

According to Shazia, a better transition for the activity could be developed by integrating her science lesson with social studies. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Shazia gives serious considerations to the integrated curriculum among science and other subject areas using books.
It shouldn’t have just been science. It should have been integrated to all different subject areas, especially social studies. It - Central American culture - can be presented through books and pictures. Then she could have introduced the fruits and vegetables by saying, “these are some of the fruits and vegetables that you read about in the story” (Case discussion).

In her personal reaction, Shazia also suggests that a discussion of the characteristics of various fruits and vegetables would facilitate later comparisons with unfamiliar ones. She could have also introduced the children to the uncommon fruits by asking them to describe the seeds of the common foods. This discussion would serve as a transition to other fruits and vegetables, ones with seeds that look different, like the mango (Personal reactions to the case).

_Student teacher’s and children’s development of in-depth learning about different cultures through interactions with people from other cultures_. In her case discussion, Shazia recommends inviting a guest speaker who is familiar with the new fruits and vegetables. According to Shazia, the benefit of a guest speaker is his/her ability to link the fruits and vegetables with the countries where they were cultivated.

You could have even connected it to that of your peers. Hey, can you talk about what you do, or have one of the parents come in and talk about, oh, this is, we usually eat this for this (Case discussion).

Shazia adds that guest speakers may offer the opportunity to foster children’s in-depth learning for the lesson. In her case discussion, Shazia elaborates, explaining, “In some countries mangos are like a delicacy. In Pakistan, mangos are eaten every day after dinner or lunch.”
Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Content integration: The importance of providing in-depth learning opportunities rather than simple infusion of unfamiliar fruits and vegetables into the science lesson.

“She throws some multicultural stuff in without thinking. How is this gonna affect the children? How are the children gonna react to it?” Even though Kim is attempting to make her lesson multicultural, in her case discussion, Shazia suggests that Kim is trying to do this by simply incorporating multicultural artifacts into her lesson. From the perspective of Shazia, Kim’s attempt to infuse unfamiliar fruits and vegetables from different cultures into the science lesson addresses issues of diversity in a simplistic manner. The unfamiliar fruits and vegetables seem to be simple materials to add some “multiculturalism” without true effort to teach and learn about the different culture that produces the uncommon fruits and vegetables.

Shazia thinks that a more appropriate lesson introduction is necessary since the children have no experience with the uncommon fruits and vegetables.

She was integrating the mangoes and whatever the different fruits and vegetables into her lesson about fruits and vegetables. She integrated that into her lesson but her flaw was basically that she integrated it just very abruptly. There was no introduction, there was nothing. It was done very haphazardly (Exit interview).

In her case discussion, Shazia mentions that if she were the student teacher, Kim, she would incorporate different books about the fruits and vegetables in the class and discuss with children their experiences eating different fruits and vegetables.

Prejudice reduction: The importance of having children get appropriate knowledge and information about other cultures. In reflecting on Kim’s lesson, Shazia
suggests that children need to learn about the culture of the Central America instead of having simply an experience of eating the uncommon fruits and vegetables. Using the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables from the Central America, children may get opportunities to learn about culture from this part of the world and reduce any kind of prejudices they may have developed over time. Shazia thinks, in fact, that Kim’s labeling of the fruits and vegetables as ‘the normal’ and ‘the abnormal’ may actually result in increasing children’s prejudices about cultures different than their own.

I would never want to introduce something in a way that would make it seem like what we do is normal and let’s learn something that’s not normal. I don’t consider them to be not normal. They are just different from what we do. They are not better or worse. We may not like it and that’s fine. But don’t you wanna know about what other people are doing or other countries are doing? It’s just interesting (Case discussion).

Shazia emphasizes that children can get inappropriate ideas about other cultures without having proper information and knowledge. She extends her thinking about prejudice reduction, relating it to stereotypes associated with race.

Did you read the thing yesterday about “Daddy you know who’s down there?” because it was really all like black people in the jail, and her daddy’s a sheriff. This little girl was so shocked like “Daddy you know whose down there? . . . A white man in jail!” She was so shocked that white people could go to jail. She thought it was only like African–American people that went to jail (Case discussion).
From Shazia’s perspective, failure to provide adequate information about other cultures can be miseducative. Therefore, Shazia thinks that Kim should design an experience in which children are “going from knowing nothing about Central America to knowing about the culture and to telling them to eat the food.”

In curriculum and classroom environment, I would consider what they actually know and what I would never want any of my children to think (Case discussion).

“The Day the Lobster Died”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The lobster cookout as an interesting culminating multicultural experience.

Shazia thinks that the classroom teacher’s [Stan’s] reasoning behind ending the unit with a cookout is understandable and justifiable. In her personal reaction, she looks favorably on Stan’s intentions for the lesson, putting herself in Stan’s shoes.

He felt that the children would not only have an opportunity to see and taste lobster, which is not so common in the South where he was teaching, but also learn about how a marine animal can shape the economy, life, and identity of a region. This all sounds good (Personal reactions to the case).

Shazia also reveals, in her response to the case reaction questions, that she does not mind using animals in the classroom as a source of learning. “I do feel that the idea of the lobster was multicultural because children are not accustomed to it. It is a good idea to incorporate it into the culminating unit.”

The importance of awareness of the experiential differences between teachers and children in planning a lesson. In spite of her agreement with Stan’s intentions for the lesson, Shazia does not agree with Stan’s cookout idea for many other reasons. In her
personal reaction, Shazia states that Stan’s lesson would be smoother and less
controversial without the lobster. Most of all, Shazia criticizes Stan for not taking into
consideration the difference in experiences between himself and the children in his class.
In her case reaction questions and discussion, Shazia looks at the lesson from Stan’s
perspective, noting that while cooking a lobster is not normal for the children who live in
the southern region of the U.S., it is not special for Stan.

Stan is from the East. Stan was born and raised in New England. It kept coming to
me that it was normal for Stan to eat or cook a lobster because he was from the
New England area. Lobsters are part of the custom and culture of that region
(Responses to case reaction questions).

Considering Stan’s geographical background, Shazia realizes that Stan views
animals as a source of food. Responding to the case reaction questions, Shazia analyzes
Stan’s characteristics and flaws as a classroom teacher and tries to take the perspective of
Stan in attempting to understand his position regarding the case dilemma.

He obviously isn’t a vegetarian, and doesn’t avoid the use of animals in the
classroom. Stan also might consider animals’ main purpose to be as a source of
food. I say this because of his comment about not naming food (Responses to case
reaction questions).

In her response to the case reaction questions and personal reaction, Shazia states that if
she were Stan, she would never impose her cultural beliefs on children. Shazia views the
following scene between Stan and his children as an example where different
assumptions about animals can lead to classroom tensions.
Stan’s mistake was his response to the girl who asked the lobster’s name. Stan’s comment, “We don’t name our food” made it seem like a lobster’s sole purpose is food. He could have simply said, “He doesn’t have a name” (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of being cautious in dealing with life and death issues in 5th grade classrooms. As far as emotional and psychological trauma that may be associated with this case, Shazia reveals, in her personal reaction, that she does not think that the concept of life and death and animals as a source of food should be avoided in 5th grade.

5th graders are between 10 and 11 years old. I believe that it is okay to assume that they have knowledge that animals are a source of food. I do not feel that animals as a source of food should be the dilemma surrounding this case (Personal reactions to the case).

“I don’t think we need to protect our children from life and death because those are things that are natural.” Even though Shazia believes that the issues of life and death need not be avoided in 5th grade classes, this does not mean that Shazia agrees with the lobster cookout in a classroom. At this point, Shazia distinguishes between a natural death and a cruel death. In her personal reaction, Shazia discusses this and considers the perspective of children in the case.

It probably has happened to most children in some form or fashion, perhaps, a grandparent, other relative, and/or pet. The problem with the lobster was more that it wasn’t going to be a natural death; in the eyes of the children it would be killing the lobster (Personal reactions to the case).
Additionally, in the case discussion, Shazia expresses the concern that issues of life and death in the classroom should be approached with caution because they often lead to religious questions.

Criticizing Stan’s lobster cookout lesson in terms of cruelty, Shazia takes on the perspectives of children in the case and herself as the classroom teacher [Stan]. Shazia thinks that unnatural death is not developmentally appropriate for 5th grade children. The following excerpt is from her personal reaction.

If it happens naturally that’s fine, but I would never bring something and actually kill it in the class. I would never put them in that scenario (Personal reactions to the case).

Reflecting on the issues of life and death, Shazia is concerned with children’s feelings during their encounter with the lobster boil. In her personal reaction, Shazia critiques Stan’s reaction to the children’s behaviors, pointing out that Stan does not fully consider children’s fearful feelings.

When Stan saw that two of his children were disturbed by the cookout, he could have also handled the situation better. Rather, he yelled, “Alright, that’s enough” when his children ran out the door crying. Even when he went outside the classroom, Stan did not say or do anything to quell the child’s concerns and fears. He simply asked the girls to calm down and wash up (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of considering safety issues in cooking a lobster.* Shazia indicates that Stan is overlooking the conditions in which he cooks. In her personal reaction, she shows her perspective as the classroom teacher [Stan] regarding the case dilemma. “I
would never have decided to cook live food or anything raw for that matter.” From her personal reaction, Shazia describes a safety issue with Stan’s plan to cook a live lobster in his classroom.

Teachers need to be very careful when they plan on cooking in the classroom since they are held accountable for what goes on in their classrooms. Maybe the classroom had a kitchen; nonetheless, the idea of cooking and having children eat it is scary to me and should be done with much precaution if done at all (Personal reactions to the case).

**Flexibility of Problem-Solving**

*Teachers and children are researching to develop in-depth learning about lobsters.* In her personal reaction, Shazia perceives that Stan could have given the children the opportunity to learn about the importance of the lobster in its particular region without the cookout. Praising Stan’s ‘interesting’ way to introduce the lobster - wrapped in a box, Shazia repeatedly says that Stan could have kept this interest alive without the lobster boil.

Keeping the purposes and children’s interest clear for the lesson, Shazia suggests that Stan might even consider developing a whole unit on the theme of lobsters. “Stan can have the children observe the lobster, write stories, and research the regions where lobsters are common.” In her case discussion, Shazia elaborates more about this possibility.

He could have done a whole unit on bringing in one lobster. They could have an opportunity to learn not only about lobsters but also about how marine animals are shape the economy’s identity. They could have done like a research theme,
where lobsters are commonly found, or even how it effects that area (Case
discussion).

As another activity to explore lobsters, Shazia recommends that Stan and his
children find recipes using lobsters and make a cookbook.

They could have also found recipes that called for lobster and make a class lobster
cookbook. It could have been a class recipe book with lobster recipes (Personal
reactions to the case).

The multicultural benefits of experiencing the lobster boil. “I thought that Stan
should not have continued the lobster cookout.” Feeling that Stan can have other
alternatives to give children the benefits of learning firsthand about lobsters, Shazia
suggests that children can have chances to taste pre-cooked lobster. She thinks a tasting
activity will be a good opportunity for children to experience different cultures while
avoiding the issue of harming an innocent animal.

He could have still brought the cooked lobster in and had them taste it which is
multicultural; because they’re not used to eating that and so it’s something from a
different culture, basically, which exposes them to something different (Case
discussion).

In her case discussion with peers, Shazia thinks that Stan’s lesson might change by
saying, “Alright we won’t cook it, but maybe tomorrow I could bring in fish sticks
cooked already, yeah!” Shazia strongly believes that Stan should not cook a lobster in his
class because she anticipates that children may have horrible feelings while participating
in the lobster boil. In her reaction to the post discussion about the case, Shazia mentions
that she, herself, learned some new information about cooking a lobster.
I didn’t know much about the cooking of a lobster. A couple of the girls in my group said lobsters screech and scream when they are cooked. This would have been horrible for the children to hear. If the little girl was upset about just cooking it because they would killing it, even if Stan assured her it was okay because it’s a food source, the class would have felt that the lobster screeching meant it was in pain (Post case discussion responses).

In order to help reduce children’s fearful feelings about cooking or eating lobsters, Shazia assumes that it will be good for children to talk about people eating lobsters much like they would discuss eating chickens.

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

*Knowledge construction: The importance of children’s prior experiences.* Shazia believes that when integrating the lobster cookout lesson into his existing unit of sea or marine life, Stan does not take into account the prior views and knowledge constructed by children. In her personal reaction, Shazia suggests that Stan should significantly consider children’s prior experiences including their socioeconomic status, geographical regions, and other aspects of their culture.

Stan, who is from the East, thought a lobster cookout would be a great experience for his children; however, Stan was in the south and the kids from that region really don’t know about lobster cookouts. Children have never constructed that knowledge of having a lobster cookout (Personal reactions to the case).

Shazia believes that the lobster boil, as a culminating activity, reflects Stan’s positive intentions. However, in her response to the case reaction questions and personal reaction, she explains why boiling and eating lobsters may have seemed more like animal
cruelty, attributing this perception to children’s lack of knowledge about lobsters. In her personal reaction, Shazia again emphasizes how differences in cultural backgrounds impact the effectiveness of the lesson.

Stan did not take into consideration the effect the lobster would have on the children. Since the children do not have much exposure to the animal, they probably were not familiar with the lobster being a source of food. It is normal for Stan to have a lobster cookout because where he came from they are common, but to children in the South lobster may not necessarily be food. Therefore, Stan may not have realized that some of his children would find the cookout cruel and unbearable to watch (Personal reactions to the case).

“Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of considering children’s personal background in designing a science lesson. Shazia criticizes the classroom teacher’s [Perla’s] lack of attention to the connection between the sciences the children are experiencing at home and at school. In her personal reaction and response to the case reaction questions, Shazia notices that Perla’s lesson on the effects of deforestation does not match the experience that Antonio or probably other children in the community are getting at home. Shazia critiques Perla, pointing out that she overlooks the fact that children in her community will come from families that make their living from cutting down trees. She takes the perspective of Antonio when explaining why Shazia’s lesson created some confusion.

Antonio left class on Friday thinking it was wrong to cut down trees; we should plant more and more trees and prevent trees from being cut down. However, the
next day, he witnessed his father cut down trees to make charcoal. Antonio didn’t know what to believe. He asked his father, who had a very legitimate reason to cut down the trees. The family earned money by selling charcoal, which is made from trees. Antonio experiences a different kind of science in his home. The science he experienced in the classroom did not correlate with the real-life science he experiences at home. This poses contradiction and confusion for children (Personal reactions to the case).

Shazia distinctly remembers Antonio’s father saying, “We must cut down trees in order to make charcoal and to sell charcoal in order to have money to buy our food.” Shazia empathizes with Antonio’s confusion between his father and his classroom teacher. In this sense, she considers contradiction and confusion to be negative aspects of the learning process.

The importance of balancing community and school science. Shazia discusses the case dilemma by focusing on the classroom teacher [Perla] as well as concentrating upon Antonio’s feelings of confusion. Shazia deliberates on the dilemma Perla faces and sympathizes with her response to Antonio. When Antonio asked Perla if it was okay for his father to cut down trees, Shazia wonders “How do you possibly respond to that, without pointing a finger?” Shazia indicates that if she were in Perla’s situation, she would feel the same way. In her personal reaction, she shares her views on this, taking the perspective of herself as the classroom teacher [Perla]. Shazia considers the importance of balancing the dual sciences of Antonio’s home and school cultures, while taking care not to embarrass Antonio and his father.
I thought about it for a long time and decided that if I were in Perla’s position I would probably tell Antonio that, “sometimes we need to cut down trees, because we need the resources.” This is very different from when we cut down trees for destruction purposes. I would explain to Antonio that we need trees for many things, like paper to write on and houses to live in. Sometimes it’s okay to cut them down and other times it’s not okay. I would tell him that it involves using our good judgment and I’m sure that his father used his good judgment when cutting down the trees to make charcoal. I wouldn’t want Antonio to think that his father was doing something wrong (Personal reactions to the case).

Shazia questions whether Perla’s and Antonio’s dilemma is related to different family background. Responding to the case reaction questions, Shazia again reflects on this dilemma from the perspective of herself as Perla.

I would have probably taught the same thing in regard to cutting down trees. This is because my family does not make its living doing that. Similarly, Perla’s family did not earn money from cutting down trees (Responses to case reaction questions).

In her response to the case reaction questions, Shazia states, “Perla is a very respectful teacher and she will be sensitive to the fact that Antonio’s father cuts trees to make charcoal.” Shazia feels she can imagine Perla’s distress at having to give Antonio a response or solution.

“I gathered that Perla did an excellent job handling the situation of what to teach children from poverty.” In her response to the post case discussion question, Shazia expresses the belief that Perla created a meaningful science lesson for the children in her
class. As for the intentions of the lesson, Shazia specifies her reason for assessing Perla’s lesson positively as followings: “She did make a decision to teach the children the harm caused by cutting down trees. I believe she did this because it is the natural and correct thing to teach. She did a lot of planning before she taught the lesson.” Shazia elaborates, offering another reason why she considers Perla’s lesson as an example of effective teaching.

The children seemed perceptive to her lesson, and were able to provide her feedback on the topic without much assistance from her. The children could relate to the topic being presented (Personal reactions to the case).

In her response to the case reaction questions, Shazia reveals her belief that Perla knows a great deal about multicultural issues in her classroom because she comes from the same community as the children. Shazia notes one more reason to view the lesson optimistically, pointing out Perla’s awareness of the community in which she teaches and lives.

She, herself, probably does not favor cutting down trees; however she did not want to tell Antonio that, because she realizes that some people make their living in this way. Food on the table outweighs trees in the ground, for some people (Responses to case reaction questions).

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Teacher’s supporting children’s home culture by encouraging dialogue.* In her case discussion and response to the post case discussion question, Shazia states that Perla should have told Antonio that his father was not wrong for cutting down the trees, affirming the importance of charcoal as a resource needed from the trees. Shazia,
considering the dilemma from the perspective of Perla, emphasizes the importance of respecting children’s home and cultural values.

If I was Perla, I would tell Antonio that we have to cut down trees for resources for paper and wood and charcoal and I'm sure you have to use your good judgment to do something like that. There's times when it's okay to cut 'em down and when it's not and it takes good judgment. And I'm sure that his dad used better judgment when you're cutting down trees (Case discussion).

Shazia suggests, however, that Perla could have explained more to Antonio about the importance of planting new trees to replace the ones that they were cutting down for charcoal.

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Knowledge construction: The importance of not making ‘right or wrong’ judgments between the culture of home and school science. “I remember her saying that when she traveled to college she passed several streams that fanned out into the ocean. She also mentions the fresh fish of the community.” From Shazia’s perspective, Perla has the upper hand because she, too, is from the community. However, Shazia states that Perla has to develop more in-depth knowledge about the community and the personal background of each child in her class.

Shazia believes that Perla should discover, create, and implement her lesson for children living in poverty by paying more attention to the fact that a lot of people in the community make their money from cutting down trees. Emphasizing the need for teachers to be aware of the characteristics of the community in which they work, Shazia thinks that Perla should never make a judgmental statement to children that portrays
something as right or wrong: “Knowing that I would never have said, oh well, we need to stop cutting down trees and people who do are bad.” Noting how knowledge is constructed by different sociocultural groups, Shazia indicates that Perla should develop more in-depth knowledge about the community that she teaches in, being careful not to hurt the feelings of the children and families who are cutting down trees.

Cutting down trees is his job. And that’s where my uncle works and that’s where my grandfather worked, whatever, and knowing the ideas and knowledge that your children have will really help in doing that (Case discussion).

At this point, Shazia suggests that Perla’s lesson about the effects of deforestation on the environment also can be a multicultural issue in classrooms where there are diverse values and beliefs.

“El Secreto de las Ninãs”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of being aware of and sensitive to children’s personal background. In her personal reaction, Shazia perceives that the case dilemma centers on the meaning of access to science in schools. Shazia feels that oftentimes teachers take for the granted the access children have to science materials and resources. Describing the difficulty of getting materials for a science class, Shazia considers the perspective of the homeless children in the case.

Something as simple as bringing in a shoebox to make a camera could seem like bringing in a digital camera to a homeless child (Personal reactions to the case).
Shazia feels that ‘El Secreto de las Ninãs’ is a case which makes teachers more aware of the reality of homelessness: “One day we might have a homeless child in our class, because children are the highest percentage of homeless people.”

Describing her perception about the case dilemma and the two homeless children’s inner thoughts and feelings, Shazia criticizes the classroom teacher’s lack of awareness concerning the girls’ backgrounds and situations. In her response to the post case discussion question, Shazia emphasizes her belief that the classroom teacher should have been more knowledgeable about the lives of homeless children in her classroom. Shazia considers the perspective of the two homeless children, Cynthia and Jessica.

Cynthia and Jessica claim they do not like science because they are not used to it. But the two girls liked science and were looking forward to their unit on movie making, until their teacher asked them to bring in shoeboxes to make movie cameras. The girls knew they would not be able to get mom or sibling to drive them to a shoe store, where they can get one for free, or they can bring in fifty cents to buy one. They want to keep their reason a secret until a science teacher, who teaches at their shelter is interested in their secret. She gets the girls talking and realizes that their secret is that they are homeless (Personal reactions to the case).

From her personal reaction and response to the case reaction questions, Shazia indicates that the classroom teacher perhaps lacked experience with homeless children: “Maybe, she was unaware, like most people that children make up a large percentage of the homeless. I do feel that the teacher, like any other teacher, was not aware of the complexities of living in a homeless shelter or even being homeless.”
The importance of considering children’s feelings. Again taking the perspective of the homeless girls, Shazia criticizes the teacher’s lack of awareness and empathizes with the homeless children’s feelings.

This is obviously a problem for it is extremely easy for the teacher to assume that all children would be able to bring in a shoebox, and if not, then pay money for one. However, she did not realize that for a homeless child this would not only be difficult and impossible, but also embarrassing (Personal reactions to the case).

At this point, Shazia confesses that she, too, does not know much about how to work with homeless children, or how to plan and implement activities that do not take for granted materials accessible by all children. However, while discussing the case, Shazia reveals that she’s learned that not all children have access to the materials and resources that are needed for class projects.

In addition, Shazia in her personal reaction considers the two homeless girls’ embarrassed feelings and subsequent behaviors.

Cynthia and Jessica decided to tell the teacher their secret; however, they didn’t come out and say they were homeless. Instead, they told her that they couldn’t afford to buy the boxes and their moms could not speak English or drive, for that matter (Personal reactions to the case).

Shazia expands on her views, suggesting that the classroom teacher, while sympathizing with the girls, was not able to find the most meaningful alternative solution to dealing with the dilemma of access to materials.

The importance of motivating children’s learning in the context of different personal backgrounds. Shazia critiques the classroom teacher’s problem solving
approaches with respect to the dilemma in the case. “The teacher tells the children that they are getting older and need to become more responsible for their education.” In her personal reaction, Shazia points out that the dilemma is not really related to helping children develop responsibility for their own learning. In particular, Shazia feels that the alternative means of obtaining the shoeboxes were not meaningful for the two homeless children, believing that the science lesson was not an appropriate time to instill work values. For Shazia, the classroom teacher’s approach to dealing with the case dilemma is actually a form of punishment for Cynthia and Jessica. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Shazia puts herself in the position of these two homeless girls, imagining the feelings of shame experienced by Cynthia and Jessica.

She asked them to stay in for recess and clean the erasers to earn the boxes. This sounds like a good way for the children to earn boxes, but to the girls probably sounded like a punishment. I feel that they felt like they were being punished for being poor. Furthermore, she told them she’d keep it a secret, which she probably meant to keep their privacy. Whereas, the girls took it to mean they should be ashamed of their lifestyles (Personal reactions to the case).

In her response to the case reaction questions, Shazia explains that the teacher did not provide the homeless children, Cynthia and Jessica, with a meaningful way to earn the shoeboxes. Rather, Shazia views that the alternative of earning the shoeboxes by cleaning erasers proves that the classroom teacher did not fully understand what it meant for the children to be homeless.
Flexibility of Problem-Solving

Anticipating the materials needed for science lessons. Shazia thinks that most classroom teachers are not aware of what it means to be homeless. Remembering that science materials are not available for all children, Shazia assumes that she would have changed the lesson if she were the teacher. Shazia says that she will collect additional materials in order for more children to participate in and enjoy her lesson. In her personal reaction, case discussion, and the response to the case reaction questions, Shazia also considers the perspective of herself in the role of the classroom teacher.

I would have factored in that some children would not bring in boxes, whether they forgot, or they didn’t have the money. I probably would have asked the students to bring in extra shoeboxes if they had some at home, in case some children didn’t have one, or simply forgot. I do not think it is wrong to say someone may not have one, because not all people keep shoeboxes, and not all parents can go to the store to get one, regardless of whether it is free or not (Responses to case reaction questions).

Feeling the need for teachers to prepare adequate materials for class activities, Shazia remembers the advice of a mentor teacher during her internship experience.

We as teachers should see that something simple like crayons and glue was a problem for one of my kindergarten children. We need to make sure we are able to provide materials for children who do not have access to them. After all, we cannot deny children the right to attend a field trip if they don’t pay. Similarly we cannot deny them supplies they will need for projects (Case discussion).
In this context, Shazia asserts in her case discussion that the shoeboxes should be given to the girls for free. “I don't think charging them 50 cents is good. I thought when we were little if you didn't send in money for a field trip you couldn't go on the field trip but now you have to, even if you don't send in money you go.”

**Teacher’s taking account of children’s embarrassed feelings.** As well as preparing extra and free materials for classroom projects, Shazia thinks that the classroom teacher should have cared more about the homeless children’s feelings. Assuming that it is important not to offend or hurt children’s feelings, she sees the need for the classroom teacher to help the homeless children rather than simply have them earn the shoeboxes. In her personal reaction, response to the case reaction questions, and case discussion, Shazia again criticizes the classroom teacher’s problem solving approach by putting herself in the role of the classroom teacher.

I also would have talked to Cynthia and Jessica once they decided not to stay in for recess and clean the erasers. It is obvious that the girls were making a conscious decision to not take part in the project. Since it was similarly obvious that they wanted to create the cameras when they approached the teacher, I would have been alarmed by their decisions to go out instead of earn their shoeboxes. They were no longer enthusiastic and engaged in the activity because of the way the teacher handled their situation (Personal reactions to the case).

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

**Equity pedagogy: The importance of modifying the teaching approach to increase diverse children’s academic achievement.** Shazia declares that children should have equal opportunities for education and academic achievement regardless of their personal
background and situation, including socioeconomic status. “They didn't flat out say, we're homeless, and we can't afford it. Being homeless was their secret.” In particular, lack of money on the part of homeless children should not restrict their learning opportunities.

Considering that children’s interest and motivation are important for their learning, Shazia feels that the classroom teacher’s problem solving approach, particularly the idea of cleaning erasers to earn shoeboxes, is a form of a punishment. Shazia feels that it is not fair for the homeless children in this case to miss the recess time and the learning activity because they cannot bring in shoeboxes or money to earn a box.

Therefore, Shazia feels that if there are children who cannot get supplies, the classroom teacher or the school needs to provide them in order to ensure that all children have equal educational opportunities. This point seems to correspond with Shazia’s belief that teachers should modify their teaching approach in order to promote the academic achievement of children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds.

“When Do You Perform Tuob?: Culture at the Margins of the Science Classroom”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of teachers clarifying their personal beliefs. Shazia questions, “Is it okay to let our beliefs supercede or coincide with our teachings in the classroom?” She says she is having a hard time answering the same question that the classroom teacher [Esperanza] faces in the case. In her personal reaction, she reveals her empathy for Esperanza, sympathizing with the teacher’s confusion about personal beliefs and western science.

There are many beliefs that I have and others have that there is no scientific explanation for; does this mean they are not true? When questioning my own
beliefs I feel that I would never back down from them, regardless, of whether they could be scientifically proven or not. I do, however, feel that, like Esperenza, I would feel very confused (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction, Shazia describes Esperanza’s inner conflict between personal beliefs and scientific truth. Esperanza shares the exact same beliefs as her children; she understands them, their rituals, their culture, and tradition. Yet, it is still difficult for her to accept, in the academic setting of school science, the *tuob* ritual. In the following quote, Shazia discusses Esperanza’s confusion concerning “scientific truth” and the cultural beliefs of community, taking the perspective of the classroom teacher [Esperanza].

There is an underlying conflict in this case. Is it okay to include religious and/or cultural beliefs in our classroom when they relate to our teaching? Esperanza knew that when she went home she would tell her children that *tuob* was injurious to their health. However, the reason why she told the children this is because, generally, it is not healthy to inhale smoke. These children and Esperanza have witnessed the smoke from *tuob* alleviate their hurts and pains. This is what health books and health classes tell us, but what about the *barangay* culture (Personal reactions to the case).

In the case discussion, Shazia suggests that perhaps Esperanza does not recall what she believes, and thus feels like a hypocrite. In her response to the case reaction questions, she recalls what Esperanza says at the end of the case.

“I am even more confused, because I know that when I go home tonight I will see my mother performing *tuob* on my child.” This statement made a lasting
impression in my mind because her practices tell me that she herself believes in *tuob*, but she also believes that to teach science she needs to teach proven fact (Case discussion).

At this point, in her personal reaction, Shazia wonders about the impact of the classroom teacher’s confusion on children. She considers the issue from the perspective of the children in the case. “If a grown woman can be confused, what about the children? They are probably even more confused about what they believed to be true since they were born.”

*The importance of respecting the culture of children’s community.* “She used the children’s discussion to guide them in her direction through the experiment. The experiment was definitely striking, it made her point that smoke is bad for you, but I think it was very extreme.” In her personal reaction and case discussion, Shazia criticizes Esperanza’s fish experiment as an attempt to prove the “scientific truth” in her lesson. Shazia tries to understand the classroom teacher’s thinking in using the experiment to provide empirical evidence that smoke is bad for health. However, from Shazia’s perspective, letting a fish die for the sake of an experiment is not appropriate. Shazia believes the lesson is unnecessarily cruel and that it directly offends the culture of the children’s community.

I’m not an animal activist, but that just seems cruel. I feel that Esperanza made a good point; however, it wasn’t appropriate in her community and context (Case discussion).

Additionally, in her case discussion and response to the post case discussion question, Shazia draws attention to Esperanza’s reactions to student questions. From
Shazia’s perspective, it is problematic that Esperanza decides to reject and abandon the children’s reactions and questions concerning the practice of *tuob*.

I think she tried to ignore it at first, she tried to ignore Mark but then she called on the other child, the child had the same comment to make as Mary Rose (Case discussion).

In her personal reaction, Shazia indicates, “In this society, no teacher is willing to bring religion or personal beliefs into the classroom.” She thinks that is why Esperanza simply smiles at the child who poses the issue of *tuob*, ignores the question and moves on to the next child. Unfortunately, the next child’s comment also centered on the cultural practice of *tuob*. Shazia thinks that the decision to ignore students’ questions puts Esperanza in a very tight situation.

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Teacher’s respecting and celebrating each child’s personal beliefs.* In her personal reaction, Shazia notes that Esperanza could have redirected the discussion back to allergies and left *tuob* alone by simply saying, some “people believe that to work.” Shazia notices that the main topic of the lesson is not to demonstrate the harmful effects of smoke. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Shazia suggests that Esperanza even challenges her own beliefs in the way in which she approaches the whole lesson.

I think she even changed her entire lesson. Cause it was really just a lesson on allergies and she really changed it to what smoking can do to you. That had nothing to do with the allergies (Case discussion).

Shazia explains that Esperanza’s focus on the effects of smoking is “bad” because it is spontaneous teaching. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Shazia further
suggests that there is no need for teachers to “prove” all things, especially in cases regarding beliefs. She takes the perspective of herself as a future teacher, emphasizing the importance of not forcing her personal beliefs on children in her future classes.

If a child shared the same belief, I would say, “okay, if that is what you believe.” It is just like when a child in your class says, “Jesus is the son of God.” We are taught to say, “if that is your belief.” That answer is second nature to us when the talk of religion comes up and it could have been the same for this case (Case discussion).

In her personal reaction, Shazia suggests, however, sometimes beliefs are better left untested and unproven.

There are many things that I believe that have no scientific explanation, but I believe them. I cannot tell you why I believe them, but I do, and I will probably never stop. For example, my mother always tells me to recite a certain prayer at night, clap three times, lift my arm and make three circles with my hand and then bow down before bed. I honestly don’t know why I do it, but I know by doing it I am protected (Personal reactions to the case).

*Connectedness of Theoretical Principles*

*Knowledge construction: The importance of children’s local community knowledge as well as school knowledge.* In her response to the case reaction questions, Shazia reflects on the various kinds of knowledge in the world. It is apparent that Shazia rejects the idea of knowledge as absolute and neutral. She points out that children’s knowledge should be taken into account within the context of their own personal background and culture as well as the context of school science.
I agree with Esperanza that what we teach in the classroom should be scientifically proven fact; however I do feel that sometimes, comments and responses like the ones in the case will arise. In the situation I would have let the children believe what they do and then what I was teaching would be a second explanation or belief for them (Responses to case reaction questions).

From the same perspective, Shazia maintains the need to take into account the feelings of children who practice tuob. Considering the characteristics of the community, Shazia thinks that Esperanza should appreciate the idea that “tuob is just a belief that smoke heals. Those doctors feel that vapor heals or steam heals.” She feels that Esperanza should respect this as a belief instead of considering only the intentions of her lesson.

Shazia indicates that Esperanza mainly thinks about her lesson and the need to teach scientific “facts.” She feels that if Esperanza would think about the lesson, from the children’s point of view, it would be better. For Shazia, Esperanza does not have a sense that people from different sociocultural groups can build different kinds of knowledge. Also, according to Shazia, Esperanza seems driven to teach only scientifically proven facts and that is what she regards as knowledge.

She was thinking of her own, the knowledge that she had constructed in her experiences and her background. Whereas if she would have thought what are the children’s experiences, which her experiences and the children’s experiences were one and the same, but she didn’t take into account because she wanted to teach them that smoke is bad (Exit interview).
Having said this, Shazia feels that her own Islamic beliefs will be incorporated into her teaching. In her response to the post case discussion question, she expresses her thoughts about this point.

Oftentimes I find myself questioning my Islamic beliefs; however I will never reject my beliefs. It is human nature to question: We are curious people/creatures and there is nothing wrong with that (Post case discussion responses).

Empowering school culture and social structure: The importance of examining and uniting school beliefs. “If the whole school believes the same thing and so does the teacher, there really probably wouldn’t be such a problem.” According to Banks (1995a), school is a culture and organization comprising various groups of children. Shazia feels that the school in this case does not indicate any conscious effort to examine or incorporate thoughts about local community knowledge, tuob, and scientific knowledge.

In private schools, they teach like Catholic Catholicism, Bible study, or other religion classes so she could have done that too if she had chosen to go that route (Case discussion).

At this point, Shazia does not make a final judgment with respect to whether school science should teach about tuob or only scientific facts. Shazia believes that whatever decision is made, the important thing is for schools to be united in their beliefs. For Shazia, a united school belief would help reduce the tensions that accompany conflicting beliefs.
Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy

Case-Based Pedagogy as a Tool for Multicultural Education

Constructing Knowledge with Sensitivity to Different Cultures

Cases as tools to develop awareness of and sensitivity to unfamiliar cultures.

Shazia believes that case-based pedagogy is a positive tool for building awareness and sensitivity of other cultures; the cases shed light on new, different, and unfamiliar experiences. She mentions that by reading and discussing cases, she has experienced many perspectives that she had not considered previously. She feels the value of cases rests, in part, with the opportunity to learn about diversity within real classroom context.

It was really a positive effect on me because I was able to read those cases and then think what I would do in that situation, and what if that comes up in my classroom (Exit interview).

Emphasizing that case-based pedagogy is a good way to learn about cultures; Shazia cites the example of the case of ‘El Secreto de las Ninãs.’

In the case about ‘El Secreto de las Ninãs,’ I would never even think that any of my children were homeless. I read how huge the homeless population is and I would never think of that. Maybe I’ve come across children just in my practicums that were homeless and I didn’t even know (Exit interview).

Moreover, through her experience with cases, Shazia realizes that there are more religions in the world than she’s thought about in the past. After experiencing cases, she feels she has developed a broader and more generous perspective about talking about religion in classrooms. The case of ‘When Do You Perform Tuob?’ intrigues her with respect to this point.
Until after reading the cases, I never think about it as there are other religions out there too. Just like in the *tuob* case, they were talking about the magic, the smoke helps you get rid of spirits. If a child says to me Jesus is the Son of God, I’ll just say, Oh, well, I’m glad that’s what you believe. Children can come up to me and say other things, anything. There are all sorts of religions out there that I don’t even think about that (Exit interview).

Stressing again the effectiveness of case-based pedagogy, Shazia thinks that cases will help her, a near future teacher, to handle diversity matters because they reflect actual classroom situations.

It made me realize things that I would never have thought about until it happened to me. Which in a lot of cases it could have been too late and now I realize that there are certain things at least from the cases that we read, hopefully I won’t make those mistakes about (Exit interview).

Shazia adds that even though it is easy to judge a certain situation without significant consideration, “none of us is really aware of how difficult it may be to deal with the problems and what we would do if we were in the situations similar to those represented in the various cases.”

*In-depth Reflections on Diversity and Knowing Personal Beliefs*

*Cases as tools for reflective peer conversation and consideration about future teaching.* “My goal is to teach everyone and that’s basically what the teachers in the cases were trying to do.” Shazia feels that cases help her realize what the profession of teaching is all about. Thinking that multicultural education is one of the important goals of
education, Shazia states that she will create an inclusive classroom which does not privilege just one specific group of children.

Having said this, Shazia believes that case-based pedagogy is a good way to develop in-depth reflections on diversity and multicultural education. She indicates that cases provide opportunities to think and talk about the issues over and over again with peers and to learn about teaching and learning on diversity embedded in the experiences of real classroom teachers.

We talked about it in different classes but never in this way of learning how to look, of reading about other teachers’ experiences. It was neat to read about teachers and know that we’re gonna have similar situations as them (Exit interview).

As a future classroom teacher, it is interesting for her to see how and what the case teachers do with children from cultures different from their own.

I feel a good thing from reading those cases is, right now I can sit back and critique those teachers, but it gave me an upper hand because now I know what to think when I’m in my own classroom or how to approach things (Exit interview).

Shazia notes that cases are valuable because they provide opportunities for reflection rather than simply showing concrete solutions for problematic situations. For Shazia, cases are opportunities for in-depth reflections; chances to confirm or change beliefs on diversity, and tools for helping teachers consider their actions when faced with similar dilemmas.

I think they were trying to make us more aware of things that happen with multicultural issues and what we can do, and it’s more of a reflective thing, they
weren’t telling us what to do. It was just read the case and then, what would you do, if you were in that same position so it was a lot of reflection (Exit interview).

*Cases as tools for challenging or confirming personal beliefs.* Indicating that cases provide her with good opportunities to critique the teachers in case situations and relate the issues to her own approaches in teaching and learning, she recalls moments where her personal beliefs were challenged or confirmed. She illustrates this point with an example from the case of ‘The day the lobster died.’

There’s a lot of stuff that I didn’t agree with that the teachers did. Those were just my personal beliefs. I’m not a person who eats meat and I like animals. I would never like slaughter an animal in the classroom (Exit interview).

Reading the case of ‘El Secreto de las Ninãs,’ Shazia feels that she further confirms her personal beliefs and realizes they do not conform with the those of the teacher in the case.

I didn’t agree with the teacher who said you can stay in from recess and clean the erasers because the children would feel like they were being punished for not having money. I would have done things differently telling the children to bring in as many as they could to account for children who didn’t bring them in (Exit interview).

Shazia repeatedly shares how some of her own beliefs have been confirmed through experiencing cases. She strongly believes that the questions concerning religion depend on personal faith or culture.

My personal belief is there are a lot of things regarding religion that aren’t proven, that you can’t prove. You just either accept it or you don’t. That’s what faith is. It’s just blind faith, you believe something that has been passed down or
is in the culture or in the Bible or whatever. A lot of those things can’t be scientifically proven. That’s why it’s religion. You just have to believe it (Exit interview).

Shazia cites the example of the case of ‘When do you perform tuob?’ as one in which she empathizes with the classroom teacher in the case in terms of questioning one’s beliefs. She points out, however, that the case teacher definitely does not represent her own beliefs and thinking about the dilemma.

She was questioning her own beliefs and I do that at times, too. There are a lot of times when I question my own beliefs, but she was very double standardish about it. She is a hypocrite because she’s gonna go home and see her mom doing it to her child (Exit interview).

*Cases as tools for learning about diversity by sympathizing with and criticizing classroom teachers.* Although she discovers conflicts and disagreements with teachers portrayed in some of the cases, Shazia is sympathetic with these teachers in the contexts of the situations described in the case. By referring to the point that it is easy to sit and critique classroom teachers, Shazia thinks that she cannot say for certain, “That is really wrong of the teacher to do that.”

That’s easy for me to say right now because I’m stepping back and looking at a case, and something that happened to other teachers. Because maybe given in that same situation, maybe also I wouldn’t have known that they were homeless and I would have said the same thing (Exit interview).
She stresses, “I was able to be an outsider and look at what teachers were experiencing and critique what they were doing. I was not only able to learn from it but also I was able to sympathize with her and learn from it.”

*Cases as tools for imagining oneself in real diverse worlds, rather than the sterile worlds of textbooks.* For Shazia, experiencing case-based pedagogy is better than having a textbook. She notices that cases include real life classroom situations that address multicultural issues.

Just by knowing that those things happen and that they are real, real accounts of teachers’ experiences. So just like they happened to them, they can happen to me, too. Just learning from them (Exit interview).

She compares her thoughts about textbook knowledge and case knowledge. First of all, she thinks that learning from textbooks is a harder way of remembering, even though textbooks show many key ideas about diversity issues. “Something you learn in textbooks is harder to remember. You’ll remember key things but you don’t remember the details.” However, she perceives that cases help her read about diversity issues with interest and remember the specifics that may be helpful for her own teaching and learning in the near future.

Cases that I read stay in my mind, I remember them. It’s like a story that I remember from, something I did with my friends. It’s an anecdote or a vignette, it just stays with you and so when you experience something in your own classroom, you’ll think of that, cause it’s specific and real. I can look back on it and refresh my memory and never forget the cases that I read. Those are real examples for me (Exit interview).
Through the real-world case vignettes, Shazia sees the life of diverse cultures and is encouraged to learn more about multicultural education. “Just reading little examples from an Afghani boy and I just hope one day I can go back to my country.” Cases also give her hope and plans for her life by offering impressions and insights about children from other cultures. She tells about a project for another class on multicultural education. For the project, she is using cases.

The case I am using is about a teacher and her experiences with different children. There are a lot of vignettes in it from where the children are actually talking about what they’re feeling and how they’re feeling isolated and what impact moving from another country has had on them. This little Chinese boy felt like no one was there for him and felt like exhausted from not knowing the language. It’s really neat with the book that I’m reading, just reading about the child’s point of view (Exit interview).

Shazia is assured that cases put her in the world and position her in an authentic context. “The cases really put you in that world and in that position. They make you think I’m not in that position but I could be.”

Suggestions for Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy Regarding Diversity

“Put yourself in the person’s shoes.” Shazia indicates that it is important to put oneself in the person’s shoes in cases. She notes that it is easy to critique the characters of cases as an outsider when reading and discussing; however, her university teachers stress the importance of reflecting upon her own teaching in the same situation rather than simply criticizing. She implies that it is not good to judge someone else so quickly until one’s lived his/her life.
I remember the first case, Dr. Tippins told all of us, go easy on the teachers, like put yourself in their shoes. I realized I really need to do that because I might make the same mistake too and someone else looking at me could say, oh, that teacher’s stupid, why is she even teaching. Whereas, they don’t really know what went on. They need to step into my shoes, into my world and see what I was thinking, and what I was doing, and that quote is what I tried to do with the cases (Exit interview).

She expands on this point, noting that when one is not putting her-/himself in the person’s shoes, it’s really easy to critique. She now thinks more about “what I can do to fix it instead of just saying, oh, that teacher shouldn’t do this or do that.”

I really think the first case I wrote was a lot the tone of it, was very harsh, putting a lot of stipulations on the teacher, whereas the rest of them I started thinking, what if I was in, I could make that same mistake (Exit interview).

Desire for more cases focusing on different aspects of diversity. Shazia feels very positive about the case-based pedagogy that she experienced through this study. She recommends that the next group of preservice teachers have even more cases about diversity.

I think we maybe even doing more than five. I know it would be more work for the next group but it was really a good experience to do those cases and to do the work. Yeah, it took time but it really made me think about what the different things are (Exit interview).

At this point, Shazia thinks various issues focusing on diversity will help preservice teachers construct deeper knowledge of multicultural issues. Because diversity means
more than racial or ethnic issues, she maintains that suggested cases should include a broad range of issues.

    Everyone really does know about ethnicity and racial issues regarding multicultural education. A suggestion would be to try and include some different cases like the Barangay community and the homeless shelter cases that we read (Exit interview).

    Furthermore, Shazia insists that case-based pedagogy should be utilized more in teacher education programs. She believes that case-based pedagogy makes her enjoy learning about diversity in schools by enabling her to consider the holistic aspects of teaching and learning rather than the fragmented knowledge typically presented in accordance with each subject.

    It’s interesting to learn why we don’t do those things, what the reason behind it is. Even I think, multifaceted of learning in any scenario not just tagging math, social studies, English. We can have so much other stuff involved that is different….things to learn from and enjoy (Exit interview).

*Sources of Learning through Case-Based Pedagogy*

    Reading, writing, and discussing as sources of metacognitively thinking and experiencing case dilemmas. Assessing that case-based pedagogy is a good tool for learning about multicultural education, Shazia says, “Everything we did really worked.” She feels that her learning about diversity comes from a synthesis of all the experiences that she has had, such as reading, writing, and discussing cases.

    The learning just comes from all three of those things. Like we read the case and we discussed it and we wrote about what we remembered most and the follow up.
It was a really good set up to really make you think and really reflect on (Exit interview).

Shazia feels that reading cases, relating her own experiences to the cases, and writing reflections on cases provide her with the opportunities to metacognitively think and experience what the case teacher and she have been experiencing throughout their personal and school life.

*Writing as a source of reflection.* Shazia mentions, particularly, the importance of the writing phase of this study.

You’re reading it and metacognitively experiencing what the teacher’s experiencing. When you actually write it down, that’s your time to reflect on it and I think reflection is a really good way of learning. Like when you reflect on something you’re just making it stronger for yourself (Exit interview).

*Discussing as a source of collaborative learning about case dilemmas.* She also explains her thoughts about discussing cases. She feels discussing cases with peers helps her think collaboratively about particular issues of diversity. She adds,

When I discuss something, it just helps me learn it better and stronger for me. By discussing it, I start out reading I’m thinking about it, and I reflect I’m putting my ideas out and I’m putting it all together. It was just a really good mix of three different types of strategy. Cause you just sit there and read it, and really not gain as much from it as if you write about it also. Then you gain even more I feel from discussing it (Exit interview).

Shazia’s point supports the view of Judith Shulman (1993) concerning cases.

“Read alone, they offer the vicarious experience of walking in another’s shoes.
But in group discussion, they are especially powerful, allowing differing points of view to be aired and examined” (Shulman & Mesa-Bains, 1993, p.v)

During the case discussions, Shazia feels that she did not experience conflict. “I think in our group we were very coincided for the most part. We really didn’t have any conflicting.” She thinks the reason for this is because her peers all come from similar personal backgrounds in terms of family, socioeconomic status, and the same university program.

We come from very similar backgrounds. We all have similar families, like we’ve all had good, we’ve been brought up nicely, and we’ve been brought up in a similar way. Maybe some of the girls don’t live with their parents, or their parents are divorced, but there’s still the same sort of connection there, with family. We’re so socioeconomically the same and we’re in this program together. We do have a lot of the same (Exit interview).

*Generally gaining culturally relevant learning on diversity from a facilitator.* Shazia notes that the facilitator of her class during this study did not influence her experience with the cases because she did not have any direct contact with her about the cases due to the structure of the study. Generally, however, Shazia explains that the facilitator for her case-based experiences will have an impact on her teaching philosophy.

I really didn’t get to experience too much of, regarding the cases with her [facilitator] because we were kind of by ourselves more. But as far as multicultural perspectives, yeah, because she really did other stuff, teaching strategies and the lessons she gave us. I think those were excellent, because all of them weren’t just very ethnocentric here, this is for the Caucasian crowd. She
gave us ways to modify lessons and make them more multicultural and culturally relevant. She really teaches in a very multicultural way so in that way she influenced me (Exit interview).

*Perceived Meaningfulness about Diversity from Case-Based Pedagogy*

*Creating Awareness of Diversity*

The importance of not making assumptions until knowing children or other cultures well. One of the key learning ideas for Shazia is “Never make any assumptions or decisions about children unless I get to know them, which is a really big part of multicultural education.” Highlighting the case of ‘El Secreto de las Ninãs,’ Shazia emphasizes that teachers’ sensitivity to children’s personal backgrounds and situations will reduce problems in schools, especially when they avoid making assumptions, pre-decisions, or pre-judgments. Shazia feels that classroom teachers should be more aware of children’s unique home situations.

They were homeless and the teacher really didn’t pick up on that. If she would have, then it would have lessened the whole problem. The children wouldn’t have felt isolated; they wouldn’t have felt they couldn’t go to their teacher for help. They wouldn’t have felt disillusioned and just given up (Exit interview).

In addition, reflecting on the case of “Who eats the Mango?” Shazia points out that teachers should not make the assumption that children have been exposed to certain cultures and environments when presenting diversity. While discussing the importance of children’s past experiences, Shazia advises that teachers should not separate or differentiate between children’s “normal” culture and the other cultures. They should
avoid labeling or giving impressions that children from different cultures are somehow
“abnormal.”

I just believe that we can’t make assumptions about children or about what are
children’s culture and background knowledge. In order to provide good quality
practices and experiences for your children, you need to know them, to know
what goes on in their life, and what they’re all about (Exit interview).

*Beyond ethnicity and race: Defining multicultural education in broader terms.* “It
is changed in the sense that I realized more how important multicultural education is. I’ve
realized we are responsible for these children, we need to help them in any way that we
can. We need to incorporate them into our classroom.” Shazia feels that multicultural
strategies should be an integral part of the classroom and that teachers should make a
conscious effort to understand and develop in-depth knowledge of other cultures. She
comes to more broadly define diversity and multicultural education through her
experiences with cases during this study.

Multicultural education isn’t just Hispanics, African–Americans, or Asian. All
can be multiculture. It can be homeless people, special education children, the
family that made their living from cutting down trees and making charcoal out of
them, children from the *Barangay*, single parent, children from divorced families,
and children from different religions. I don’t think multiculturalism just has to do
with ethnicity always. It has to do with many factors, like socialization and
economics, just anything (Exit interview).

Shazia states emphatically that multicultural education needs to move beyond concern for
racial and ethnic issues. She emphasizes, rather, the need for teachers to be more aware of
children from diverse cultures, asserting that “multiculture” includes a variety of groups of people.

_The Importance of Teaching Approach_

_The importance of equal educational opportunity for every child._ “I believe that every child deserves a chance for education and we can’t disregard it. We can’t take something away from another child and be giving it to other children in the classroom.”

Shazia feels that it is not equal or fair if teachers treat children from diverse cultural backgrounds in the same manner as other children in classes. She thinks that her responsibility is to guide and teach every child in ways which are good for their future. However, she does not think that ‘teaching in the same way’ is equal for all children. She believes that teachers need to consider every child’s personal background and experiences within their own sociocultural context; she thinks that her teaching should be modified accordingly. She feels she needs to be more sensitive to each child’s situation, learning level, and socio-emotional development.

I’ve been reading other things about multicultural education, like the book called ‘The Inner World of the Immigrant Child.’ It really, along with the cases that I read, have made me realize how important it is and how difficult it is for children. I’m not stopping to think on the children’s level and their feelings to learn in classes. I’m thinking more about it this way, when I do have my own classroom, ‘What am I gonna do? How am I gonna make it as easy for them as possible?’

(Exit interview)
The importance for educating for diversity across subjects in a culturally relevant manner. On the basis of her case reflections, Shazia perceives that it is difficult to design a science curriculum that matches children’s experiences at home. In particular, she points out the difficulty in meeting the needs of children from poor families.

I have not had the experience of teaching in my own classroom yet; however, from the case reading and discussion, I feel that designing a science curriculum for children from low-income families will be difficult. So much of science is based on prior experiences and the quality of the materials we have available for our children to explore. Oftentimes, poverty-stricken children will not have the access to science materials in the community that we would like them to have. More often that, the school we teach in, if it is in a poor neighborhood, will not have the materials, we would like to teach with (Exit interview).

Referring to the case ‘Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?’, she suggests that the most effective way to design a science curriculum is to use children’s prior knowledge and personal experiences.

Perla could relate to the children because she was born and raised in the same community and now she lived in the same neighborhood as her childhood home. For the most part, Perla experienced the same things as her children. It is the best thing to do; use what you know about the children’s backgrounds to teach them about science (Exit interview).

As for the design of a science curriculum, Shazia also learns that it is good to integrate science curriculum into various subject areas focusing on diversity. Using the
case of ‘Who Eats the Mango?’ as an example, she mentions a variety of ways to integrate the science lesson and incorporate diversity issues.

If you wanna do a cross-cultural and cross-curricular unit on something across all subject matter, like on Central America, the language, the way that they learn, the things that they do, what their schooling is, fruits from Central America, counting to ten in Spanish,….see whatever but there is so much else she could have done with it… With social studies she could have had even something simple like this is where Central America is, do you know anyone who is from Central America is in your classroom, is there any local business or anything like that can come in talk to your class, maybe you can go to a restaurant and have a tour, etc. Learn about things that actually will engage the children and don’t just isolate it to one thing (Exit interview).

Summary and Discussion

The particular situation of Shazia both as a Pakistani and an American gives her opportunities to think more about issues of diversity. As an “atypical” (Takata, 1991, p. 251) person in her school life, she raises questions about the matter of belonging. She assumes that she belongs to both of the groups, as a member of the majority group of Americans and the minority group of Pakistani. However, sometimes she feels confused and questions whether she is a member of any of the groups.

Experiencing her own uncertainty as a “norm breaker” (Takata, 1991, p. 251), she strongly believes that every child in a classroom should be respected regardless of his/her individual background. She thinks that as a teacher she will build her future classrooms
around the unique characteristics of children in her class. From Shazia’s perspective, this will help children avoid being hidden or silenced by ‘the norms’ and stereotyped labels.

Throughout her case-based experiences, the theme of ‘knowing children’s personal background’ emerges constantly. She believes that knowing the individual children in her class is necessary to design a lesson, to motivate their learning, and to respect their own culture. She feels that without being aware of and sensitive to children’s personal background, lessons in classrooms and schools cannot be meaningful.

Her parents’ influence has been instrumental in helping clarify her own beliefs and decisions. Shazia feels their open education about diversity influences her teaching beliefs and philosophy with respect to diversity because she, as a future teacher, cannot be separated from herself as a person.

Shazia’s experiences with the case of ‘When Do You Perform Tuob?’ raises for her issues concerning the tension between children’s cultural knowledge and school knowledge.

Ideally, education should help all students acquire knowledge that empowers. This implies that knowledge should include a perspective of history from the students’ point of view and be selected and constructed in relationship to the students’ desires, visions, descriptions of reality, and repertoires of action (Sleeter & Grant, 1991, p. 50).

Although teachers transmit a concept of knowledge, the information is recreated depending on the context of children’s preexisting belief systems constructed within their home and community. Shazia notes that when Esperanza teaches a lesson regarding
modern ideas of health care, the scientific learning raises questions for children that conflict with their own traditional beliefs.

According to Sleeter and Grant (1991), children are “becoming disabled and silenced within a public institution, interpreting school knowledge as a series of tasks to complete for authority figures rather than as an instrument for advancing their own interests” (p. 53). Without understanding children’s culture, school experiences for children cannot be meaningful and productive for them. With a similar tone of voice, Shazia asserts that scientifically proven facts should be suggested to children as the second source of information for their learning. The primary source of learning centers on respect for children’s personal beliefs constructed within diverse sociocultural contexts.

Shazia also points out that it is important to discuss school beliefs and to get a cohesive direction for teaching and learning in a school. She feels that this will help reduce the confusion of teachers and children with respect to learning. She repeatedly emphasizes throughout the case-based experiences the need for teachers to take into account, accept, respect, and celebrate diverse knowledge, situations, and beliefs of children at a school. Additionally, she stresses the importance of teachers’ examination on “a specific set of values, norms, ethos, and shared meanings” (Banks, 1995, p. 17) that they possess. Shazia is aware that beliefs in schools can affect children’s beliefs even when teachers do not explicitly preach a certain set of values. Shazia feels that teachers’ knowing their own beliefs and the beliefs of the school in which they work may empower and contribute to the development of a multicultural learning environment.

In the case of “When Do You Perform Tuob?”, Shazia resolves the issues by assuming the need to totally separate children’s cultural knowledge and school
knowledge in science. However, as evidenced in her earlier comments, she embraces the idea of including religion and other aspects of culture in the classroom. According to Sleeter and Grant (1991), teachers may think of ways to bridge school knowledge and children’s real-life knowledge and experiences together as well as dichotomize and set them apart from each other.

Shazia assesses case-based pedagogy as a good way to learn about diversity. “This type of learning using cases influenced me to go out and learn more about multicultural education. The case-based pedagogy really made a big difference. I think it’s a really good type to learn through other people’s experiences.” According to Shazia, the experience with cases encourages her active and real learning rather than passive memorization of pre-packaged concepts and knowledge that textbooks suggest.

“Put yourself in the person’s shoes.” During the study, Shazia has opportunities to think about her own teaching as a future teacher and to consider the similarities and differences between herself and the teachers in cases. She feels this is more important than simply incorporating the thoughts and ideas of others. It helps her learn to understand others rather than simply critique them.

“Early childhood education is not only for Caucasian children.” Interestingly, she contemplates the meaning of ‘equal learning.’ Is her teaching able to be or should it be exactly the same for all the children in her class? Reflecting on diversity and the meaning of equal learning, she thinks that modifying her teaching is necessary in classes. In other words, for Shazia, ‘equal educational opportunity’ means to provide the required help needed for children to learn based on an assessment of individual needs.
After the case-based experience, Shazia reveals that nothing really has been challenged regarding her personal beliefs about diversity. Rather, the experience has clarified her unconscious thoughts and beliefs. “I didn’t have that many beliefs when I started this whole thing. When I read the cases, everything made sense and everything seemed to go, I agreed with everything.” Shazia emphasizes that she has had few opportunities to think about her beliefs on diversity before this study. She indicates that she did not have a coherent set of thoughts with which to compare the change or confirmation about her beliefs on diversity. In the meantime, she does not forget to emphasize that her teacher education needs further preparation for diversity and multicultural education in ways which are both theoretical and practical.
CHAPTER 5
EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on three experienced teachers’ – April, Tiffany, and Karla – knowledge, beliefs, and experiences about diversity. By analyzing interviews, written narratives including personal responses to each case, responses to case reaction questions post discussion reactions, and case discussions, this chapter comprises three major sections: background information showing preexisting practical knowledge about diversity and teaching, experiencing cases regarding diversity, and experiencing case-based pedagogy. Among the three experienced teachers, one teacher – Tiffany – could not make the exit interview due to a health problem. Accordingly, Tiffany’s section of ‘experiencing case-based pedagogy’ is not shown in this chapter.

The preexisting practical knowledge about diversity of each experienced teacher is discussed with respect to emergent themes under the categories of ‘teaching experience,’ ‘experiencing diversity,’ and ‘thoughts’ about teacher education programs for diversity.’ The category of ‘teaching experience’ includes the subcategories of ‘desire to become a teacher’ and ‘the important things for children’s learning.’ Following the description of each experienced teacher’s background, their views of ‘experiencing diversity’ are discussed in terms of the subcategories of ‘experiencing ESL children,’ ‘experiencing different races, cultures, and genders,’ ‘experiencing children with special needs,’ and ‘realizing the influence of the school environment.’ Each experienced teacher’s ‘thoughts about teacher education programs for diversity’ are then followed
with the categories of ‘seeing a need for a more practical approach in teacher education,’
‘seeing a need for classes on diversity in teacher education programs,’ and ‘recognizing
help from staff development programs in school.’

The section of ‘experiencing cases regarding diversity’ discusses each
experienced teacher’s experiences and beliefs about diversity with five selected cases
experienced as part of their elementary science methods course. The experienced
teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity in relation to these five cases is discussed
in terms of Kennedy (1991), Lundeberg and Fawver (1994), and Banks’ (1995a)
dimensions of multicultural education.

In the last section of ‘experiencing case-based pedagogy,’ each experienced
teacher’s views about ‘case-based pedagogy as a tool for multicultural education’ and
‘perceived meaningfulness about diversity from case-based pedagogy’ are discussed. The
category of ‘case-based pedagogy as a tool for multicultural education’ includes the
subcategories of ‘constructing knowledge with sensitivity to different cultures,’ ‘in-depth
reflections on diversity and knowing personal beliefs,’ ‘suggestions for experiencing
case-based pedagogy regarding diversity,’ and ‘source of learning through case-based
pedagogy.’ The construct of ‘perceived meaningfulness,’ one of the categories of
Kennedy (1991), reflects each experienced teacher’s synthesis of themes that emerged
relative to each case. This section of ‘perceived meaningfulness about diversity from
case-based pedagogy’ consists of the subcategories of ‘creating awareness of diversity’
and ‘the importance of teaching approach.’ Several emergent themes are discussed in
terms of these categories.
April

April’s Background

April’s Teaching Experience: Desire to Become a Teacher

“I love children and teaching.” April is a fourth grade teacher with four years of experience at a private Christian elementary school. During her private Christian college years, she obtained a double major in Elementary Education and Special Education. She is enrolled in the first class of a master’s degree program in Early Childhood Education. She states that she loves children and “absolutely” loves teaching.

I always enjoyed being around children. I love children. I also always loved school as a student. I wanted to be a mom. I have a good time with seeing people understand something. All of these things put together, teaching really is…a good fit for me. I really do love it. It’s a lot of fun (Initial interview).

The Important Things for Children’s Learning

The importance of various teaching methods for children’s learning. April advocates a varied approach in teaching and learning, which takes into account what children do on a day-to-day basis. “I don’t try to do all lecture or all games. I would much rather them learn in a fun way than in a not fun way.” She thinks that sometimes lecture can be an effective teaching approach, but tries to use this method as little as possible. She attempts to facilitate children’s active involvement in their own learning.

If there’s anything that we can do after we’ve learned the concept to make it more in a game format, they seem to like that. Anytime I can get them up moving instead of just, on something other than their paper and pencil, like normal. Just
try to make it varied, not the same thing everyday, every subject (Initial interview).

**Experiencing Diversity**

*Experiencing Different Races and Cultures*

*Socioeconomic status (SES) as a basis for defining “minorities.”* “The percentage of minorities is low here. I have…three African-Americans in my class this year. That’s all the minorities I have. I think it’s less than 10% of minorities here.” She defines “minorities” by focusing primarily on race.

April considers, however, that the lack of diversity at her school is related to the fact that it is a private institution. Relating racial issues to SES, she feels that even children and families from different racial groups are not so different at her school, due to their similar, comfortable, and affordable life styles.

As far as the economic going along with the race, it really doesn’t happen here. Everybody’s pretty much…comfortable the way they live and all the parents are involved here. It’s not like Hispanic children’s parents aren’t involved because they have a hard time understanding me and understanding the other parents. But they’re here, and they come to Open House, and listen, and just very polite (Initial interview).

*The influence of April’s father: The importance of resisting stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminations.* April vividly recalls her father’s attitudes regarding diversity. She describes her father’s stereotypic and discriminatory attitudes toward other groups of people.
I was raised in a family that was real conservative. My parents, especially my dad, were probably more concerned with diversity issues, about who I was friends with. And not necessarily their race but sometimes he would get concerned if I was too good a friend with an African-American, or if I was watching TV that a show was about another race. He was real concerned about people, whether or not they were Christians or not (Initial interview).

“But I just kind of did my own thing anyway.” April feels that awareness of her father’s attitudes has provided her with more opportunities to think about diversity. She believes that her father’s prejudices and exclusions are unacceptable.

It always irritated me that my Dad wouldn’t…give people a chance, or he would make comments about me being friends with people. It still irritates me whenever I hear people say things, you know, remarks about a certain race or um…it just irritates me (Initial interview).

Even to this day, April continues to be influenced by her father’s attitudes towards diversity – this has had a tremendous impact on her own beliefs about teaching and learning. “How silly it is to say that all of one group of people are a certain way. Just like I wouldn’t want somebody to say all girls are this way, etc. It just bothers me.” She mentions that no prejudicial attitudes, no stereotypical remarks, no teasing or victimizing of others and no discriminations are tolerable in her classroom.

I have heard children say, well, “He’s weird,” “He looks funny”, or “He’s a nerd,” or something like that. I just won’t tolerate it. You can’t let them form a judgment without getting to know the person (Initial interview).
At this point, April explains that her father’s biased attitudes about diversity and multicultural issues are a reflection of a generation gap, saying “That’s how he was raised.”

Well, I think that was how he was raised and he’s from a different generation. He lived through integration…and so I guess, those same thoughts and feelings were hard to give up. Slowly he’s grown from that but, still…well; I guess every generation gets better about it. I know there’s still some room to grow (Initial interview).

*From April’s school experiences: The importance of accepting others just as they are.* As well as pointing out the generational differences between her father and herself, April also considers the generation gap between her own childhood and that of the children in her class. “When I grew up it was so different than now.” She remembers from her childhood the strong presence of children’s clique behaviors, particularly between the “black” and “white” races. She notes that during her childhood, children from different ethnic backgrounds would constantly clash and fight.

A lot of the children would separate according to race, especially in high school. The different groups of people, based on their backgrounds would just cluster together, and those people would be friends. There were always groups of people that hung out together. Sometimes groups would get in a fight. There was always a core group of African–Americans and a core group of Caucasians that wouldn’t let any other race in their group. The whites didn’t want to have any black friends, and the blacks didn’t want to have any white friends (Initial interview).
April remembers having scared feelings about the racial cliques in her school and her efforts to avoid identification with any of the cliques.

It was real scary sometimes because you would always hear them talking about, there’s going to be some big fight somewhere and it was really silly. Yeah, silly. They would all be together in the hall. I was nervous walking by either group. Just, “okay, just leave me alone” (Initial interview).

April believes that her observations of peers’ clique behaviors helped her develop a more open-minded attitude about people from different groups. “My friends were just ‘whatever.’ I wasn’t really that close to friends with either one of those groups. I was white but I guess I may have felt differently.”

*The importance of social interactions in developing children’s attitudes about different racial groups of people.* April believes that the older children get, the more they start to focus on “differences.” “I feel like as they get older, people form more groups, and become more exclusive than they are whenever they’re in elementary school.” She thinks that children develop prejudices about other racial groups because of increased social interactions with others. “I guess, mainly just, being in the world, hearing more about it and meeting more people.”

Her point is supported by Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) which note that “societal stereotyping and bias influence children’s self-concept and attitudes toward others” (p. 1). The authors argue that children’s racial awareness is developed not only by social experiences from their environments but also by their inherent physical or cognitive developmental structures. Citing Alejandro-Wright (1985), Derman-Sparks, et al. (1989) claim that children’s development of racial awareness
begins at preschool age with the recognition of the differences in people’s skin colors and is fully understood by the age of ten or eleven, as children develop knowledge of physical attributes of various racial groups and social comprehension of racial membership and categorization.

Through the multicultural day: The importance of understanding different cultures to celebrate everyone’s uniqueness. In order to come up with educational goals about diversity, April tries to make sure that children in her class are respectful of both themselves and others. She often discusses diversity issues with her students in a “natural way,” such as focusing on their various heritages. She attempts to give children many chances to share with respect to their own origins and cultures.

A lot of times we have children who were born here but maybe their parents weren’t. That’s just the last generation that was living somewhere else. We try to pull that in and do (Initial interview).

April does not think that children from diverse cultures should be forced to assimilate totally with the dominant culture. She thinks it is important for children to have an awareness of and opportunities to learn about their own cultures.

Just to make children aware and want to share what their heritage is, if you’ll just give them a chance to, and not make them feel like, “Well, you live in America now, and you need to do everything like we do it.” Just let them share their stuff (Initial interview).

As an effort to recognize and appreciate diverse cultures, her school has a Multicultural Day once a year. “It is just to try to make the children aware that they are not the only ones on earth and that other people are here.”
The whole fourth grade would pick a country and the whole fifth grade would pick a country and they would research it, and have people come and talk, and get clothing, and food. They spend lots of hours, gathering materials and researching the different countries (Initial interview).

April feels that when children investigate other cultures they are interested in, they better understand and develop positive attitudes about the cultures of their friends. She notes that the annual Multicultural Day is also an opportunity for parental involvement.

The last time they did India. They had one of the mothers here who was from India do the little painting on the hands. Then they had different foods, different displays of maps, and games that they played there (Initial interview).

April evaluates the Multicultural Day in terms of its potential to increase children’s joy for learning about diverse cultures, as well as their recognition and appreciation of difference. She feels that children have a real learning experience about diverse cultures through this school activity.

They get to actually work on it, really love it. They learn a lot about the different countries. I think it’s neat for them to think and to realize that all their friends are their friends (Initial interview).

April’s efforts to provide children with opportunities to share about their own culture and participate in researching other cultures indicates the importance she places on developing children’s positive identities and attitudes toward themselves and others. She feels that positive attitudes toward diversity will contribute to building a safe and supportive learning environment for every child at a school. As Sapon-Shevin (1995) indicates, children should feel comfortable in expressing themselves in classrooms. They
need to understand and appreciate one another’s similarities and differences. Celebrating each child’s uniqueness, they should be proud of themselves for being themselves.

“God loves everybody”: The importance of school environment on children’s thoughts and attitudes about diversity. The school that April is working at is a private Christian school. April feels that school environment influences teaching approaches with respect to diversity and multicultural education. “We talk about, in chapel and in class, the color of their skin, or what they look like. Even in the Bible we talk about God doesn’t look at the outward appearance.” April believes that the Christian environment of her school positively affects children’s attitudes towards others.

I have three African-American children this year, two girls and one boy. One of the girls, her new best friend is a little Caucasian girl. And the other one, she just hangs out with whoever. They get along fine. I haven’t seen anybody say, I’m not going to be friends with you because of the color of your skin. I haven’t seen anybody left out because of that (Initial interview).

April notes that “respect for others” is a constant theme in her school. In chapel, children hear “Jesus died for everybody; he didn’t die for just white people or just smart people or just athletic people. He loves everybody.” Her school encourages children to be friends with everybody, accepting and respecting one another. “Everybody doesn’t have to be best friends with everybody, but that doesn’t mean they would exclude somebody because of something.”

Experiencing Children with Special Needs

The importance of teaching approaches which consider children’s individual learning struggles. April’s educational background in special education makes her more
sensitive to children with learning difficulties. She emphasizes that children with special needs should be treated and taught differently. She tries to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of every child in her class. She agrees with Sapon-Shevin’s (1995) point that each child is worthy of being celebrated differently because each is struggling with different issues. She feels that children with learning difficulties add to the diversity of her classroom. She discusses a child with autistic tendencies, expressing her difficulties in determining the best teaching approach for this child.

This year I have a child that has been diagnosed with autistic tendencies. Autism is a very strange disease. There are so many characteristics. It’s hard to diagnose because every child can be different and have different characteristics. But this young lady has a hard time; everything is either black or white, or win or lose. If she gets in trouble then she thinks that she’s losing, she will shut down and she won’t speak to you, won’t answer you, and won’t do what you ask her to do (Initial interview).

At first, when April had little information about the autistic girl, she treated her like all the other children. She recalls her troubled experience with this autistic child.

When she wouldn’t answer me, I would say “You need to answer me.” When she wouldn’t do her work, I would say, “Okay, you need to get busy.” Even made her stay in from recess. I have to be careful with her because she’ll start crying, and end up with a migraine the next day and not be able to come to school (Initial interview).

April believes that teaching approaches and actions should be different depending on the individual needs of children. “I have to definitely come at her at a different angle than a
lot of the other children, and try not to let her get too upset about something, so that she
doesn’t shut down on us.”

_The need for children to recognize one another’s strengths and differences._

Because April’s school is a private institution, most of the children in the class know the
autistic girl. The children in April’s class are familiar with the needs of the autistic girl
and try to understand and encourage her to do schoolwork.

A lot of them really try to encourage her, just say, “Come on, Mica, you can do it,
you know, you can work this,” or whatever it is she’s trying to do. It’s not really
been an issue as to, well, “How come she doesn’t have to do this,” or “Why does
she get treated differently?” (Initial interview)

April has open discussions with children in her class about similarities and differences
among individuals. She tries to let the children realize that they all have both strengths
and weaknesses. She thinks that an open discussion is a good way for children to develop
an accepting attitude of differences in others. She stresses, “Everybody is different and
…. people’s brains are different…not only do we look different on the outside but our
insides are different too. We all learn in different ways.”

Everybody’s different. I really try to talk to them about that some people are
better at athletics than others. Maybe you’re better at math, or maybe you’re a
better reader. Some of you are real good at making friends. I just really try to play
up everybody’s strengths (Initial interview).

_Fostering diversity through interactions with children with special needs._ April
also recalls an experience during her second year of teaching involving a student with
attention deficit disorder (ADD).
About the second day of school, we were walking back from lunch, and he was just jumping over everybody, and was going crazy, screaming. I said, “You need to calm down, get in line with the rest of us.” He turned right at me and said, “Well, I have ADD. I can’t help it.” And I said, “Whoa” (Initial interview).

The boy’s parents had obviously tried to help him by talking to him about how he was a little bit different than his friends. But April feels that the parents just gave the boy a new sense of “Hey, I can’t help this. I don’t want to say an excuse.”

Sometimes he wouldn’t really try. He was probably the worst case I’ve had, as far as ADD with hyperactivity. He did a cartwheel in my classroom one time. Right in the middle of class, I was like teaching, and he just got up to throw something away and did a cartwheel on his way back. He was truly, truly hyperactive (Initial interview).

April uses rewards to deal with the ADD boy’s problems. She provides him with positive rewards like giving opportunities for his favorite play when he behaves ‘appropriately’ in her class.

I had my husband bring home one of those stress balls, just little things that you can squeeze, and let him keep that at his desk, and if he ever just couldn’t stand to sit still, he could play with that. That seemed to help some, but it was hard (Initial interview).

As another reward for the boy with ADD, April pays attention to and praises his desirable behaviors in the class. Sometimes she makes him the leader of his group activity.

Some days were great and some days just weren’t. I found that he really needed to be the center of attention. Sometimes he couldn’t, but anytime I could let him be
the one to read the story, or him be the one to get up and help me. I would really
praise him if he did a good job and if he stayed calm while he was helping me. I
would put him in charge of, you know, I would say “You make sure that your
group is ready to go whenever it’s time.” That made him think, okay I have to
make sure everybody else…and really I was thinking you just make sure you are
ready to go (Initial interview).

April thinks it is important for classroom teachers to put constant efforts and
attention into the needs of children with learning difficulties. She emphasizes the
importance of incessant verbal and nonverbal interactions between teachers and children
with learning difficulties.

So that helped, and just praising him all the time. He really just needed that. But, I
would have a little cue. I would just look at him, pause, and look at him real hard,
if he was going a little too far. He understood me a little bit, and I understood him
better. That helped (Initial interview).

Feeling the challenges of meeting all the needs of exceptional children, her
curricular goals, and other children’s well-being in her class, April uses rewards to reduce
the distracting behaviors of the children with special needs. She considers reward systems
such as providing preferable objects or events to children with special needs as effective
and important strategies. On this point, however, Kohn (1999) digs into the hidden
assumptions of teachers’ rewards noting that they value “Do what the teachers says, live
up to teacher expectations for proper behavior, keep busy, keep quiet and don’t move too
much, stick to the schedule” (p. 163).
Where do these priorities come from? First, teachers themselves are often judged on the basis of whether their students sit quietly and obey. Second, teachers may take for granted that the only way two or three dozen people can learn in the same room is if one person exerts absolute control. Third, unilateral power can be pleasing (and its absence disconcerting) to some teachers. (Kohn, 1999, p. 163).

Considering that the purpose of rewards is ‘to win a power struggle’ rather than to teach and learn together with children, Kohn (1999) suggests the ‘logical consequences’ of children’s behaviors. According to the author, positive or negative rewards that are not related to the consequences of children’s behaviors may result in making them merely conform to authoritative figures and power. To be more self-regulated individuals with intrinsic motivations, children should develop in-depth understandings about the association between rewards and their behaviors. “Once again we have to ask what our ultimate goals are. Do we want only to control short-term behaviors, or do we want to help children become responsible decision-makers?” (Kohn, 1999, p. 172).

*The importance of creating a sense of a family in the learning environment.* April remembers her experience with the ADD boy as one of the most difficult ones, noting that she and her students were tired by the end of the semester. “We were tired, the rest of the class was sick of him, you know, always talking, always moving, and always messing with their stuff.” She feels, however, that she successfully created a sense of family in the classroom by discussing the importance of friends with the class.

Whenever he was really getting on everybody's nerves, bothering, people were getting mad at him real easily. I talked about how we’ve been together so long, it’s almost like we’re a family. When you’re around your family, sometimes you
mistreat your brothers and sisters, and you would never treat a stranger like that (Initial interview).

April’s Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity

Seeing a Need for Classes on Diversity in Teacher Education Programs

Need classes about diversity. April cannot recall taking any classes about diversity in her teacher education programs.

I can’t really think of anything. Of course being a double major, Special Education major, we talked a lot about inclusion, but as far as diversity, I don’t really remember having a class that specifically discussed that (Initial interview).

Even though she states that she had a lot of opportunities to talk about inclusion in her teacher education program, she does not recall taking any classes involving multicultural issues at the college level. Neuharth-Pritchett, Reiff, and Pearson (2001) indicate that inclusion is “the deepest level of understanding on diversity” (p. 264). However, April does not perceive inclusion as a multicultural issue and feels that classes on diversity and multicultural education should deal with race or ethnic matters.

The importance of treating all children with love and respect. April does feel that in her teacher education program she learned the importance of treating all children equally, regardless of their personal backgrounds, learning difficulties or other special needs. She points out that the ideal of treating all children with love and respect is a major idea she gained from her teacher education program.

I think you should just enjoy your children and get to know them all, and treat them all the same. Don’t mistreat someone based on anything about them at all. Even if, something as silly as, you know, their parents aren’t as involved or, they
get on your nerves or they have a harder time learning or whatever their skin color is. I think you should just love them all, respect them all, and teach them all (Initial interview).

Experiencing Cases regarding Diversity

“Who Eats the Mango?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

Empathizing with the difficulties of complex and unexpected teaching. Taking the perspective of the student teacher [Kim], April considers the intentions of Kim’s science lesson. “To encourage exposure to plants grown and eaten in diverse cultures, Kim brought fruits and vegetables that would be unusual or uncommon to the children. She hoped the class would be just as excited about these foods and want to explore them as well.” When Kim’s lesson and her efforts to expose the children to different cultures are frustrated, however, April empathizes with this student teacher. In her personal reaction and case discussion, April reveals that she does not have much teaching experience and easily sympathizes with Kim’s emotions of failure and frustration.

I found myself identifying closely with Kim. As a relatively new teacher, it has not been that long since I was in the position of a student teacher. I worked so hard trying to make my lessons meaningful and challenging to the children, and so many times I found myself in similar situations as Kim found herself, frustrated and feeling as if the most important part of the learning had failed to reach the children (Personal reactions to the case).

In her responses to the case reaction questions, April mentions that Kim’s lack of experience and insight about teaching contribute to faulty assumptions about children’s reactions to new and unfamiliar foods and cultures.
The fact that Kim continues with the lesson and doesn’t quite know what to do with the children shows her inexperience as a teacher and a lack of insight into how the children might react to being asked to eat something they’ve never tried before. She assumes the children will be interested in learning about different cultures and their foods (Responses to case reaction questions).

April feels that she is also sometimes naive as to how children might react to her planned activities. “Even when I try something new, I never know how the next group the next year will respond.”

_The importance of thorough planning and reflection before implementing a lesson._ “Many times as teachers, our ideas are great but implementing them is a challenge.” In her reactions to the case reaction questions, considering the perspective of Kim, April explains:

The student teacher, Kim, was trying to integrate a lesson on diversity with a unit on fruits and vegetables. This was a valid reason to bring examples of unusual fruits, but it didn’t work exactly as planned (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction and the response to the post case discussion question, April indicates that thoroughly preparing a lesson is so important in teaching and learning. She thinks that goals and objectives of a lesson should be evaluated and reflected upon before implementing a lesson. She feels it is vitally important for teachers to think carefully about what they have planned and evaluate the potential success of the lesson.

Through experience and trial and error, hopefully this will happen less and less often. Being prepared is so critical in teaching. Every activity must be thought about and picked apart to determine whether or not the objective will be met, and
secondly, that it will be meaningful to the children (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of reducing children’s anxiety about unfamiliar things from different cultures with sufficient information and discussion.* In her personal reaction, April positively evaluates the intentions of Kim’s lesson. “I loved Kim’s idea to stretch the curriculum in order to expose the children to different cultures.” In her personal reaction and case discussion, April recalls her experience, as an elementary student, being asked to try kiwi for the first time.

My classmates and I, like the children in the case, were very reluctant to try this strange looking, squishy, unusually colored food. However, the teacher let us know that it wouldn’t kill us, and some of us might even like it. I ended up loving it, and still enjoy it today (Case discussion).

April feels that her elementary teacher was wise because she discussed in advance the different types of foods students would encounter. She mentions that it was a treat to eat any kind of food in class. She feels that her elementary teacher reduced their anxiety about the unfamiliar fruit so that they would not shy away from exploring the new food.

She is obviously very experienced at being different from the rest instead of being included, and compared them to the fruits and vegetables that the children were accustomed to (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of naturally integrating lessons with diversity issues.* April feels that the mango case in particular will serve as a guide in her own teaching. In her personal reaction, she mentions, “I will make an extra effort to try to include culturally diverse topics whenever possible, but think through how the children might react and
what I can do to make things run smoothly.” In the case discussion and her reactions to the post case discussion question, she reiterates the importance of finding spaces where teachers can relate their lessons to diversity.

Children should be introduced to other cultures in a natural way. The discussion and case made me realize I need to be even more aware of opportunities to share with the children and evaluate whether or not my lessons will help teach respect to the children (Post case discussion responses).

Flexibility of Problem-Solving

Pictures of unfamiliar fruits as tools to reduce children's anxiety about foods from different cultures. In her personal reaction, April suggests that Kim could show pictures of mango trees to the children to demonstrate that they grow in ways similar to other familiar fruits. She thinks that this approach may lessen children’s nervousness about unfamiliar fruits and vegetables by providing them with a sense that they are foods that people enjoy eating.

If children were able to identify with the mango before the day of the experiment, they may have been more willing to examine it. The children needed to see that these fruits, though unusual or strange, were still classified as fruits and are eaten by people just like them (Personal reactions to the case).

Literature as a basis for integrating cultural diversity activities across the curriculum. April’s favorite suggestion for this case centers on the idea of reading a piece of literature to the class to introduce them to other places with interesting foods, people, and cultures. April feels that children do not have much sense about unfamiliar fruits and vegetables and the societies and cultures that produce the “unusual” foods. In her
personal reaction and case discussion, therefore, she suggests that using literature as an introduction to the activity is an excellent way of connecting the subject of science to diverse cultures.

I truly believe that literature can allow children to soar when used effectively. I also love when subjects can be integrated. I feel it gives the children a better sense of the material and how it affects their lives, rather than isolating subjects so that they never see how anything connects (Personal reactions to the case).

**Small group work as a means for children to learn about different cultures.** April proposes the idea that children could be involved in small group work to research and share what they learn about unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. She feels that active involvement and ownership in the class activity will inspire their interest and curiosity. In her personal reaction and case discussion, she comments:

Small groups to choose and research an unfamiliar fruit or vegetable to share with the class might help with the initial responses of disgust. The first reaction that you get, usually, if one kid goes, “Ooh cool!” then everybody thinks it’s cool, but if one goes, “Uugh!” you know then everybody thinks, “Oh that’s gross” (Case discussion)

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

**Content integration: The importance of experiences which expose children to diverse cultures.** April recalls Kim’s efforts to expose children to different cultures through unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. She feels Kim’s idea is good in terms of integrating multicultural awareness in the curriculum.
I think that’s a good way to make the children aware of different cultures, just to bring it up and just talk about it and get them to do something they’ve never done before (Exit interview).

Even though April indicates that Kim should have planned more carefully, taking into account children’s possible reactions, she still thinks that it is very commendable of Kim to attempt to expose students to new experiences. “The teacher was trying her best to expose them to new and exciting cultures, and they were simply grossed out.”

I know it was probably very upsetting for her when children rejected it and hard for her to figure out how to handle it, and so she just ignored it and went on and made it worse instead of helping. But I thought that was good that she was trying (Exit interview).

“The Day the Lobster Died”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of exposing children to diverse cultures in a natural way. Taking the perspective of the classroom teacher [Stan], April agrees with Stan’s goals in terms of trying to offer children various experiences that are outside the realm of their daily life. In her personal reaction, April describes Stan’s difficulties during the lesson.

He has done a unit on oceanography with his class and is excited about his plan to end the study with a lobster cookout during class. Stan knew that many of his children may not have had an opportunity to taste lobster and wanted to give them that chance (Personal reactions to the case).

April also feels that the introductory class activity was a good way to begin the activity, stimulating children to make observations and inferences about objects. From
April’s perspective, children’s observations and inferences can lead to predictions and explanations of theories in science. April thinks that Stan facilitates children’s higher-level thinking processes during this lesson.

Stan put the live lobster in a wrapped box and had the children make observations and ask questions to guess what was in the box. This allowed him to build in a lesson on distinguishing between observed and inferred information (Personal reactions to the case).

In addition, April evaluates Stan’s lesson in a positive light because he connects the science to different curricular subjects. She notes how Stan relates his lesson to social studies, by discussing how marine animals can shape the economy, life, and identity of a region. In her personal reaction, she points out:

I thought that Stan’s idea to discuss how marine animals can shape economy, life, and identity of a region was insightful. This is a great way to link subjects, including social studies with science. Stan could have held a discussion with the class about these topics after studying different ocean animals (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of sensitivity to children’s emotions in planning and implementing class activities.* In her personal reaction and responses to the post case discussion questions, April indicates that Stan should have reflected upon the potential problems of his lobster cookout lesson. She is bothered by Stan’s lack of “good” judgment in terms of conducting a lobster boil in front of his fifth grade class. She does not think that the lobster boil part of the lesson is appropriate for fifth grade children.
I was a little surprised that an experienced teacher would not see the problems involved in cooking a lobster in front of a class of fifth graders. However, I do not think it was an appropriate activity, especially for children as young as these. After our discussion, my beliefs were confirmed based on my classmates’ reaction (Personal reactions to the case).

April feels that the lobster cookout lesson has the potential to traumatize children. She believes that fifth grade children will be horrified from the experience of “killing a lobster.” In her personal reaction, she considers the fears and perspectives of children in the case.

His excitement over what he expected the class reaction to be quickly changed when the children realized his plan to kill and eat the lobster. Two children, Erin and Gretchen, ran from the room crying (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, she illustrates her feelings about the lesson.

There are many foods that I, as an adult, love to eat but would not necessarily want to see killed, especially lobster. Lobsters are known to make like a scream as they are lowered into the boiling water and they also try to block themselves from being put in a pot. I don’t know many fifth graders that would enjoy this, much less want to eat it afterward (Personal reactions to the case).

Criticizing the lesson in terms of the children’s emotions, April sympathizes with their feelings of shock, remembering her own experience when she was young. Describing this experience in her personal reaction, she considers the perspective of herself as a child.
I can remember from when I was a child my dad wringing the necks of chickens for us to eat. I was horrified, and later had trouble eating them (Personal reactions to the case).

At this point, in her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction question, April considers the perspective of Stan, noting his confusion with respect to the children’s negative reactions.

The teacher seems to be confused by their reaction. He couldn’t understand why they would not love the idea of boiling a live lobster right there in class (Responses to case reaction questions).

April continuously emphasizes the absolute need for teachers to be sensitive to children’s emotions in relation to class activities.

*The importance of taking into account animals’ rights in classrooms.* In her personal reaction, April indicates that people should care for animals in a humane way in order to minimize fear of children with diverse emotional characteristics. She does not advocate animals’ rights simply on humanitarian grounds; rather, she believes that the treatment of animals is closely connected to the emotional well-being of children.

There will always be those who are squeamish around dead animals and those who have a hard time dissecting or even studying live animals. Teachers must be sensitive to the needs of the class, and in order to minimize fears, they must take extra care to handle animals with the utmost respect (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of considering children’s personal backgrounds in planning a lesson.* After experiencing the case of “The Day the Lobster Died,” April feels even more
strongly about the need for taking into consideration the background of children when planning a lesson. In her personal reaction, she realizes the regional differences between Stan and the children in his class.

Stan grew up in an area that wouldn’t have thought twice about cooking a lobster, but these children were not raised with the same perspective. What he believed would be a learning experience for them ended up being a very traumatic event.

We all have diverse backgrounds and these must be considered by teachers (Personal reactions to the case).

Flexibility of Problem-Solving

Engaging students’ interest in science through attention-grabbing lesson introductions. Previously in the discussion around flexibility of identifying multiple issues, April comments on Stan’s unique way of helping children distinguish, observe and infer information. In her personal reaction, she suggests that Stan could have used the idea as a motivational tool to get children excited about the upcoming unit of study.

The idea might have worked better had he prepared the class beforehand. Because of the nature of a science class, you want and need the children to be interested, excited, and enthusiastic. The “20 questions” game is a great way to get children interested in class and in a new mystery topic. He could have even used a toy lobster or other ocean animal (Personal reactions to the case).

Integrating science and multicultural education across disciplines. In her personal reaction, April suggests that groups or individuals could have conducted research about particular geographical regions, including the identification of animals and their uses. Her proposals indicate the importance she places on integrated curricular practices.
The class could have drawn a large map in the classroom, and as they discussed each animal, added it to the region where it is an important resource. The children could discuss ocean animals’ roles in providing food, clothing, etc. Any of these activities would have given Stan an idea of how the children would feel about a lobster boil (Personal reactions to the case).

*Considering alternatives to the lobster boil.* April does not think that opportunities for children to taste lobster are bad. In her personal reaction, however, she recommends tasting a previously cooked lobster rather than instantly boiling one in the classroom. This point seems to be related to her concern regarding children’s emotions about the lobster boil part of the lesson.

Having the opportunity to taste lobster or other ocean animals is valid in this unit. Instead of actually boiling and eating the animal in class, if Stan really wanted to give them a taste test, he could have brought in items that had been prepared ahead of time (Personal reactions to the case).

*Connectedness of Theoretical Principles*

*Content integration: The importance of meaningful experiences about diverse cultures.* April thinks that Stan tries to boil the lobster in front of the class in order to get the children to have an authentic experience with marine animals. She points out, however, that Stan’s lobster cookout lesson is not really meaningful as a culturally relevant activity. “As far as the lobster boil situation, I wouldn’t consider killing any animal in front of my fifth graders just to eat during class.” In her personal reaction and the reactions to the case reaction questions, she notes that the lobster cookout lesson can provide children with opportunities to experience something they are rarely exposed to in
their usual life. However, unlike the “mango case,” April believes that Stan’s lesson has less of a multicultural focus.

I guess he was trying to get them to experience something too, but I didn’t feel like his motive was as much culturally based as the mango case was. He was on purpose trying to get the children to try things that were from other places. But I think he just wanted to show them he could eat lobster (Personal reactions to the case).

Knowledge construction: Sociocultural background as a mediating factor in the teacher’s critique of the case. April has multiple interpretations with respect to the lobster case. She does not find anything inherently wrong with bringing lobsters to class or eating animals. She does not feel personally offended by the idea of boiling a lobster. In her personal reaction and responses to the post case discussion question, she mentions:

I thought bringing in a live animal was a neat idea. I can see myself doing that.

I do believe that humans were put on the earth to rule over the animals of the land, and we may enjoy any of the foods produced by them. I also think children should definitely experience neat learning activities in school (Personal reactions to the case).

She points out, however, that Stan’s lobster cookout lesson is based on practices he grew up with, without considering the children’s community and personal experiences. That Stan’s lesson showed little consideration for regional difference between himself and the children in his class makes a big difference in terms of April’s thoughts and feelings regarding the class activity. April feels that Stan does not take into account the diversity of children in his class by assuming that every child has upbringings
that are similar to his. April feels that Stan should be aware that children’s emotions may arise from their personal backgrounds. In her reactions to the case reaction questions, April emphasizes that student’ thoughts and emotions should always be taken into account, with the recognition that children will not always feel the same way as the classroom teacher. From her reactions to the case reaction questions and the post case discussion questions, April notes the following:

Stan, the fifth grade teacher, had the plan of explaining how a marine animal can shape the economy, life, etc. of a region. He grew up in a region that depended on lobster as a resource. His class, however, did not. Stan felt that he would be exposing the children to new and exciting experiences that linked his unit on oceanography with a delicious lobster boil. Unfortunately for Stan, some of the children were very disturbed by his plans. His idea would more than likely traumatize more children than it would amaze (Responses to case reaction questions).

In her personal reaction, April also indicates that Stan should do more to help children understand various ways lobsters can be used as food and their role in the economy. She believes that these connections will help children develop flexible ideas about people and cultures that differ from their own.

He might could talk about the fact that, yes, a lot of people eat lobster and how it would effect the economy based on that and different things like that (Personal reactions to the case).
“Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of honoring the beliefs of children, parents and teachers. “As teachers, we must stand up for our beliefs, teaching the children in our classes what is right for the sake of future generations. Children must learn what it means to be a good steward of our land and resources.” April thinks it is important for teachers to teach the “right” things to children. At the same time, she stresses that teachers should be careful not to offend the views and beliefs of parents. In her personal reaction, she relates the case of “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?” to her own experience and teaching context. She confesses her personal difficulties in dealing with issues characterized by disagreement in beliefs between teachers and parents. She feels that teachers should respect the beliefs of parents even in situations involving contradictory viewpoints. She recalls her experiences with situations involving differences in beliefs.

I teach in a Christian school. The diversity in religious beliefs is difficult to handle sometimes. I have an obligation to God and to the school to teach the truth, but many children will say, “But my mom and dad say…” It’s a touchy situation when my children’s parents’ beliefs contradict what I know is right or truth. When in this situation, I think it’s important to be careful not to demean the parents’ views. They are doing their best to raise their children right. I do what I can to “plant a seed” in them so that when faced with an issue in their own lives, they will have the ability to make an informed decision (Personal reactions to the case).
April feels the same way about the issues in the *ipil-ipil* case. She believes that Perla should not offend Antonio’s parents’ beliefs or means of economic livelihood. She thinks that Perla should be careful not to have a relationship that creates tensions with parents. She feels that tense parent-teacher relationships may cause confusion in children about what is “right,” forcing them to choose between the views of their parents and teachers. In her personal reaction and reactions to the case reaction questions, she considers the perspective of Antonio, empathizing with his struggles and confusions about the deforestation issues.

I feel that this is what Perla should do. I remember that Antonio must have really worried all weekend about whether his family was making the right choice by cutting down *ipil-ipil* trees. She needs to realize that this young man is only a fourth grader, with struggling parents, and this is not the only time the issue of deforestation and soil erosion will be discussed in his lifetime (Responses to case reaction questions).

In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, April thinks how hard it would be for Perla to express her beliefs to Antonio without making him feel bad about himself and his family. She considers the perspective of Perla, remembering her difficulties as a classroom teacher in dealing with conflicting issues. She empathizes with Perla’s difficulties in trying to balance both her own beliefs and those of parents in ways which will not offend Antonio’s emotions.

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Teaching scientific knowledge about deforestation in a culturally sensitive manner.* In her personal reaction, April indicates the need for Perla to discuss and share
scientific information with Antonio about the effects of deforestation, including the
dangers of soil-erosion. She feels that scientific knowledge is important for helping
children recognize and understand underlying reasons for environmental problems.
However, she points out the need for Perla to be aware of and sensitive to each child’s
personal family situations. She thinks that scientific knowledge must be presented in
ways which do not offend Antonio’s feelings about himself and his family. April respects
Antonio’s confusion and empathizes with Perla’s difficulties in handling the situation.

The teacher, Perla, has a certain responsibility to teach the children in her class
about the dangers of erosion and cutting down trees. She also must be sensitive to
the fact that cutting trees for charcoal is the family’s living and source of income
in an area where income is hard to find. This situation puts her in a tough spot
(Personal reactions to the case).

*The teacher’s moral obligation to assist parents in seeking other forms of employment.* In her personal reaction, April recommends that Perla talk to Antonio and
his family, continuously urging them to obtain the education needed to find other jobs
that do not contribute to deforestation. She feels that it is important for Perla to educate
Antonio’s family about the harmful effects of deforestation.

She needs to speak gently to Antonio, letting him know she understands his
family’s situation, but look at the situation’s long-term effects. He should be
encouraged to continue seeking an education so that his family could have the
chance to live without the worry of poverty (Personal reactions to the case).

However, she worries that this suggestion would potentially contribute to a more negative
relationship between the classroom teacher and the family of Antonio.
She will probably not be able to change Antonio’s father’s career and would end up with a strained relationship with child and parents if she tried (Personal reactions to the case).

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

*Knowledge construction: The imperative of standing up for one’s personal beliefs while respecting diverse beliefs and practices.* As she earlier mentions, April takes into account the positions of the classroom teacher, Perla, and Antonio and his family. In her responses to the case reaction questions, she indicates that a teacher has a definite responsibility and obligation to share her values and beliefs with children in her class. Even though it may be difficult sometimes, especially if parents have different views on issues, she thinks she still believes teachers need to teach “what is right and truth.” April empathizes with Perla with respect to this point.

April disagrees, however, with Perla’s decisions to teach the science underlying deforestation and soil erosion with no consideration of children’s personal backgrounds, values and beliefs. April feels that Perla simply approaches the lesson in a logical and scientific manner, without considering values as a dimension of science. April points out that Perla just does not present both sides of the coin – that is, community views on science issues and the school knowledge of science topics. In her responses to the case reaction questions, she illustrates this point.

She did make the decision to discuss deforestation and soil erosion based on the needs of the area. She felt that educating the children would be the first step in improving condition for the land (Responses to case reaction questions).
April continuously describes how Perla disregards the fact that the culture of the community influences children’s construction of perspectives, assumptions, and ideas for a phenomenon. For April, Perla seems to be very familiar with the community of her school and aware that many of the children live in poverty, but does not take this into account in her teaching. In her personal reaction, April describes Perla’s awareness of the culture of the community.

Perla grew up there, so she knows the difficulties the children in her class face. The community is facing a very important environmental concern. The land where they live, and even the schoolyard, is eroding rapidly because of deforestation. Many in the area harvest *ipil-ipil* trees and other trees for charcoal and fuel. She realizes that every one of her children has basic needs that must be met in order to survive (Responses to case reaction questions).

However, April thinks that Perla does not take into account these community contexts, simply giving preference to scientific knowledge, and devaluing cutting down trees, even though she knows the hardships and community issues that involve poverty and environment. In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, April points out:

She is committed to sharing her values about proper treatment of resources with her class. After showing the children in her class the effects of deforestation and erosion, Perla gets the class to understand that they all should plant more trees and not cut down any that are already planted (Personal reactions to the case).
April feels that Perla does not respect the personal backgrounds of children and their families. In her responses to the case reaction questions, April indicates that Perla should pay more attention to Antonio’s confusions regarding the nature of “truth.”

Antonio struggles with the issue because his family needs the trees to make charcoal as their source of income. He confronts Perla with the question of whether or not his father is doing the right thing (Responses to case reactions).

In addition, in her personal reaction, April recommends that Perla could have used the complex situation of Antonio as a basis for class discussions which would enable children to consider and share various perspectives and positions regarding deforestation. She thinks it will be meaningful for children in Perla’s class to think about controversial issues focusing on how scientific knowledge and people’s personal situations are associated with the specific school curriculum. She feels that children get expanded educational opportunities to construct an understanding of the perspectives of different groups of people through these kinds of discussions.

Give the children a scenario to read and discuss placing them in a position of someone who needs to cut down trees to survive. Pose questions to the class, and have them evaluate short-term and long-term advantages and disadvantages (Personal reactions to the case).

Prejudice reduction: The importance of not alienating children in relation to their personal backgrounds. In her responses to the case reaction questions, April emphasizes the fact that Antonio’s father works in deforestation in order to survive and this should not be put to the test by other children in the class. The teacher should take care not to judge the work of Antonio’s father as something that should be considered as bad or
wrong. “Antonio came to her with his question of whether his family was doing the right thing. Perla should be careful when answering Antonio since this was his father’s only source of income, and it put food on their family’s table.” She feels that curricular lessons in science classes, as well as other subjects, should be sensitive to their potentially alienating nature. In her responses to the post case discussion question, April provides an example of this point taken from the school where she currently works.

Teaching at a private school, I don’t have any children who would be considered living in poverty. I do, however, have a diverse group of family incomes. Many could be considered some of the wealthiest in Atlanta, and others struggle to send their children to the school. I have had children in the past whose parents had jobs that might be considered less than moral, but I try to be sure not to put down their parents or their occupations. I just try to give them information so that when they are trying to choose a job, they will make a good choice (Post case discussion responses).

“El Secreto de las Ninãs”

**Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives**

*The importance of appropriate teaching actions which are sensitive to children’s personal backgrounds.* In the case of “El Secreto de las Ninãs,” April strongly emphasizes that classroom teachers must take into account each child’s personal situation. In her personal reaction, she criticizes the classroom teacher in the case for failing to consider the perspective of the two homeless children.
The teacher did not take into consideration their situation when making the assignment, and even when they explained their dilemma, she further humiliated them by making them feel inadequate (Personal reactions to the case).

April feels that the classroom teacher is not sensitive to the two homeless girls’ situations by assuming that all the children are able to obtain the materials for the class project. In her personal reaction, April considers the perspective of the classroom teacher, mentioning the assumptions behind her teaching actions.

As educators sometimes must do, the teacher asks each child to bring in a needed supply, a shoebox. For most of the children in the class, this poses no problem at all. Many have extra empty shoeboxes at their homes. The teacher even suggests that they go to a discount shoe store if they did not have a shoebox, and the store would give them one for free. The teacher assumes that all the children are capable of providing this small item for the project (Personal reactions to the case).

April also feels that the classroom teacher has the incorrect assumption that all the children can afford to pay for materials for the class project. In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, she reflects on the teacher’s assumptions.

The teacher in this case probably never thought about how the children might truly be unable to get the shoebox needed. She assumed that everyone in her class all had similar families and resources. When they didn’t have the shoeboxes, she reacted without discussing it first with the children (Responses to case reaction questions).
Stressing that teachers should consider children’s individual situations, April extends the context of this case about homeless girls to the situation of children from divorced families, whom she considers to have very similar struggles. In her personal reaction, case discussion, and reactions to the post case discussion, she notes that being prepared on a day-to-day basis is sometimes difficult for some children due to their specific home situations.

The issue of homelessness is one that I have not had to deal with so far in my teaching career. I do, however, have children whose parents are divorced or other circumstances make it hard for them to have a stable home life. Little things like not being at the same house for a week in a row make it difficult to remember assignments, bring in supplies, or just get a good night’s sleep. Although this is far from being homeless, it is still an issue that some in my class struggle with. When problems arise, I try to consider that most of the time, it’s not the child’s fault, but a matter of their circumstances (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of being sensitive to children’s emotions in relation to personal situations. April cares much about children’s feelings. “The girls could not help their circumstances and should not have been made to feel like they were not as worthy as the rest of the class.” In her personal reaction, she describes the two homeless girls’ situations.

The science teacher of Cynthia and Jessica announces to the class that they will be making their own movie, and to do that, they will first make their own camera. The class is very excited about the upcoming project. Cynthia and Jessica do not have access to an empty shoebox, a car to drive to a shoe store, or any extra
change to pay for the supply. The next day, they both come to science without their boxes or money to buy a box (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction, April discusses how the classroom teacher inadvertently turns the two homeless girls away from their previous excitement and enthusiasm for science. She considers the case from the two homeless girls’ perspective, discussing their feelings about the class project. She points out the problems with the classroom teacher’s actions concerning the girls’ failure to obtain class materials.

The teacher lectures them on responsibility. After the girls tell the teacher their situation, she continues embarrassing them by offering that they stay in during recess to clean erasers to “earn” their shoeboxes (Personal reactions to the case). Regarding the teacher’s actions, April empathizes with the two girls losing their interest in the science project. In her personal reaction, she considers the perspective of the two homeless girls.

The girls decide it wasn’t worth it and go out to play at recess instead. The teacher gives them the needed shoeboxes without a word, but the girls have lost all interest in the project, and maybe science in general. I felt very sorry for the two girls who were embarrassed in front of the class (Personal reactions to the case).

**Flexibility of Problem-Solving**

*The need for teachers to prepare extra materials for class projects.* April believes that teachers should always prepare extra materials for class projects. She criticizes the teacher’s action of specifically charging money for the shoeboxes and lack of sensitivity to children’s personal access to needed school supplies. In her responses to the case reaction questions, she proposes the following.
I would not have made the girls “earn” their shoebox. As teachers, we sometimes have to supply things that we wish all the children could bring in themselves. The teacher in this case said herself that you can get free boxes at a shoe store, so she could have gotten extras and not made a big deal about it. I think it’s silly to charge fifty cents for a shoebox anyway, especially since the girls shared their dilemma with her (Responses to case reaction questions).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Equity pedagogy: The importance of teachers’ creating equal educational opportunities for all students. Even though sometimes money for supplies is limited, April feels that teachers have to come up with creative ways to get needed supplies so children can participate in class without worrying about their families’ financial struggles. In this respect, she thinks that the classroom teacher in the case of “El Secreto de las Ninas” should have been more understanding and more compassionate toward the two homeless girls. “These children are dealing with some big issues in their lives that most people, luckily, would never dream of worrying about.”

April feels that the classroom teacher in this case failed to provide the homeless girls with equal educational opportunities, ultimately causing them to lose interest in the class science project. April feels that the girls are aware that the teacher considers their actions irresponsible; this hurts their feelings and diminishes their desire to participate in the activity. She thinks that the assumptions of the classroom teacher in the case do not take into account issues related to socioeconomic status. In her responses to the case reaction questions and post case discussion question, April comments on the classroom
teacher’s assumptions and actions and the girls’ feelings as a consequence of these actions.

I think this science teacher assumed that the children in her class all had access to either the materials themselves, a way to get the materials, or money to pay for these materials. These two girls, Cynthia and Jessica had none of these. The girls obviously felt self-conscious about the fact that they did not have the means or the money to get needed supplies for the science class. They seemed to feel resentful and hurt that the teacher assumed it was because they were irresponsible. The teacher lost the girls’ respect and probably any hope of getting them excited about this project (Responses to case reaction questions).

April’s point suggests that the ‘equity pedagogy’ dimension of multicultural education should include not only providing equal access to needed school supplies, but also should include stimulating learning interests through a consideration of each child’s specific situations and needs. April emphasizes that teachers must make every child enjoy learning if at all possible. She feels that sometimes school is a child’s only “escape.”

The teacher corrects them for being irresponsible and loses all their respect and their enthusiasm for science. The teacher seems unaware that her class has a diverse population when it comes to financial status (Responses to case reaction questions).
When Do You Perform Tuob?: Culture at the Margins of the Science Classroom

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of teachers’ consistent personal beliefs and actions. In her personal reaction, April identifies the classroom teacher’s [Esperanza’s] conflicts between traditional medical rituals and more scientific explanations of medical practices. Esperanza Parcon is caught between her proven knowledge of science and the traditions of alternative medicine she was brought up with. The rural barangay area where she grew up and lives is known to be involved in medical practices that are not proven by science. Esperanza is torn between what she has seen in her lifetime that can not be explained by science and what her education tells her is truth about these rituals (Personal reactions to the case).

Esperanza introduces the topic of allergies to her class by asking them how to prevent itching and red spots that are caused by some plants. Two children offer the idea of performing tuob, a ritual of passing smoke from various burning plants over someone to drive bad spirits away. Reflecting on the dilemma in this case, April indicates that Esperanza first of all needs to decide how she feels about the practice before telling the children that their families are doing something that is wrong. In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, April stresses that Esperanza should closely reflect on her own beliefs about tuob before “preaching” to the children in her class that the practice is bad for health. She describes Esperanza’s own confusion concerning the effectiveness of tuob and scientific knowledge about medical practices.
I found it odd that a teacher would go out of her way to prove the dangers of smoke and disprove the need for *tuob*, yet allow it to go on in her own home. Her mind told her that the children needed to know the science behind the alternative rituals that many of their families performed. However, her heart told her that there was something in the rituals that might work but couldn’t be explained (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction, April emphasizes that Esperanza should make sure that her personal beliefs and values correspond to her teaching practices. If not, April feels that both Esperanza and the children in her class will get confused and not know what to believe.

If she truly believes that *tuob* is invalid, she should continue teaching the children that. However, she must be careful in the approach she uses to demonstrate her views. Not only are the children confused, but also Esperanza wonders what really is the truth. Even with her education and training, she knows her own mother will perform *tuob* on her daughter. She feels like a hypocrite (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of selecting appropriate, culturally sensitive demonstrations in science class.* In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, April remembers the experiment of Esperanza. Wanting to make a point about the dangers of smoke, Esperanza conducts an experiment with a fish in an aquarium and a cigarette. April thinks the experiment does not help foster children’s understanding about *tuob* or any other medical practices. She considers the perspective of Esperanza, describing her intentions for the fish experiment and the resulting confusion of children.
Esperanza wanted so badly to make a point about the dangers of smoke that she killed a fish in front of her third grade class. She filled the aquarium with smoke, and the fish eventually died. The children witnessed this and were confused about what to think. Esperanza made her point that smoke is not good for lungs, but the children now wanted to know why tuob had worked so many times (Personal reactions to the case).

In addition, April indicates that Esperanza’s fish experiment is harsh, as the children witness “killing fish.” In her personal reaction, she considers the perspective of the children, noting their shocked feelings. She thinks that teachers must consider the developmental and conceptual appropriateness of their lessons in planning and implementing class activities.

I think killing a fish in front of a group of eight and nine year olds is rather harsh. She does have a responsibility to these children to show them the truth, but as our class has discussed before, going against strong parent beliefs and values can be a touchy thing (Personal reactions to the case).

Regarding April’s point about disagreements between teachers and children’s parents, Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) suggest that teachers’ genuine dialogue and discussions with parents about their concerns are essential to understanding each other’s beliefs. Considering that it is unlikely that their beliefs and norms will be exactly same, it is necessary to invest some time and come to understand differences in thoughts, attitudes, and experiences. Both teachers and parents should recognize that sometimes conflicting ideas develop because of incorrect or lack of information. Parents have a primary right to be informed about their children’s education.
As Adelman (2000) indicates, collaboration among schools, families, and communities is facilitated through the sharing of in-depth information and knowledge. This leads to expanded opportunities for various curricular activities, acquisition of meaningful resources for children’s education, and the construction of mutual support and community relations.

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*The importance of honesty in teaching.* April feels that teachers’ roles are not simply to give children “right” or “true” information and knowledge. As Sapon-Shevin (1995) and Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) argue, a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning community does not distinguish between those who teach and those who learn. All members of the classroom community should benefit with respect to learning. In this context, April suggests in her personal case reaction that Esperanza should honestly share her thoughts about *tuob* and openly discuss them with children.

I do not think Esperanza should ignore the comments from the children, considering the extent to which many of the children in her class believe in these methods of medicine. Since she has experience with some of the rituals, she can tell them from personal history her feelings about them (Personal reactions to the case).

*Connectedness of Theoretical Principles*

*Knowledge construction: The importance of social interactions in individual’s knowledge construction.* April feels that Esperanza, herself, is torn between the beliefs of *tuob* and scientific knowledge. She notes that Esperanza definitely understands the background of her students and the practice of *tuob* because she grew up in the area and...
has been exposed to the same experiences. However, as April explains, Esperanza’s university education exposes her to views which are starkly different from those underlying the *tuob* rituals. In her responses to the case reaction questions, April notices that while Esperanza has been taught that *tuob* is not scientifically effective and potentially harmful, she still believes that the practice is effective. From April’s perspective, Esperanza is confused by conflicting information gained from totally different sources of knowledge.

In her personal reaction, April points out that Esperanza must be sensitive to her students’ feelings and frankly share scientific information and her own personal thoughts about *tuob* with children. She feels that it is important for children to construct their own knowledge and decisions with respect to the practice of *tuob*. April suggests that it is important for children to have social interactions with significant others such as peers, teachers, or parents in order to construct this personal form of knowledge. Her ideas support Burr’s (1995) contention that people’s knowledge is constructed through their daily social interactions; therefore, “truth” is a product of social processes and not an objective phenomenon of the world. As Burr explains, even though teachers may transmit “truth” of the world to their students, children do not and cannot retrieve the same understanding of this “truth.” New information and knowledge is constantly filtered by preexisting conditions of knowledge and beliefs, and are constructed through social interactions. April alludes to this position in her personal reaction, as follows:

My belief is that teachers must share the truth with the children. Being sensitive to the class, Esperanza can be completely honest with them. She could tell them the effects of smoke on their bodies, offer advice, yet let them know that she struggles
also with the issue of the effectiveness of tuob. I think it is important for children to understand that they will need to make many of their own decisions in life based on information given to them (Personal reactions to the case).

Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy

*Case-Based Pedagogy as a Tool for Multicultural Education*

*Constructing Knowledge with Sensitivity to Different Cultures*

*Cases as tools to broaden perspectives about diversity in classrooms.* April describes both her interests and difficulties with the case experiences. She thinks that cases are valuable because they provide opportunities to personally think more in depth about diversity issues related to the children in her class. However, she feels that sometimes it is frustrating and difficult to understand exactly how the cases relate to diversity issues. She highlights the lobster case as one which helps to broaden her “narrow” view of diversity.

For instance the lobster one, how can I make this a diversity issue. But the fact that the teacher had grown up in another area even of the United States which I hadn’t really considered that diverse, but it is. The fact that he’d grown up where lobsters were killed all the time and that’s what everybody ate and it wasn’t a big deal. Then he had moved to a place where it was a big deal and the children were really shocked by his attitude toward it and so I never would have thought of that as being a diversity issue and the fact that I need to think about where my children are from and even in the United States, not just that they’re from another country. I thought it was good for us to have to think about that (Exit interview).
Experiencing cases, April indicates that she feels there are so many issues that she now will consider more in terms of diversity. She realizes the strong need to think about lots of different issues from the perspective of diversity in her classroom.

Based on the cases, I had to think about each case. We had to try to figure out how it was a diversity issue or a multicultural issue, and so I feel like that has been strengthened. Always be thinking, how can I teach in a way that will show respect for others and will show the children that they should respect others (Exit interview).

In-depth Reflections on Diversity and Knowing Personal Beliefs

Cases as centerpieces for discussions with colleagues and mirrors to see other teachers’ experiences about teaching and learning. “I thought it was interesting just reading the different cases and being able to discuss with the other teachers."

I thought it was an interesting way to talk about school and teaching. And how we can become better teachers is to look at other people’s experiences. It’s just interesting to hear what other people have been through (Exit interview).

She feels that case-based pedagogy is stimulating because it makes her have conversations and deep discussions about teaching and learning with colleague teachers. She enjoys hearing the experiences of other teachers that relate to the case situations. However, April sometimes wants to know exactly how the case teachers resolve the conflict situations and what happens at the end of each case.

Cases as tools for reflecting on complicated dilemmas from multiple perspectives. April mentions that case dilemmas, especially those showing the tensions between teachers and parents’ beliefs, provoke in depth reflection. She feels the hardest point of
case analysis is deciding what the case teachers could do in the specific instances. She also feels that case analysis is similar to her own difficulties in determining how to handle dilemma situations as a classroom teacher, as portrayed in the excerpt that follows.

I think the issue of the parents having different views than the teachers is tough because that’s their children and they’re raising them the best they know how and the way they want them to be raised with their belief system. It’s the teacher who has to come in and try to say that’s not right in a sensitive way. You have to be careful about that. Of course, you have an obligation to teach the truth, but it’s kind of touchy whenever the parents think something opposite than the teachers (Exit interview).

Suggestions for Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy Regarding Diversity

The need to balance both curricular knowledge and case-based knowledge. “It [case-based pedagogy] is a much more interesting way to study different topics.” April thinks that case method is interesting and useful but feels that teachers also need “textbook knowledge” in order to determine whether teachers’ actions in cases are “right” or “wrong.”

Unless you’re just natural or you’re a veteran teacher, or you have a lot of experience with children, I think you have to have some knowledge of the curriculum and what each child is expected to be like (Exit interview).

Emphasizing the need for teachers to develop both curricular knowledge from textbooks and case knowledge, April feels that cases can provide more authentic and realistic experiences beyond what textbooks convey about teaching and learning
situations. She also feels more comfortable with cases and is encouraged by seeing that the case teachers also make mistakes and experience struggles in their classrooms.

You just have to understand you’re not always gonna hit a home run with every lesson, and I think that was probably comforting to hear that from all these other teachers. Many of them really goofed and make me feel like well, you just go back and try again the next day and yeah, I don’t think you can learn everything. There is something to learn about being a teacher from a book, but that’s probably why the cases are interesting – because this is stuff that you wouldn’t get from a textbook, you know, should you or shouldn’t you boil a lobster in front of your class. That’s not gonna be in a regular textbook, but it brings up issues that a textbook might bring up but in a different way (Exit interview).

*Sources of Learning through Case-Based Pedagogy*

*Reading, writing, and responding to cases as ways to reflect, confirm, and broaden beliefs about diversity.* April thinks that all the reading, writing, discussing, and responding to cases makes her think about a lot of different issues regarding diversity in teaching and learning. However, she indicates that reading the cases and having to think about the questions are the most significant part for her reflection and learning regarding diversity. She reads the cases several times to analyze the issues of diversity they portray. She comments, “My views were either confirmed or broadened” through the reading and reactions to the cases. Reading and responding to the cases, April reflects on the complicated and dynamic nature of case situations and constructs intellectual and affective learning associated with the case dilemmas.
Pretty much I just reread the case and tried to figure out how the teacher might be
different, or their background might be different from the children, and the
different children that were in the class and how they might have been raised.
Sometimes basically just really thinking about it for a while, sometimes I would
have to read the case for a couple of times and then I would finally say, oh well
that could be considered a diversity issue, which I guess it was, I hope it was,
because things I hadn’t really thought about even related to generations, because
the teachers are older sometimes. That had a lot to do with the way they perceived
things as opposed to their children (Exit interview).

*Colleague teachers as mentors and resources who assist in confirming and
broadening personal beliefs about diversity.* “I felt like our class, on the whole, had
basically the same opinions on the cases, and so many times I wasn’t swayed at all, my
beliefs were just strengthened.” Even though April finds that other teachers views about
cases tend to follow a similar direction, she feels that it is interesting to hear ideas about
how they can handle the case situations.

As well as the large group class discussions with other teachers, April mentions
further individual discussions about the cases with colleague teachers of her school. She
indicates that whenever she meets the difficulties and complex challenges regarding case
situations, her colleague teachers’ expert level professional mentoring and collaborative
assistance advance her understanding.

So yeah, just forging ahead is really how I dealt with it, and sometimes Jane and I
would talk about it. Sometimes I would talk to another teacher and say, how can I,
what’s the diversity issue in this, how can I make this meaningful as far as
diversity goes. Of course talking to Jane, she’s very knowledgeable, experienced, and an excellent educator. She sees things that I wouldn’t see. She just has such insight into things that I just love sitting and talking to her. She’s very willing to help and say this is what I thought. I learned a lot from her and still I don’t know that I have an answer for everything even for myself, because some things, well, I don’t know how I would handle that. It would just have to depend on the child. So I guess experiences, just living it, teaches you a lot, teaches me a lot (Exit interview).

*Perceived Meaningfulness about Diversity from Case-Based Pedagogy*

*Creating Awareness of Diversity*

_The importance of putting special efforts into understanding diversity issues across individuals._ April feels that her experiences with selected cases have strengthened and broadened her beliefs about diversity in teaching and learning. April states that she always tries to think about each child and make sure that everybody in her class feels they are a part of the learning community. However, she confronts various challenges regarding diversity and multicultural education. “I hadn’t thought about much, as far as how each child could be considered diverse. I felt like that was eye–opening to think about that.”

I had a very narrow view of what diversity was. I thought just simply because they were African–American or they were from another country, not the U.S. That’s basically what I thought of as diversity. So in studying the cases in class, we were asked questions like what was the diversity issue and I really had to think
about it. It really opened my eyes to the fact that there are so many other aspects
of diversity other than just what I had initially thought (Exit interview).

She indicates that her experiences and beliefs about diversity and multicultural education
are greatly expanded in comparison to her initial thoughts about issues of that nature. She
reveals that prior to her experiences with cases she tended to just generalize about the
personal backgrounds of children and their parents. “I thought I really knew every child
is its own little person and they’re all different and unique but I really hadn’t. I just
thought, well, they’re all pretty much wealthy, they all do this, all their parents are
involved.” Observing the dilemmas of the teachers in cases, she realizes many more
diverse issues in her own class.

Many of the teachers unfortunately in the cases made mistakes with their class
because they hadn’t thought about that ahead of time, and it really made me think,
wow, I have a much more diverse class than I thought. Teaching at a private
Christian school, most of the children are pretty well off, I kind of had them in a
certain little box. It really opened my eyes to the fact that there are so many
different issues besides just what I had considered as diversity (Exit interview).

April describes how her views about diversity and multicultural education have
been broadened. She is now more clearly aware of regional differences, even in the
United States.

I have children that are from the north. They lived in the north up until just a few
years ago. They do things all different, even their speech is different, and their
customs are different, and even the things they eat. It’s just all kinds of different
things that would most of the time be associated with people that are from another
country or something like that (Exit interview).

April is also more aware of her teaching actions with respect to a diabetic child in her
class. She feels the need to be more sensitive to the particular needs of this child.

The fact that I have one little boy who’s diabetic in my class. I hadn’t thought
about how different topics might affect him and how I should think more about
different things like rewards that I give. I have to be careful, because I don’t
wanna always give out candy and things like that for him, because of the fact that
I don’t want him to feel bad about it (Exit interview).

In addition, she describes her growing awareness that diversity is sometimes a reflection
of differences in personal experiences and backgrounds between children and their
parents.

Even if someone was raised here in Atlanta all their life, if their parents weren’t,
then that’s different too. And that will cause them to have different views on
things, and I really hadn’t thought about that (Exit interview).

_The Importance of the Teaching Approach_

_The significance of culturally relevant lessons that consider each child with
respect to diversity._ April mainly recognizes that she should review all aspects of her
teaching, including her lessons and attitudes, in order for her to be a more culturally
Sensitive teacher. After the case-based experiences she thinks more deeply about diverse
teaching approaches that could benefit each child in her class.

There were a lot of different things and that really was interesting. It made me
want to talk to my children more about what they think about things and how they
feel about things so that I can be better prepared to present things to them in a way that they would accept easily (Exit interview).

Trying to make her lessons more culturally relevant, she thinks more about how she is perceived by the children in her class.

Am I presenting the same thing all the time and not trying to let them learn about other people, other cultures? That’s exciting and I guess that it really wasn’t as hard as I thought it would be. I was like ok now. I was trying to make it some big thing where it was gonna be real complicated but it wasn’t bad at all. I thought I could do this and the children would like it (Exit interview).

She is now thinking more about the curriculum in terms of diversity. She thinks that the curriculum of her school is good about introducing children to a wide range of different cultures. However, she is more conscious now about specific points of her lessons and the need to focus on the sociocultural dimensions of multicultural education. She discusses this point, using an example from social studies.

Social studies is what I teach. In social studies we study American history. Even with American history that’s hard because our country is made up of all the different people that came from somewhere else and settled in the country. With the exception of the Native Americans, we’re all from somewhere other than here. Making that point to the children I think has changed me (Exit interview).

*The importance of considering specific contexts in criticizing teachers’ actions in teaching and learning.* “A lot of the times I felt like the teachers just really made bad decisions about the activities they decided to do.” However, April points out that after experiencing cases she has a greater understanding about the actions of other teachers,
rather than simply arbitrarily trying to judge them. She thinks that other teachers also strive to do their best in teaching, even though sometimes it does not go well. She thinks that teachers cannot be simply criticized, without considering all of the contexts, uncertainties and dilemmas that surround teaching situations, and without putting oneself in the other person’s shoes.

I’ve done all kinds of things that really flopped and I wished I hadn’t done it that way. It’s not that I would ever do anything for my class that I knew wouldn’t work, and so these teachers in the cases and everybody they’re trying to do their best, so I just have to remember that. As much as I try to do my best, everybody else is doing that too. Just my giving people the benefit of the doubt has been strengthened instead of always judging them and saying it really wasn’t a very smart idea. Because they probably realized that after the fact just like the rest of us did (Exit interview).

*Respect as a “Golden Rule” in diversity and multicultural education.* April explains that she is trying hard to teach children respect for each other and for themselves. As she gets more experience and develops different ideas about teaching, she is better able to consider how she can reach all children and teach them even more about respect. She notes the importance of being careful not to talk about the idea of respect simply with reference to the “color of their skin.” She thinks more about different kinds of respect.

We always talk about that but there are so many other things, respecting people that maybe don’t like sports that would prefer to read instead of go out and play
soccer and things like that, that are issues that the children deal with (Exit interview).

“I think respect is truth.” April thinks that respect is the golden rule for every situation in classrooms in terms of diversity and multicultural education. She points out that respect is crucial in understanding and appreciating people’s similarities and differences. She feels that there should be no controversy regarding the need for respect.

It’s hard to say that you have to treat everybody the same, because they are different. Everybody needs to be treated that way. They need to be treated based on who they are. As far as multicultural goes, that’s probably the main thing is that, which I don’t think any of the parents would outright say they disagree with that. I think that there’s definitely right and wrong and that I have a responsibility to teach that to the children (Exit interview).

April describes respect as “such a big word.” She feels that there are lots of things that can be taught in terms of respect such as the understanding of self and others, having sensitivity to human dignity and cultural rights, and valuing individual’s rights to personal beliefs.

Respect has so much encompassed in it because you respect yourself, you respect God, you respect others, you respect your environment. There’s just so much that you have to think about if you’re truly going to try to respect the way that you should. And so much can be taught with respect, because treating other people the way you want to be treated is showing respect, giving people the benefit of the doubt is showing respect (Exit interview).
In order to work towards the goal of respect in her classroom, April attempts to boost children’s self-esteem, focusing on their uniqueness. She attempts to get children talking about their different accomplishments in order to help them feel good about themselves. She stresses, “When you feel good about yourself, you don’t let somebody else mistreat you, and you wouldn’t mistreat someone else.” As another effort to instill respect, her school teaches the teachings of Jesus. She indicates that respect should also be considered on the basis of each person’s situations.

Because this is a Christian school, we can easily say how would Jesus treat other people. And we really want them to treat other people how they want to be treated. And we talk about how that doesn’t mean just not being mean to someone, that doesn’t mean just not kicking them – that means going over to them if they’re sitting by themselves and talking to them and making them feel like they’re a part of the class too. I think so many times people think the golden rule just means don’t be mean, but you have to think about if I was in that person’s situation, what would I want somebody to do for me and that’s what you should do. We get to talk about it all the time (Exit interview).

Summary and Discussion

Before her case-based experiences, April’s views about diversity were mainly focused on race – African-American. “To be honest with you, I had to just think how many African-American, how many other minorities I had in my class because…not that I don’t notice it, but…I just get used to them and I don’t think about it.” It is interesting, to note, however, that April feels that racial minorities in the U.S. are not so much considered as minorities as long as they are not economic minorities. She thinks that if
people from diverse racial groups are similar in terms of SES, issues of “minorities” would not be a big topic in schools.

Through the case process, April learns to define “minorities” more functionally, including matters of power and economic resources, rather than superficially considering issues only in terms of skin colors. Her point is fully supported by Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force’ (1989) contention that the way of categorizing people simply based on race definitely has noteworthy social meanings.

Access to economic resources, political power, and cultural rights are still very much determined by a person’s membership in a specific “racial” group. Stereotyping and prejudice based on race remain a power part of prevailing social practice. Children need guidance in sorting out their ideas and feelings about skin color, hair texture, and eye shape so that racism cannot harm their self-concept or teach them to reject others. (Derman-Sparks & A.B. C. Task Force, 1989, p. 31).

Commenting on her views about diversity with respect to race, April uses the terms “black” and “white.” However, teachers need to think about how the words they are using may affect children’s development of prejudices, misconceptions, discomforts, unfairness, stigmatization, etc. “Why am I called Black? My skin is brown.; I’m not yellow. I’m tan.; I don’t look white like the piece of paper. It’s pink; Is Mexican my color?; What color blood do we all have?” (Derman-Sparks & A. B. C. Task Force, 1989, p. 32, 34). Young children in preschools become confused about why they are labeled “Black” or “White.” In the categorization of races, ‘color’ is decoded as ‘non-white’ or ‘visible minorities’ people such as African-American, Hispanic, Asian, mixed or others with the hidden aspects of racial identity rather than physical characteristics. Derman-
Sparks, et al. (1989) claim that children’s skin color should be positively acknowledged in order for them to get to know who they are and encourage wonderful feelings about themselves. Teachers should be aware of the socially prevailing prejudices against people of color and be sensitive not to convey societal biases to children.

April’s personal experiences, such as her father’s closed-minded views about diversity and her school experiences with peers’ racial clique behaviors positively influence her philosophy regarding diversity in teaching and learning. Seeing these negative examples about diversity from her interactions with others, April constructs personal thoughts and beliefs about diversity and multicultural education more openly, fairly, and equally.

As a dual major of Elementary Education and Special Education, April frequently raises the issues of children with special needs. Having many experiences with children with special needs, April feels that they should be treated differently, even though everyone is “equal” in her class. She indicates that every child with special needs must be wholly accepted, acknowledged, and included just as the other children in her class, but should be treated differently, depending on their problems and conditions. In the same way that April mentions the importance of prior information about children with special needs, Greenstein (1998) suggests that teachers need to be familiar with individual children with special needs, ascertaining their own strengths and weaknesses rather than broadly diagnosing their problems, because even children with the same “diagnosis” may reflect varying characteristics and different abilities. In order for children with special needs to grow and develop in a class, it is essential to view each child’s ‘inner wonderfulness, not the outer differences’ (Greenstein, 1998).
April believes that “respect” is the absolute truth in multicultural education. She assumes that positive and open communications about one another’s similarities and differences further understandings and support for diverse groups of people and their unique cultures. “How can we teach our children to live in a society rich in diversity if we don't allow them to ask about differences?” As Greenstein (1998) suggests, ‘natural curiosity is to be encouraged, but frame your answers positively.’ April believes that this philosophy will provide children with multiple opportunities to experience people from diverse backgrounds, facilitate positive knowledge and attitudes toward different cultures, and help them develop awareness of their misconceptions or biases.

Basically, April believes that “truth” in the world is scientifically proven knowledge. However, she thinks that when the “truth” is questioned, its nature can change. She maintains that there are some unprovable truths.

Personally, I do agree that there are things in this world that science can’t explain. I honestly believe there always will be, no matter how much humans think they have figured out. However, I would find it conflicting to try to persuade children to believe something I myself couldn't be sure of (Exit interview).

In this context, April feels that she needs to teach what she believes to be the “truth,” even though sometimes it is difficult due to differences in beliefs and norms between herself and children in her class and their parents. She believes that if teachers’ lessons include beliefs that are different from their personal ones, then teaching and learning is no longer a real and meaningful experience for children. Throughout all of her case reactions, April consistently emphasizes that teachers must believe in what they are teaching.
Tiffany

*Tiffany’s Background*

*Tiffany’s Teaching Experience: Desire to Become a Teacher*

“I love children.” Tiffany is a teacher with six years of experience in a first grade classroom. Currently she is enrolled in the master’s program at a university in the southern area of the U.S. She feels that she has a natural gift for teaching young children. “I like to teach. I like to color. I always love working with children. I used to work in bible school, in Sunday school, in choir even when I was in middle school and high school. I never thought about doing anything else.”

*The Important Things for Children’s Learning*

*The importance of considering children’s individual level of learning.* “I’d like to say I like to take them as far as I can. I do a lot of hands on activities, pre-testing, and small group works.” Tiffany thinks that hands on activities and pre-assessments are important for understanding the prior knowledge of children and essential to effective teaching. It is necessary, according to Tiffany, for teachers to understand a variety of ability ranges of children, although she admits it is sometimes hard to determine their maximum learning potential.

*Experiencing Diversity*

*Experiencing ESL Children*

*ESL children as an indicator of diversity.* Tiffany feels that the issues surrounding the learning of ESL children are the most important topics in the area of diversity. In discussing her experiences with diversity, she notes that the school where she is currently teaching lacks diversity.
I have no children in my class who are being served through ESL. I do have two children who are from the Ukraine, but they do not qualify for ESL (Initial interview).

From Tiffany’s perspective, a classroom with children from other countries is not really diverse unless the children struggle with speaking English. She remembers, however, that the school where she taught previously was very diverse. “I had the majority of ESL children. At one point I had fourteen out of my eighteen children being served ESL, and every year I had between three and four children who came in and it was their first school experience and had just reached the United States and did not speak English.”

*Recognizing ESL children’s feelings of being alienated.* Tiffany finds that children who come from different cultural backgrounds and speak little English do not participate in classroom activities. “The children especially that were brand new and had very limited English would sometimes not want to try. They were a little worried about it.” She thinks that children with limited English fluency are quiet and shy about participating in large group activities. “They were very unsure of themselves. Even when most of the children in my class did speak Spanish and had that experience, they were still in that quiet stage.” Therefore, she has the children with language barriers involve themselves in small group activities.

Tiffany adds, however, that the lack of participation of children who cannot speak fluent English is not merely a reflection of their difficulties with language comprehension. Tiffany believes the issue is more complex, and acknowledges that sociocultural differences can block the active participation of ESL children in classroom activities. Tiffany notes children’s prior experiences with playdough as an example.
They’d not seen or experienced things like Playdough. They’d never seen it, didn’t know what to do with it, were kind of afraid of it because they didn’t know what it was like (Initial interview).

*The importance of teacher’s efforts to communicate with ESL children’s parents.*

“They did not speak English….I always had to rely on translators. I picked up a few phrases here and there.” Tiffany acknowledges that communication issues involve both ESL children and their parents. She brings to mind the challenges of communicating with ESL parents, and is aware that this is a big issue in schools.

We found that a lot of the parents were worried about communicating with the school. They didn’t know the language, so we would have problems getting parents to curriculum night and to parent teacher conferences (Initial interview). She notes that there are even more challenges when teachers attempt to communicate with children’s parents about academic or discipline problems related to school.

Even when it came down to academics, it was really difficult. If you sent a note home asking for help or just to even let them know there was a discipline problem, they were falling behind, it was hard to get the notes back (Initial interview).

Seeking out the help of translators, Tiffany emphasizes the need for teachers to keep trying and to increase the communication with ESL children’s parents. “At my old school that had the highly diverse population they did hire people who were bilingual, and they would come in, write notes to the parents or translate the notes, and call home for me if I needed to.” She notes that older siblings who are fluent in English can also serve as translators.
A lot of times I would grab the older brother or sister who was in the same home, can you read it for me and let them read it for me and they would have to serve as the translator at home if nobody spoke English (Initial interview). She indicates that it is good to have older siblings translate because they are willing to help out the teachers, whereas the school staff translators are overwhelmed trying to keep up with many people. At this point, Tiffany states that it is teachers’ own continuous efforts to help and communicate with children’s parents that are most important, even when the help of translators is available.

*ESL classes are beneficial for children.* Tiffany feels that ESL classes that focus on language activities can definitely help children. She relates how an ESL teacher would regularly visit her classroom under the auspices of inclusion.

We had such a diverse population. I had an ESL teacher who would actually come into the classroom and serve the children that tested with the lab test and determined if they would qualify for the ESL program. They would actually come in and do activities with those children, and they would pick up some of the lower children also to work with them (Initial interview).

Tiffany notes that the inclusion teacher primarily used small group guided reading strategies, depending on the individual child’s level of English.

In my room the teacher did a lot of reading activities because it was during the reading time. In my room, because it was an inclusion room, she worked with about five children at a time and did reading experiences with the children depending on their reading level in small groups (Initial interview).
In addition, Tiffany notes, the ESL teacher will do many language activities such as vocabulary building with ESL children, usually centering around seasonal themes. If it was winter, talk about kinds of things like that, the weather, kind of the language enriched kind of activities (Initial interview).

Tiffany thinks of ESL classes in a positive light and describes feelings of children who have participated in them. She explains that most ESL children feel special and believe they go to a special class even when it is a pull out program. She thinks the ESL children enjoy the classes a lot.

They didn’t feel like they were just being singled out. They thought I get to go to somewhere where the other children didn’t get to go—they really did. My other children would get jealous sometimes so the ESL teacher would choose a day they would get to bring a friend to participate, so they really enjoyed it. They liked to visit the other teacher who was working with the ESL children (Initial interview).

*The importance of social interactions to ESL children’s academic progress.* Even though she experiences various struggles working with ESL children, Tiffany experiences satisfaction from seeing ESL children’s progress and growth with respect to language development and social interactions with peers.

I really liked working with them because I saw the most growth with those children who had only had a year or two of experience in the United States. They came in speaking no English and I had three out of four, who actually exited the ESL program (Initial interview).
Tiffany elaborates, explaining how “amazing” it is to see children come in her classroom not speaking English, and leave reading at second and third grade levels by the end of the year. She finds that ESL children experience frustration trying to express themselves, even though they are bright. Tiffany notes that ESL children are particularly better at expressing themselves in Mathematics.

They just didn’t understand what I was asking them a lot of the time. You can always see that in mathematics there is no language there, so they could express themselves a lot in math (Initial interview).

In addition, Tiffany points out that other classmates’ acceptance of ESL children and collaborative experiences particularly help ESL children grow and change: “When they leave they’re like a totally different child. They’re reading, talking, and playing, whereas when they came in they were silent.” She is especially cognizant of children’s peer interactions and their attempts to communicate in spite of cultural and linguistic differences.

It was amazing watching them learn ways to communicate—pointing, they’ll figure things out, and they’ll try to teach a lot of times the other child how to speak things, to say things in English. You would think that they would sit there very quietly and not have any social peers, but, especially in the age group that I teach, that’s not usually a problem. Even if they don’t speak the same language, they’ll hold hands and run around (Initial interview).

The importance of creating a safe learning environment for ESL children. Tiffany confesses that she faced many challenges the first couple of years working with ESL children. “I didn’t understand what to do with them. I wanted to help them but it was very
hard.” She makes a conscious decision to obtain an ESL endorsement in order to better help children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. The ESL endorsement involves a year long series of three classes. With the add-on endorsement, she is certified to teach kindergarten through twelfth grade. Tiffany describes her courses for acquiring this particular endorsement.

There was a cultural class that we just explored the different cultures of the children we might get. There was a linguistics class, and there was also a kind of methods and materials class. We also had to teach for a week in summer class to teach the ESL (Initial interview).

She thinks that it is important for ESL children to have fun while engaged in learning activities. For this reason, she does lower level activities with ESL children in order for them to pick up on things quickly and experience early success. She also plays various games and does assorted hands on activities, avoiding the typical plethora of worksheets.

I play doing games, not worksheets, because they were a little unsure of doing things like that because they didn’t know if they were doing it correctly, or they didn’t know what to do. So we did a lot of hands on activities (Initial interview).

Tiffany describes the kinds of hands on activities she is doing and how she implements them with children. Through active involvement in hands on activities, she hopes her ESL children will have learning experiences that involve multiple senses.

I do things called map tugs. I really do it with all the children, it really benefits everybody including the ESL children. I’d talk about money and we might have a store where you have to buy things. I play a lot of games with the ESL children. If
we were practicing letters and sounds, they would have tactile letters. It’s a
children’s book where they talked about the letters. They’d have this tree and they
would have to stick the letters on it—they physically had to do something (Initial
interview).

In addition, when she does card games with ESL children, she challenges them to
beat her. “I would tell them I was going to keep it if they didn’t get it correct. They would
try to beat me a lot, that’s what they liked to do was to make sure they beat the teacher.”
Tiffany purposefully lets her ESL children have the satisfaction of “beating” the teacher
in her willingness to assume the role of the student. “I would kind of flub up a little bit
and let them correct me.” Similarly, she helps the ESL children feel confident in class by
asking them to teach her their languages.

I took a step back and said, well, what can I do, so I tried . . . I would get them to
teach me to, I would teach them English and they would teach me Spanish. It was
kind of a learning experience for both of us. They felt confident because they
were teaching me something I didn’t know, so they opened up a lot (Initial
interview).

Through the co-teaching process, Tiffany finds the relationship with her ESL children to
be more open and comfortable. She believes that all teachers should be required to
establish a comfortable learning environment for ESL children, where they can learn
safely without fear.

Beyond ‘tourist curriculum’ and ‘contributions approach’: The importance of
curriculum which fosters awareness and in-depth learning about different cultures.
Tiffany feels she has become more aware of what she does with children in her class as a
result of experiences and interactions with diverse learners. “We study other countries and even when we make things, we try to include in our pictures children of all cultural backgrounds. We also talk about different things, like it’s snowing today, does it snow everywhere?” She likes to use children’s books from different countries to capture the interest of children, open their eyes to different cultures and connect the unfamiliar cultures to diverse children in the class.

I have an author study, and we would talk about different authors from different countries. Patricia Polaco is a Ukrainian, and we did a lot with her because I had a child who was Ukrainian, so he got to bring in some cultural things. There’s a book called ‘Rosetska’s Eggs,’ and she makes these little Ukrainian eggs, so he brought one in to show us (Initial interview).

While describing the “mini culture units” she likes to incorporate she explains that teachers are required to include multicultural activities representing different countries. “In my county, we have to teach ten different countries; Canada, Mexico, and Brazil, those are the three countries we’re responsible for making sure that the first graders know about. It’s the curriculum. I like to do little mini units and just bring in more.” She says that teachers are usually asked to teach about Canada and Mexico as these border the United States.

Tiffany admits that it is difficult for her to teach and for children to learn about Canada. She has trouble finding exciting curricular activities about Canada for young children. She also feels that children have limited contact or ties to Canada.

Canada is a really hard one because we can physically see where it is, but they have no ties to Canada. It’s sort of in one ear and out the other because it doesn’t
have any meaning to them. Canada is not a fun place for them. I don’t think that they really internalized much about Canada, because they’re so young and it really has nothing to do with them (Initial interview).

By contrast, Tiffany notes that children find countries such as Mexico and Brazil interesting because they are exotic and different from their own places and lives. In addition, she thinks easy access to Hispanic children make the lessons of Mexico more meaningful for children.

Mexico is a fun one because there are a lot of children who can relate to Mexico, and even the children who aren’t from Mexico knew children in our class who are from Mexico, or know people who are. Mexico and Brazil, because Brazil’s a South American country, are very popular (Initial interview).

When Tiffany talks about the cultures of these countries with children, she makes a point of designing comparative lessons involving the United States.

We talk about all the geography and the holidays. We also talk about schools, children, what it’s like for children, their daily lives, where they might live, what school is like. Those are the things that children are really interested in because they want to know what are the children doing (Initial interview).

For the curricular materials needed to develop multicultural lessons, Tiffany collects her own resources. She feels that her social studies resource guide is unsubstantial in terms of planning for these lessons. She designs her own lessons, centering on experiences which familiarize children with traditional artifacts and literature of different countries – what might commonly be referred to as the “iceberg model” of multicultural education.
I’ve spent a lot of time and money collecting things. I have a theme kind of table where I do review notes, a resource center is what I call it, and I put out things. For Mexico I have sombreros and maracas and kind of traditional things that you would see in Mexico—flags, books, children’s literature that’s in Spanish. We talk about the colors, the Spanish words for colors and we make a book about colors and we write it in Spanish. At the resource center they can go and learn by putting a sombrero on and see what it looks like to wear this hat, and a poncho, that kind of thing (Initial interview).

Tiffany plans numerous hands on activities about different cultures including exotic activities. In this context, she also tries to have a fiesta with children.

We have a fiesta. We have food, parents make food, and we can learn things like Mexican hat dance. We learn a lot about the culture, but like I said, a lot of it with the curriculum is kind of this is the book and these are the facts, but I try to make it fun (Initial interview).

She feels that it is a good idea to get parents’ support for doing these lessons. She invites parents to her classroom on a regular basis to share their cultures with children.

For Mexico, we’ve had some wonderful fiestas in our classroom because the parents, when they realize we’re going to explore this culture that they’re very familiar with, are very willing to come in and share what they know (Initial interview).

Essentially, Tiffany’s approach to designing lessons filled with “fun” activities related to new and unfamiliar cultures is a reflection of the ‘tourist curriculum’ described by Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) and Banks’ (1995a) ‘contributions
approach.’ Even though the intent of these curricular approaches is to develop children’s positive and respectful attitudes about other cultures, they spotlight cultures primarily through special events such as celebrations, holidays, heroes or heroines. In these curriculums, teachers teach about cultures through exotic cultural artifacts including food, traditional clothing, crafts, dance, and so forth. rather than through the effort to connect new cultures to children’s ongoing daily curriculum and real-life experiences.

Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) assert that it is important for teachers and children to have in-depth information and understanding about other cultures and to develop positive attitudes and interactions with cultural diversity. Simply visiting or entertaining other cultures’ special celebrations may convey to children stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminations with respect to diversity.

The importance of modifying curriculum to consider children’s ability level. With her awareness of the increasing population of ESL children and families in school systems, Tiffany feels that teachers should actively put forth the effort needed to be aware of individual situations and difficulties. “You can’t just let the children sit in your classroom and hope they catch something.” Through her participation in the ESL endorsement program, Tiffany has come to recognize the importance of modifying school curriculum in order to accommodate the learning needs of all children. She believes that school curriculum should be designed to start with assessment of baseline abilities of individual children and built through constant monitoring of their curricular achievement.

We have to modify work according to the children’s ability level. If they’re physically placed sometimes in classrooms even if they don’t have the ability because of age, if they come from another country to the United States, and we
have to look back and work back at the curriculum and if they can’t master the curriculum. In my case first grade, if they are not able to do addition or subtraction, because they don’t understand what you are talking about, or if they can’t read, then I have to go back to the kindergarten, where the kindergarten teachers teach and I have to start there (Initial interview).

Tiffany emphasizes the importance of determining the baseline, particularly when working with ESL children:

If they do not understand what I am teaching because they don’t speak the language, then you’re not doing anything to help them, so you need to go back, take a couple of steps back, and start where the children can be successful (Initial interview).

Strategies to assist children in developing positive ideas and attitudes about diverse cultures. One of Tiffany’s affective goals is to facilitate children’s development of positive and respectful attitudes to diverse cultures. She recommends role playing as a particularly effective strategy in this regard. She gives children strips of paper with phrases or vignettes that illustrate various cultural issues, has them analyze the situations and conducts class meetings to talk about the issues. The cultural issues depicted in the vignettes are ones that are commonly found in her own classroom or around the school. She explains her use of role playing strategies in addressing an issue such as the teasing of ESL children by other students from the dominant culture in her class.

We’ve really had problems in the past with children who wanted to laugh when people took chances, especially those children who didn’t speak English, where they would try to answer questions and not come up with the right things. Some
of them would get a little tickled and laugh and so we would stop and talk about how we think we should feel, and talk about ways that people try. They gave suggestions what they could do to encourage children to take risks, and this is what happened, what’s a better way? What else could we have done? Instead of laughing what could we have done? (Initial interview)

She describes the benefit of role playing: “Even though role playing is mostly based on what actually happened in a classroom or a school, when you take it outside to a role playing thing, then it doesn’t embarrass anyone or worry somebody.”

Tiffany also uses children’s literature to address diversity issues with her students. Using children’s books, she discusses with children differences in people and the need to accept these differences.

I like to do that especially at the beginning of the year, try to take a week to talk about a friendship kind of theme. We talk about being friends, and what we need to do to be friends, and we need to be friends with everyone (Initial interview).

Recalling her work experiences in previous and current schools, she points to the value of character education in teaching for diversity. “That’s new. One week they find kind of characteristics of good citizens’— things like respect, being helpful, being good listeners, and being friendly.” She explains how character education is generally based on the principle that people are both different and same and that the similarities and differences among people should be appreciated. In this regard, Tiffany thinks that no child should be excluded from classroom activities because (s)he is different from children of the more dominant culture. According to Tiffany, character education is a way of teaching values, and is typically incorporated into the curriculum on a weekly or
monthly basis. She describes how character education is typically emphasized by teachers and school staffs.

The teachers spend a little bit of time discussing it whenever the topic comes up during class time or down time, and talk about . . . like ours is being helpful this week. We talked about, brainstormed ways for being helpful, things we can do. In the school I’m at now, it’s a really big push and they also have faculty members looking for children who are being really helpful, or exhibiting the word for the week, and we’ll give them, oh, special recognition (Initial interview).

She evaluates character education as something that is beneficial for children in terms of addressing multicultural goals of the curriculum. “I think it’s wonderful. Really it’s just like the life.” She feels that character education actually brings to the surface values that children need to know to be successful in school and life. Even though Tiffany acknowledges that values should come mostly from children’s home environment,

Tiffany thinks that teachers have a responsibility to teach values in schools.

It gives us a focus. This week we can talk about being helpful, because that’s our character word for the week, and it gives it a context for the learning, so I really enjoy teaching. I think the children become more aware because the children will go home and talk to their parents, I’ve noticed, because the parents will come back and let me know the characteristic (Initial interview).

Tiffany recalls that the children in her previous school, which was more “diverse,” were much more aware of similarities and differences, making it easier for her to teach tolerance and acceptance. But she feels that in her current school it is more challenging to address issues of diversity: “With a school that’s not so diverse it takes more effort to talk
about strengths and weaknesses, and how we’re the same and different, and acceptance, teaching acceptance.” It is apparent that Tiffany, in her comments, mainly considers diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, with only minimal emphasis on difference and diversity within a culture.

_Tiffany’s Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity_

_Seeing a Need for a More Practical Approach in Teacher Education_

_The importance of having experiences in actual diverse classrooms._ Recalling the preservice teacher education program in her university, Tiffany feels that she had little education regarding diversity and that those “multicultural” classes she did have were not practical or applied to actual classroom situations. “They would have a kind of a diversity class, but it was not too realistic.” Rather, she notes that she has learned more about diversity through the staff development programs in her schools. She believes that staff development programs have helped her confront and recognize diversity issues.

The staff development started when I started teaching in the school in ’95. I think when I got into the school where it was very diverse they did a lot of staff development because there was a huge need for it. I think there’s a much bigger push now than there was when I went through school (Initial interview).

Pointing out the importance of practical approaches in teacher education programs concerning diversity, she asserts that to be in a classroom is the best way to learn about diversity – it allows one to experiment with different teaching approaches.

I think, honestly, the most helpful thing was actually being in the classroom and having to come up with strategies, I had to look for things to—that would work in the classroom. I think it’s kind if one of those things where you can get a lot of
good knowledge, but until you’re in the classroom and have to actually do it—
that’s the real test, and that’s where you learn the most (Initial interview).

Not surprisingly, Tiffany feels that preservice teachers need to have more classroom experiences with children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds in their university programs. Describing her perception of the “theory-practice” gap, Tiffany emphasizes that theoretical knowledge from teacher education programs is not sufficient to enable preservice teachers to develop genuine understandings of classrooms in terms of diversity. From Tiffany’s perspective, preservice teachers need to have the opportunities to apply and examine their knowledge and strategies about diversity in actual classrooms.

*The importance of positive diversity role models for preservice teachers.* Tiffany feels that teachers for young children and school administrators truly need to open, accept, and enjoy the diversity in a school. She points out that they are often afraid of having diversity within their classrooms and schools. She thinks that teachers and children benefit from exposure to new, different, and fun things through interaction with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. According to Tiffany, teachers and school administrators need to put more effort into developing a learning environment where diversity is valued, rather than simply relying on pull–out program materials and the expectation that children will automatically learn about diverse cultures. “You’ve got to put a little effort into it, but the rewards are wonderful.”

I’ve had a lot of experiences where they were afraid of having someone in their class who didn’t speak the same language. They just need to open up and realize that’s what makes life fun. It’s having those children and they sort of just put it on
the side and don’t realize that there’s a lot of potentials in there, and kind of just
teach the class and hope they catch on something (Initial interview).

Tiffany’s comments point to the need for teacher education to build stronger
collaborations with schools that are taking a lead and are innovative in terms of issues
related to diversity. This is particularly important with respect to creating placements for
preservice teachers which include good diversity role models. During their internship or
student teaching experiences, preservice teachers are not expected to totally replicate or
imitate their mentor teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, actions, strategies, and so forth, with
respect to diversity matters in teaching and learning. However, mentor teachers as
effective role models in schools will positively influence preservice teachers’ own
construction of knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes about diversity.

Experiencing Cases regarding Diversity

“Who Eats the Mango?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of anticipation and thoroughness in planning lessons. In her
personal reaction and case discussion, Tiffany sympathizes with the problematic situation
of the student teacher [Kim] in the case. As an experienced teacher, she recalls similar
situations she encountered as a student teacher and a beginning teacher. She considers
Kim’s perspective, showing an understanding of the difficulties experienced by this
student teacher.

Kim faced a problem that I have faced many times. It is often hard to predict how
children will react to unknown situations. Kim faced a situation that many
teachers have faced before. It’s really hard to think of everything that could go wrong (Personal reactions to the case).

Therefore, in her personal reaction, Tiffany places strong emphasis on the importance of thoroughness in planning lessons. “Even the best planned lessons can go terribly wrong if every aspect of the lesson is not taken into account when planning.” She admits, however, that she believes teachers will better plan and teach as they get more practical experiences with children.

When you get more familiar with teaching and more experienced, you learn to anticipate those things because you play it in your mind, what could they do, what could they say, and how could this go wrong (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of teachers’ guidance and support for children. In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, Tiffany indicates that Kim’s problem lies in her lack of awareness of children in her classroom. Taking the perspective of the children in the case, she discusses the need for Kim to recognize children’s personal experiences, and to anticipate that children do not like to delve into the unknown without guidance and support.

The student teacher’s lesson did not go well because her children were not receptive to the mangoes that were brought in as a part of her lesson (Responses to case reaction questions).

Reflecting on the case of “Who Eats the Mango?” in her personal reaction, Tiffany recalls her own similar experiences in “highly diverse” classrooms, making the point that children oftentimes feel uncomfortable with new and unfamiliar practices.
For six years I taught in a classroom where on average three to four children were experiencing their first educational experience in the United States. A majority of the children had limited experiences in the United States. I often found children of another cultural background reluctant to participate in activities and lessons that included materials unfamiliar to them, but commonplace in the United States (Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany illustrated the above point with the story of a child who was unfamiliar with the aesthetic learning environments that often characterize classrooms for young children in the United States.

When I was demonstrating a new spelling center that was being introduced to the class, children were given playdough to mold spelling words. I had a child who refused to touch the playdough (Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany has learned that children from different sociocultural backgrounds often feel alienated from their new educational settings. Accordingly, she does not try to force their participation. Rather, she tries to help children adapt to the new cultural contexts through designing a variety of learning activities.

I went to her seat and through an interpreter encouraged her to participate in the lesson. She continued to refuse to participate. Since it was an introduction activity, I just let her watch the rest of the class (Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany does not want children from different sociocultural backgrounds to miss the learning opportunities that other children in her class experience. However, she has come to realize that children with diverse cultural backgrounds need a lot of guidance and encouragement to interact with unfamiliar materials or engage in new activities. She tries
to connect new materials and activities in a lesson to ideas and objects children are familiar with in their prior experience.

During small group time I called her, along with several of her friends, to my table. I turned my introduction to a spelling center into a discovery lesson for these children. We felt the playdough, described the playdough, and just played with it. We also compared the playdough to something they have seen before, mud (Personal reactions to the case).

In addition, Tiffany allows children to use their mother tongue, frequently Spanish, and encourage children to “teach her” Spanish words. In her class, she believes that both teachers and children can interchangeably assume the roles of teachers and learners. “The child who did not want to participate during our first encounter became a willing participant.”

In her personal reaction, she emphasizes the importance of incorporating children’s cultural experiences into class lessons. She feels that teachers have to take into account the cultural backgrounds of children when preparing meaningful learning experiences.

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

-Stimulating children’s curiosity with culturally relevant information.* In her personal reaction, Tiffany suggests that if she were the student teacher [Kim], she would let the children know in advance of lessons that contain information or materials that they are not accustomed to on a daily basis. “When I tie the unknown to something known, children are more willing to respond.” Tiffany emphasizes the importance of preparing children for the lesson and initiating early conversations about the activities.
The day before or even the morning of an activity containing unfamiliar components, I would make an announcement preparing children for the unfamiliar activity. ‘Tomorrow we are going to see, touch and even taste some fruits and vegetables that you might not have seen before.’ I think that this prepares them for the experience (Personal reactions to the case).

_Exaggeration as a strategy for capturing children’s interest in the strange and unusual._ Tiffany suggests that the student teacher, Kim, should let children know at the beginning of the lesson that activities they will be doing may have “yucky” parts. “I play them up and find children more willing to participate when I ‘play up’ yucky parts.” In her personal reaction and the case discussion, she emphasizes the need for Kim to accept children’s emotions and reactions to the new and unfamiliar fruits and vegetables.

In Kim’s situation, I would not have ignored the children’s “this feels gross” comment. I would have played it up. “It does feel gross. It feels rough.” When cutting the mango, I would have played up the consistency and “messiness” of the situation (Personal reactions to the case).

Related to this point, Tiffany recalls her experience with parents who had spent several years living in Australia.

They would bring Vegemite and every year we would tell them it’s disgusting stuff and who wants to try it? Every last one of them would do it—even if they didn’t want to at first, the children would go, “Oooh this is gross” and they’d sit there and they’d do it anyway. The other children would taste it because they said it was gross and disgusting [others laugh]. So I would definitely play that up and I
think it would invite more children on the first grade or kindergarten level to join in because it was gross (Case discussion).

In addition, in her personal reaction, Tiffany proposes that Kim model the tasting of “yucky” fruits and vegetables. “I would have tasted it myself and then offered it to children. This lets them see that it is safe to participate.”

Tiffany’s strategies for playing up the “yucky parts” of the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables point to the complexity of teacher - children interactions in a classroom. Her mischievous interactions with children and her enthusiastic attitude toward the lesson are typically considered to be important in facilitating children’s curiosity, interest, intent for learning, and participation in classroom activities. However, teachers’ verbal or nonverbal expressions could easily be noticed by children and lead to inappropriate teasing of another culture. It is vital for teachers to foster children’s positive and respectful attitudes about diverse cultures as well as raise their interest in classroom activities. Tiffany’s verbal description of “yucky parts” may create assumptions for children in her class that yucky fruits and vegetables are ones eaten only by people in different cultures. Her expressions may generate messages about untrue “homogeneity” of children’s cultures and build prejudicial manners toward other cultures.

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

*Content integration: The importance of connecting different cultural experiences to children’s understandings about their own cultures.* “I think that the student teacher tried to bring a bit of a different culture into a lesson. This introduction to a cultural aspect caused her to make the decision that she made.” Starting with an analysis of the student teachers’ intention for the lesson, Tiffany criticizes the student teacher [Kim], for
simply “throwing out” the new and unfamiliar fruits and vegetables to children as examples of different cultures. From Tiffany’s perspective, Kim assumes that the exotic examples will automatically make children experience different culture and feel diversity. However, Tiffany emphasizes that careful consideration of children’s cultural experiences is needed in planning a meaningful, culturally relevant lesson. In her response to the case reaction questions, Tiffany comments:

    It seems that the student teacher in this case was not aware that difference is not always accepted. Children are leery of unknowns. Children have [to be] reassured and prepared for anything that is different, whether it is of a different cultural or just something new. Children need to be prepared in advance or shown that difference is acceptable (Responses to case reaction questions).

Tiffany emphasizes that unfamiliarity often frightens children. She points out repeatedly the importance of connecting children’s own thoughts or experiences to new and unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. Tiffany feels that if teachers fail to make significant connections between the familiar and unfamiliar cultures, an exotic snapshot approach to multicultural education will likely be the result. She mentions this point in the case discussion.

    I think you have to be very careful not to throw in cultural diversity or something for diversity’s sake. You have to make it meaningful for the children. I would bring in something either from a country that we’d studied or are gonna study, or have a cultural representation in the classroom instead of just bringing in something because it doesn’t make an impact on children unless they have some kind of connection to it (Case discussion).
Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) support Tiffany’s point regarding the need to tie children’s previous experiences, beliefs, or personal backgrounds to the curriculum with respect to diversity. According to these authors, it is important to connect children’s cultural experiences to comprehension about their own sociocultural contexts including family, community, and bigger groups to which they belong. Children should be introduced to diversity concretely through their daily life experiences rather than through alien and abstract activity. Additionally, these authors emphasize that diverse cultures should not be singled out as different from children’s own cultures. A better approach is to emphasize the concept that “everyone has a culture” (Derman-Sparks & the A. B. C. Task Force, 1989) and that cultures have similarities and differences among them.

*Knowledge construction: The importance of children’s own experiences and discovery learning for creating knowledge.* In considering proposed solutions to the “mango” case, Tiffany emphasizes the importance of children constructing their own knowledge of diversity through discovery learning. She believes that children should have opportunities to actively learn and experience new and unfamiliar cultures through their personal daily life experiences. She warns about the potential for children to passively acquire others’ perspective or knowledge through pictures, literature, or unit studies. She seems to feel that knowledge in the world, including scientific knowledge, is created by people through a dynamic process.

It was suggested in the book that Kim should have exposed the children in her classroom to new fruits and vegetables that were being used in the lesson by showing the class pictures, literature or conducting a unit study. I do not know if I
would have followed this advice. If Kim prepared the children in advance, they would be making conclusions about a fruit that they had some knowledge about instead of relying solely on the scientific information that they had discovered and applied the information to an unknown food to draw conclusions (Personal reactions to the case).

“The Day the Lobster Died”

*Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives*

The importance of thorough lesson plans which takes into account all possible situations. In her personal reaction, Tiffany shows the perspective of the classroom teacher [Stan], mentioning the following: “Here is a case of a lesson with the best intent gone horribly wrong. Stan thought that he was going to have a fun concluding activity while also exposing his children to New England culture.” She evaluates positively Stan’s intent for the lesson, pointing out that he tries to expose children to a new culture. She feels that Stan’s idea for the lesson is based on wanting to have children in his class experience something that he views as a fun experience.

As for lesson planning, however, Tiffany stresses the need for teachers to consider all possible situations that might happen during a lesson. In her response to the case reaction question, she notes that Stan does not think thoroughly about the personal and prior experiences of the children in his class.

Stan did not think things through. A well-meaning lesson suddenly turned into a chaotic situation. All possible outcomes should be considered when dealing with lessons involving “touchy” situations, including live animals (Responses to case reaction questions).
The importance of respecting individual children’s feelings about life and death. Tiffany is most impressed with the reactions of the girls in his class to the lobster. “I recall that they ran out of the room crying.” In her personal reaction and response to the case reaction questions, she empathizes with the children’s feelings of horror upon killing the lobster, taking the perspective of the children in the case.

I felt for Stan’s child, Erin. I am an animal lover. My husband says that I would help a worm across the road. He’s right (Personal reactions to the case). Sympathizing with the children’s horrific emotions, Tiffany instantly recalls her own experience in high school. In her personal reaction, she takes the perspective of herself as the child, Erin, in the case.

Although this was not an in-class experience, Erin’s reactions brought back this awful “school” experience. I understood why she would react the way she did. In high school I was horrified to learn that the physiology classes actually used cats for dissection. I, unfortunately, was signed up to take physiology. It took no time for me to decide that I would take a failing grade if I was forced to participate in this activity, as threatened. Luckily, physics opened up as an option for me after having to spend only a couple of days in physiology (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of valuing the rights of living organisms. Related to the above issues concerning children’s emotions, Tiffany points out the importance of considering animals’ rights. In her personal reaction, she discusses how her experiences during school life influence her beliefs as a teacher:
I am not an “animal activist,” but I do strongly object to any use of animals that harm them, including dissection. I don’t believe that the benefit an activity such as dissection or the activity that Stan planned outweighs a life of any kind (Personal reactions to the case).

*Becoming aware of school rules.* Through the case experiences, Tiffany indicates that she now has new knowledge about school rules and thoughts about diversity. In her personal reaction, she brings up the issue of preparing food for children at school.

The textbook brings up the issue about bringing in prepared lobster for the class, citing rules against serving food not prepared at school. I was unaware of such a rule. On countless occasions parents have prepared food for parties and cultural celebrations that I have had in my classroom. I often have Fun Friday cooking activities using food (usually cookies) that were not prepared at school (Personal reactions to the case).

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*The need to empathize with children’s feelings during a lesson.* Tiffany questions the teaching actions of the classroom teacher [Stan]. “This activity doesn’t seem to enhance the learning of the children in his classroom.” As mentioned above, she criticizes Stan for ignoring children’s feelings during the lesson. In this case, she suggests that Stan should consider the feelings of each individual child, and not force them to participate in the lesson.

Stan, and other teachers like him, need to step back and consider the feelings of the children in their class (Personal reactions to the case).
The need to consider alternatives to the lobster cookout. “In the case of Stan, he should step back and weigh the benefits of a lobster cookout.” Tiffany indicates that Stan has to clarify the purposes of his lesson and think about other options instead of the lobster cookout. She feels that Stan should reconsider whether the lobster cookout activity is truly essential for the children in his class, even at the expense of their traumatic reactions.

There are many options that Stan could have used instead of the live lobster cookout. Stan could have brought in the live lobster to share with the class. (Although I have a huge problem with this too!) He could have shown pictures of a lobster or other sea creatures. He also could have brought in prepared lobster for the class (Personal reactions to the case).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Content integration: The importance of genuine multicultural curriculum which avoids the tourist curriculum. Linked to the emotional experience of children in Stan’s class, Tiffany remembers her own traumatic experience with bullfights during a trip to Spain in her high school years. She indicates that her teachers made a great effort to expose them to the culture of the country. However, in spite of the teachers’ endeavors, Tiffany feels that she learned nothing about diversity through the experience of watching a bullfight. Rather, in her personal reaction and case discussion, she tells the story of the bullfight clearly, showing how much she was affected emotionally by the experience, and criticizing her teacher’s attitudes toward students and diversity.

I thought that I knew what bullfights were all about; after all I had read Ferdinand and seen the episode of Bugs Bunny when he was a matador. Five minutes into
the bullfight, I had a rude awakening. I suddenly realized that the spears that the matadors were using were real and that blood was flowing from the bull! I concluded that the bulls just didn’t walk away and run around in wonderful pastures smelling flowers like Ferdinand did. I began to scream in absolute horror! I begged and begged for the teachers that accompanied us to let me go wait under the stands. They refused. I sat for what seemed an eternity bawling while everyone pretty much laughed at me. This story was used for the next two years by the Spanish teacher when they discussed the bullfights as a part of the Hispanic culture. I was stopped by many students and asked to recount the experience (Personal reactions to the case).

She notes that the teachers who accompanied the trip did not take into account students’ feelings or background information prior to the bullfight. From Tiffany’s perspective, the teachers tried to make students experience and learn about a diverse culture, but it was never a meaningful experience.

Again, this example raises the issues of tourist curriculum (Derman-Sparks & the A. B C. Task Force, 1989) and contributions approach (Banks, 1995a) of multicultural curriculum. The bullfights can illustrate exotic differences between the cultures of Spain and that of the children. However, exposing children to a small piece of a culture should not be recognized as understanding the whole culture. Seeing a culture’s traditional food, clothing, celebrations, holidays, and activities separated from their daily lives is not enough to understand the culture and develop positive attitudes toward people from their own and other cultural groups.
Knowledge construction: The importance of taking into account children’s ethical beliefs. “The teacher does not acknowledge the beliefs of the children in his class.” Tiffany’s comment from her response to the case reaction questions raises the issues of knowledge construction, particularly with respect to cultural and ethical beliefs. Throughout her reactions to “The Day the Lobster Died,” she shows a concern for children’s feelings and empathizes with them. She feels that the classroom teacher [Stan] should be more sensitive toward his children’s feelings and describes her own sensitivity as a teacher:

I believe that I am sensitive to the emotions of the children in my classroom, mostly because I am a very sensitive person. I would have been extremely traumatized in this situation and so I take into consideration the emotional needs of the children in my classroom (Responses to case reaction questions).

Children are socialized within their own sociocultural context. Their emotions largely reflect this socialization – they are not abstract and neutral across all cultures. Thus, it seems natural that Tiffany should strongly emphasize with the need for Stan to take into account the cultural context in which children are raised. The lobster cookout is not uncommon in Stan’s culture, but not common for the children in his class. According to Tiffany, Stan should consider children’s prior experiences within their culture, recognizing that almost all of them have not had experiences previously involving the “killing” of a lobster.
“Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

Being aware of poverty as an aspect of culture. In terms of the case “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”, Tiffany expresses a strong interest in the conditions in which the classroom teacher [Perla] lives. Seeing Perla’s dedication to teaching within a poor community and empathizing with the difficulties of living and teaching in poverty, Tiffany questions and imagines the children’s home situations. In her personal reaction and response to the case reaction questions, Tiffany reflects on issues of children in poverty in relation to this case.

I kept thinking that if this was the way that a professional lived, how do the children in her class live? How do they learn when lacking some of the basic necessities in life? I admire Perla’s dedication. Staying until 5:00 in the evening and arriving early must be difficult when she has her own struggles that she must overcome each day, including caring for her six children. I admire her ability to teach effectively in the conditions that she lives and works in on a daily basis (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of being sensitive to children’s contradictions and feelings. Tiffany realizes that Perla’s dilemma is not one that only exists in poverty. She sees the contradiction in values between teachers and parents.

Perla’s dilemma is magnified because Antonio’s father has to make a living doing a job that the class has determined is detrimental to the environment, as determined by a lesson taught in class (Personal reactions to the case).
In this process of conflict, Tiffany places her sympathies with both the teacher and the children of the case. In her personal reaction and response to the case reaction questions, she takes the perspective of the child in the case, Antonio, who experiences the dilemma between learning “school knowledge” and respecting his father’s livelihood. She also considers the perspective of the classroom teacher, Perla, considering her difficulties in this situation.

Antonio is obviously torn between the knowledge that what his father is doing is harmful to the environment and his respect for his father. Perla is in an awkward situation. In this case I sympathize with the child who is caught between knowing what is right and what has to be done by his father in order to survive (Personal reactions to the case and responses to case reaction questions).

In her personal reaction, she questions, “What should Perla do in this situation? How does she show respect for the work that Antonio’s father does and still stick to the information that was discovered in class?”

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Showing respect for children’s feelings and home culture through class discussion.* In her personal reaction, Tiffany points out that ‘respect’ can go a long way toward solving the dilemma of this case. She thinks that the child’s [Antonio’s] feelings should not be hurt and his family background, including his father’s work, should be respected. She feels that teachers’ awareness about children’s personal background and community is vital to the learning process.

I would like to think that I would have been more aware that parents may have to cut the trees down in order to survive (Responses to case reaction questions).
In personal reactions to the case and response to the case reaction questions, she suggests the need for class discussions about this dilemma to assist and clarify for the child the conflict he is encountering between school knowledge and the knowledge of his home.

In Perla’s situation, I would ask Antonio how he feels about the situation. Then I would reiterate that cutting down the trees to make the charcoal does harm the environment, but people do have to do this type of job to make a living to support their families. I would also brainstorm solutions to Antonio’s problem with him (Personal reactions to the case).

Viewing the dilemma as an opportunity to expand children’s learning about knowledge of science and their home culture. Tiffany believes that a dilemma involving contradictions between school knowledge and home culture can serve as a great catalyst for class discussion. She sees the dilemma as a chance to extend children’s learning about issues of both the charcoal industry and environmental concerns. She expects that through class discussions children may develop a broader picture, including more in-depth understanding regarding scientific knowledge at school and the knowledge of their home and community culture. In her personal reaction, she suggests the following:

Perla could use this opportunity to have children brainstorm ways that the charcoal industry and the environment could coexist. This could be another learning opportunity for the children in her class that may someday have to work in a job that causes environmental problems so that they can provide for their families (Personal reactions to the case).
Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Knowledge construction: The importance of respecting and being sensitive to the beliefs and knowledge of children’s home culture. Tiffany recognizes that children’s parents may have beliefs and knowledge which are different from the school or teacher. In her personal reaction, she describes how the case of “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?” prompted an instant flashback regarding the contradictions between teachers and parents.

Perla’s dilemma is not one that exists only in poverty. Teachers contradict parents even in affluent economic environments. I have had children whose parents tell them that they don’t have to do homework because they have baseball or other activities that they are involved in outside of school. It is a very sticky situation (Personal reactions to the case).

At this point, Tiffany discusses the case issues with respect to knowledge construction, focusing on need for respecting the knowledge or beliefs of children which are developed outside of school. She suggests that teachers should avoid engaging in disputes with children’s parents concerning any aspect of educational matters. In her personal reaction, she notes that if teachers offend the beliefs of parents, their children will likely be confused and finally defend their parents.

The most important thing that I have learned from the small encounters that I have had in my classroom with this situation is to remain respectful to the children’s parents. Children will defend their parents, no matter what, out of respect and adoration. You just can’t fight that. You have to find a tactful way to explain to
children the situation and your expectations without putting them on the defensive (Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany’s point is an important one, as it highlights her awareness that knowledge can be constructed differently by different people. Accordingly, teachers cannot claim that schools reflect the only truth and reality – this devalues the home culture of children and their parents. Tiffany again emphasizes the importance of being sensitive to children’s culture.

I do think that Perla could have been a little more sensitive considering she probably understood that many parents were forced to cut the trees in order to survive (Personal reactions to the case).

“El Secreto de las Ninãs”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of being sensitive to children’s hidden feelings. Tiffany tries to read the two homeless girls’ emotions when they interact with the teacher in a science class. “In this case study two Hispanic children tell the secret about why they do not like science.” When the two girls tell the co-author of this case that they do not like science because they “are not used to science,” she thinks that the girls’ dislike for science runs deeper than that. In her personal reaction, Tiffany discusses the case, noting the classroom teacher’s actions and the two girls’ responses.

In their story the two girls are excited about a project that they are going to do in science class. The teacher asks the children to bring in a shoebox to use to create a camera. When the girls do not bring a shoebox to school, they and their classmates are given a lecture about being responsible. After talking to the
teacher, the teacher offers them the opportunity to clean erasers to earn a shoebox. At this point the girls are disillusioned and choose to play at recess instead of earning their shoebox. The teacher gives them shoeboxes anyway, but at this point, the two girls have decided that they do not want to make the cameras

(Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany thinks that the feelings of the two homeless girls are not validated by their teacher. In her personal reaction, taking the perspective of the two homeless girls in the case, she says “They seem to be in a classroom where the teacher takes for granted the economic situation of these two girls, causing them to feel like outcasts.”

Empathizing with the girls’ feelings, she criticizes the classroom teacher’s handling of the situation, pointing out that she does not include the homeless girls as members of the classroom and fails to make them feel safe and comfortable. Tiffany feels that the initial enthusiasm of the two girls changes to disgust as a result of the actions of the classroom teacher. In her response to the case reaction questions, again taking the perspective of the homeless girls, she emphasizes the way in which the teacher’s handling of the situation crushes a “wonderful” learning opportunity for the two girls. At this point, in her personal reaction and response to the case reaction questions, Tiffany compares the teacher in the case to herself as a teacher, pointing out the importance of sensitivity to each child’s situation. She considers the embarrassed feelings of the homeless girls in this case.

I am the opposite of this teacher. I am very aware of the living conditions, economic background and cultural background of each of my children. I am aware that not all children can contribute the same things to the classroom and
adjust accordingly. Teachers in culturally diverse schools and in low socioeconomic area schools need to be aware of the impact that situations, like this one, can cause. Children who cannot provide materials often feel embarrassed and therefore do not wish to participate in classroom activities (Responses to case reaction questions).

Even while criticizing the case teacher, Tiffany demonstrates an understanding of her actions. In her reaction to the case reaction questions, she comments:

She was not sensitive to the economic situations of her children. I think that the teacher in this story made the decision that she did because of ignorance. She was unable to realize the true impact of the small things that she did (Responses to case reaction questions).

Tiffany feels that teachers cannot truly understand a situation until they experience it firsthand. Therefore, more effort to recognize situations like the one illustrated in the case is required for them. “You don’t understand how much extra effort it is to be sensitive to the individual situations of your children.”

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Prejudice reduction: The importance of considering children’s personal situations and not making faulty assumptions. Tiffany stresses that teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the children in their classes. From Tiffany’s perspective, it is not always correct to assume that children who do not bring in materials for class projects are lazy or not responsible for their own educations. Tiffany feels that the teacher’s ignorance about the situation of homeless children can lead to prejudice toward the girls,
assuming that their inability to bring in class materials is due to a lack of responsibility and work ethics.

Tiffany is emphatic in stating that without recognizing individual children’s situations, teachers should not make any assumptions. Teachers’ unfounded assumptions about children can lead to wider prejudices. In her response to the case reaction questions, Tiffany underscores the importance of teaching actions which reflect a genuine sensitivity to children’s background.

The teacher has to become aware of the lasting effects of her actions. Lecturing children on responsibility didn’t solve the problem, it just created a new one. The enthusiasm of these two children was put out by her choice of actions. The teacher needs to become more attuned to the situations of the children in her classroom (Responses to case reaction questions).

Seeing the way the teacher in the case handles the situation with the two homeless girls, Tiffany feels that perhaps this individual lacks knowledge of multicultural issues, particularly socioeconomic dimensions of culture. Tiffany realizes that the teacher lectures children on responsibility for their education because she hopes to instill the value that “nothing can be earned by free.” However, Tiffany believes that the teacher’s assumptions and teaching actions will ultimately lead to an increase in prejudice.

*Equity pedagogy: The importance of families, teachers, and schools joining together to assume responsibility for children’s education.* Tiffany points out that not all children are able to prepare and bring in materials for class projects. Similarly, she feels that a majority of parents are unable to contribute for school supplies.
When I first started teaching, I felt resentful that the parents would not make an effort to provide materials for our classroom. It took a while for me to realize that many of the parents could not make donations that were needed for our classroom. Children would often feel embarrassed, making excuses for the parents. “I’ll bring it tomorrow.” “We didn’t have enough time to get it at the store” (Personal reactions to the case).

“I eventually just stopped asking for the donations, buying the materials myself.” At this point, Tiffany thinks that if there are children who cannot prepare materials for class activities teachers and schools should provide them. She feels that lack of money or class materials cannot be a reason to deprive children of any educational opportunities. In her personal reaction, she remembers her own experience regarding this point.

I taught for five years in a school similar to this one. Children were not able to provide the basic school supplies, let alone materials for extra projects. Each year I purchased not only school supplies for over half of my classroom, but provided materials for projects, food for cooking activities and for classroom parties (Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany feels that it is unfortunate that budgets at schools do not allot extra funds for children who do not have the means to purchase school supplies and classroom materials. The materials budget that I received barely covered the necessities (construction paper, glue, pencils, paper). There were no funds allocated for notebooks and other supplies. Teachers in these situations often end up spending hundreds of dollars (believe me!) of their own personal money to supplement what can not be given by the parents (Personal reactions to the case).
In summary, Tiffany feels that teachers need to understand that not all children can or will contribute to classroom projects and that this should not affect the learning opportunities of children. At this point, emphasizing the difficulties teachers encounter in preparing and providing materials for the learning of their students, she argues that schools should assume more responsibility for all children’s learning.

Recently, a commercial came out for one of the big office supply chains depicting a husband telling his wife that they could not possibly afford the school supplies that she was buying for her classroom. The shot then moves to the store where her husband is buying markers, glue, et cetera, for his wife. My husband laughs as this commercial is one of the only commercials that portrays real life (Personal reactions to the case).

“When Do You Perform Tuob?: Culture at the Margins of the Science Classroom”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of taking into account ethical treatment of animals. The most vivid memory Tiffany has about the case of “When Do You Perform Tuob?” is the use of the fish as an illustration of the harmful effects of smoke on people. In her personal reaction, response to the case reaction questions, and case discussions, she discusses the teacher’s “fish experiment,” finding it to be inappropriate and unethical.

The experiment that Mrs. Parcon conducted upsets me that anyone, especially a teacher, could kill fish as a demonstration, even to illustrate the effects of something as dangerous as smoke inhalation (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of balancing one’s personal beliefs with educational principles.

Tiffany feels that the classroom teacher [Esperanza] should clarify her own beliefs about
the practice of Tuob before she lectures on the harmful effects of smoke to the children in her class. In her personal reaction and case discussion, she mentions that both the teacher and the children in her class could easily be confused without the teacher clearly realizing her own beliefs about tuob. Tiffany feels that the teacher’s personal beliefs should be consistent with her teaching actions.

If she feels this strongly about the tuob, I think that the first thing that she has to do is to stop the ritual in her own home. She is, to me, a hypocrite for illustrating the harmful effects of this ritual practice, yet wondering if she should allow her mother to perform the ritual on her own child! Isn’t the way to make a change to start with your own life? (Personal reactions to the case)

The importance of balancing children’s school knowledge and cultural knowledge. Considering the perspective of the classroom teacher [Esperanza], Tiffany explains, “I think that Mrs. Parcon made the decision to share her feelings about tuob out of concern for her children. I think that her heart was in the right place, but she went about it wrong.” She feels that Esperanza has the right idea and acts on her beliefs by telling the children about the harmful effects of the smoke in the tuob ritual.

She then should explain that there are harmful effects of breathing in smoke and to be cautious. I am not quite sure of the specifics of the ritual, but there would really be enough smoke to cause concern (Personal reactions to the case).

On the other hand, Tiffany also suggests that the classroom teacher, Esperanza, needs to be sensitive about the practices of the children’s parents. Tiffany thinks that the “fish killing experiment” sets a poor example which may lead children and parents to unthinkingly kill fish. In her personal reaction, she indicates the importance of respect
and the need for the teacher to value the cultural knowledge of children and their parents. She considers the perspectives of both the children and their parents.

Mrs. Parcon has to be careful when approaching a subject as this one. She has to be careful not to alienate the children who actively believe in participating in *tuob*. She also has to be careful not to offend the parents, who will likely hear about this classroom discussion (Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany recalls the case of “Where Have All the *Ipil-Ipil* Trees Gone?” and notes that the classroom teacher in that case [Perla] encounters the “same” dilemma when discussing the fate of the *ipil-ipil* trees. “She [Perla] had to expose children to the harmful effects of destroying the *ipil-ipil* trees, knowing that this is the way that some of the parents of her children provide the basic necessities for their families.” Suggesting that the dilemma in the “*ipil-ipil*” case can be used to expand both children’s scientific knowledge and their knowledge of family and community, Tiffany similarly asserts the importance of balancing children’s school knowledge and cultural knowledge in the case of “When Do You Perform *Tuob*?”.

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Teacher’s acknowledging and respecting children’s culture and beliefs.* Tiffany suggests, as a possible solution, that the classroom teacher should acknowledge and accept the *tuob* ritual as an important cultural practice of the community. Focusing on the importance of respecting the cultural knowledge of children, their families, and the community, Tiffany thinks that the teacher should not discount the children’s beliefs as superstitious behaviors. In her personal reaction, she explains further:
I think that she went a little too far when performing the experiment with the aquarium and the cigarette. I think that the better thing to do would be to acknowledge the ritual as a part of their culture and as a ritual in which their parents may choose to have them to participate (Personal reactions to the case).

By acknowledging the children’s culture, Tiffany states that she would treat this subject as she would when religion is brought up in her classroom. She indicates that while she would acknowledge the beliefs of children, she would quickly move the lesson on to a new topic.

I acknowledge the beliefs of the children and tell them that that is one thing that people believe. Sometimes, I just acknowledge their comment and move on. In this case, I would have acknowledged the tuob ritual as one way that some people administer first aid and then I would have moved on to other options (Personal reactions to the case).

**Connectedness of Theoretical Principles**

*Knowledge construction: The importance of culture in knowledge construction.*

Tiffany reflects that dealing with issues that cross the line from classroom to personal beliefs and practices is hard. Recognizing that people differ in their knowledge and beliefs, she demonstrates awareness, sensitivity, and a desire not to offend any student or parent.

It is difficult to approach the subject like religion or religious holidays without fear of offending someone. Teachers have to always be aware that some lessons may offend others. They need to weigh the options and consider the consequences
Tiffany feels that children’s home culture, as well as school knowledge, should be respected. She emphasizes the important role that families play in determining how children learn.

I feel that there are some things that parents have to take the responsibility for teaching their children. This, to me, crosses the line between education and personal beliefs (Personal reactions to the case).

Particularly in cases like “When Do You Perform Tuoh?”, Tiffany believes that ritualistic or spiritual beliefs should be dealt with outside of the school environment. “To me it’s something parents need to take care of at home. It’s not something that I feel comfortable to get into.” In the case discussion, she comments on the significant role parents play, especially when it comes to religious issues.

Religion comes up. Sometimes they want to talk about things. It’s hard. You don’t want to sit there and talk religion, you just kind of acknowledge it but you have to move on, cause they’ll ask sometimes is there a God, .... some people believe that but you know you want to leave that for a home situation, not get involved (Case discussion).

Tiffany feels that in order for teachers to understand how their students make sense of the world they must first come to know how their own personal beliefs and knowledge have been shaped by their cultural experiences. She makes no attempt to decide on which type of knowledge is “right” – scientific knowledge or knowledge of
home and community. In her response to the case reaction questions, she expresses her feeling that the teacher in the “tuob” case needs to clarify her own beliefs.

I think that Mrs. Parcon is questioning her own beliefs and assumptions about her culture. I think that she wrestles with the need to believe in her culture and accepting the science behind the rituals and their contradictory outcomes.

(Responses to case reaction questions).

In her response to the post case discussion question, she again emphasizes importance of teachers recognizing their own beliefs and assumptions, and the influence these have on children in the class.

I was amazed to hear that people can want to disprove a cultural ceremony, yet participate in the same ceremony that they are trying to raise questions about in their classrooms. I was shocked at the inconsistencies of the belief system of the Mrs. Parcon in this case study (Post case discussion responses).

She strongly believes that the first step that the classroom teacher of the case [Esperanza] should take is to reflect on her own beliefs about tuob.

What struck me was the fact that Mrs. Parcon was warning children of a ritual in which she was questioning whether she should allow her own child to participate. I don’t think that she can be effective until she knows what she believes (Personal reactions to the case).

Summary and Discussion

Tiffany believes that the issues of ESL (English as a Second Language) children and their families are one of the most important aspects of diversity. She realizes that having ESL children in a class is one of the big challenges for teachers and other children
in the class. She tries to help ESL children experience success in her class by letting them celebrate cultural differences and learn languages from each other. In order to learn appropriate and supportive instructional approaches, she put in additional effort to obtain an ESL endorsement. She values children’s active interactions with ESL children, teachers’ positive attitudes of acceptance, understanding, and willingness to learn about their cultures, and appropriate instructional methods in terms of ability level and English proficiency. Her beliefs support the work of Cummins in this regard:

Language minority students’ educational progress is strongly influenced by the extent to which individual educators become advocates for the promotion of students’ linguistic talents, actively encourage participation in developing students’ academic and cultural resources, and implement pedagogical approaches that succeed in liberating students from instructional dependence (Cummins, 1986, p. 35).

Considering that ESL children often experience silence and isolation in school settings, she feels pleased with the progress of her ESL students in terms of language fluency, active involvement in class activities, and participation in dynamic interactions.

In empathizing with ESL children’s frequent feelings of alienation, Tiffany asserts the importance of a safe learning environment in nurturing their confidence, success, and personal agency. She tries to create a secure learning environment by giving the ESL children in her class opportunities for both teaching and learning. She understands the vulnerability of ESL children and gives them chances to become teachers. She enjoys learning about different cultures, feeling that everyone has valuable
things to offer. “I think if we all were in a classroom that had only the same kind of people, it would not be any fun.”

In order to create positive learning environments with respect to diverse cultures, Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) warn, “token diversity” (p. 15) should be avoided, i.e., representing a culture with only one picture, song, doll, item, book, and so forth. Rather, more flexible and open-minded learning environments should be constructed, comprising more diverse cultural groups of people. In addition, the above authors also caution, “Don’t show only images of a group from the past, even though they may be easier to find than contemporary images.” These authors emphasize that experiencing only traditional songs, dances, food, cultural tales, special celebration activities, and so forth, are not enough for children to develop appropriate attitudes towards different cultures. Small snapshots about a culture may lead to the development of stereotypes and prejudices in children.

Tiffany thinks that she is an open-minded person with respect to diverse cultures. From her perspective, her experiences in childhood have influenced her beliefs and attitudes about diversity. She notes that she experiences other cultures through being with friends from diverse backgrounds.

I’ve always had friends from different cultures and backgrounds. I didn’t grow up in a homogeneous place, so I had a lot of friends and different things and I would go to their homes and experience meals and a little tiny bit of culture but it wasn’t a whole lot. I’ve been to a couple of festivals, like Hispanic day of the dead festivals and that kind of thing, but it was not very extensive (Initial interview).
She remembers that she has always had a few friends with cultural backgrounds that were quite different. However, recalling these past experiences now, she states “We didn’t think of it as a cultural thing, they were just our friends.” She feels that she has constantly been an accepting person. As she becomes friends with people, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, she develops more flexible attitudes toward diversity.

It didn’t matter what color you were or what kind of background you had. My friends were all friends, and that’s the way I feel even now. I don’t separate my friends as, well, they’re from a different background or they’re from somewhere else (Initial interview).

She recognizes that her beliefs about diversity, which were constructed when she was a young child, now influence the children in her class.

I think that kind of played into my classroom experiences because I really didn’t see the children as, well, you’re Hispanic or Ukrainian, you’re African–American—it was just the children in my class. I think that did help (Initial interview).

Experiencing cases, Tiffany as a veteran teacher recalls her own experiences during her teaching and learning, relates them to the dilemmas and empathizes with the case teachers. She demonstrates a sympathetic attitude towards the teachers in the cases with comments like: “She faced a problem that I have faced many times”; “She faced a situation that many teachers have faced before”; “I have run into similar, but opposite situations in my classroom”; “I also had a similar experience with.” Experiencing cases, she reflects on her own teaching and learning experiences, comparing and contrasting these to the case teachers’ approaches to dealing with the various dilemmas. In the case
of “Who Eats the Mango?”, Tiffany questions the commentary discussant’s problem solving suggestions when the discussant recommends that children in the case should be exposed to “pictures, literature, or conducting a unit study.” She decides not to support his recommendations, feeling that this advice can make children passively receive knowledge about science rather than actively constructing personal knowledge.

This point implies that, as a classroom teacher, Tiffany’s knowledge and decisions about teaching and learning do not simply come from textbook knowledge that she has accrued in her university classes. Rather, she sometimes rejects what textbooks and teacher educators advise and creates her own knowledge and theories from her teaching experiences. “Experience has shaped the way that I deal with children.” As Fenstermacher (1994) argues, teachers are not only knowledge consumers but knowledge producers. Through their teaching experiences, teachers generate their own practical knowledge.

Through her experiences with the five cases in this study, Tiffany continuously states that the case discussions did not confirm or challenge her beliefs. Essentially, she feels that she is already very competent when it comes to issues of diversity and has a large amount of experience in diverse school settings. For Tiffany, class discussion of cases does not impact the ideas and understanding that she has developed through her culturally diverse teaching experiences and life experiences.

Another reason why Tiffany feels her beliefs were not impacted by the case discussions relates to the nature of her own classroom. “The children in our class are very open and do not seem to challenge in anyway ideas that are presented in class discussions. Ideas are welcomed and not challenged in any way. Differing views are
listened to and respected.” In addition, she points out that a single class discussion is not enough to confirm or change her belief system about diversity in teaching and learning. “I’ve spent many years developing my beliefs. I would hope that a discussion would not change them.”

However, having experienced cases, Tiffany thinks that she is provided with unique opportunities to think about the issues that she has unceasingly taken into account or has never thought about. For example, in the case of “El Secreto de las Niñas,” she was able to relate to and reflect about situations that she has to encounter on a daily basis, when teaching in a similar situation.

I take into consideration the socio-economical backgrounds of the children in my classroom when planning activities and field trips. I hope that others become aware of the problems that teachers of low socio-economic children have to face (Personal reactions to the case).

In the case of “When Do You Perform Tuob?” she could think about the issues of other countries’ poverty. She indicates that the “tuob” case brings up interesting points that she does not usually think about.

I don’t often stop to think about the poor socioeconomic conditions that people in other countries live in. I have had several fellow teachers and paraprofessionals that I have worked with tell me just how bad it really is. These people have been teachers and lawyers. They tell me how incredibly lucky that they are to be able to live in the United States and earn money, even the little bit that they did (Personal reactions to the case).
Reflecting on her experiences with case-based pedagogy, Tiffany suggests that the cases would be better if they showed how teachers resolved the dilemmas. She feels that it helps case readers to reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions about diversity by comparing them with the case teachers’ actions and problem-solving methods in complex teaching and learning situations. She mentions the case of “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?” as a case in point.

In this case, Perla’s decisions were not discussed. We were left with the question about what to do. Her reactions were not noted, so I do not know if they were appropriate. Because her reaction to the situation was not portrayed, I don’t know if we would share the same multicultural assumptions (Responses to case reaction questions).

She also mentions the difficulties in understanding some cases when she has no similar experiences and information about the case contexts. She mentions this point in relation to the case of “When Do You Perform Tuob?”.

This is, by far, the hardest case that I have had to react to. It is hard to put myself in the shoes of Mrs. Parcon. I can’t say that I have ever had an experience close to that of Mrs. Parcon (Personal reactions to the case).

Tiffany feels that the preservice teacher education program of her university was not effective in terms of preparing teachers for diversity. Rather, she feels that staff development programs in the elementary school where she works help her get a real and better sense of multicultural issues. “Teacher education was not helpful.” Professional development at the school where she presently works greatly influences her thoughts about diversity. “The need of schools is also a good indicator as an influence for my
thoughts about diversity.” She suggests that teacher education programs should be more realistic and practical in order for future teachers to better understand and effectively teach diverse groups of children.

Karla

Karla’s Background

Karla’s Teaching Experience: Desire to Become a Teacher

“Teaching is a gift.” Karla has been teaching for fifteen years. She is currently teaching third grade at a private Christian school. She graduated from a small private university with high honors. Before she had her own children, she was teaching at a college while working on her masters degree. She is starting her graduate work again after staying at home four years with her children. She loves to teach, feeling that teaching is her gift.

I just felt like teaching was a gift I had. I had always wanted to be a teacher.

When I was in first grade I wanted to be a first grade teacher, when second grade I wanted to be second grade teacher (Initial interview).

The Important Things for Children’s Learning

The importance of emotional and motivational support for children’s learning. Karla feels that emotional support for children’s learning is more important than subject matter knowledge. She believes that emotional support is related to student motivation.

I want the children to know that I care about them. I want them to come to school every day with a sense of anticipation and curiosity, “What are we going to do today at school?” I want them to bring an eagerness about learning. I want them to
feel success. If they are excited about learning and they feel successful about learning, there’s a lot they can achieve (Initial interview).

Her point is supported by Oldfather and Dahl’s (1994) concept of ‘continuing impulse to learn’ (CIL):

An on-going engagement in learning that is propelled and focused by thought and feeling emerging from the learners’ processes of constructing meaning. CIL is characterized by intense involvement, curiosity, and a search for understanding as learners experience learning as a deeply personal and continuing agenda. (p. 142)

_The importance of considering individual learning characteristics._ “I want to look at each of them as individuals and not as just a class. What are the child’s needs, and what’s fair.” Karla wants children to be prepared and challenged individually in their learning.

As far as looking at the children as individuals, I just don’t think I can look at 20 children and present a lesson or cover some type of material and think that every child needs the exact thing. Some children that I have need a lot of extra one-on-one help from me or they need help at home from their parents. Other children, such strong children, they need to be challenged way beyond just the general lesson (Initial interview).

In teaching, Karla tries to spend a lot of time each day on little one-on-one conferences, working with individual children. She has multiple things going on in the classroom for her children with diverse abilities and interests.
The importance of reading. For Karla, reading is the most important subject in terms of student learning. She believes that reading, above all other subjects, is fundamental for children’s independent life-long learning. “Probably, more than anything else, I want them to love reading, because if they love reading, then they can be successful learners of a multitude of information. Probably that’s my greatest love, reading.”

Experiencing Diversity

Experiencing ESOL Children

The role of ESL programs in developing language proficiency. Karla’s school has a program, English as a Second Language, for the children who do not speak fluent English. Karla describes how a few years ago, she had a Korean child who was not strong in English and had some problems with reading. The parents were not willing to let the child participate in the ESL program.

I don’t know if they don’t want their child labeled. Sometimes it’s hard to convince the parents that would really help that child, and her parents did not want her to have that extra help. So we worked with her as best we could (Initial interview).

Assuming that the ESL program is quite effective for children who speak English as a second language, Karla explains the program in her school. She describes how the ESL program focuses on helping children with difficulties they may experience in daily classroom work due to both their cultural and linguistic background.

They are taken out of the classroom two or three times a week for help with their classroom work such as their reading problems or language problems that are due
to them not primarily speaking English. Those teachers can explain things to them, ideas that they might not be comfortable with. If we’re talking about someone living in the country, we might say they live out in the sticks and that child doesn’t understand what that means. Just so they can work with them, some of the comprehension that is lacking because they don’t have the English background (Initial interview).

The classroom teachers in her school make the student referrals for the ESL program. Teachers have a conference with children’s parents. “If the parent is agreeable to them being in that program they sign up for that. It is an extra expense for the parent and so that may be why some parents are hesitant about it.”

*The importance of volunteer programs: Parents-, peer-, and cross-age teaching.*

As well as the ESL formal program at her school, Karla describes many opportunities for ESL children aimed at building community. “We have many parents who volunteer to come to school and help us in any way they can.”

I’ve found that most of the parents are willing to help in any way that they can. I had parents that would come up regularly and read with her. They would read to ESL children and talk about books with them, and the children would read to them. We use parents a lot to come up and help (Initial interview).

The teachers in her school also use the strategy of peer collaborative teaching. “We use other children. The children sometimes can be the best help to each other.” The teachers also get help from high school students who have an interest in teaching.
They think they might want to be teachers. When they’re in high school they can sign up, as a class, to be an elementary school tutor and they come over here every day for one class period, and they work with the children (Initial interview).

Karla points out the effects of peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring. Peer tutoring includes a dyad of tutor and tutee that are about the same age while cross-age tutoring is defined in terms of pairs where the tutor is older than the tutee. The theoretical background for peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring can be found in Vygotskian (1978) theory associated with the concepts of ‘zone of proximal development’ and ‘scaffolding.’ Regarding tutoring, Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of collaborative social interaction with a competent tutor. Ryan, Whittaker, and Pinckney (2002) suggest that one-on-one help from peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring are beneficial for children in terms of active engagement with peers, motivation and responsibility for learning.

**Experiencing Different Races and Cultures**

*Interacting with diverse populations of children and parents.* In her classroom and school, Karla has diverse populations of children and parents. Currently, in her class, she has a child from Pakistan, a child from Vietnam, and a child that was adopted from Vietnam. She explains more about the adopted child.

He was adopted by a Caucasian family whose mother’s a teacher at another school, just a precious little boy. He also has an older brother from an Asian county that was adopted by the same family. I have another family who has children of their own and they are adopting children from other cultures, in fact the mother left today to go to Guatemala to bring back a little boy they’re adopting (Initial interview).
She also has an African-American child and a child whose parents are from Scotland, although the student was born in the United States and has lived here. “A lot of diversity. In other years here I have had children who have been from England for a year, just probably from most cultures you can name.”

Karla recognizes diversity in terms of children’s different origins, different races, children whose parents have different birth countries, and children from visiting families staying in the United States for a short time. She views diversity as complex, moving beyond simple issues related to race.

*The importance of accepting diverse cultures.* Reflecting on the diversity issues in her class, Karla recalls a negative experience with a child from Japan about two years ago. No English was spoken at the child’s home and her only exposure to English was in the classroom. Karla describes a science lesson where she attempted to connect to the child’s diverse life experiences.

We were talking in science about studying the ocean and seaweed and we were talking about all the food products we have on the grocery store shelf that have seaweed in them. She said, “Well there’s a snack I eat everyday that is mainly seaweed,” or has a lot of seaweed in it and she said, “Could I bring it and give some to everyone?” Well, I don’t remember what it was, but when she brought it, it had a very strong smell that was pine farhes, but it was very offensive to the other children and that’s really the negative experience. They all expressed “Oh it smells horrible, it tastes horrible” and her feelings were very hurt (Initial interview).
Remembering the Japanese girl’s feelings, Karla mentions about different norms for appropriateness among diverse cultures. Having a discussion with the children in her class regarding the unexpected aspects of the science lesson, she emphasizes the importance of accepting diversity, even when it goes against the norm. As Sapon-Shevin (1995) claims, children should be safe from humiliation, isolation, stigmatization, and alienation from the class members.

We had to talk about how what seems very appropriate in our culture may be very offensive and uncomfortable to her. We had to talk about the differences in the acceptance (Initial interview).

The importance of experiencing diverse cultures in developing awareness of the uniqueness of cultures. Karla’s school has a program called Excel that is for the children who have been tested and are strong academic achievers. The Excel children organize a multicultural program for the entire elementary school. Children in Excel are assigned a specific cultural area in the world and at the stadium of their school they conduct a huge presentation highlighting their research. Karla believes that the Excel curriculum is meaningful for children because exposure to various cultures furthers positive attitudes toward different cultures.

I’m trying to think Japanese writing. They got to make a book mark with their name and those characters. They got to taste a lot of food. We had children from our school and the high school that have grown up in India and they came in their native dress and did dances for the children. They did the sand paintings that some of the cultures do, sort of the tattoo-looking henna hand painting for the children. They got to taste lots of different kinds of food. That was an all day
thing that our elementary school got to go and see. Little things about all those cultures (Initial interview).

At this point, however, Pattnaik (2003) suggests that it is a myth that other cultures have to be learned as discrete entities, merely focusing on differences from the mainstream culture. Pattnaik says that teachers should avoid a polarized “we versus they” focus on other cultures’ exotic differences. Rather, according to Pattnaik, it is important for students to recognize the uniqueness of their own culture.

Karla also discusses the ‘Mission Trip’ that is available in her school district. At the high school, the English department takes any students that want to participate on international trips.

The high school students go on a European trip to explore some of the cultures and then our spring break they can sign up for five different mission trips, visiting different cultures. One group goes to Mexico, one group goes to Honduras, one group goes to Russia, et cetera (Initial interview).

The high school students tell elementary children about their trips to raise their curiosity and interest. “We’re going on a medical mission trip to Honduras and we need band-aids. The whole elementary school will be working together to gather materials for those high school students to take on their mission trip.” They go on the trip to Honduras during their spring break, visiting a village where there is no doctor.

The supplies they took were the supplies these children had brought in, for those children to take into that culture. Then they’ll come back and put on a slide show, showing who are the children we took care of, here’s how they live, here’s what they eat. That’s a very, very important thing here (Initial interview).
The importance of equal treatment of all children regardless of their personal backgrounds. On the day following September 11, th some of my Muslim children’s parents came to school and expressed the concern, “How are my children going to be treated here? Are they going to be ostracized?” Karla remembers that one thing she could assure the Muslim parents was, “The children are going to be loved and treated just the same. This is a safe haven for their children. We really look at the children that way.” Emphasizing the equal treatment of children, Karla takes into account the nature of the school learning environment.

Discussing the events of September 11, th Karla describes emergency situations are handled in her school.

Probably when that happened, on September 11, th we were in chapel. Our principal called all the teachers out of chapel and the chapel director was singing with the children. The president of our school came over and told us what had happened and discussed how they wanted it handled. They didn’t want the televisions turned on in the classroom (Initial interview).

Continuing, Karla describes how the teachers and staff of her school reacted to the associated issues. They stressed the equal treatment of all children regardless of their personal backgrounds.

By the time we got back to our classroom, probably thirty minutes after we had been informed. The very first email that we got from our president was that the thing he wanted every teacher to remember was that this was a Christian school and every child was going to be treated equally regardless of their background, regardless of their beliefs. This had nothing to do with our schools, and the exact
words he used were “any unkindness from other students toward a student of Muslim background will not be tolerated” (Initial interview)

In her school, Karla explains, “A teacher here would not mistreat a child. The children just don’t treat each other that way. It just doesn’t happen.” She feels they are “blessed” and “fortunate.” In her school, no matter what children are or where they come from, they are safe, loved, and protected.

*The importance of curriculum change regarding diverse ethnic and cultural groups.* In spite of the fundamental beliefs of a school based on principles of Christianity, Karla discusses two contrasting teaching approaches regarding the September 11th issues. One classroom teacher provides children the opportunities to voice and share their Muslim beliefs and discuss feelings about the event, whereas the other classroom teacher ignores opportunities to discuss Muslim values. Karla describes the approach of the former teacher.

There was a boy in one of her senior classes that was Muslim. The teacher allowed him to talk to the students and explain that his belief as a Muslim did not in any way go along with these people’s beliefs and what had resulted from their beliefs. So, the teachers were very open to let him share how embarrassed he was. It made him voice that people of his background were at this school, but in the news media, they were lumped together. And so they let him share and voice that (Initial interview).

In contrast, Karla describes her teaching approach. She does not feel the need to discuss Muslim issues because, to her knowledge, nothing unkind or inappropriate has ever been said or done in her classes.
We didn’t ever in the classes talk about the Muslim issue. We just said, there are evil people in this world, we need to pray for them, just like we need to pray for all the people that have been hurt by what’s happened (Initial interview).

It seems like Karla feels that the other teacher’s class has need to discuss Muslim beliefs because of the fact that there is a child from an Islamic culture in the class. Karla feels that it would be easier and more relevant to discuss Muslim beliefs and culture for the former, as this teacher can connect to the child’s thoughts and feelings about the September 11th event. However, according to the concept of ‘curriculum inclusion’ (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997), any ethnic and cultural diversity, including Muslim beliefs and culture, should not be omitted from the curriculum. Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997) explain the goals of curriculum inclusion in the dictionary of multicultural education:

(1) to present information about groups who traditionally have been oppressed and marginalized in U.S. society and have been excluded from the instructional agendas of schools; and (2) to replace incomplete, distorted, or stereotypical portrayals of marginalized groups with accurate information (p. 79).

Focusing on the point that curriculum inclusion typically emphasizes ‘selective, restricted, and fragmentary’ dimensions of culture using exotic artifacts, celebrations, information, or experiences, teachers should put more effort into broadly connecting their curriculum to the social, political, economic, cultural, and institutional level of ethnic and cultural diversity. Within this movement of curriculum improvement, change should also be carefully considered, involving major transformation of existing biased values, assumptions, and beliefs about diverse groups of people and their cultures.
The importance of unbiased child-rearing and religious beliefs on children’s attitudes towards segregation. Karla tells the story about a time when African-American people were highly segregated, recalling her childhood. “I grew up in the South, in Alabama and Tennessee. I saw as a child how differently people could be treated.”

We weren’t wealthy, but we could afford for my mom to have a maid that came in once a week to clean and do laundry. We always had just the sweetest black women that came to our house. I just loved them (Initial interview).

One day, as a kindergarten age child, she heard about how the “black” people could not go to the same restaurants as the “white” people. “I never understood that because they were such sweet people.”

To me, it was so sad because I had these lovely sweet older black women coming to my house that were so wonderful. I just didn’t understand why it was that way (Initial interview).

Karla’s memory represents a significant aspect of segregation in the United States history. In the 1896 Supreme Court case, Plessy v. Ferguson considered the law of ‘separate but equal’ constitutionally legal (Raffel, 1998). The case held that ‘White Only and Colored Only’ public facilities did not obstruct the legal equal protection of the Colored. This case justified racially separate facilities as long as they were equal, and was an example supporting segregation (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

Karla feels that she is fortunate because the bulk of her family is very open-minded and tolerant with respect to the prejudice that lots of people in the South accepted as a way of life. She mentions that discrimination and inequality have never been an issue for her in spite of a predominantly “white” school background. She attributes this to her
parents’ non-biased child-rearing attitudes and her Christian religious beliefs. She describes the first time when she was exposed to the African-American culture outside of her home.

I remember the first time I ever went to church, a black man preached. That was amazing because I’d never had that before, but it wasn’t a negative. It was just different (Initial interview).

*Being within the history of school segregation and desegregation in southern states.* Extending the issues of segregation, Karla mentions her experiences regarding the movement of desegregation and integration of public schools. In the era of her early years of teaching, the government put great efforts into integrating diverse children from different racial and ethnic groups into public schools. Karla describes the resistance of “Whites” in her particular community against the integration of schools.

When I started out teaching in Alabama, what was happening at that time the government was forcing integration in the schools. The particular area where I was teaching was a fairly wealthy area and so all these little small communities that could afford to do it were breaking off from the city school system and they were forming their own school systems. They did not have to abide by integration (Initial interview).

Raffel (1998) and Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997) explain that the government attempts to integrate schools were affected by the 1954 Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*. The decision of this case sanctioned the idea of school desegregation, arguing that the idea of dual school systems organized on the basis of
‘separate but equal’ was inherently unequal, conveying the sense that “Blacks” were
unworthy and inferior.

About the second year that I taught school, if you take government money for
anything, you have to integrate. They were taking money to help their school
lunch programs or whatever so they had to go miles away to another community
to bring a bus load of African-American children in to satisfy the government’s
demand (Initial interview).

Karla’s description of busing African-American children “miles away to another
community” demonstrates the situations existing before desegregation. According to
Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997), the situation may be accounted for in terms of the
concept of ‘de jure’ segregation, a type of formal segregation of school systems.
However, another situation existing before desegregation, ‘de facto’ segregation, is
explained as segregation without formally designating separate dual school systems.
Karla continuously articulates vivid scenes of school integration, illustrating her sad
feelings within the circumstances. She describes her feelings regarding the small number
of poor “Black” children integrated into “White” privileged schools with teachers
unprepared to teach them.

I felt like that was very, very sad because those children were brought from a
level of tremendous poverty and illiteracy into a school of wealth where most of
the parents had college degrees. To me that was very, very unfair for those
children. They were, I felt, being punished. There was not the least thing for them.
They were in a school of privilege, but they were so different and a lot of the
teachers were so unprepared to help them. That was, to me, a very negative thing for those children (Initial interview).

*The importance of recognizing the generational differences between teachers and children in educating children for diversity.* Karla feels the generational differences between herself and the children in her school. “I think that it is time that we’re really open and aware that the America of my childhood is not the America of today.” She definitely considers that these days diversity is so common and natural.

Well these children have grown up in a country with diversity being common place. I think sometimes when we discuss that with these children, I don’t see what the big deal is, because they’re just very accepting, and this little Caucasian boy’s best friend is the little Vietnamese boy that’s sitting beside him. I think sometimes we make it a big deal when it’s not really a big deal to these particular children. It’s just very natural to them (Initial interview).

*The importance of being exposed to diverse cultures.* Karla stresses that having a multiplicity of cultures is an enriching experience, not a problematic issue. Feeling a need to learn more about others’ cultures, she wishes she had the financial resources to travel.

How narrow is it to always live in middle-class America with nothing but Caucasians? How limiting is that? I think we’re enriched. I’m enriched. The more that I’m exposed to, the more that I get to learn about other people and their cultures and their values (Initial interview).

Karla exemplifies the benefits of experiencing other cultures. She believes that there are many things to be learned from exposure to other cultures. She thinks it is worthwhile for teachers to work hard at developing open-minded attitudes towards diversity.
I think the Asian culture, we could learn so much in our country. From the Asian culture, as far as respect for elderly, as far as the way children respect their parents, as far as work ethic. We can’t go out and change the whole country, but I feel like at least here at this school that we are trying to make a difference and trying to be very open-minded to the blessing of being surrounded by diversity (Initial interview).

Realizing the Influence of the School Environment

The influence of school goals emphasizing diversity. Karla feels that her school goals reinforce teachers’ work and attitudes regarding diversity. Her school has a five year goal of developing with respect to diversity, including teachers’ and children’s attitudes. In the faculty meeting or any other professional meetings, the teachers at Karla’s school are attuned to diversity matters.

We have children from every culture and a large population of diverse nationalities. We have large African-American, Asian, and Indian populations. We’ve already had our meeting this year about how we can bring the culture that some of these children have in their backgrounds into the classroom, how we can integrate some of their cultures, their foods, the things that they do at home into the classroom. And that’s just something that we really think about and talk about a lot (Initial interview).

The influence of religious education on attitudes towards diversity. Karla indicates that the chapel programs in her school definitely contribute to teachers’ and students’ knowledge and attitudes about diversity. Strongly believing that all children
should understand and be exposed to diverse cultures, the chapel programs try to make children experience diversity in multiple ways.

We’re a Christian school, so we have bible classes and chapel every day. At a lot of our chapel programs we even focused on children of different countries. Last spring we did a program about America. Our music teacher puts it all together and the children learned and sang a song about how America is a melting pot of all these countries. They had children representing every culture that we have here in the elementary school with a little part in that program (Initial interview).

The chapel programs emphasize the acceptance and celebration of uniqueness and difference in a person as well as in diverse cultures. They stress the point, “We can come together and be strong because we can help each other work together and learn from each other.” Karla further explains,

….that different is good. That we’re all different and we judge people more by what’s on the inside then what we see on the outside. It’s not just in other cultures, it may even be in this child being very strong in math and this child being strong in reading (Initial interview).

In addition, the chapel programs teach children that they should be curious about this world. They help children learn about other people’s ways of living in terms of circumstances, sociocultural issues, and so forth.

*The influence of Christian beliefs towards celebrating uniqueness.* When she has problems regarding diversity issues with children in her classroom, Karla preaches “God’s rule.” “Being a Christian school we always bring in the fact that God created everyone, God loves everyone, God accepts everyone, and we have to do the same
thing.” Using a biblical standpoint, Karla teaches children that all people are unique and different but God sees everybody the same. Her school even hires a full-time individual just to help teachers be more aware of and deal with diversity in classrooms.

Last Friday in chapel, the man who’s been hired to help us know ways we can celebrate diversity, he did chapel for the elementary school. We sang a song that talked about God creating people of all color. That was our whole chapel program Friday. I’d be very hard to come up with any negatives here because we like the diversity and the differentness. Jesus expects us to treat each other this way (Initial interview).

*The influence of the school principal on children’s positive attitudes towards diversity.* Karla emphasizes the principal’s influence and ways of handling dilemmas involving diversity matters. “If I don’t do something about a child teasing, well my principal would not tolerate me not dealing with that appropriately in my classroom.” If the problems continue even after she talks about people’s feelings and appropriate behavior with students, Karla calls a conference with the school principal and the parents of the particular child.

I would let my principal know for sure and we would probably call the parents and have a conference. I would think most of the parents here would be horrified to think their child was mistreating someone in that way. The parents know it won’t be tolerated, and so they’re going to make sure their children do what needs to be done (Initial interview).
Karla’s Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity

Recognizing Help from Staff Development Programs in School

The importance of teachers’ sharing experiences and knowledge about teaching diversity. Karla remembers no educational experiences about diversity in her teacher education programs. Rather, she focuses on her school’s staff development programs with respect to multicultural education. For example, the teachers in her school have faculty meetings where they share their different teaching experiences, focusing on how to work with diverse children in classrooms.

Last Wednesday morning at our faculty meeting – we had discussed the day before to bring in ways that we brought diversity into the classroom. Different teachers brought books that they had found that addressed that issue really well. The Spanish teacher told about what she does at Christmas, about bringing the different cultures, everybody brought ideas like that and shared (Initial interview).

Karla feels that the faculty meetings are effective in terms of sharing new knowledge and information about teaching diverse learners. She points out that talking about children’s picture books expand their discussions about diversity beyond just “the color or the cultural.”

If she hadn’t brought that book and shared it at the faculty meeting I wouldn’t have known anything about it. Anytime we can get a new idea, it’s wonderful (Initial interview).
Experiencing Cases regarding Diversity

“Who Eats the Mango?”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of thorough lesson planning that considers children’s various learning characteristics. Karla feels that Kim plans an excellent lesson for her students by providing opportunities for them to investigate and identify characteristics of fruits and vegetables. Karla believes that the children in Kim’s class are highly focused on examining the plant parts and grouping them until Kim introduces unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. In her personal reaction, case discussion, and post case discussion reactions, Karla describes the disinterested feelings of Kim’s students. The following quote shows the perspective of children in Kim’s class.

When Kim attempts to bring cultural diversity into the lesson by introducing fruits from other cultures, the children in her class expressed disgust and distaste for these new foods and were not interested in examining or tasting them (Post case discussion responses).

At this point, Karla also discusses Kim’s frustrated feelings about the children’s negative reactions to her planned lesson. In her personal reaction, case discussion, and the responses to the case reaction questions, Karla considers the perspective of Kim. “Kim was distressed by the students’ reaction and felt that her lesson had not been successful.” In the responses to the case reaction questions, Karla empathizes with Kim’s “unsuccessful” lesson by considering her [Karla’s] own perspective as a classroom teacher.
I was most impressed with the awareness that what I teach my students may not leave as great an impression on them as the experiences I offer them. Also, I was reminded that even the most well-planned lesson can ‘flop’ if I don’t consider basic developmental truths about the age group I am teaching (Responses to case reaction questions).

The importance of teachers’ continuous reflection upon intentions, implementation, and result of lessons for future teaching. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Karla expresses the belief that Kim’s science lesson is successful, separating it into two main objectives. First, Karla feels that Kim’s science lesson successfully helps children distinguish between fruits and vegetables, even though some problems with children’s unenthusiastic reactions come into play when she introduces the cultural diversity issues. Karla describes the success of Kim’s lesson with respect to student learning.

First, Kim wanted her children to characterize edible plant parts and identify fruits and vegetables. As a secondary objective, she wanted to interest her children in foods of other cultures. Kim needs to remind herself of those two objectives and realize that in developing her science experience, she was very successful. She engaged her children and they uncovered a science principle just as she planned. Her activity was organized and appropriate to the age and abilities of the children in her class. Her science lesson was a ‘real peach’ (Personal reactions to the case).

Second, pointing out the importance of teachers increasingly becoming aware of the need to expose children to diverse cultures that contribute to their classroom populations,
Karla considers Kim’s science lesson positive because the experience is designed to help children learn about cultural diversity.

Kim demonstrated strength and awareness as a preservice teacher by incorporating cultural diversity into a well-planned, age-appropriate science exploration (Personal reactions to the case).

Again, Karla indicates that Kim’s lesson is successful because her lesson fosters children’s curiosity towards new cultures. In her personal reaction, Karla considers the perspective of the children in Kim’s class, sympathizing with their hesitant but curious feelings about “different” cultures.

As teachers, we need to be realistic and accept that children may still be hesitant to taste new things. As an adult, there are things that I am not eager to taste. The measure of success can’t be based strictly on what the children are willing to taste, but on their curiosity and how much their minds have been opened to new possibilities (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction and case discussion, Karla points out that Kim’s activity related to diversity is a qualified success, particularly from the perspective that teachers are life-long learners. Karla feels that the “unsuccessful” part of Kim’s lesson can be the reference point for future diversity lessons integrated into multiple disciplines.

As a cultural diversity experience, the children did not learn as she had planned but she, an educator, a life-long learner, learned much about her students. Kim is now aware that her children do need to be exposed to diverse cultures and she will need to back up and lay a foundation for future experiences. This experience can
be the reference point for future diversity lessons integrated into multiple
disciplines (Personal reactions to the case).

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Discussing children’s feelings about “strange” foods, considering the*
*perspectives of themselves and others from different cultures.* Karla proposes various suggestions for helping students experience the fruits and vegetables from different cultures. Karla’s idea of a “systemic approach” focuses on sequential planning. She suggests starting with an introduction, sharing of previous experiences, and transitioning to activities involving unfamiliar foods, in order to reduce children’s anxiety and fear, and increase motivation; this would be followed with tangible experiences in terms of the “strange” fruits and vegetables. In this context, Karla recommends talking with students about their negative feelings towards the “new” foods. In her personal reaction, Karla shares example questions that might be a good basis for discussion. Karla believes that class discussion can broaden children’s perspectives and help them consider others’ positions and cultures.

Are there foods they didn’t like when they were younger that they now enjoy? What changed? If someone moved here from another culture, what foods do we regularly eat that might seem strange to them? Why? What could we do to introduce those foods to them? (Personal reactions to the case)

*Parents’ involvement in building children’s prior experiences related to class activities.* In her personal reaction and case discussion, Karla suggests the need for parents’ involvement through other experiences where children can learn about diversity by exploring “unfamiliar” fruits and vegetables. Karla feels that children’s prior exposure
to diverse fruits and vegetables, such as touching and smelling them with their parents at a grocery store, will reduce children’s anxious feelings about the unfamiliar foods that would be introduced within the classroom context.

Make a list of ‘new’ fruits and vegetables. Ask children to go on a scavenger hunt with their parents to the local grocery store or market. Which of these foods and how many of the things can be bought at local stores? Make a class graph showing those frequently found (Personal reactions to the case).

Children’s small group research and sharing about unfamiliar fruits and vegetables as a tool for enhancing motivation and reducing anxiety. In her personal reaction, Karla indicates that children could research and share about unfamiliar fruits and vegetables in small groups before tasting these foods. Karla believes that examining the “strange-looking” fruits and vegetables provides children with chances to get familiar with them and encourages their engagement in the class activity. “You can’t judge a book by its cover; you can’t judge a fruit by its covering.”

Form small groups of children and give them specific guidelines to use to research one of these fruits or veggies that can be purchased at local stores. They could use the internet, library, et cetera. Ask them to make a visual presentation of their fruit or vegetable making sure to include where it is grown and specific information about that country’s culture (Personal reactions to the case).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Content integration: The importance of meaningful connection of subject matter to lessons with diversity. Karla feels that Kim is simply trying to infuse information about foods eaten in a different culture into an existing lesson that she is trying to present. In
her responses to the case reaction questions, Karla expresses the belief that Kim values diversity and feels like children should be exposed to new and different cultures. However, Karla points out that Kim does not think deeply enough about children’s developmental characteristics such as age-appropriateness, reactions, and the “necessity to ‘bring them along’ and ‘sell’ them on the new and different.”

I think she was so concerned with making a good impression as a student teacher and planning a good lesson that she got caught in the plans and forgot to think like a third grade child thinks. She was thinking about content and forgot about a child’s basic hesitance to try new things (Responses to case reaction questions).

From Karla’s perspective, emphasizing the simple infusion of artifacts or examples from diverse cultures only promotes meaningful learning for children in a limited way. Karla believes that lessons regarding diversity should be carefully planned and meaningfully connected to the subject matter that is taught, and should take into account children’s prior experiences and backgrounds. Karla criticizes the content integration approach in terms of the knowledge construction dimension of multicultural education.

Knowledge construction: The importance of considering children’s background experiences for meaningful construction of diversity. Planning and implementing a lesson about diversity, Karla takes into account that teachers must be willing to back up and meet the learning needs of children as they have more experiences with diverse cultures. “I was reminded to be prepared. I need to think things through and not assume I will capture children’s imaginations without doing the necessary background work.” In her
personal reaction, case discussion, and post discussion reactions, Karla shares her belief that teachers should see the big picture when exposing children to diversity.

I have always felt that introducing any cultural diversity needs to be a natural outgrowth of a lesson, situation, or individual in my classroom and not something manufactured just to be able to say that I focus on cultural diversity (Post case discussion responses).

*Prejudice reduction: The importance of providing children with diverse experiences which foster open-minded attitudes about other cultures.* In her case discussion, Karla recalls her own experience of eating seafood for the first time. She points out that exposing children to diverse cultures can reduce bias about other cultures.

I remember the first time I ate seafood. I always thought it was the most disgusting sounding thing until I was about thirteen. My uncle took me on a trip with one of my grandmothers, and they coaxed me to try it and I didn’t have the issues with my parents. I was willing to take that risk, I just loved eating it (Case discussion).

As Derman-Sparks and the A. B. C. Task Force (1989) argue, sometimes children’s biases and prejudices towards different groups of people and their cultures result from lack of or incorrect knowledge or information. Without validated experiences from other people, children may overgeneralize their prejudices against unfamiliar cultures. Seeing that children in Kim’s class are negative about the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables, Karla recognizes that care should be taken to ensure that attitudes about a particular thing or event should not be generally extended to views about larger phenomena of the culture.
“The Day the Lobster Died.”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

The importance of teachers’ continuous reflection on positive and negative aspects of their lessons for better teaching in the future. Karla positively views the classroom teacher’s [Stan’s] intentions in terms of relating the lobster cookout part of the lesson to an experience with diversity. Karla believes that Stan is an “excellent” teacher, considering his efforts to offer children various experiences beyond simple subject matter knowledge. In her personal reaction and the responses to the case reaction questions, she considers the perspective of Stan.

Stan and his children have been engaged in an exploration of the oceans and he has gone to great lengths to provide an unforgettable ending to this interdisciplinary unit. He wants his class to experience a traditional New England ‘lobster cookout’ as the culmination of his oceanography unit. Stan was so excited about ending his ocean study with a ‘whale of a memory’ that he just didn’t think about all of the ramifications of his plans. He so badly wanted to share an experience with his children that was special to him that he forgot to think about the culture in which he was now living (Personal reactions to the case).

However, in her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, Karla indicates that Stan should not “kill” a lobster in a classroom no matter what his reasons are, even though bringing in live sources of foods would have been a good finale to the lesson.

To me it seemed obvious that you would not cook a live lobster in front of children for many reasons. I felt so sorry for Stan because his intentions were so
earnest in desiring to end his study with a great experience for his children

(Responses to case reaction questions).

As Karla mentions that teachers are life long learners in the previous case of “Who Eats the Mango?”, she again suggests that Stan’s frustrating situation during his lesson should not discourage him from providing meaningful experiences for his future students. Focusing on the idea that “Every teacher’s lessons can go different ways” from his/her original intentions, Karla comments:

Handled with care, this situation could be something that they reflect on and actually chuckle about at the end of the year as they recap a great fifth grade year of memories and growth (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of being sensitive to children’s emotions and development when planning a lesson. “When Stan finally unveils his lobster to the class, the children realize that their teacher intends to cook the lobster for them to eat. Chaos ensues.”

Remembering the scenes where two children flee the classroom in shrieks and tears while the remaining children are divided between laughter and stunned disbelief, Karla shows the perspective of the children in Stan’s class. At this point, Karla also captures Stan’s confused feelings about the reactions of his students. In her personal reaction, she discusses the perspective of Stan.

Astonished by the disintegration of his well-intentioned plan, Stan asks himself, “What on earth do I do now?” (Personal reactions to the case)

Sympathizing with the students’ horrified feelings about Stan’s lobster cookout, Karla brings a personal experience to mind, that illustrates children’s bond and friendship with animals.
The children I teach ask me to pray about their sick and injured pets as often as they request prayers for family members. Children forge a strong bond with animals of all kinds (Personal reactions to the case).

Considering children’s age and development, Karla feels assured that Stan’s lobster cookout is definitely inappropriate for the children in his class. She takes the perspective of the children in the case.

They often do not think about the foods they eat as having once been live animals. They frequently express surprise when this discussion comes up in the classroom.

In working hard to plan an amazing unit, Stan seems to have forgotten some principles of child development (Personal reactions to the case).

*Not hurt and not being hurt: The importance of appropriate treatment of animals in a classroom.* Related to the issues of sensitivity to children’s emotions regarding ethical treatment of animals, Karla points out that they can provide great learning experiences but must be dealt with in a sensitive thoughtful manner.

Pets in a classroom must be cared for properly and humanely. A teacher must be prepared to deal with a child mistreating an animal or being hurt themselves by a classroom pet (Personal reactions to the case).

Karla describes specific ways for protecting animals’ rights within the classroom context. “Stan also needed to check with school system guidelines and science standards to evaluate the appropriateness of his plans. He needed to elevate the ‘rights’ of animals.”

*The importance of carefully dealing with issues surrounding the topic of “death” in the classroom.* “Stan was really setting himself up for some criticism and conflict.” Considering that planning to cook and eat an animal in the classroom brings up a plethora
of concerns and dilemmas, Karla thinks that all aspects of the curriculum related to death must be handled with care and consideration. She expresses her feelings about the handling of death issues with respect to fifth grade classrooms.

Fifth graders do not need to be shielded from natural life experiences and this is a reality that could have been appropriately brought to these children’s attention in a less dramatic way. They could have discussed, and followed the news for reports about mistreatment of ocean animals and other issues related to ocean life (Personal reactions to the case).

Karla addresses the importance of obtaining the permission and opinions of children’s parents about the lobster cookout activity. Because children’s family background and beliefs are possibly different from ones of a classroom teacher, Karla feels that the delicate issues of death should be discussed openly with children’s parents.

They could have polled adults in the community to get their reaction to boiling live lobsters. They could have tabulated their results, talked with experts or chefs and then formulate their own opinions, stopping short of actually cooking the lobster in the classroom (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of considering safety and health issues.* In her personal reaction and post case discussion reactions, Karla identifies the issue of safety and health in a classroom. “If he had not cooked properly or if a child had any related allergies that may have been undetected due to a lack of exposure to lobster.” She states that principles regarding children’s safety and health should not be superseded by the need to expose the children to cultural diversity.
We were united in our opposition to Stan’s intent because of his disregard for sound science and health standards. There are certain things that cannot be sacrificed in the promotion of cultural diversity (Post case discussion responses).

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Teacher’s shelving his planned lesson, by reflecting in action upon children’s responses.* Stressing the importance of being sensitive to children’s emotions, Karla believes that Stan should stop his activity as soon as he notices the children’s fearfulness. In her personal reaction, showing the perspective of the children in Stan’s class, Karla focuses her issues on the need for Stan to reflect in action on his lesson. She strongly feels that Stan should reflect, during the course of his lesson, on whether his teaching is working and if his approach is effective and valuable for the children in his class. Believing that teachers should be flexible in teaching and learning situations, Karla mentions the following:

I hope that he immediately shelved his plan to boil the lobster. Continuing with his original plan seems insensitive to his children since the horrified reaction was not limited to a single individual. Stan underestimated the emotions that young children attach to living things (Personal reactions to the case).

Karla’s suggestion is supported by the concept of “teaching as reflection-in-action,” an idea which emphasizes teachers’ thinking and decision making during the problem-solving process in teaching and learning. At this point, citing Schön (1983), Karla asserts that teachers as professionals should depend on ‘reflection-in-action’ rather than on preexisting standardized knowledge or technical rationality in teaching, taking into account the complex and specific context of teaching and learning.
Providing children with opportunities to discuss and have various experiences with seafood to broaden their knowledge about ocean animals as natural resources. Karla believes that one of the reasons children were appalled by the lobster cookout activity stems from their lack of experiences and knowledge about ocean animals as natural resources for humans. Karla proposes providing children with opportunities to discuss and taste various seafood. In her personal reaction, she mentions:

I wonder if Stan did background work with his children discussing all of the foods we commonly eat that come from oceans. Few of these rural children, living far from an ocean, may have ever eaten seafood. Stan should have done considerable study and discussion with the children in his class regarding the natural resources of oceans. Stan could enlist some help in bringing in samples of various common and tasty seafood such as crab, lobster, tuna, shrimp, et cetera. The children did need an opportunity to experience these foods (Personal reactions to the case).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Knowledge construction: The importance of understanding cultural influence in constructing different knowledge. Karla identifies with the case of “The Day the Lobster Died,” detailing the predicament of an experienced fifth grade teacher who finds his own New England cultural background colliding with southern perspectives. In spite of her belief that Stan had positive motives in introducing behaviors and customs from a different sociocultural group, Karla emphasizes how sociocultural differences stand between Stan and the learning of children in his class. Karla believes that because of Stan’s background, born, raised, and educated in Boston, there is an inherent tension
between his beliefs and the perspective of children who were raised in a rural southern community.

While New England children might have been delighted with the prospects of a lobster feast, Stan’s southern children were horrified (Post case discussion responses).

Karla points out that Stan fails to consider that even the same experiences regarding diversity can be interpreted quite differently by different groups of people. In her responses to the case reaction questions, Karla suggests that Stan does not understand that the assumptions or perspectives of one culture on knowledge construction may differ dramatically from that of other cultures.

Stan valued diversity and had experienced diversity but did not connect diversity experiences with what was or was not acceptable in different societies. There is so much more to introducing children to diversity than just the experiences. Stan didn’t seem to understand that there are sensitivity issues that are unique to various cultures. Stan assumed that what was a delightful experience in one culture would be equally enjoyed in another culture. It would appear that while he accepted diversity and believed his children should be introduced to diversity, he didn’t really understand too much about diverse groups of people (Responses to case reaction questions).

Emphasizing that teachers need to take into account children’s cultural backgrounds when developing lessons, in her responses to the case reaction questions, Karla shows her understanding as a classroom teacher.
I definitely think children should be exposed to all types of diversity but I have lived in enough places to realize that what one culture thinks is great may be ‘all washed up’ in another culture. As shocking as it may be, other cultures do not embrace sweet tea like Georgians do! I think that while children can be introduced to diverse cultures and I do need to make this a part of the educational experience I bring to my children, I cannot force it on them (Responses to case reaction questions).

“Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”

**Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives**

Relating subject matter to community issues: The importance of considering children’s community culture. In her personal reaction, Karla describes Perla’s lesson positively in terms of her effort to prepare the lesson, despite a lack of materials. Karla feels that Perla is a creative and diligent teacher who works hard to present meaningful lessons to her children with very few materials and resources.

She has planned a science lesson on soil erosion and deforestation. Lacking books, transparencies, videos, computer demonstrations, and other teaching tools we take for granted, she put effort into sketching pictures showing the seashore before and after the tree harvesting (Personal reactions to the case).

Karla also acknowledges the achievement of children in Perla’s class in terms of the science lesson.

Perla guided her children in discussion as they observed both pictures. The children’s responses demonstrated excellent insight into the causes and effects of the removal of the trees (Personal reactions to the case).
From Karla’s perspective, Perla’s science lesson about soil erosion is especially effective because the topic has a close relationship to the community. Karla notes that, because of poverty in the children’s community, those who have remained have turned to harvesting *ipil-ipil* trees for charcoal and fuel. The resulting erosion along their shoreline is now a significant environmental concern for the community. In her personal reaction, Karla considers the perspective of Perla, describing her intentions for the lesson.

She was helping them develop an awareness of the ecological concerns of their community which would hopefully lead to positive changes in deforestation and soil erosion problems. Perla used her science lesson to address the needs of her people and her community (Personal reactions to the case).

“How difficult it is to relate to Perla’s dilemma! We are so guilty of taking our blessed lives for granted.” Being struck with Perla’s determination to connect her science lesson with the needs of her children and community, Karla expresses her learning about teaching with diversity. In her personal reaction, Karla feels the need to reflect on the community issues of the children in her class rather than simply following a curriculum determined by some “gigantic” publishing company.

As I read I kept thinking that I should be studying droughts and water conservation with my students living in Atlanta in 2002 in the midst of the worst water shortage in the city’s history. The comparison was so paradoxical to me. These Philippine children’s ability to eat depended on these trees being harvested --- erosion or not. Here in Atlanta, car washes and landscape businesses dependent on water are exempt from many of the water use restriction (Personal reactions to the case).
The importance of reconciling teachers’ lessons with the beliefs of children and their parents. Karla describes Perla’s dilemma, trying to make sense of her struggle with a child in the class. In her personal reaction, Karla considers the perspective of Antonio, the child featured in the case, describing his feelings of confusion.

One of the children, Antonio, discussed this with his father as he burned the trees he had cut to make charcoal. Antonio’s father tells him this is necessary to have money to buy food. Antonio is upset and wants to know who is telling him the truth—his father or his teacher (Personal reactions to the case).

Reading this case, Karla is impacted by the uphill battle Perla faces in trying to reconcile the poverty of her villagers with the need to protect their land against growing erosion. In her responses to case reaction questions, Karla again takes the perspective of Perla, reflecting on her effort to teach controversial issues related to community life.

It would be so easy to see her situation as hopeless but instead she seemed to see the hopeful possibilities in educating the children of the village about the need for redirecting the natural resources of their community (Responses to case reaction questions).

At this point, however, Karla feels that Perla does not have a specific vision of how the situation can be remedied, even though she sees the dire need to protect the shoreline against erosion. In her responses to the case reaction questions, Karla takes the perspective of children’s parents, seeing their anticipated conflicts with Perla’s lesson.

Perla presented the facts as she knew them to the children. Since she offered no solutions that would halt the erosion and still offer the villagers ways to earn
money to feed their children, conflict from the parents was to be expected (Responses to case reaction questions).

Along this same line, Karla elaborates on her beliefs regarding disagreements and conflicts between classroom teachers and children or their parents. In her personal reaction and responses to the case reaction questions, Karla provides an example to illustrate this point.

Instead of introducing this type of diversity into science lessons, I could benefit from following Perla’s example of addressing the scientific concerns of my own community. I wonder how the parents of my students might react if I clearly and unapologetically taught concerns about water shortage and pollution from vehicle emissions. I might experience some of the tension Perla experienced as my students tried to reconcile what I taught with what their parents practiced (Personal reactions to the case).

Flexibility of Problem-Solving

*Raising awareness about community issues through discussions between a teacher and children.* Because Karla does not believe that Perla can reeducate the parents in terms of other means of earning a livelihood, she focuses on the need for environmental awareness of the current situation regarding the deforestation and soil erosion in the community. “I think she can plant in her children’s minds an awareness of the interaction between harvesting and erosion. She can help her children dream about the future of their village.” In her personal reaction, Karla proposes discussions related to this issue with children as a concrete way of increasing children’s awareness about the matter.
She can share with them examples of coastline communities who have experience with reclamation by planting mangrove trees along their shores to repair erosion and attract fish (Personal reactions to the case).

*Children’s writing letters to government officials to improve the community’s problems.* Seeing children as members of the community and the society, Karla suggests that the children in Perla’s class take actions regarding the problems of their community. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Karla feels that the children and their community can find other ways to improve the problematic situations in their community rather than to halt the work that causes deforestation that children’s parents need to survive. Karla believes that in Perla’s community, the hunger of children will always take precedence over environmental concerns.

She can use written communication lessons to teach her children to be actively concerned members of society by writing letters to government officials and global environmental agencies, alerting them to the problem of erosion, poor soil quality, and interference from the corporate fishing industry in their village and requesting assistance. Hope for this village and its natural resources may be found in Perla’s present children --- tomorrow’s adults (Case discussion).

*Connectedness of Theoretical Principles*

*Knowledge construction: The importance of reflecting on lessons which involve diverse sources of knowledge.* Seeing Perla as a teacher who is trying to help children understand the need for preserving the *ipil-ipil* trees and Antonio as a student who cannot balance what his teacher and his father have told him, Karla points out that Perla does not relate her science lesson to diversity issues, even though she is interested in and focuses
on the community’s problems and needs. In her responses to case reaction questions and post case discussion reactions, Karla indicates that Perla fails to consider different sources of knowledge among diverse groups of people and the resulting tensions.

She values the environment and recognizes the growing need for present and future generations to protect it. I really don’t see how diversity issues impacted Perla’s lesson. She simply saw an environmental concern for the people of her community and taught the children about it. The needs and concerns of Perla and the children may demonstrate diversity awareness for us, but Perla was not dealing with a diversity issue. These were her people and the problem she addressed impacted her as well as her villagers (Responses to case reaction questions).

Karla feels frustrated with the discussion with her university colleagues, indicating that the dialogue centered around how Perla’s community could stop the erosion, and was analytical from a scientific point of view of the need to replant and stop cutting trees. In her post case discussion reactions, Karla focuses on her belief that the deforestation practices cannot be criticized based on simple facts of science. Karla refers to the importance of considering the situation and positionality of people with different realities.

I was very frustrated with the discussion because I felt like this was almost impossible until these people’s poverty was addressed. I kept thinking about how impossible it would be to see beyond your children’s hunger if you lived in this situation (Post case discussion responses).
“Once again, how do we begin to relate to Perla’s struggle?” In her personal reaction, Karla suggests that Perla must present the total picture when she responds to Antonio and other children. For Karla, children need to understand the positions of both science and their community. She thinks that scientific knowledge about environmental concern cannot overbalance the community’s primary question, “How do I feed my family?”

Yes, harvesting leads to erosion but it also leads to the ability to purchase food. Reality and what would be best are diametrically opposed in this little village (Personal reactions to the case).

*Empowering school culture and social structure: The importance of an activist approach.* Karla discusses issues related to the dimension of ‘Empowering school culture and social structure,’ extending her ideas to social services for less privileged cultural groups of people. She wants the children in her class to understand the issues and what they can do to help other “less fortunate” cultures. “Can we take our money that we would spend on lunch on Fridays on ice cream and could we use that money to buy trees or to replant trees?” In her case discussion and post case discussion reactions, she thinks that her school culture should be empowered to participate in larger societies and cultures, rather than limited to simple academic study. She believes that the perspective of teachers, students, parents, staffs, and administrators in schools and university teacher education needs to shift to include an activist approach instead of just focusing on academic attainment.

This case needs to be a wake-up call for science teachers who find themselves teaching in nations rich with funds and resources. We need to look for
opportunities to involve our children in projects that can enrich the lives of the less fortunate. What could it really cost us to buy vitamins for children in Honduras who do not have access to medical care in conjunction with our ‘units’ on the human body? What would our children learn if we raised money to buy trees for an impoverished Philippine village when we study ecosystems? (Case discussion)

“El Secreto de las Ninãs”

*Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives*

*The importance of realizing the hidden meanings of children’s reactions.* “The girls’ teacher told them that they were going to make cameras and must bring a shoebox to school or fifty cents to purchase a box.” In her personal reaction, Karla adds, “She even told the girls where they could get free boxes when they told her they did not have shoeboxes.” At this point, Karla shares her belief that the classroom teacher fails to consider Jessica and Cynthia’s personal background at all.

Since the girls’ families had no access to transportation to go get boxes and they could not afford fifty cents to purchase one, the girls did not have the boxes on the day of these activities (Personal reactions to the case).

Recalling the homeless girls’ living situations, Karla empathizes with their embarrassed feelings about the class project. In her personal reaction and post case discussion reactions, Karla considers the perspective of the girls, attempting to find hidden meanings in their negative attitudes about science experiences.

The girls told Angie that they ‘were not used to science.’ I think they were trying to explain to her that they were uncomfortable and embarrassed about their school
science activities because they had no way to meet the demands of participating in these activities. Not only did these girls lack the materials themselves, they had no adults in their lives that could assist then because of transportation, economic, and linguistic limitations (Personal reactions to the case).

*The importance of considering children’s problems in relation to their personal background.* Taking the perspective of the two homeless girls, in her personal reaction and post case discussion reactions, Karla remembers the scene where the classroom teacher suggests that the girls clean the chalkboard at recess to ‘earn’ their shoebox. Karla feels that the girls are humiliated by the teacher’s attempt to reinforce work ethics. It is so unfortunate that these two girls were disengaged from the project. It was needless for them to feel demeaned by requiring them to clean the chalkboards to ‘earn’ a shoebox that their teacher could have supplied them with very little trouble and no expense (Personal reactions to the case).

In her personal reaction, Karla continuously alludes to evidence that the girls’ loss of interest was due to their angry feelings.

The girls were angry about this. Instead of cleaning the boards, they went to recess and when the activity began, they were given damaged boxes the other children didn’t want. They had lost interest in the project and did not participate (Personal reactions to the case).

“No one size fits all”: *The importance of flexible teaching approaches which consider children’s specific situations.* Karla stresses that educators cannot have a ‘one size fits all’ mindset. In her responses to the case reaction questions, she expresses the
belief that expectations for each child must match with the realities of his/her own specific situation.

I must look at my children as individuals and search out their specific strengths, weaknesses, needs, and gifts. I must match my expectations for each child with the realities of his/her situation. I must never penalize a child for something that is out of his/her control. I must find ways to open doors for each of my children and not limit them because of their lack of money or parental support and encouragement (Responses to case reaction questions).

In her responses to the case reaction questions, the case discussion, and her post case discussion reactions, Karla expresses feelings of frustration, because she thinks that the responsibility for the shoeboxes belongs to the teacher. Karla feels that the classroom teacher penalizes the girls by asking for something that is out of their control, especially since she could easily gather the shoeboxes for the class activity. “I felt like we did a good job differentiating between responsibility issues for children and things that they could not and should not be held responsible for due to their lack of control.” Karla considers the perspective of the girls and thinks about their situations and feelings. This was not a matter of the girls being responsible but a matter of the teacher not really knowing her children and their circumstances. The teacher had planned an engaging activity but had not considered the difficulty of her request for some of her children. What a sad situation for these two girls and for their teacher who should have been doing everything within her power to open doors of opportunity for these girls (Post case discussion responses).
Karla feels that her experience with the case of “El Secreto de las Niñas” helped her reflect more deeply on each child’s individual situations.

While it might be reasonable that she expect some of her children to be able to bring in shoeboxes, it was not reasonable to expect that of Cynthia and Jessica. It is not reasonable for me to expect my student from a broken home, living with a mom who is trying to cope with the devastation of a recent divorce, to have all homework and notes in on time. It is not reasonable for me to expect my student who is coping with the recent cancer death of a younger sibling to always stay totally focused on her schoolwork. We must look at each of our children as individuals with individual emotional, learning, financial, or physical concerns (Personal reactions to the case).

Karla again emphasizes the importance of taking into account children’s individual backgrounds rather than simply following predefined rules in a classroom. “She doesn’t seem to have an awareness of how bleak life is for those people living in poverty. I don’t get the feeling that she has really tried to get to know her students.” In her responses to the case reaction questions, Karla considers the perspective of the classroom teacher in the case, discussing her strict attitudes toward all children in her class.

I think she was thinking about her project and just did not take into consideration what a simple request of a shoebox might mean for some of her children. I think she was living with a belief that I held in the past that a ‘rule is a rule is a rule’! She was going to be ‘fair’ and expect all of her children to follow the same guidelines and expectations. I don’t think she was being intentionally hurtful; she just didn’t think about how difficult this could possibly be for some of her
children. Anyone working with people, and especially children, will be more effective if they are interested first in the person and second in the activity (Responses to case reaction questions).

**Flexibility of Problem-Solving**

*Teacher’s preparing the supplies for class activities.* Karla believes that while the classroom teacher may not have known that Cynthia and Jessica lived at a homeless shelter, she must have surely known that she was working with underprivileged children. Accordingly, Karla feels that the classroom teacher should prepare extra materials for any unprivileged children in the classroom. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Karla suggests the need to collect additional shoeboxes in anticipation of student needs.

Why did she not go to the store or to friends and family members and ask for shoeboxes? Why was she charging these children fifty cents for a shoebox that could be acquired at no expense by someone who had transportation? I have always felt that it was my responsibility to acquire the supplies for any science activities I plan for children (Case discussion).

In her personal reaction, Karla indicates that if she is not able to gather science materials for each child, she will develop a group project or make some kind of accommodations so that supplies will be available for all students.

*Facilitating motivation for learning by increasing social interactions with peers and teacher.* Karla reflects on various ways to facilitate the girls’ motivation to engage in the science project. In her personal reaction, Karla suggests the need to increase the interactions with peers and teacher.
She could have asked some other girls in the class to invite them to ‘buddy up’ and work on the project together. She could have sat down and worked with them. Making a camera should have been such an exciting experience for these two girls and instead it became a reminder of their poverty (Personal reactions to the case).

As mentioned before, Karla stresses the need to be sensitive to individual children’s feelings in a class. In her personal reaction, Karla recommends that the classroom teacher talk to the girls about their feelings about the science project and the idea of doing chores to earn a shoebox.

It might have helped if the teacher had asked them why they weren’t participating and then apologized (Personal reactions to the case).

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Equity pedagogy: The importance of offering appropriate learning opportunities that take into account each child’s situation – “What is fair for a child is what that child needs.” Karla feels that the classroom teacher does not take an “equity pedagogy” approach with her children. Karla thinks that the teacher fails to consider children’s individual situations and culture – important considerations in fostering a positive environment and learning attitude. In her personal reaction, Karla indicates that the classroom teacher fails to look at the homeless girls’ needs from a cultural standpoint.

We are required as educators to look at children as individuals and not as a group. This teacher seemed to only consider her project and did not take into consideration the needs of her particular children, even though she knew many of her children were living at the poverty level (Personal reactions to the case).
In her personal reaction, Karla points out that simply giving all the children the same materials or opportunities does not address the meaning of ‘equal education.’ She emphasizes the need for teachers to modify their teaching approaches based on the varied range of children’s sociocultural characteristics in order to improve children’s chances for success and achievement in learning.

The learning of our children must be appropriate for our children in each subject we teach and no student should be penalized and deprived of an educational experience because of a lack of connection on the part of an educator. Children living in poverty need every opportunity we can give them to learn and achieve and break free from the limitations that their circumstances have placed on them.

It is senseless to allow something as simple as providing a shoebox diminish a child’s eagerness to grow and learn (Personal reactions to the case).

In this context, in her post case discussion reactions, Karla hopes that the two homeless girls have a teacher in the future who looks at the hand life has dealt them and shows them the possibilities open to them through education instead of the “hurdles” they must overcome. Affirming her beliefs and commitment to being sensitive to each child’s unique problems and situations, Karla provides an example with a child in her own class.

One of my very fine students had just started to become very sporadic about turning in notes that needed to be signed, homework, et cetera. Instead of having her ‘sign her card’ where the children record behavior and work concerns, I sat down with her and asked her if anything was happening at home that made it difficult for her to get her homework done. I knew that she had a new little brother, Bryan, a two-year old boy her family had just adopted from Guatemala. I
also knew that she had an older sister with severe learning difficulties. She told me that they had just discovered that Bryan was totally deaf and her parents had been taking him to many doctors to see if anything could be done to help him hear. I immediately knew why things weren't being returned and the last thing this family needed was more pressure. There were many ways I could give Nikki some help without the other children realizing she was getting extra time to get assignments completed and turned in (Post case discussion responses).

“What is fair for a child is what that child needs.” In her personal reaction, Karla expresses that one rule or one set of circumstances cannot apply to all children in any class.

“When Do You Perform Tuob?: Culture at the Margins of the Science Classroom”

Flexibility of Identifying Multiple Issues and Taking Multiple Perspectives

“Learning by doing”: The importance of realizing cultural appropriateness of class activities. “We learn more by doing and experiencing than by simply hearing. The tangible and visual images stimulate our memories and understanding.” In her personal reaction, Karla notes that an experiment, such as the one Esperanza used to show her children the effects of *tuob*, is always more beneficial to learning than lectures.

In her personal reaction, case discussion, and post case discussion reactions, however, Karla raises the issue about different cultures’ perspectives of lesson “appropriateness.” Karla considers the perspective of the children in Esperanza’s class, discussing their reactions to the experiment.

I do not think it is ever appropriate in our culture to harm or kill live animals in an elementary science classroom exploration. I cannot speak to the appropriateness
for Esperanza’s native culture. Her children did not seem overly upset or traumatized by the demonstration and death of the fish. We were only told that one child had a ‘serious and sorrowful expression’ (Personal reactions to the case).

_The importance of not offending children’s religious or family beliefs through teaching and learning experiences in a classroom._ “It looks like something off the Simpsons comic show... the fish was moving slowly downward…” In her case discussion, Karla feels that the fish experiment in Esperanza’s class conveys the message that the children’s and their community’s religious beliefs are wrong. In addition, Karla feels that looking at the fish dying from smoke, children may think that their parents are hurting them when they practice _tuob_. For Karla, the fish experiment can offend children’s family beliefs and background.

If it’s connected with their religion, then it really isn’t appropriate. If that’s part of their religious practices, that’s not really her place to necessarily convince them. She’s teaching these kids that their parents are trying to hurt them and their religion is wrong (Case discussion).

_The importance of thorough planning and reflection on lessons._ In her personal reaction and case discussion, Karla criticizes Esperanza’s spontaneous fish experiment. Karla states that Esperanza’s experiment using a cigarette and a live fish to demonstrate to her students the dangers of smoke inhalation is one conducted without thorough planning and reflection in terms of its effectiveness and children’s involvement. Karla believes that children’s age and culture, and the appropriateness of class activities should be considered in planning lessons.
“I suddenly seized on the idea of performing an experiment.” Experiments and explorations for young children need to be carefully thought out and planned and evaluated for their effectiveness and appropriateness for the children involved. We have seen the negative results of this in several of our other cases when age, appropriateness, and culture of the children involved was not considered (Personal reactions to the case).

The importance of respecting children’s opinions and thoughts. Karla recalls the attitudes of Esperanza when she tries to ignore one of her students’ comments. In her personal reaction, Karla considers the perspective of Esperanza and her thoughts about how to react to children’s questions. “After several more children commented on the ritual she was stunned and unsure whether to respond to the children or ignore them.” Karla thinks that teachers should never ‘ignore’ a child’s observation in response to a question posed by the teacher. In her personal reaction, Karla emphasizes the need to respect and acknowledge all children’s contribution and thoughts. She describes her own perspective, as a classroom teacher.

The teacher may need to respond to a child privately but if a child shares an understanding or insight, his or her response needs to be recognized and considered. It would be better to thank a child for his or her response and tell that child that you want to think about their answer for a little while and then talk with them about it. No child or adult wants to be ignored. There would be uncertainty about responding in the classroom if responses were routinely ignored. There would be ‘fireworks’ in a marriage if comments were routinely ignored. There
would be a price to say if I routinely ignored the comments of my administrator.

Children deserve the same respect and validation (Personal reactions to the case). In her personal reaction, Karla continues to show the perspective of herself as a classroom teacher who may meet situations which are similar to the dilemma of the case “When Do You Perform *Tuob*?”

If faced with a child’s comments that I was uncomfortable addressing before my entire class, I hope I could think quickly enough to say, “I know there are people who agree with you and I would like to talk to you about this later this afternoon during center time. Thank you for sharing this with me” (Personal reactions to the case)

*The importance of reconciling teacher’s personal beliefs with educational beliefs.*

In her responses to the case reaction questions, case discussion, and post case discussion reactions, Karla attempts to understand Esperanza’s actions in terms of “ignoring” children’s reactions to the posed questions. Karla finds the reasons for Esperanza’s attitude by digging deeply into her own beliefs and personal background.

She ignored the comments that she did not know how to address and then jumped on the first idea that came to her about showing her students what she herself had learned at university. She was well intentioned but her own personal conflicts between knowledge and experience made her less effective in addressing these issues with her students (Responses to case reaction questions).

From Karla’s perspective, Esperanza experiences confusion and conflict as she tries to resolve the differences between modern health knowledge she learned at the university and the traditional native practice of *tuob*, a healing treatment that involved burning
leaves and charcoal. Karla thinks that the discord between traditional and modern knowledge that Esperanza wrestles with creates a puzzle for children in the class. In the case discussion and her post case discussion reactions, she mentions the following:

As she taught her children a lesson on allergic reactions, the children talked about relief brought about by *tuob*. Esperanza demonstrated the dangers of smoke inhalation by killing a fish with cigarette smoke, even though *tuob* was a ritual practiced in her own home on her own child. The children and teacher ended the lesson bewildered about their traditions and their new knowledge (Post case discussion responses).

In her personal reaction, Karla expresses a strong belief that Esperanza must reconcile her beliefs about ritual based on cultural experiences and practices with her scientific knowledge. Without her own agreement between the different sources of knowledge, Karla believes that the confusion and conflict about the native ritual of *tuob* for children and herself will continue. In the following quote, Karla considers the perspective of Esperanza.

It seems somewhat hypocritical to teach her children so adamantly when she is allowing her own child to be exposed to this obvious health risk. I have a hard time understanding how she is protecting her own child. These children are being told to take a stand against things their own parents believe and practice when she, as an adult, is not taking a stand. I think she must reconcile her native cultural practices with her scientific knowledge before she can really impact her students and hopefully their families (Personal reactions to the case).
Flexibility of Problem-Solving

Teaching scientific knowledge without harming animals. Indicating the inappropriateness of the fish experiment in Esperanza’s class, Karla suggests another way to show the children the dangers of smoke inhalation. In her personal reaction and case discussion, Karla describes an activity involving a discoloring cotton experiment. Karla thinks that the cotton experiment can provide children with the same instruction without harming animals.

There are many experiments I have seen students set up at science fairs involving cigarette smoke discoloring cotton in 2 liter bottle ‘lungs’ and other such demonstrations that could be done without involving a live animal (Personal reactions to the case).

Exposing children to diverse sources of knowledge. In her personal reaction, Karla recommends offering children opportunities to discuss health issues with health care professionals. “Esperanza could invite a health professional from her university to come, talk with her students, bring appropriate materials, and give a demonstration.” Karla’s suggestion seems to imply that being exposed to scientific knowledge about health issues can provide children chances to newly construct their beliefs about these issues by changing or modifying their preexisting ritualistic beliefs.

Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

Knowledge construction: The importance of cultural backgrounds in constructing diverse knowledge and perspectives. Karla feels that Esperanza simply introduces
specific information about health issues without considering children’s cultural backgrounds or previous knowledge. “She just sort of jumped into it, without really deciding this is what needs to be taught, this is how it needs to be taught.”

In some ways, she was trying so hard to teach all of her students the scientific factual knowledge that she gained, but it was in such direct conflict with the cultural practices (Exit interview).

“She was so confused herself.” Karla believes that Esperanza shows conflicts between several different foundations of knowledge regarding health care and medicine. Karla finds that Esperanza wants to believe in the scientific knowledge she learned at university while still holding onto her native customs. Karla feels that even though Esperanza has a new awareness of ‘what constitutes good health care’; she could not turn her back on what she had experienced in her native culture. In her responses to the case reaction questions, Karla mentions:

She knew about the dangers of smoke inhalation from performing tuob and she wanted her children to understand the risks and yet she was allowing her mother to perform the ritual on her own baby in her own home. Esperanza reacted as she did because she was so conflicted about her health care knowledge and her experience with the ritualistic practice of tuob. She knew educationally what was truth and she knew that she wanted her students to understand the facts about smoke inhalation but because of her own conflicts, she did not know how best to handle their questions and concerns (Responses to case reaction questions).

Karla empathizes with Esperanza’s difficulties in balancing scientific knowledge with the old ritualistic practices. Considering that people’s knowledge and perspectives
are constructed on the basis of their sociocultural background, in her responses to the case reaction questions, Karla feels that it is not easy to criticize Esperanza’s confusion about her personal beliefs and scientific knowledge. Especially in her post case discussion reactions, Karla expresses her understanding that Esperanza’s conflicts between two different beliefs sets are not “extraordinary or unique” to most people, even in other cultures, because she thinks most religions believe in some type of spiritual beings. In her responses to the case reaction question, Karla states the following:

It is so easy for us to sit in judgment and shake our heads at their ‘backwardness’ but we have had little or no experience countering firmly ingrained ritualistic practices. It must be especially difficult for educators in these countries to help themselves and their people move forward (Responses to case reaction questions).

Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy

*Case-Based Pedagogy as a Tool for Multicultural Education*

*Constructing Knowledge with Sensitivity to Different Cultures*

*Cases as tools to experience diverse cultures*. Experiencing case-based pedagogy, Karla indicates that she has many opportunities to think about different cultures that she might not be exposed to on an ordinary basis. “I really enjoyed having to think and I do feel like I learned a lot about different cultures.”

I think it [case-based pedagogy] gave us a lot of things to think about that I would have never thought about because we live in such a wonderful environment and we’re just not exposed to a lot of the things that, for instance, the cases in the Philippines (Exit interview).
Being challenged by cases to create a more diverse and rich curriculum. Karla feels that through the multiple contextual lenses of cases she becomes better prepared for teaching children from diverse cultural groups. In her post case discussion reactions, Karla indicates that she has been challenged to look for opportunities to introduce cultural diversity into each and every subject she teaches. “I try to look beyond the academic objectives and seek opportunities to enrich children’s experiences by opening up possibilities that they may not be exposed to by anyone or any situation other than those I bring to them in my classroom.” She confesses that she is better able to connect her lessons to diversity having developed a heightened awareness and knowledge of multicultural issues through cases.

As I worked on my lesson plans this week, I was reminded of the numerous opportunities I have to make this a natural part of my planning and instructing each week. One example was evident when I planned my Social Studies lessons for this week. Shiza and V. P. can show us the continents of their parents’ birth countries as we identify the seven continents. Nikki can show us Guatemala where her new adopted brother will be coming from. As we use the equator to divide the Northern and Southern hemispheres, each of these children can talk about the weather of these countries located near the equator (Exit interview).

In-depth Reflections on Diversity and Knowing Personal Beliefs

Cases as tools to reflect on culturally diverse situations by observing others’ teaching and learning. “I remember laughing at the humor of this case since I was the one reading about it and not experiencing it.” Karla indicates that she keeps trying to put herself in the case teacher’s position. She thinks that the teachers in cases should not be
simply criticized without a full consideration of their specific cultural situations. Citing the case of “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”, Karla recalls the classroom teacher’s difficulties and frustration teaching about a controversial science topic that cut across the core of community values.

I just would keep thinking about trying to put myself in that teacher’s position.

You can’t change the way their parents feel or believe because this is their work, this is their job, this is how they feed their families (Exit interview).

Discussing the same point, Karla uses another example from the case of “When Do You Perform Tuob?”. Karla states that cases are good tools as they facilitate learning from other teachers’ practice.

I would try to put myself in her place and the frustration that she must have in what she knew scientifically but yet what she was having to deal with culturally. Just put myself into her shoes and try to think about it from her perspective.

Which once again, is a very good learning tool to get out of ourselves and to think about what other people are dealing with (Exit interview).

*Cases as tools for learning to teach focusing on children’s cultural differences.*

Karla describes how she becomes even more sensitive to the children in her own class by observing and critiquing the case teachers’ actions. By analyzing the case of “El Secreto de Las Ninãs,” for example, Karla learns that teachers should not ignore the cultural backgrounds of students.

The teacher wouldn’t give the little girls the shoebox to make the camera. I got very impatient and frustrated thinking that there are teachers who are not more open and understanding to the differences of the children in their classrooms. That
really disturbed me that there are teachers that aren’t looking at the population of children. I understand why this could be a struggle for this child (Exit interview).

Karla emphasizes that she recognizes more strongly the need for classroom teachers to consider cultural differences that may be impacting student learning. “I assumed people teaching in classrooms cared enough about their students to recognize the cultural differences and the way they might impact their students.”

*Cases as tools for teachers to realize connections between theory and practice.*

Karla expresses the belief that case-based pedagogy stretches her thinking and helps her learn more about diversity issues than textbooks.

I think cases make you get out of your comfort zone and really think and apply much more than just a textbook where you’re just learning pure factual material (Exit interview).

Through cases, Karla analyzes the dilemmas and considers how the case situations can be transferred to her own teaching and learning context. Karla feels that cases are highly interesting and provide new perspectives through which she can analyze her own teaching knowledge and practice. As Black and Halliwell (2000) contend, Karla feels that she comes to understand her teaching better through the realities portrayed in cases rather than merely trying to apply textbook knowledge to her teaching and learning.

I just thought it was very very interesting. My personality is the type that I would rather have probably the textbook where you learn the facts. So it was very good for me to read these and to have to think and be challenged by these things (Exit interview).
Suggestions for Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy Regarding Diversity

Desire to experience more cases by skimming them. “I wish we had read more of the cases.” Karla points out that she wants to have opportunities to discuss with class members many more of the cases not assigned for class readings.

Because there were cases, as I skimmed through and a title caught my eye, I would read it and think. Oh, I wish we could have discussed this case. I wish, instead of a particular case being assigned, we were told to read four or five cases.

It didn’t take long to read them (Exit interview).

Karla’s desire to skim through multiple cases rather than spending time to carefully read and discuss a few cases contrasts with the view of Lundeberg and Scheurman (1997) who argue the importance of more in-depth reflection with a small number of cases rather than superficially reading many cases.

Sources of Learning through Case-Based Pedagogy

Discussing cases as a source of mentoring. Karla states that a case is a good springboard to help teachers think about situations of teaching and learning that they might not normally come in contact with but might experience one day. Talking about the case dilemmas that she read with her colleague teachers at recess time, she notes that cases are an interesting and provocative way to encourage informal learning about culturally diverse teaching practices.

I know that a lot of the cases we talked about I came back and told at lunch. We would be talking and I would tell the teachers that I teach with, on the third grade team, about one of the cases that we read and you know what do you think about this. I think it’s a good way to learn (Exit interview).
Cases as tools which motivate teachers to engage in personal research. Karla mentions that she extends her learning about diverse cultures through her own reflection and research using the internet or books. Feeling challenged to understand the cases with different cultural contexts, such as ones from the Philippines, Karla tries to be informed by internet about how to relate to and deal with the case issues.

I think the cases in the Philippines, it was hard for me to relate to them. I had to really think about ways that I could relate because I just live in such a blessed place compared with what they’re having to deal with. I think just by thinking about it and then I’ll have to do a lot of my own research whether it be on the internet or books (Exit interview).

Perceived Meaningfulness about Diversity from Case-Based Pedagogy

Creating Awareness of Diversity

Seeing diversity as more complex than race and ethnicity. Karla emphasizes that case-based pedagogy has made her more aware of diversity. She feels that she is developing a broader picture of multicultural issues that goes beyond simple racial or ethnic classifications.

I think it made me think, too, that the multicultural, it’s a much broader picture. It’s any culture that’s different from my culture, whether it’s the people that live in California, along the Atlantic ocean, whether, it doesn’t just have to be another country. If you asked me how many African–American children you have, I would really have to stop and think about it (Exit interview).

Through the selected case readings, Karla finds herself deconstructing her belief that culture is only something equated with exotic differences among various countries.
I have always equated cultural diversity in terms of meshing customs, habits, thoughts, values, foods, et cetera., of people of different cultures, substituting the word ‘countries’ for ‘cultures’ (Exit interview)

Karla now feels that there can be great cultural differences even in one country. Realizing that there can exist huge cultural diversity between people of the same nationality, she notes an example from the case of “The Day the Lobster Died,” and discusses how this case impacts her own teaching practice with respect to diversity.

It can be any part of this country even whose culture is different from ours. Different foods that are eaten, different ways of life, even different ways that people may dress or work because of weather conditions where they live. I know the teacher who had moved to the south from Maine and cooked the lobster, well, that’s not another country. He just moved from one part of this country to another part of this country but yet there were cultural issues that really impacted his teaching. We have even here children that are coming from all parts of the country that move into Atlanta and they’re coming to school here and it’s made me think about how different things may be culture wise from where they moved, just in the same country (Exit interview).

Finding that she has not thought previously much about how the different cultures in one country can impact children, Karla mentions, “Helping my children understand cultural differences throughout our own nation can be vitally important.”

Seeing multicultural education as intricately connected to individual life experiences of children. Describing her broadening vision about diverse cultures, Karla emphasizes the need to learn more about the individual lifeworlds of children. She sees a
connection between each child’s strengths, weaknesses, personalities, and problems to cultural experiences and family backgrounds. She reflects on some of the children that she has encountered in her teaching.

It’s made me think I need to be more aware of their cultural differences and think about the fact that may be why they’re having a hard time reading. That may be why this is a struggle for that child. That may be why I never get notes back from that mother, you know she may not have the English skills to deal with it. It made me realize I may need to be more open to looking at what are the reasons, what are the cultural reasons that this could be a problem or a roadblock (Exit interview).

Now she focuses more on looking at every child individually, rather than seeing them as a “whole” class.

We’ve got to look at each child and see what about their culture is impacting their performance or their behavior or any aspects of my classroom. That we’ve just got to be even more open to really getting to know the differences in each of our students (Exit interview).

Karla illustrates this with an example of a child with reading difficulties in her class. She describes her attempts to view the child’s reading difficulties in light of the wider context of her family situation. Karla tries to keep journals and more closely observe the children in her class to find out how their struggles can be understood in juxtaposition with their cultural backgrounds.

I think about one of the little girls in my class that as the year has progressed she’s had more and more difficulty with her reading and she’s been at our school for
several years. She, her family is from Pakistan, but her parents were raised in this country and but she, when I talk to her a lot, she says her parents both work full time, and she’s left with a grandparent a lot that grew up in Pakistan who does not have real strong reading skills, who is the one that she’s with at home that helps her some with her homework. It’s made me aware that even though she’s been at this school and her parents are English speaking, because of who her primary caretaker is in the afternoon, that’s probably impacting a lot some of the reading struggles that she’s having in my classroom. And just little subtle differences like that. It’s made me think of and look for what could be impacting a particular child (Exit interview).

*The Importance of Teaching Approach*

*The importance of connecting subjects with community issues.* “It made me think that we don’t do an adequate job dealing with scientific issues that are going on in our own community. We’re too focused in on a set of curriculum standards.” Karla feels that case-based pedagogy makes her realize the importance of connecting subjects to children’s community issues. She and her students try to look for ways that they can help people of other cultures and serve the community.

I think what I shared about being more aware of helping my children understand cultural differences and accepting those. Because especially being here at a Christian school, we have a lot of opportunities to do service projects. I think it’s just made me look for ways that we can maybe add some of these things as service projects to do, reach out to people of other cultures (Exit interview).
For example, recalling the case of “Where Have All the *Ipil-Ipil* Trees Gone?”, Karla expresses her belief that the teacher should take into account the construction of a culturally relevant curriculum which helps children become community activists. She feels it is vitally important to recognize cultural and community issues, rather than narrowly sticking to a prescribed curriculum or the scope of one’s own life experience.

I think that it made me want to address issues that really relate to the children in my class. The biggest thing for me is that it really made me think about ways that with my students I can introduce multicultural issues and then help my children to become more activist, whether it’s bringing in change to buy trees to replant an area that’s been deforested. We don’t address those issues like a lot of the teachers in Philippines were teaching their children about the science issues that they had to deal with and then the long term effects. I don’t feel like we do that. We could be activist in science in addressing issues of other cultures instead of just sticking in our own little world in our own little realm (Exit interview).

*The importance of providing increased opportunities for children to understand diversity through integration with subject lessons.* Throughout the case-based experiences of this study, Karla emphasizes that her teaching actions will change in the future. She feels a pressing need to relate her lessons more closely to people and their cultures. Karla describes an example of one of her science lessons on ecosystems as a chance to increase children’s understanding within and about diverse cultures.

I definitely think it will cause me to do this with the ecosystems next semester. I think it will cause me to look at, let’s say we’re reading, doing a novel study. To think about, are there cultural things being introduced in my lessons that my
children may not really understand or are there cultural things that can be a springboard for my children to learn about other cultures. We studied the animals but we never talk about the people, the cultures of those ecosystems. I know this spring when I teach those units, we won’t just talk about the ecosystems and those animals, we’ll also look at the cultures, the people that live in those different environments and we’ve never done that in the past. I think it will just make me think a lot more as I’m preparing lessons and studies about ways I can introduce them to things that they might not be introduced to otherwise (Exit interview).

Summary and Discussion

As an experienced teacher with fifteen years of experience and even more life experience, Karla chronicles her perceptions of diversity issues historically by analyzing her experience with school segregation and desegregation. Reflecting on the history of the education of African-Americans in the United States, Myers (1989) explains the ‘stages of school desegregation’ as follows:

1) *Prohibition* of the education of blacks before the Civil War. South Carolina adopted the first compulsory illiteracy law in 1740 making it a crime to teach slaves to write; other southern states followed; 2) *Development* of education for blacks after the Civil War with the establishment of the Freedmen’s Bureau, which helped to found schools for blacks throughout the South, and many historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs); 3) *Segregation* following the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision of 1896, which established the principle of separate but equal as constitutional and kept blacks in inferior schools for decades; 4) *Desegregation* following the 1954 *Brown* Supreme Court decision, which overturned the *Plessy* decision and the separate but equal
principle, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which provided the federal
government with the enforcement tool to effect school desegregation

(Raffel, 1998, p. xiii)

Having lived through the historical period of the transition of school segregation and
desegregation, Karla feels sad about what she perceives as teachers’ failure to develop
knowledge and positive attitudes about African-American children, their family,
community, and culture.

Totally unlike the situations of the Southern schools during her early teaching
years, Karla feels that the learning environment where she is currently teaching is highly
“blessed” with people who are both socioeconomically affluent and culturally tolerant.

Working at a Christian private school, Karla’s strategies for dealing with diversity issues
are based on religious principles. Being influenced by her school environment, Karla
believes that teachers should be aware of and sensitive to individual children’s
differences irrespective of their personal backgrounds. “If you’re aware of something,
you’re going to think twice about what you say or about what you do that could be
labeling, or hurtful to a child.” In order to be sensitive to each child’s personal
background, Karla places a lot of value on talking to the children in her class. Being close
to children in the class, teachers can create more culturally responsive and successful
learning environments for children in terms of cultural integrity and educational success
(Phuntsog, 1999; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

It’s making me be more aware to go over at lunch and just ask them “Was your
mom and dad born in the United States? Were they born in Pakistan and then they
moved here? Is your Christmas more like the American traditional Christmas or
Recalling the September 11th event, Karla recognizes that every teacher’s approaches to multicultural education are different, even in a school environment where all of them consider diversity as the primary important issue. Speaking to this point, Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997) stress the need to overcome a ‘curriculum inclusion’ approach to multicultural education. Curriculum inclusion, as a form of curriculum improvement, is meaningful in the respect that it includes issues of diverse ethnic and cultural groups of people such that they are not excluded and marginalized in school curriculum. However, ‘curriculum inclusion’ as an ‘add-on’ approach is more likely to be selective and fragmentary, focusing on exotic cultural customs or people, and isolated from broader daily-basis experiences with history, politics, economics, and institutions. According to Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997), the ‘curriculum change’ approach is considered best for multicultural education. ‘Curriculum change’ focuses more on transforming the curricular components including basic values, beliefs, and sociocultural assumptions. From this ‘curriculum change’ approach, teachers should examine their practice to consider whether their curriculum takes into account diversity by comprehending and valuing cultural pluralism and challenging or changing biases and prejudices toward other cultures.

Discussing teaching, Karla emphasizes that the appropriateness of activities depends on the cultural context. Her point implies that other teachers cannot be criticized
without first fully understanding one’s own culture and history as a learner. According to Karla, teaching actions can never be separated from the cultural context in which they take place.

I don’t think that you can have a lot of absolutes because I think that there are too many cultural differences that factor into it. The teacher that put the cigarette in the aquarium tank and the fish died, well, for us, we might want to say, well that’s just an absolute that you don’t experiment with animals and you don’t hurt an animal, but we don’t know all the differences in that culture. That’s a fishing village and what we might think about a fish as a pet – it’s a totally different viewpoint to them (Exit interview).

Karla’s thoughts about case-based pedagogy focus highly on case discussion. As Christensen and Hansen (1989) point out, Karla experiences the five cases of this study as she “explores a problem by sorting out relevant facts, developing logical conclusions, and presenting them to fellow students and the instructor” (p. 35). In addition to the case discussion in class, Karla has frequent opportunities to share her thoughts about the case dilemmas or more extended issues of teaching and learning with her colleague teachers where she works. She relates an example of discussing the case “The Day the Lobster Died” with her school colleagues.

The day after our class reviewed this case, I told my fellow teachers about the story and our discussion. Their reactions were very interesting. They reacted even more decisively that we did in our discussion. Without exception, they felt that the teacher should have been reprimanded. Several even felt that the teacher’s
behavior was so negligent his contract should not have been renewed (Post case discussion responses).

Considering her colleagues as teachers who are “very committed” to knowing their children, Karla’s beliefs about diversity are confirmed and strengthened through the private case discussion in her school as well as through the formal discussion in class. She shares, “The case and our discussion have reaffirmed my commitment to stop and consider situations that occur with my students.” My thoughts about this case were confirmed by our class discussion.” I had several new understandings as we discussed this case.” My ideas about cultural diversity were reinforced and my awareness of making this a regular part of my planning was heightened following our discussion about cases. The comments of my classmates regarding their own personal experiences and the experiences in their classrooms confirmed this.”

In addition, recalling the case of “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”, Karla suggests that teacher education programs should more specifically relate issues of diversity and multicultural education to the community that preservice teachers may face. She is impressed by the nature of teacher education programs in the Philippines.

I was very struck by their training, their college courses that trained them so specifically to deal with the science issues of their community. I don’t feel like we get that training. That very much surprised me and pleased me and I felt like in some ways, we could learn from them because their elementary training was very specific and ours is so very, very general. I felt like we could take some lessons from the way their teachers are prepared. I felt like what they did as teachers with their very limited resources, that we probably should be a little bit ashamed
sometimes of what we do with all the resources that we have. That very much surprised me. I was not expecting that degree of training for those teachers and that was very, very interesting and very much of a learning experience for me (Exit interview).
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter aims to compare and contrast the experiences of three preservice teachers – Kate, Lisa, and Shazia – and three experienced teachers – April, Tiffany, and Karla – regarding their practical knowledge about diversity and multicultural education through case-based pedagogy. In order to fully understand the dynamics of the three preservice and three experienced teachers’ experiences, epistemological beliefs, and their practice in teaching and learning focusing on diversity, the first section of this chapter focuses on the preservice and experienced teachers’ preexisting practical knowledge about diversity before the case-based experiences. The second section of this chapter, experiencing cases regarding diversity, in related in terms of the categories of Kennedy (1991), Lundeberg and Fawver (1994), and Banks (1995a); This section discusses the preservice and experienced teachers’ experiences with cases regarding diversity according to Kennedy’s (1991) categories of ‘flexibility’ and ‘connectedness’ with Lundeberg and Fawver’s (1994) additional category of ‘perspective-taking.’ As mentioned before, Kennedy’s category of connectedness is discussed in terms of Banks’ (1995a) dimensions of multicultural education – content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure. The third section of this chapter discusses the preservice and experienced teachers’ ‘perceived meaningfulness’ (Kennedy, 1991) about diversity through case-
based pedagogy. In addition, the third section focuses on the preservice and experienced teachers’ thoughts and suggestions about cases as teaching tools for diversity and multicultural education in teacher education programs.

*Research question 1. How does preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge regarding diversity compare?*

1-a. How does preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity compare?

**Preexisting Practical Knowledge about Teaching and Diversity Before Case-Based Pedagogy**

*General Thoughts about Teaching*

*The Important Things for Children’s Learning*

*The importance of considering individual children’s learning characteristics.* The preservice teachers’ practical knowledge about teaching and learning focuses on broad issues which emphasize the importance of considering individual uniqueness. On the basis of their personal life experiences, they point out the need for teachers to be aware of and sensitive to individual children’s learning needs, interests, development, emotions, personalities, and uniqueness. They feel that in-depth quality time with each child in a classroom is an important action of a caring teacher. In order to stimulate children’s motivation and ownership in learning, they believe that it is important to create a safe and respectful learning community for children. Recognizing that every child struggles with different issues, they stress how important it is for teachers to know children’s personal backgrounds and situations with respect to inclusion, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status.
The experienced teachers also take into account individual children’s differences. Their issues, however, are more practical, focusing on teaching strategies to promote individual children’s active learning and involvement. They emphasize the importance of various teaching methods on a day-to-day basis, for example, assessment of prior knowledge, hands on activities, reading, small group work, and one-on-one conferences. It is noticeable that both preservice and experienced teachers consider individualized learning to be a significant part of teaching for diversity. This may, in part, be due to the recent emphasis on differentiated instruction in various professional development contexts.

The experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity in teaching and learning is more concrete and directly related to teaching practice, whereas the preservice teachers produce more images of their future teaching based on educational philosophies and theories. This is not surprising, considering that the experienced teachers develop stark knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs about teaching and learning from their own practice. The preservice teachers more frequently link their practical knowledge about diversity in teaching and learning to their previous life experiences (Richardson, 1996) beyond the roles of ‘teachers.’ Because the preservice teachers are in transition from student to teacher, they frequently draw on other life experiences to make sense of diversity issues and construct images of their future classrooms. Both the preservice and experienced teachers’ ideas about children’s individualized learning are firmly grounded in their own personal experiences as well as formal education. This supports the notion that teaching is both a personal and social human activity (Kvernbekk, 2000; Tirri, Husu, & Kansanen, 1999) involving reflection about teaching (Fenstermacher, 1994) and
personal beliefs (Pajares, 1992). Teachers’ personal beliefs serve as a framework to understand, interpret, and construct knowledge about teaching and learning. Research (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Putnam & Borko, 2000) shows that preservice teachers’ prior beliefs and attitudes should be examined in order to meet the needs of diverse groups of children. Because their beliefs and attitudes are built by numerous personal experiences, it is meaningful to see the “self” of preservice and experienced teachers. Their prior experiences influence both thoughts and actions in teaching and learning. Based on their personal experiences within certain sociocultural contexts, preservice and experienced teachers acknowledge and make meaning about new experiences in teaching and learning.

No matter how one looks at it, an analysis of meanings always leads to individual experience and the social process of accommodating the links between words and chunks of that experience until the individual deems they are compatible with the usage and the linguistic and behavioral responses of others (von Glasersfeld, 1996).

**Experiencing Diversity**

**Feeling of Being a Minority and about Minorities**

*Who and what is minority?: Norm, situation, and power.* All three preservice teachers express feelings of being a minority. Upon moving to another region in the country, Kate feels culture shock. When traveling to other countries, Lisa and Shazia feel frustration, difficulties, alienation, and isolation. When these preservice teachers are positioned in a sociocultural context that is unfamiliar to them, they feel like minorities. In this sense, the concept of ‘minority’ is situated. Identifying herself as both an
American and a Pakistani, Shazia feels that she does not fit the norm in the United States or in Pakistan, and expresses confusion about her identity. Even though the preservice teachers indicate that people from other sociocultural groups never directly hurt their feelings, they still find it hard to be “different.”

In relating their experiences of being minorities, the preservice teachers reveal their practical knowledge about diversity: Diversity is a world-wide issue even in a traditionally homogenous society; teachers need to have children learn, share, appreciate, and celebrate their own and others’ cultures; misconceptions about other cultures can contribute to feelings of fear or negative thoughts; and every person should be respected regardless of his/her sociocultural background.

One of the preservice teachers – Shazia – questions the hidden meaning of “majority” and “minority” in society. Her questioning brings to light issues of norm, power and privilege in a group and society. In contrast to Shazia’s more critical view of the power relationship between “majority” and “minority,” describing the United States as a “melting pot,” another preservice teacher – Lisa – argues that “submersion” is the best way to learn about other cultures. Discussing the points raised by this group of preservice teachers, Essed (2002) criticizes the approach of ‘cultural cloning’ that produces inequalities by assimilating various groups of people to ‘normative standards.’ According to Essed, cultural cloning is a process where immigrant minority people are expected to adapt and be absorbed into the mainstream culture. In this sense, cultural differences are interpreted as deviant from the dominant sociocultural ‘norm.’ The cultural difference of non-dominant groups also means having less power within the
mainstream culture. Essed emphasizes the importance of appreciating and valuing the
cultural differences of diverse groups of people.

In contrast to the three preservice teachers, none of the experienced teachers
mention having feelings of being a minority. It may be that this is due to differences in
exposure to diverse cultures. Both the preservice and experienced teachers positively
recall personal life experiences with diversity within their family and educational
backgrounds. However, the experienced teachers may have less exposure to diverse
cultures and university-based multicultural education experiences, having come of age in
a historical era of discrimination. One of the experienced teachers – April – remembers
her struggles to avoid holding her father’s stereotypical and prejudicial beliefs towards
other cultural groups. Another experienced teacher – Karla – reflects on the sadness of
segregation in the United States. It may be that the generation gap between experienced
teachers and preservice teachers contributes to the experienced teachers’ perceptions that
they are always “We” within the culture of “White” and mainstream.

In the current “multicultural era,” preservice teachers have many more
opportunities to experience different cultures firsthand. The preservice teachers’ trips to
other countries and experiences relating to people of other cultures, seems to help them
“stand in another’s shoes.” Even though one of the experienced teachers – Tiffany –
mentions a trip to Spain, the tour she describes differs significantly from preservice
teachers’ trips to Italy and Spain where the main purpose is to interact with “real people”
from diverse groups.
Experiencing English-as-a-Second-Language Children

Inclusion or sociocultural empowerment in the education of ESL children. Both preservice and experienced teachers indicate the ultimate importance of discussing ESL issues, recognizing the increasing number of linguistically diverse populations in schools. The preservice and experienced teachers are attuned to ESL children’s emotional well-being, cognizant of their feelings of alienation and frustration, and worried that many of them are shy about participating in class activities.

The experienced teachers, however, place more emphasis on the difficulties of communicating with ESL children and parents and the need to foster their language development. Because experienced teachers, as teaching practitioners, need to communicate and solve problems with parents regarding children’s disciplinary or academic performance on a daily basis, they feel a stronger need to better communicate with parents. Being disappointed with the difficulty in finding translators when they are needed, the experienced teachers feel that ESL children and parents, first and foremost, should develop their English language skills. The experienced teachers’ ideas support Delpit’s (1988) views that language-minority children can academically achieve by being taught the “rules of the culture of power” (Banks, 1995b). Delpit stresses that it is the teachers, not ESL children’s home cultures that build the learning environment for language-minority children’s achievement. Even though the experienced teachers do not show disdain for ESL children’s home cultures, they strongly believe that ESL children and parents need to acquire mainstream culture’s language and rules.

The preservice teachers do not view the need to facilitate ESL students’ acquisition of English language as paramount. Rather, they emphasize the importance of
acknowledging and valuing the language children bring to school. With respect to this point, one of the preservice teachers – Lisa – recalls a mentor teacher in her student internship, whom she perceived as very careless, prejudicial, and stereotypical in her actions towards ESL children. When the mentor teacher says, “Don’t worry about them. They never know what we’re saying anyway. It’s not a big deal,” the preservice teacher thinks: “In the meantime the child is frustrated and you’re giving him bad grades and it’s not a measure of their intelligence, it’s a measure of your intelligence cause you’re not trying to help and make them understand.” Another preservice teacher – Shazia – indicates that language should be acknowledged as one’s own, not as a lack of ability. Ogbu (1992) maintains that teachers should be responsible for language minority children’s education by focusing on their potential difficulties rather than lowering expectations for their academic performance. The preservice teachers believe that ESL children should not be considered ‘learning disabled’ and need equitable learning opportunities. The preservice teachers also feel that teachers’ lack of knowledge and understanding of ESL children and parents cause them to incorrectly label students as ‘learning disabled.’ It is important to note, however, that one experienced teacher – Tiffany – does indicate that ESL children’s learning difficulties are tied to both sociocultural backgrounds and language. Tiffany believes that children are socialized in their own sociocultural context, and that teachers’ in-depth understanding about their culture and language is an important factor in facilitating the academic achievement of ESL children.

Considering the important role of teachers, Eubanks (2002) indicates that children learn when the school settings are related to their lives and culture. According to
Quintanar-Saraellana (1977), teachers’ cultural awareness is defined as three stages. In the first stage of ‘culturally unaware,’ different culture is rejected in all ways from the dominant culture. In the second stage of ‘transition,’ culture is shared and explored together. In the third stage of ‘culturally aware,’ teachers share and comprehend the differences of children’s culture and integrate their language and culture within the curriculum, actively seeking strategies to teach ESL children (Eubanks, 2002). Along this same line, both the preservice and experienced teachers feel that it is necessary for teachers to create a safe learning environment for ESL children by examining their own attitudes and teaching practices. They emphasize the close interactions with children and the need for open-mindedness which avoids stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes toward ESL children and their families. However, the preservice teachers’ beliefs about second language learning seem to fit more closely with Quintanar-Saraellana’s (1977) ‘culturally aware’ stage. By contrast, with the exception of Tiffany, the experienced teachers seem to hold more “transitional” beliefs about the role of language in classrooms.

The preservice teachers’ firsthand experiences with feelings of being a minority, as well as relating to diverse groups of friends, provide them with more opportunities to be sensitive to and empathize with ESL children’s emotions of being in a different culture. The experienced teacher – Tiffany – becomes more culturally responsive to ESL children’s language and culture, as she mentions, working at a school environment with “huge diversity” in terms of demographic population. The need to deal with ESL issues was strong enough to cause Tiffany to seek an ESL endorsement. However, the other two experienced teachers seem to think that the responsibility for ESL children’s learning rests more on ESL programs; they consider ESL children as students with special needs.
One of the two experienced teachers says that: she thinks ESL programs are “really” good; she recommends ESL programs to ‘language minority’ children; she considers it strange when ESL children’s parents deny their children opportunities to be in ESL programs. She thinks that the reason for their rejection of the ESL programs is possibly due to “extra cost.” This is a simple example of her lack of understanding about ESL children and their cultures. Considering ESL parents’ comments in real school settings, they do not want ESL programs because the curriculum and method of ESL programs are without depth and the ESL teachers deal with ESL children like babies, resulting in peers’ same attitudes. While the preservice teachers and Tiffany have framed their beliefs to take into account the importance of ESL children and their cultures, the other two experienced teachers have not met crucial challenges to be fully immersed with and reflect on ESL issues – and that seems to make them be more at the culturally transitional level.

*Strategies to Develop ESL Children’s Language and a Sense of English Culture.* In terms of strategies needed to work with ESL children, the preservice teachers suggest that multiple languages, including sign language, should be a part of their teacher education programs. One of them – Kate – also points out the importance of teachers learning children’s language. To include ESL children in their classes, however, the experienced teachers propose more practical approaches such as obtaining an ESL endorsement, introducing ESL programs, taking risks of vulnerability, doing active, hands-on activities, using children’s literature, and obtaining help from community members. One of the experienced teachers – Tiffany – also recommend role playing and character education as strategies for learning English and assisting children in developing
positive ideas and attitudes about diverse cultures. The experienced teachers consider more practical and varied strategies, drawing on multiple resources such as teachers themselves, media, and community, to help ESL children in terms of their language development, feelings of comfort and confidence, and learning interest and motivation. They emphasize the importance of small group activities in working with ESL children. This small-group approach is supported by Eubanks (2002) who notes the positive effects of one-on-one help rather than critical evaluation in a whole class setting. Rather than focusing on strategies with respect to student needs, the preservice teachers focus on developing the efficiency of teachers themselves, primarily in terms of acquiring multiple language skills.

The strategies of the experienced teachers reflect Vygotsky’s (1978, see Wertsch, 1991) principles of “zone of proximal development.” They take into account social interactions between teachers and children, and children and their peers, placing more value on ‘skills-oriented classrooms’ rather than ‘traditional teacher-centered classrooms’ as environments for language development. Their strategies are not intended to force children to simply acquire English language. Rather, their philosophies for the strategies are to facilitate children’s language development based on their current level of learning. Acquiring an ESL endorsement, for example, Tiffany feels the need to modify her lessons considering each child’s needs, interests, and developmental levels. Both the preservice and experienced teachers value children’s literature and hands on activities as “wonderful” opportunities to interact with children mediated by language rather than simply disseminating knowledge. Related to scaffolding and zone of proximal development, interestingly, both the preservice and experienced teachers indicate the
importance of teachers’ “vulnerability” with respect to ESL children’s language learning. Showing ESL children that English is “a” language like their own and also that teachers are vulnerable learners, they try to boost children’s self-esteem in the different culture. It is their opinion that this approach will help children open up to the unfamiliar culture and more actively learn language by socially interacting with English competent others.

*Experiencing Different Races and Cultures*

“Race” as a social construct. “Race” is a big issue that permeates both preservice and experienced teachers’ discussions about diversity. What is meant by “race”? What makes humans categorize using “race”? What is racial identity? Both preservice and experienced teachers wrestle with these questions. During their student internship, the preservice teachers notice conflicts and fights among different races, especially between “Blacks” and “Whites.” The experienced teachers recall clique behaviors and scared feelings about racial fights during their childhood.

While the preservice teachers do not express any real tensions in defining “race” as a biological construct, some of the experienced teachers rethink the meaning of “race” reflecting on “socioeconomic status” as a defining criterion. Their discussions imply that, for them, the category of race has social meaning as well as physical differences in terms of skin color. The preservice teachers discuss race in ways similar to earlier conceptions of the construct:

In the mid-to late 1800s, “race was conceptualized in a way that designated specific groups with clearly defined, biologically inherited physical and behavioral characteristics. Some groups were defined as inherently superior to others,” and “the environment or experiences of individuals or groups could do
little to change their inherited racial characteristics” (Banks, 1996, pp. 68-69, see Dilg, 2003, p. 132).

By contrast, the experienced teachers concur with Banks (1996), Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997) who define race and racism as a social construct. According to Phillips (1997),

Racism is an institutionalized system of economic, political, social, and cultural relations that ensures that one racial group has and maintains power and privilege over all aspects of life. Individual participation in racism occurs when the objective outcome of behavior reinforces these relations, regardless of the subjective intent. Consequently, an individual may act in a racist manner unintentionally (Phillips, 2003, p. 180).

It is surprising that while preservice teachers have had more exposure to multicultural experiences, including multicultural classes, they hold a more narrow view of race, failing to consider sensitively hidden assumptions of “race” as a construct. Recalling their student internships, they usually recognize and criticize their “White” mentor teachers’ biased attitudes, including “Playing favorites” towards “Black” children. The preservice teachers feel that people’s lack of understanding or misconceptions is the root cause of prejudice about cultural groups, and they emphasize the need for teachers to take into account individual children’s personal backgrounds. Because the preservice teachers perceive themselves as having appropriate and democratic thoughts and attitudes about “race,” they indicate that they consider all children as “equal” regardless of their ‘skin colors’ or their cultures. However, reflecting on the ‘color-blind’ approach, Irvine (2003) and Lewis (2001) suggest that teachers’
attempt to treat all children the same may hinder the expression of values, norms, and beliefs of different cultures and blind them from realizing their preexisting assumptions or prejudices towards other cultural groups of people. Citing Feagin (2001), Irvine (2003) states that “Whites truly believe that color blindness is consistent with notions of fairness and nondiscrimination. However, a color-blind approach is fiction because it ignores the realities of racism in this country” (p. xvi). In this sense, the preservice teachers tend not to challenge their beliefs about race because they are “innocent” about “other kinds of skin colors.” However, living through the historical struggles of racial discrimination, the experienced teachers have constructed stereotypic perceptions of people of color, particularly African-Americans. Now that they work at private Christian schools and see African-Americans from a higher socioeconomic status, the experienced teachers feel conflicts and challenges regarding their preexisting conceptions about race. The experienced teachers look back at their history, at their present environment, their knowledge and beliefs about race, and ‘ultimately’ label ‘race’ on the basis of socioeconomic status. For the experienced teachers, the power of race is legitimized by the socioeconomic status rather than biological characteristics.

*The relationship of knowledge and attitudes towards diversity to student learning.*

The preservice teachers believe that children’s misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about other people contributes to their prejudicial actions toward individuals from other cultures. Piatt (1997) claims, “Prejudice hardens in the absence of experience that contradicts it” (p. 75). Accordingly, the preservice teachers feel it is important to expose children to various beliefs and perspectives, rather than focusing on specifics of a single group or culture. Both the preservice and experienced teachers agree on the importance of
being aware of children’s personal background. Noting that teachers’ personal beliefs influence children’s attitudes and thoughts about diversity, the preservice teachers emphasize that teachers should be “culture-wise” – aware of and sensitive to each child’s characteristics and taking care not to generalize according to large categories of culture.

The experienced teachers believe that teachers should not force students to totally assimilate into the dominant culture. Ravitch (2002) argues that assimilation is good and bad. On the positive side, assimilation helps children learn a common language, knowledge, and history to succeed in a country. On the negative side, however, assimilation ignores the strengths of non-dominant cultures, presuming that there is a U.S. culture which is static. Ravitch asserts that the celebration of diversity is an appropriate strategy for nurturing democracy and equality of all people regardless of race, ethnicity, or any other sources of cultural grouping.

The preservice teachers’ emphasis on the need for teachers to be knowledgeable about children’s personal backgrounds is based much more on their personal experiences beyond their roles as “teachers.” From their experiences of being situated in unfamiliar sociocultural contexts and being an immigrant, the preservice teachers empathize more with the difficulties of children’s alienation in ‘different’ cultural contexts from their own. Rather than being assimilated into a mainstream culture, they believe teachers should find ways to help students experience success in foreign cultures while still maintaining their own cultures. They take into account the importance of social interactions as a means for people to share and learn from each other’s cultural experiences. One of them – Shazia, in particular, is influenced by her parents in terms of her beliefs regarding the importance of considering children’s uniqueness. She feels that
she is proud of her heritage as both an American and a Pakistani and wants to equally maintain both cultures. From the preservice teachers’ memories about their childhood, they have developed an image of “good teachers” – teachers who care about individual children’s personal backgrounds, including their learning needs and difficulties. They have the belief that all learning should be based on students’ pace and interests rather than conforming to a set pattern of instruction for all children in a class.

On this point, the experienced teachers’ beliefs about the importance of children’s similarities and differences is influenced by the reality of their school environment where, in all cases, there is an explicit attempt to make a “multicultural” curriculum and learning environment, even to the extent of hiring an African-American male as a “diversity” teacher. They feel that the African-American teacher is a good role model for children in terms of cultural diversity and empowerment because he represents someone who can view teaching and learning through the lens of his African-American heritage without total assimilation into a dominant culture. This point is supported by Irvine (2003).

Teachers of color are essential in our schools because, like all other teachers, they teach who they are. They teach through a lens of cultural experiences that is different from the lens of mainstream teachers. Teachers of color bring to teaching a “situated” pedagogy. How they make meaning within their classrooms, how they define their teaching roles, and the articulation of their beliefs are contextually and culturally dependent. Most important, their situated pedagogy and culturally specific teaching behaviors and beliefs seem related to the achievement of students of color (p. 58).
Two of the three experienced teachers work at private schools where religious belief is the central referent for creating a multicultural learning environment, and the school belief rejects the concept of “assimilation.” Because they believe and preach that God is not just for “Whites” and loves everyone, assimilation is not an appropriate concept for them.

Both the preservice and experienced teachers feel that educators should be open-minded, respectful, appreciative, and accepting of children for who they are. They think that prejudicial attitudes, stereotypical remarks, victimization and discrimination have no place in classrooms. They believe that teachers’ modeling of positive attitudes about diversity will help children know themselves and others.

As near future teachers, the preservice teachers feel it is important to provide multiple opportunities for children to know and share their original culture, to facilitate sense of belonging. The experienced teachers focus more on increasing positive social interactions among children as a vehicle for developing positive attitudes about different cultures. When discussing different “cultures,” the experienced teachers are aware of more issues related to diverse populations of children including adoption, children with special needs, ESL children, children with different origins from their parents or other peers, and children from other cultures who are “visiting” for extended periods of time. Unlike the preservice teachers, who superficially touch on some of these issues, the experienced teachers discuss more selective aspects of cultural diversity. This suggests that the experienced teachers have more implicit practical knowledge about diversity based on their teaching experiences in varied learning contexts. Experienced teachers tend to extract meanings from their stories regarding diversity, whereby they perceive
themselves as ‘agents of their own learning’ (Adger, 2002) and professional
development, being more aware of complicated and local teaching and learning
situations. The preservice teachers also make sense of their own experiences about
diversity in teaching and learning, but they are more likely to access textbooks about
selected topics included in their university multicultural education programs. Considering
that theoretical knowledge from textbooks is not enough to construct in-depth meanings
about multicultural issues, it seems that preservice teachers would benefit from more
practical experiences and continuous inquiry-based problem solving (Adger, 2002) to
integrate formal knowledge with teaching practice.

*The importance of understanding both artifacts and ideologies in multicultural curriculum.* During their student internships, the preservice teachers observe how
classroom teachers deal with the issues of diverse societies and cultures. One of the
preservice teachers, however, is not satisfied with the way a kindergarten teacher singles
out one child during a lesson illustrating the concept of same-and-different. Another
preservice teacher is critical of a teacher who appears to play “favorites,” exhibiting
prejudicial attitudes. The preservice teachers are particularly sensitive to issues of
equality and fairness as they play out in the curriculum. Regarding multicultural
curriculum, the preservice teachers believe that: Every norm is socioculturally situated;
everyone learns from one another; no cultural groups should be excluded from the school
curriculum; no one should be offended by the school curriculum.

In contrast, the experienced teachers communicate a foundational ideology and
philosophy of diversity which is centered on understanding, celebrating, and respecting
the uniqueness of diverse cultures through school activities like ‘Multicultural Day.’ The
experienced teachers create many opportunities for children to investigate unique cultural aspects of different countries through writing, dress, dance, painting, and food that they believe have the “potential to increase children’s joy for learning.” In the same vein, experienced teachers also indicate the importance of connecting diverse cultures to children through the infusion of cultural lessons which emphasize “exciting, exotic, and different” artifacts, such as flags, literature, dance, and fiestas. Even though the experienced teachers feel that these activities are “real learning experiences” in terms of diversity, their teaching and learning approach still seems much like a ‘tourist curriculum.’ During interviews prior to the case-based experiences, the experienced teachers continuously show their value of “difference,” “interest,” and “fun” as central components of multicultural curriculum.

The experienced teachers’ “tourist approach” is problematic for, as Pattnaik (2003) points out, a multicultural education should aim for students to learn about the “self” as well as about “others.” It should not be an approach of “we” versus “they.” It is more important to “live diversity” rather than simply “do diversity.” Cultural uniqueness does not mean focusing on exotic differences while excluding similarities. The National Council for the Social Studies (1992) says, “Multicultural education helps students understand and affirm their community cultures and helps to free them from cultural boundaries, allowing them to create and maintain a civic community that works for the common good” (p. 134). Accordingly, a multicultural curriculum should not be limited to superficial aspects of culture; rather, it should include beliefs, values, ideologies, norms, and codes of interpersonal relationships.
Banks (1995a) argues, in relation to the multicultural education dimension of “content integration,” that diversity should be more carefully integrated with other disciplines, as opposed to emphasizing the infusion of different cultural materials. He stresses the need for teachers to examine their curriculum regarding diversity to determine whether it truly investigates implicit biases, prejudices, assumptions, beliefs, and values of their own and others’ cultures. In discussing issues of multicultural curriculum, the experienced teachers focus more on ‘how to do’ but the preservice teachers spotlight ‘why to do.’ The experienced teachers strongly believe that their multicultural curriculum is “very good” as it provides children with diverse experiences about other cultures. However, there are gaps in the experienced teachers’ multicultural curriculum that they do not perceive, in terms of ideologies of diversity and practical experiences through cultural artifacts. The experienced teachers dismiss the point that multicultural education curriculum includes beliefs as well as “exotic, fancy, and attractive” cultural activities. This reveals their lack of or superficial understanding about multicultural education. In contrast to this, the preservice teachers are highly influenced by the multicultural education courses in their teacher education program. The goal of multicultural education is to provide children with equal educational opportunities and teach all children, caring for each of their academic, emotional, and social needs (Lin, 2001). The preservice teachers state that they are “programmed” by their teacher education courses to emphasize ‘equal opportunities, positive human relations, and appreciation of individual uniqueness’ (Banks, 1995a; Sleeter & Grant, 1999). They think that they understand about the purposes of multicultural education “very well” and they often take knowledge of diversity for granted. However, the preservice teachers also
show gaps in the multicultural understanding they have constructed from their university program and teaching practice. For example, their teacher education program emphasizes that they should never bring up religious issues, including holidays, in a diverse classroom. But the preservice teachers wonder how to separate religious issues from the culture of children. They also wonder if religions should be separated. This study does not examine whether preservice teachers with more knowledge about diversity better manage multicultural curriculum in real teaching and learning contexts than current experienced teachers. However, it is apparent that preservice teachers need opportunities to incorporate their formal multicultural theories with teaching practice and the experienced teachers need opportunities to learn about different philosophies and ideologies of multicultural education.

**Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity**

*The importance of considering various diversity issues from multiple perspectives.*

Neuharth-Pritchett, Reiff, and Pearson (2001) indicate that classes in preservice teacher education programs are important resources for preservice teachers’ knowledge and information regarding diversity. They maintain that preservice teachers’ coursework in teacher education programs makes a significant impact on their fluent knowledge about diversity and multicultural education. In this study, however, only one preservice teacher among six participants agrees with the researchers (2001) in terms of seeing a derived benefit in preservice multicultural education as it is currently framed. Even the one teacher who saw some value in her preservice multicultural education program, feels that it did not effectively prepare her to practically work with diverse groups of children in
real school settings. She sees a contradiction between the ideas of her teacher education program and actual practice during her teaching internship experience.

“We really have not done anything very multicultural.” Criticizing their preservice teacher education program, both the preservice and experienced teachers make suggestions for improving teacher education programs in terms of diversity. All of them agree that their multicultural education programs should deal with more in-depth issues that go far beyond issues of African-American cultures. They feel that the huge focus on only one culture is not fair and continuously point out the need to learn about the beliefs and practices of many cultures in their multicultural coursework. They stress the importance of being prepared to critically analyze whose perspective and whose voice is concealed in school curriculum. Almost unanimously, the six teachers argue for a more “critical” approach to multicultural education in their university coursework or professional development.

The importance of constructing knowledge and practical teaching of diversity. “If all children are to learn effectively, teachers must be prepared to address the substantial diversity in experiences students bring with them to school – the wide range of languages, cultures, home conditions, learning styles, exceptionalities, abilities, and intelligences” (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995, p. 2). How then can preservice teachers be teachers for “all” children from diverse cultural groups? How can preservice teachers make appropriate decisions considering every complex classroom situation regarding diversity?

Speaking to this point, the preservice teachers feel that their preservice multicultural education simply consists of history classes, unconnected to teaching and
learning. They feel that academic subject knowledge and multicultural education should not be separated; rather, they suggest the need for subject matter and issues of diversity to be naturally integrated across disciplines. Supporting this point, Nieto (2000) argues that multicultural education should be central and mandatory in teacher education programs by being integrated with course curriculum and teaching experiences in school settings, rather than being presented as a single optional course. The preservice teachers point out that their university courses on diversity should focus more on practical teaching methods that will be useful to them in working with diverse populations.

While the preservice teachers make many comments regarding the quality of their preservice teacher education programs with respect to diversity, the experienced teachers have difficulty in recalling any courses addressing diversity in their university programs. According to Dilworth (1992) and Sleeter (1991), the movement of multicultural education began in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1972, the ‘Ethnic Heritage Studies Act’ assumed that the melting pot approach was not working. In 1973, the ‘Bilingual Education Act’ provided the legislative support to the “multicultural, bilingual, and ethnic education” movement (Dilworth, 1992, p. 5). During the 1980s,

Then president Reagan addressed discrimination by simply removing sexist wording from laws, and the Supreme Court began dismantling civil rights rulings on the grounds that these are state issue. The “silent majority,” with federal sanction, no longer sees the existence of a problem or the need to act (Sleeter, 1991, p. 2).

In this context, the experienced teachers’ beliefs support this historic description, stating that multicultural education was never an issue during their university programs.
However, the experienced teachers stress that they learn more about diversity through their staff development, as this form of professional development addresses real needs and confronts controversial issues in school settings. Sharing with colleagues about different teaching experiences regarding diversity, the experienced teachers believe that they become more “culture wise” in terms of paying attention to each child’s personal background.

*The importance of considering personal experiences with diversity in teacher preparation.* Most of the preservice teachers feel that they are already open-minded about diversity, and consider simple historic or theoretical courses as not beneficial in preparing them to be culturally competent teachers. They feel that their multicultural teacher preparation did not take into account their own knowledge and experiences with diversity. Rather, they note that multicultural education was presented as a decontextualized history, without connections to their own stories. This is an important point for, as Dilg (2003) notes, “Students’ multiple histories affect how they approach materials in a course and how they are affected by them….Students ‘tired of hearing about’ particular events or histories or about circumstances not tied to their own lives may be reluctant to explore a work or may reject a work knowing no more than its focus” (p. 47). Dilg feels that opportunities to share personal backgrounds and experiences with peers will help teachers develop open-minded attitudes and closely examine their own beliefs about diversity in light of the beliefs of others.

With respect to this point, the experienced teachers rarely mention any relationship between their personal experiences with diversity and formal education learning experiences. Because they do have little experience in terms of university-based
multicultural teacher education, it is hard to connect their personal perspectives to teacher preparation programs. However, considering their positive perception about staff development programs regarding diversity, it seems that the experienced teachers become diversity competent teachers by socially sharing their personal experiences, ideas, actions, feelings, beliefs, and reflections about diversity in teaching and learning practice; however, there is evidence to suggest that a “critical” lens may be missing from their conversations.

The importance of field experience with culturally diverse children. Both the preservice and experienced teachers indicate the significance of teaching experiences with diverse children in real classrooms. Both the preservice and experienced teachers feel that awareness and knowledge about diversity are not sufficient for teaching diverse learners. They concur that actual teaching experiences are best for developing genuine understandings about diversity in classrooms. They value “real” teaching which allows for experimenting with different approaches and applying their knowledge of diversity to complex teaching contexts. The experienced teachers also note that actual classroom experience provides an opportunity for mentor teachers to be positive diversity role models for preservice teachers in ways which can influence their beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes.

Capella-Santana (2003), arguing for the importance of field experience, points out that preservice teachers’ fieldwork experiences can facilitate change in their knowledge and attitudes about diversity. As Phillips (2003) contends, teacher education programs for diversity should reflect both conceptual and practical issues. Phillips (2003) notes that changing preservice and experienced teachers’ knowledge and attitudes about diversity
requires continuous reflection on their own teaching and learning. Even though practical ways to teach diversity should be stressed, they should not be “one-workshop formats” or “one-time-lectures” (p. 181).

1-b. How does preservice and experienced teachers’ reflection about sociocultural dilemmas regarding diversity compare through case-based pedagogy?

How flexible are preservice and experienced teachers in reflection through case-based pedagogy?

Experiencing Cases regarding Diversity

_Versatility of Identifying Multiple Issues_

_Being life-long learners._ Throughout the case-based experiences, the preservice teachers continuously indicate the importance of reflection for-and-on action. They feel that teachers should have more time to plan, research and design lessons before implementing them. For these teachers, preliminary thinking on how a lesson should be taught and how children in a class might react is essential for good teaching. Because the preservice teachers highly value ‘reflection-for-action,’ it is not surprising that they harshly criticize the classroom teachers of cases, with comments such as “Her unsuccessful lesson is a natural consequence considering her lack of consideration for children’s prior knowledge.” “The teacher does not know her students too well.”

Moreover, the preservice teachers tend to evaluate the case teachers merely on the basis of whether the students actively participate in the class activities. The experienced teachers, when evaluating case teachers, consider multiple aspects of learning such as children’s curiosity, motivation, and attitudes towards “new and different” cultures and classroom participation.
The research of Killion and Todnem (1991) suggests that preservice teachers use 'reflection-for-action' in planning better experiences in teaching or 'reflection-on-action' for thinking back on past teaching events. However, 'reflection-in-action' as “framing and solving problems on the spot” (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 14) is considered to be hard for preservice teachers because they need to quickly reason and decide between multiple teaching moments within a certain situation. Killion and Todnem (1991) maintain that preservice teachers’ reflective thinking can develop with opportunities to experience literature and case discussions about teaching and learning. The findings of this study support those of Killion and Todnem (1991) – prior to the case experiences, there are many examples of reflection-on-action on the part of preservice teachers. Their discussions emphasize the importance of ‘reflection-on-action,’ focusing on how their analysis of case dilemmas will help them develop an awareness of related situations in teaching settings. However, unlike the experienced teachers, attention to ‘reflection-in-action’ is missing from their conversations.

Like the preservice teachers, the experienced teachers emphasize the importance of anticipation and thoroughness in planning lessons. They, however, stress all three levels of reflective thinking – ‘reflection-for-action,’ ‘reflection-in-action,’ and ‘reflection-on-action.’ The experienced teachers show continuous reflection upon intentions, implementation, and outcomes of lessons.

Because they see bigger pictures of teaching and learning than the preservice teachers, who focus narrowly on the case dilemma itself, the experienced teachers tend to consider the teachers in the cases more generously. When analyzing a case, the experienced teachers consider the lesson from different standpoints. For example, in the
case of “Who Eats the Mango?”, they separate Kim’s lesson into an examination of the science purpose, the overall educational purpose, and the diversity purpose. Looking at teachers as “life-long learners”, the experienced teachers consider the case teachers more in terms of their ‘possibility’ for helping children with respect to issues of cultural diversity, rather than criticizing specific actions. For example, in the case of “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”, the experienced teachers evaluate the case teacher, Perla, positively as a “creative and diligent teacher” who works hard to present meaningful lessons and be sensitive to children’s personal backgrounds. In contrast, the preservice teachers strictly criticize Perla’s lesson, mentioning that her lesson does not consider children’s family and community life. On this same point, the experienced teachers describe Perla’s effort as commendable because she makes the attempt to teach controversial issues that are critically significant to the children’s community.

Both the preservice and experienced teachers indicate that, as teachers gain more practical teaching experience with good role models in diverse classrooms, their teaching will improve. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) emphasize the need for preservice and experienced teachers to develop as life-long learners who are qualified to teach in diverse school and class settings in the context of ‘inquiry’ within learning communities, rather than through ‘training’ or ‘transmission’ approaches.

Considering children’s personal background. Both the preservice and experienced teachers emphasize the importance of teachers taking into account children’s personal backgrounds. It is one of the most common themes emerging both before and after case-based experiences. They feel that teachers need to be aware of and sensitive to
children’s personal backgrounds including individual characteristics such as health, developmental level, family structure, and other aspects of culture.

The preservice teachers assert that teachers must be aware of children’s personal experiences and prior knowledge so as not to offend them in any way. They note that teachers need to consider the potential differences between teachers and children when planning lessons. One of them – Lisa – indicates, “people’s sensitivity to an event is influenced by the context in which they are educated and socialized.” Another preservice teacher – Shazia – suggests that teachers must care about individual children’s motivation for learning in the context of different personal backgrounds. Their ideas reveal that they are very much aware of the ‘knowledge construction’ (Banks, 1995a) dimension of multicultural education.

In a similar way, the experienced teachers state that children should be fully recognized in classes in terms of their personal backgrounds. In considering the importance of children’s personal background, the experienced teachers focus on how teachers respond to students during teaching and take into account their backgrounds when planning lessons. The preservice teachers tend to see the importance of children’s personal background in planning lessons, but as mentioned before, rarely consider students’ background through ‘reflection-in-action.’

Continuously raising the issues of the importance of thorough reflection, including ‘reflection-in-action,’ the experienced teachers recognize and are more aware of children’s emotions and responses in the midst of teaching. The experienced teachers attempt to dig into the hidden meanings of children’s reactions and teachers’ actions in light of the personal backgrounds of students.
Paying attention to children’s various emotions and reactions during teaching, the experienced teachers place more emphasis on appropriate guidance and support for children with diverse personal backgrounds. Extending the case dilemmas to their own teaching practice, the experienced teachers reflect upon their teaching actions focusing on the concept of “No one size fits all.” Emphasizing the importance of multiple forms of reflection (Schön, 1983), teachers “can surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice” (p. 61). For both preservice and inservice teachers, reflection is essential to critically finding ‘internal logical consistency and inconsistency’ (Lee, 2001) between their beliefs and actions in teaching and learning.

Confronting conflicts between teachers and parents. Both the preservice and experienced teachers raise issues associated with parents and their relationship to schools. The preservice teachers’ ‘parent’ issues are brought up primarily when they empathize with the parents of cases. For example, in the case of “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”, both groups sympathize with Antonio’s parents who cannot help but cut down trees for a living. The preservice teachers simply focus on the conflicts between the science lesson and parent and community beliefs. They analyze the dilemma from many perspectives, focusing on the difficulties of dealing with tensions between classroom teachers and parents. More practically, the experienced teachers suggest ways that teachers can and should avoid placing themselves in the position of experiencing tensions or conflicts with parents. As current teachers, the experienced teachers are very sensitive to issues involving children’s parents and connect to and reflect on their own teaching situations regarding this point. Compared to the experienced teachers’ views about
conflicts with parents, the preservice teachers, in their discussions, play the roles of objective analyzers. While the issues of experienced teachers move far beyond the specific case situations, the preservice teachers center their discussions around the literal “facts” of the case. These findings extend the research of Kagan and Tippins (1991) who assert that preservice teachers define “classroom problems as external” (p. 288), not colliding with classroom teachers’ internal life, whereas experienced teachers identify case dilemmas as teachers’ “internal conflict: frustration, ethical choices, a questioning of values” (p. 288).

Dealing with sensitive issues about diversity. The preservice and experienced teachers feel the need to be sensitive when dealing with specific issues regarding diversity such as life and death and religious topics. Both groups of teachers feel that these issues easily can offend the beliefs and values of children’s families. Particularly, in the case “The Day the Lobster Died”, the preservice and experienced teachers feel that life and death issues should be avoided in classrooms because the topics usually bring in religious beliefs that can offend children’s family beliefs. Using the case “When Do You Perform Tuob?” as an example, the preservice and experienced teachers also claim the importance of respecting both community beliefs and school knowledge and clarifying teachers’ confusion and conflict between personal beliefs and teaching obligations. Both the preservice and experienced teachers, through the case experience, become more aware of themselves as cultural beings and how their own cultures can contradict children’s individual cultures. As a consequence, both the preservice and experienced teachers indicate that they are more attune to carefully watching their own cultural beliefs (Irvine, 2003) in teaching and learning.
Analyzing the ‘fish experiment’ in the case of “When Do You Perform Tuob?”, the preservice teachers evaluate the case teacher [Esperanza] negatively saying that it is “unnecessarily cruel and directly offends the culture of the children’s community.” The preservice teachers believe that the issue is not only about animals’ rights but also extends to ideas about respect for the children’s family and community beliefs. They assume that teachers’ scientific knowledge is the “right thing,” but should not offend children’s home culture. Speaking of the same experiment, the experienced teachers demonstrate an understanding of Esperanza’s instructional intentions in terms of the fish experiment. Additionally, reflecting a more holistic view of the case, the experienced teachers question whether the experiment is culturally appropriate in the context of schooling in the Philippines. The preservice teachers do not consider this perspective in any of their discussions. The experienced teachers demonstrate a deeper understanding of how the same class activities or social phenomena can be interpreted in diverse ways in different cultures. They understand that different norms exist in diverse sociocultural contexts.

Addressing controversial issues in teaching through cases, the preservice teachers ask, “Is it okay to include religious and/or cultural beliefs in our classroom?” They are confused and when the children in the case “When Do You Perform Tuob?” raise the issues about the practice of tuob, the preservice teachers decide, “Just quickly return to the class topic” because tuob is not the topic of the science class. The preservice teachers try to dismiss conflict-filled situations in teaching and ask how this kind of dilemma can be entirely avoided in classrooms. Concerning the same issue, the experienced teachers have a very different perspective, emphasizing “Share what you know with children. The
children will then construct beliefs themselves regarding the topic.” Unlike the preservice teachers, the experienced teachers show interest in developing the children’s own interpretations and perspectives related to various cultures. The experienced teachers’ perspective is an indication of the value they place on Banks’ (1993) knowledge construction dimension of multicultural education. Banks (p. 5) notes that:

> Although many complex factors influence the knowledge that is created by an individual or group, including the actuality of what occurred, the knowledge that people create is heavily influenced by their interpretations of their experiences and their positions within particular social, economic, and political systems and structures of a society.

This distinct difference in perspective on the handling of controversial issues suggests that the experienced teachers consider children as active and subjective co-builders of knowledge in their sociocultural context. While the preservice teachers’ comments indicate that they believe there is absolute “right” truth in the world, they tend to be afraid to openly deal with controversial dilemmatic situations with children. In addition, recalling the preservice teachers’ university learning where they were admonished, “Never bring in religious issues in classrooms but deal with cultural issues as much as possible,” the preservice teachers feel confused as to how they can reconcile scientific knowledge and community’s beliefs in a class.

*Integrating subjects with diversity.* Valuing teachers’ awareness about themselves and individual children’s personal backgrounds, both the preservice and experienced teachers point out the importance of integrating diversity with various disciplines. The preservice teachers mention that connecting diversity issues to subject lessons help
children broaden their knowledge about other cultures and open their minds to cultural differences. The experienced teachers also indicate that integrating diversity issues with different subjects is a good way of exposing children to different cultures that they otherwise might not experience. In designing integrated multicultural curriculum, both the preservice and experienced teachers indicate that classroom teachers’ open-mindedness is a significant component in teachers’ ability to see possibilities for linking diversity issues across the curriculum. They believe that teachers’ passion, enthusiasm, and excitement can help children share and develop meaningful experiences regarding diversity, no matter what the subject matter.

Both the preservice and experienced teachers raise issues of the best ways to develop an integrated multicultural curriculum. The preservice teachers feel that children do not automatically make connections between diversity and subject matter. Trying to find ways to encourage children to learn more about diversity in all subject areas, the preservice teachers suggest the importance of hands-on experience with concrete materials that children feel familiar and comfortable with, rather than starting with abstract ideas about diverse cultures.

Similar to the preservice teachers, the experienced teachers also indicate that concrete teaching materials connected to individual children’s personal experiences are important starting points for diversity lessons. They attempt to connect new materials and activities in a lesson to ideas and objects children are familiar with in their prior experience. While the preservice teachers mainly focus on lesson materials depicted in the various case dilemmas in terms of integrated curriculum, the experienced teachers stress the importance of finding “spaces” in the curriculum where teachers can integrate
and relate their lessons to diversity. They commend the case teachers in terms of their efforts to relate diversity lessons to social studies, science and other subject areas. Related to this, the experienced teachers also point out the importance of teachers guiding and encouraging children to interact with diverse cultures outside the scope of the classroom. For them, an interdisciplinary curriculum goes beyond the four walls of the classroom. Speaking to this point, Dilg (2003) agrees that it is important to “connect their lives with what occurs in the classroom and to take learning from the classroom and apply it to their lives beyond” (p. 191). The experienced teachers have large images of what their integrated multicultural curriculum might be like, while the preservice teachers focus singularly within the classroom, and on the dilemma depicted in each case. The experienced teachers’ views about integrating diversity with other subjects are more complex, going beyond the idiosyncratic case situations. Multicultural education is not a simple issue of what to teach. Teachers’ superficial knowledge of how to deal with diversity issues in curriculum may contribute to children’s more prejudicial knowledge and attitudes toward diverse cultural groups of people. Even though the preservice and experienced teachers express differences in terms of how they will handle diversity in relation to integrated curriculum, they do not particularly mention what attention they will pay to the integrated curriculum regarding diversity. The preservice teachers seem to need to extend their knowledge and experience in integrating diversity to multiple subjects. The simple notion of the experienced teachers’ “finding spaces” for integrated curriculum beyond the “narrower” scope of handling materials, however, does not necessarily mean that they are more multiculturally competent than the preservice teachers. Both groups indicate the importance of ‘integrated curriculum’ regarding
diversity, but need more critical focus on genuine connections of subjects to cultural diversity.

*Flexibility of Problem-Solving*

*Teacher- or child-centered.* The preservice and experienced teachers acknowledge the importance of both teachers and children having a role in resolving the dilemmas portrayed in cases. Both the preservice and experienced teachers suggest the need for locating additional information, participating in research, and identifying resource materials and individuals. However, the preservice teachers suggest more teacher-centered ways for problem-solving while the experienced teachers see their roles as facilitators for children’s learning. Even though both the preservice and experienced teachers consider that developing positive attitudes towards diversity is important, the preservice teachers frequently suggest a more didactic, explanatory approach to instruction. They think that it is beneficial for children to be exposed to “proper” understanding of diversity through teachers’ clear and direct explanations of lesson goals or materials, rather than a more experiential approach. While the preservice teachers focus on disseminating information about a topic related to diversity, the experienced teachers propose to use media such as pictures, literature, role-playing, or other interactive activities to engage children in diversity lessons. While the preservice teachers rationalize their direct problem-solving as the best way to reduce children’s anxiety about other cultures, the experienced teachers believe that an interactive, child-centered approach is better. They feel that using a variety of materials and methods is helpful in creating an integrated multicultural curriculum.
As teachers need the opportunities to perceive and confront their own beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes about diverse cultures, children also need a rich learning environment to understand and analytically construct their own meanings about diversity. Teachers can guide children’s “misconceptions” with respect to diversity but cannot transmit cultural knowledge and attitudes to their students. It is important for both teachers and children to care about worth of “self” and “others” and decision making regarding social and cultural issues, especially those closely associated to them. It is difficult for teachers to be “innocent” in terms of children’s knowledge, beliefs, and values; however, it is essential for teachers to examine themselves including their own understanding and biases about diversity.

*Children’s emotions and motivation.* Both the preservice and experienced teachers show sensitivity to children’s feelings about experiencing diverse cultures. They emphasize the need to sympathize with children’s feelings – shock, fearfulness, anxiety, and so forth – during diversity lessons. In order to respect individual children’s feelings in a class, the preservice and experienced teachers take into account the importance of ‘reflection-for-action,’ emphasizing careful anticipation, planning and examination of the potential problems about their lessons. In a sense, this strong emphasis on planning on the part of both preservice and experienced teachers suggests that they hold a somewhat prescriptive view of teaching and learning. The experienced teachers also recommend the need for classroom teachers to implement alternatives to planned lessons when they meet up with children’s negative reactions. Both the preservice and experienced teachers stress flexibility in teaching and learning situations, particularly when it comes to children’s feelings. For example, in the case of “El Secreto de las Ninās”, both groups of teachers,
sensitive to the emotional feelings of the students, suggest that the case teacher needs a less rigid stance by simply providing shoeboxes to the girls.

Believing that children’s emotions are highly related to their motivation to learn, one preservice teacher suggests the importance of modeling for children attitudes of open-mindedness about diversity. For example, in the case of “Who Eats the Mango?”, she proposes that the teacher should eat the unfamiliar fruits and vegetables to intrigue children’s interest in the lesson. However, the experienced teachers are more likely to consider many other ways of motivating children’s learning about diversity, including class discussions, group work, peer tutoring, games, and the use of exaggeration to increase their interest about other cultures. The experienced teachers indicate that teachers should facilitate children’s motivation by focusing on individual children’s personal backgrounds. By contrast, the preservice teachers have few ideas as to how they might motivate students in alternative ways.

This point implies, as preservice teachers point out, that preservice teacher education programs should provide more practical ways of teaching diversity. The “practical ways” do not simply mean “skills,” “techniques,” or “activities” related to diversity. Rather than simply offering “histories” or norms about diversity, teacher education programs should put effort into connecting multicultural ideologies to teaching practice. The reason that the experienced teachers seem to be more diversity competent in real teaching and learning situations, even though they have experienced little formal multicultural education, may possibly be attributed to the fact that they have developed coherent teaching philosophies centered around the importance of individual children’s characteristics. For both preservice and experienced teachers, diversity and multicultural
education cannot be separated from children’s daily lives. However, for the experienced teachers, diversity is more of an issue related to people’s everyday lives, rather than a selection of specific content that falls under the rubric of multicultural education.

*Parent involvement.* Both the preservice and experienced teachers use parents as resources for children’s diversity learning. They feel that parents can be helpful in providing information about children’s personal experiences and background such as developmental level, health issues, family beliefs, and so on, regarding diversity. The preservice and experienced teachers indicate the importance of continuous communication with children’s parents through permission slips, questionnaires, and conversations. They often invite parents from diverse cultural groups and involve them in class projects to build or broaden children’s knowledge and experiences about diversity. Their point reflects, as Pelo and Davidson (2003) indicate, that teachers need to learn about children’s families and communities rather than take on the role of knowledge disseminators. Children do not live in a vacuum far away from their personal backgrounds. As teachers become more knowledgeable about children’s personal beliefs and values related to families and communities, teachers are more likely to be culturally sensitive to diverse groups of children.

*A systemic approach to problem-solving.* The experienced teachers use a more systemic approach to problem solving with respect to case dilemmas, while the preservice teachers’ problem-solving is more segmented and fragmentary in nature. For example, in the case “Who Eats the Mango?”, one of the experienced teachers outlines a sequence of problem-solving activities that could be used to address diversity issues during a science lesson, including discussion about children’s feelings, scavenger hunt
with parents to develop prior experience, and small group work to encourage motivation, followed by large group activity and discussion. In this regard, Reiff and Cannella (1992) claim that preservice teachers conceptualize multicultural education as more of an isolated segment in the curriculum rather than a process and total instructional approach with all children. This suggests a naïve idealism concerning issues related to cultural diversity. In addition, Reiff and Cannella (1992) find that other experienced teachers also demonstrate problem-solving approaches that particularly focus on stimulating children’s motivation or integrating diversity with other disciplines.

*Children’s constructing their own meaning about social issues.* Both the preservice and experienced teachers notice the importance of children’s active involvement and ownership through small or large group work. They believe that group work and discussion approaches help children actively participate in diversity learning. In the case “Where Have All the *Ipil-Ipil* Trees Gone?”, the preservice teachers emphasize that it is important for teachers to have culturally sensitive discussions with children about controversial issues such as deforestation in order to help the children better understand environmental issues and the teacher better understand children’s family issues. However, the experienced teachers, speaking about the same case, indicate that teachers also need to share scientific knowledge about deforestation in a culturally sensitive manner, so that children will be exposed to diverse sources of knowledge. Both the preservice and experienced teachers emphasize the importance of respecting children’s home and cultural values, suggesting discussion as a way of solving the dilemma. However, the preservice teachers feel that scientific knowledge should be left out of the discussion, so as not to offend parents.
As Pattnaik (2003) indicates, multicultural education is not to learn and understand only “self” or “others.” Multicultural education cannot be effective if it simply involves experiencing cultural materials from diverse cultures. Multicultural education should provide all participants opportunities to share and reflect on their own and others’ knowledge, beliefs, or values. Emphasizing the importance of understanding positionality in interpreting the past, present, and one’s own or others’ knowledge, assumptions, and attitudes, Banks (1993) asserts that “multicultural education is an education for functioning effectively in a pluralistic democratic society” (p. 5). In this sense, lack of recognition and understanding about other cultures can lead to victimizing cultural others by producing prejudice and stereotypes. Along this same line, the experienced teachers’ desire to expose children to a variety of cultural perspectives is meaningful for diversity and multicultural education. Just as ‘scientific, empirical, verified, and objective’ knowledge is not considered as “truth” from the perspective of “knowledge construction”, children’s home and community knowledge can be viewed similarly. Diversity and multicultural education does not attempt to find or prove “truth” in the world. Rather, multicultural education involves experiencing multiple groups’ perspectives, in order to develop better understanding about one’s own group and others’.

The experienced teachers also take into account the importance of children’s small group work and discussion with “peers”; this is rarely mentioned by the preservice teachers. The experienced teachers consider that understanding both sides of an issue – scientific school knowledge and community knowledge – is important in helping children construct their own knowledge. They believe that teachers’ roles are not simply to give children “right” or “true” information and knowledge. They also seem to assume that
social interactions with peers help children scaffold each other’s ideas, as a catalyst to expand their learning. The experienced teachers believe that opportunities for children to think about controversial issues with peers and teachers helps them construct individual and social meanings about the issues. While the preservice teachers do not entirely believe that teachers or scientific institutionalized knowledge are the authorities or knowledge givers, the experienced teachers find it easier to share more responsibility for learning with children.

*Raising awareness about community issues and taking social actions.* Even when discrepancies of belief are detected between children’s home and school, the experienced teachers acknowledge the importance of raising awareness about community issues. Therefore, the experienced teachers suggest teaching the “scientific school knowledge” in a culturally sensitive manner and openly using the controversial situations as a basis for student learning which can explore the relationship of home community, and school knowledge; they believe all three forms of knowledge are valuable. This point is supported by Tippins, Nichols, and Dana (1999) who report that experienced teachers focus on individual and community activity as important aspects of children’s knowledge construction. However, the preservice teachers do not see controversial issues as opportunities to facilitate activism and connections to the community. Rather, they tend to psychologize, empathizing with children’s feelings of confusion or other troubled emotions involving conflicts between home and school. In the case “Where Have All the *Ipil-Ipil* Trees Gone?”, the preservice teachers believe the teacher should not intervene directly in relation to parents. However as discussed earlier, some of the preservice
teachers emphasize that it is important to discuss community issues with children when
the topics are brought up in a class.

The experienced teachers feel that children need to acknowledge what conflicts or
issues exist in their community. Even though they feel that they cannot change anything
regarding children’s home culture and beliefs, the experienced teachers consider children
as “the seed to change future problematic situations.” In this context, one of the
experienced teachers proposes to help children take social actions such as writing letters
to government officials to address environmental problems in the community. Reflecting
on Banks’ (1995a) multicultural curricular approach, the preservice teachers, for the most
part, emphasize an ‘additive’ or ‘transformation approach’ to multicultural education,
which involves including or facilitating children’s understanding about various cultural
issues and perspectives. Likewise, the experienced teachers emphasize a ‘transformation
approach,’ stressing that children should construct their own knowledge through
exposure to various cultural groups’ perspectives and knowledge. However, one
experienced teacher, with fifteen years of experience, advocates a ‘social action
approach’ to multicultural education, focusing on planning with children opportunities to
“make decisions on critical social issues” and engage in social actions for solving
community problems.

Ways of Perceiving Educational Dilemmas of the Preservice and Experienced Teachers

Context. The experienced teachers provide a large amount of descriptive detail
about the context of cases, including personal information or backgrounds of teachers,
children, parents, community, or other characteristics of the cases. Their descriptive
accounts of case context indicates an awareness of a sense of place, and the specific
localized contexts of dilemmas. Even though the preservice teachers also start to react and discuss their experiences by taking into account contextual background information, they tend to focus more directly on the case dilemmas themselves, not always seeing the relevance of the contextual background. Consistent with the findings of McLaughlin and Talbert (1993), the experienced teachers put forth efforts to develop a sense of the embedded contexts of dilemmas, believing that this will help them better understand the influence of community on the dynamics of teachers, children, and other actors in the various cases. The experienced teachers realize that teaching and learning context is helpful in identifying educational dilemmas and considering other people’s perspectives with respect to resolving conflicts. Without having a sense of context about teaching and learning, teachers cannot make effective decisions. Because an educational phenomenon can be differently interpreted and resolved, context helps teachers develop deeper understandings about complex dynamics of a “simple” educational event or situation.

Historical view. Even though the experienced teachers present more descriptive accounts of the context of cases, both the preservice and experienced teachers consider the historical embeddedness of case dilemmas. In the case “Who Eats the Mango?”, the preservice and experienced teachers consider the student teacher’s lack of experience, the students’ lack of knowledge about immigrant families, the racial and socioeconomic backgrounds of students and other factors. In the cases “The Day the Lobster Died”, “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”, “El Secreto de Las Ninãs”, and “When Do You Perform Tuob?”, the preservice and experienced teachers think about the cultural and personal backgrounds of teachers and children, the cultural differences between children’s home community and school, teachers’ personal life experiences, and
children’s lifeworlds including aspects such as poverty. Rather than considering simplistic solutions to issues such as children’s not bringing school supplies, both the preservice and experienced teachers reflect on contextual issues surrounding the case dilemmas that have evolved over a period of time.

Without historical views about children’s personal situations, teachers can find it hard to be culturally responsive to individual students; they may have only a superficial understanding of their problems. Without genuine realization about the possible explanations for children’s certain behaviors or thoughts, teaching cannot be productive for all diverse groups of children. Teachers’ endeavors to consider the origins and histories of students’ behaviors and beliefs can assist them in becoming more aware of their own teaching practice, rather than simply focusing on finding an absolute, correct solution.

Extending the case issues to their own teaching practice, the experienced teachers apply the historical analysis that they “practice” during the case experiences to their own students’ problems. For example, experiencing the cases, the experienced teachers reflect on students from divorced families, students with illness in the family or other complex issues. They believe that ordinary problems such as ‘not doing homework’ should be viewed in light of students’ histories and personal backgrounds.

*Narrator.* Interestingly, the preservice teachers show that they use more affirmative ways of talking about issues surrounding case dilemmas. “I had never even thought about…” “I definitely like the way…” “I was always the kind of person…” “My parents have always done a good job…” “You have to teach…” “I don’t have a problem with…” “I would never want any children in my class to think…” “I have never felt
like…” “You have to accept…” Yet it is interesting to note that the experienced teachers rarely begin a conversation or reaction with “I,” focusing more on context or situations related to the characters in each case. The experienced teachers’ comments are more tentative in relation to their analysis of case dilemmas. “If they do not understand…” “If they are not able to do…” “We need to modify work…” “Some of them would stop and talk about…” This implies that the experienced teachers recognize the complexity of situations and consider more alternatives and possibilities associated with certain dilemmas; by contrast, the preservice teachers merely focus on the dilemma as portrayed explicitly in the case.

- What multiple perspectives do preservice and experienced teachers express through reflection involving case-based pedagogy?

**Perspective-Taking**

*Taking the perspective of case teachers.* Both the preservice and experienced teachers consider the perspectives of the characters in cases. They attempt to understand the perspective of teachers, inferring their intentions and assumptions for lessons, and evaluating their ideas positively or negatively. The preservice teachers, however, are far more critical of the case teachers in terms of their lack of awareness and sensitivity to children’s personal experiences. The experienced teachers empathize more with case teachers’ difficulties, distress, frustration, and confusion with respect to children’s reactions. The experienced teachers seem to associate the case teachers with their colleagues and are willing to express a more tolerant view of the teachers’ actions. Even when the experienced teachers criticize case teachers, they still empathize with the case teachers’ feelings and recall similar experiences from their own teaching practice. The
preservice teachers, however, seem to be distanced from the case teachers and criticize them, taking a third person perspective.

However, as the preservice teachers experience more cases, some of them begin to put themselves in the position of ‘myself as a case teacher.’ Taking this perspective, the preservice teachers express more agreement, understanding, and sympathy with the case teachers. For example, in the case “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?,” one preservice teacher comments, “Perla did an excellent job in her science lesson. She knows a great deal about multicultural issues in the community.”

*Taking the perspective of children in cases.* The preservice and experienced teachers commonly consider the perspective of children in cases. When they take the perspective of case children, they focus on children’s reactions in classes and feelings like fear, rejection, discomfort, confusion, worry, difficulties, embarrassment, anger, disinterest, hesitancy, and curiosity. However, the experienced teachers’ reflections reveal a more child-centered perspective as they more frequently describe and empathize with children’s emotions. In addition to their concern for children’s feelings, the experienced teachers are more aware of and sensitive to case teachers’ emotions. The experienced teachers illustrate their sympathies with both children and teachers while the preservice teachers take a more critical stance regarding case teachers’ mistakes and “failures.” This notion reflects the finding of Kagan and Tippins (1991), who argue that experienced teachers show more “sensitivity to the internal struggles” (p. 287) such as affective reactions in their perceptions of classroom dilemmas than do preservice teachers.
Taking the perspective of parents in cases. In this study only experienced teachers consider the perspective of parents. The experienced teachers realize and are more concerned about issues in terms of the relationship with parents. Thus, the experienced teachers, in their case analyses, consider the perspective of parents, anticipating potential conflicts that could arise. It may be that the preservice teachers’ lack of teaching experience hinders them from extending their perspectives to children’s parents. Even when preservice teachers notice possible conflicts with parents, they try to solve the problems by focusing more on the relationship with children. A partial explanation may be that the experienced teachers’ school environment influences their sensitivity to the relationship with parents. For example, the experienced teachers who work at Christian private schools indicate that when a child has a problem with negative attitudes towards other cultural groups, the classroom teacher’s lack of action with respect to the situation is “not tolerated” by school’s principal. In this sense, the experienced teachers’ sensitivity to the relationship with parents can be considered a type of practical knowledge that they have developed in their own teaching and learning context.

Participants’ own perspectives as future teachers or classroom teachers. The preservice and experienced teachers also demonstrate their own perspective related to case dilemmas. The preservice teachers reflect the perspective of ‘myself as a future teacher.’ Experiencing cases, the preservice teachers recognize their lack of awareness concerning diversity, and articulate their planning and future teaching regarding diversity. “I will engage children in diverse experiences.” “I will never bring a live animal to children in my class.” Taking this perspective, the preservice teachers show their willingness to learn more about their future students, their families and community
culture. In the same manner, the experienced teachers consider the perspective of ‘myself as a classroom teacher.’ From this perspective, the experienced teachers reflect upon their own lessons and teaching practice, and plan future teaching regarding diversity. Unlike the preservice teachers, however, the experienced teachers do plan the process as well as the intention of teaching about diversity.

**Perspectives of people beyond case situations.** Beyond the dilemma, posed by the cases and their authentic teaching contexts, the preservice and experienced teachers take the perspective of ‘myself as a child,’ in recalling their own childhood experiences. However, the preservice teachers display more perspectives beyond the immediate context of the cases. The preservice teachers discuss the cases from the perspective of teachers during their student internship. In addition, one of the preservice teachers reflects on the case from the perspective of her mother. Assuming her mother’s attitudes and beliefs about diversity, she explains the importance of empathizing with children’s emotions. The experienced teachers discuss case issues from the perspective of case characters. They also consider the perspectives of people in their immediate school settings, beyond the context of cases. Because the preservice teachers, however, find it difficult to take on the perspectives of classroom teachers, they frequently “borrow” the perspectives of their internship mentor teachers in order to connect case dilemmas to real teaching practice. In addition, the preservice teachers discuss issues by sharing examples featuring their grandfathers, cousins, neighbors, or even people from an article, although they do not take the perspectives of these individuals.

**Perceiving contradiction.** In Lundeberg and Fawver’s (1994) study, they report that preservice teachers “improve” and are able to see multiple perspectives to case
dilemmas at the end of the semester. Interpreting the findings of these authors’ study to mean that as teachers gain more experience and knowledge in teaching and learning they develop multiple perspectives, I, as a researcher, initially assumed that the experienced teachers would show a wider variety of perspective-taking than do preservice teachers. However, the findings of this study challenge my initial beliefs in terms of the relationship between perspective-taking, teachers’ experiences, and knowledge of teaching and learning.

“The term ‘experienced’ teacher does not necessarily imply expert practitioner. Aside from the number of years in teaching, it is not clear what this term means. Nor is it wise for us to consider that novice or experienced teachers’ interpretations are somehow exclusive or inherently better” (Tippins, Nichols, & Dana, 1999, p. 350). In addition to the above partial explanation of perspective-taking, it is appropriate to point out that this study cannot assume that the experienced teachers have a better understanding of diversity in teaching and learning than the preservice teachers possess simply due to their experiential differences in teaching and learning practice. Another possible interpretation is that the experienced teachers view diversity primarily in school settings while the preservice teachers see diversity in their personal lives as well as in school settings. This may imply that the preservice teachers “live diversity” but the experienced teachers “do diversity” within their school environment.

- How do preservice and experienced teachers connect theoretical principles in reflection through case-based pedagogy?
Connectedness of Theoretical Principles

*Content integration: Beyond a tourist curriculum.* With respect to the dimension of content integration, both the preservice and experienced teachers express the belief that teachers should avoid a tourist curriculum; nevertheless, many of them practice a tourist approach to curriculum. Considering that teachers’ lessons are particularly important in developing children’s concepts of diversity, the preservice and experienced teachers indicate the significance of meaningful experiences about diverse cultures. In the case “Who Eats the Mango?”, the experienced teachers criticize the student teacher’s teaching, pointing out that she simply “throws them out” to experience new and different cultures. The preservice teachers also point out that diversity lessons cannot be meaningful without teachers’ efforts to teach and learn about diverse cultures on an ongoing basis. Emphasizing the importance of an authentic experience that is based on children’s everyday life, in the cases “Who Eats the Mango?” and “The Day the Lobster Died”, the preservice and experienced teachers criticize the case teachers’ ‘contributions approach’ (Banks, 1995a) to multicultural curriculum. They describe the importance of including diversity as a part of daily teaching activities that extend beyond cultural artifacts. However, one experienced teacher – April – feels that the lesson of the student teacher in the “Mango” case is commendable in terms of the lesson goals and her intentions for the lesson. The preservice and experienced teachers’ description of the importance of avoiding a tourist curriculum approach supports Pattnaik’s (2003) argument that understanding of diversity cannot be built by simply exposing children to exotic cultural artifacts such as holidays, festivals, food, and so on, at specific times during the year. Without reflecting upon cultures’ embedded values, beliefs, and real-life
issues, a tourist curriculum or contributions approach to multicultural education cannot be meaningful for children’s multicultural understanding.

The preservice and experienced teachers emphasize the importance of teachers considering children’s personal backgrounds, prior experiences, and emotions in planning and implementing diversity lessons. They think that being aware of individual children’s experiences and backgrounds is necessary for a deeper sense and understanding of cultures that goes beyond the usual focus on cultural artifacts. This point implies, as Banks (1994) contends, that changes in multicultural education should be made from gathering children’s perspectives, not simply in curricular materials. The National Council for the Social Studies (1992) concurs with respect to the beliefs of the preservice and experienced teachers asserting that “a unified and cohesive democratic society can be created only when the rights of its diverse people are reflected in its institutions, within its national culture, and within its school, colleges, and universities” (p. 134).

Knowledge construction: The role of social interaction and different reality in knowledge construction. “Knowledge reflects the social, cultural, and power positions of people within society” (Banks, 1995a, p. 12). The preservice teachers think there is no absolute knowledge in the world. They think children’s views of the world are strongly influenced by their social interactions with people. For them, the same content can be differently constructed within diverse cultural milieus. Similarly, Banks (1993) asserts that:

The assumptions, perspectives, and insights that students derive from their experiences in their homes and community cultures are used as screens to view and interpret the knowledge and experiences that they encounter in the school and
in other institutions within the larger society….Personal and cultural knowledge is problematic when it conflicts with scientific ways of validating knowledge, is oppositional to the culture of the school, or challenges the main tenets and assumptions of mainstream academic knowledge (p. 7).

Both the preservice and experienced teachers also indicate that understanding cultural difference is important in interpreting and constructing knowledge. Being sensitive to the fact that knowledge is not abstract and neutral across all cultures, and that school is not the only truth and reality, the experienced teachers stress that children’s home culture and ethical beliefs should be fully respected. Considering situation and positionality of people with different realities, the experienced teachers point out that children’s culturally appropriate knowledge is necessary in dealing with diversity issues because lack of or inappropriate knowledge strongly affects people’s discriminatory feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. The experienced teachers think that knowing about other cultures will facilitate open-minded attitudes in students. It is noticeable that the preservice and experienced teachers particularly focus on children’s emotions in discussing the knowledge construction dimension. They continuously emphasize teachers taking into account how children’s personal backgrounds influence their knowledge construction.

In the case “Who Eats the Mango?”, one of the experienced teachers suggests that children should construct their own learning and knowledge about diversity through discovery learning using various materials and processes. The experienced teacher describes that even media such as TV or books can convey to children biased perceptions about cultural matters. Her point implies that teachers should be careful in building
learning environments with respect to diversity. Another experienced teacher indicates, in the case “Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?”, that it will be meaningful to openly share thoughts about social phenomena. She notes, “Teachers need to teach what is ‘right’ and ‘truth.’” In classrooms, the experienced teacher thinks that children should be provided with opportunities to discuss both sides of the coin and construct personal forms of knowledge from various perspectives, because “truth is a product of social processes.” On this point, Banks (1993) provides ways to show “how to make effective instructional use of the personal and cultural knowledge of students while at the same time helping them to reach beyond their own cultural boundaries” (p. 8). Contending that teachers should be sensitive to children’s ‘personal and cultural knowledge’ in teaching and learning, he suggests that children’s personal and cultural knowledge can be used “as a vehicle to motivate students and as a foundation for teaching school knowledge” (p. 8).

Prejudice reduction: The role of knowledge with respect to prejudicial attitudes. Both the preservice and experienced teachers discuss how teachers can help children reduce prejudice and develop democratic attitudes and values toward different cultural groups of people. The preservice teachers emphasize that children should have positive, interesting, and real life learning experiences with other cultures to foster enlightened attitudes toward other cultural groups. In this sense, they indicate the importance of integrating majority culture with diverse cultures. In the course of reflecting on the case “Who Eats the Mango?”, the preservice teachers voice strong concerns about the influence of “labeling” on genuine understanding about other cultures. They perceive that classroom teachers’ negative attitudes toward other cultures, particularly with respect to
the labeling of other cultures as “new” and “different”, send a message to children that other cultures are “abnormal” while their own cultures are “normal” and “standard.”

With respect to this point, it is interesting to mention Yamauchi and McGuire’s (2003) argument on labeling. Traditionally, labeling is considered as a cause of stereotyping. However, they point out both the positive and negative sides of categorization. Describing the negative side, they suggest that labeling produces stereotypes about other cultural groups. According to these researchers, “When a person in a particular social group is defined with a categorical label, people are more likely to associate that person with dominant features in the group” (p. 339). However, they claim that the success of multicultural education does not lie “in decategorization, but in clarifying the differences and similarities between social groups” (p. 339). This perspective points to the positive side of labeling. Children can get in-depth understanding and mutual respect for other cultures by participating in the salient process of recognizing the uniqueness of each culture.

The experienced teachers voice concerns similar to those of the preservice teachers. However, the experienced teachers show more in-depth understanding of the relationship between children’s understanding and knowledge to the development of prejudicial attitudes about other cultures. The preservice teachers focus more on prejudice in terms of the procedures of teaching and the specific lessons that are depicted in cases. This finding is in line with the research of Tippins, Nichols, and Dana (1999) who report that experienced teachers consider the “larger goals they hold for teaching in general – values which do not directly connect to improved science learning” (p. 345) – rather than focus on “routines and strategies” (p. 345) of teaching. The experienced teachers believe
that obtaining additional information about other cultures is useful for fostering children’s open-mindedness and positive attitudes towards other cultures. Reflecting on the case of “El Secreto de las Ninãs”, one of the experienced teachers comments that people’s unfounded assumptions can provide an opportunity to examine wider prejudices about other cultural groups of people. This point emphasizes the importance of teachers analyzing their assumptions and attitudes as well as obtaining knowledge about children’s personal backgrounds. Teachers need to prevent children’s feelings of alienation from others through incessant examination of their own knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs towards other cultural groups of people.

Equity Pedagogy: Equity based on personal situations. “Schools should recognize that they cannot treat all students alike or they run the risk of denying equal educational opportunity to all persons” (NCSS, 1992, p. 134). With respect to this point, the preservice teachers emphasize that classroom teachers need to be sensitive to children’s personal backgrounds by providing equal learning opportunities for each child. As an example, in the case “El Secreto de las Ninãs”, both the preservice and experienced teachers indicate that it is natural for teachers to “offer school supplies” to children who have difficulties obtaining them, in order to ensure equal educational opportunity.

Like the preservice teachers, the experienced teachers stress the need for teachers to facilitate children’s academic achievement by creating equal educational opportunities for all children. The experienced teachers point out the importance of families, teachers, and schools joining together in assuming responsibility for children’s education. While the preservice teachers believe that it is important to provide equal school supplies in order for children to have equal learning opportunities, the experienced teachers in
contrast, feel that offering supplies for class projects to create equal opportunities for learning does not thoroughly address issues of “equity.” The experienced teachers feel that, according to individual children’s specific situations, teachers need to modify their teaching approaches to foster children’s success and achievement in learning in equitable ways.

Both the preservice and experienced teachers attempt to deconstruct the meaning of “equal treatment for all children.” The preservice and experienced teachers do not think that treating all children in the same manner constitutes equity. They think that children from impoverished families should be treated differently based on their personal situations. Furthermore, the experienced teachers feel that equity should be a thorough consideration of sensitivity to each child’s emotions and motivation for learning. The experienced teachers pay significant attention to the emotional difficulties children may experience when teachers treat all children in the same manner. One of the experienced teachers mentions, “What is fair for a child is what the child needs,” whether it is materially or emotionally.

_Empowering school culture and social structure: Inclusion of diverse beliefs and social services._ According to Banks (1995a), schools are cultural organizations and institutions that consist of social structure and a certain set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, actions, and shared meanings. The goal of this dimension of multicultural education is to transform schools in order for diverse groups of people to experience equality and equity. In this sense, the preservice teachers’ reactions to the cases “Who Eats the Mango?” and “When Do You Perform _Tuob_?” emphasize the importance of empowering different cultures by equally addressing the multiple knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes of
various groups of people. They feel that no cultural group should be ignored within the school culture; rather, emphasizing all beliefs of various cultural groups helps children feel positively about diverse cultures. Accordingly, the preservice teachers recommend that teachers examine the embedded beliefs and values about children’s family and local community knowledge.

With respect to this point, one of the experienced teachers advocates an activist approach to empowering diverse cultural groups. This experienced teacher considers that students and schools should be empowered to participate in larger societies and cultures. She takes into account social services for ‘less privileged’ cultural groups. Holding these beliefs, the experienced teacher is more likely to connect her teaching to children’s community. She attempts to help children make reflective decisions and take personal and social actions closely related to community issues. Helping children obtain genuine understanding and take needed actions for their community, the experienced teacher thinks that they can develop a sense of democracy. Interestingly, only one experienced teacher discusses the dimension of “Empowering school culture and social structure,” while all preservice teachers realize the issues associated with this dimension. Ultimately, quality education about diversity will develop both preservice and experienced teachers’ positive awareness, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about other cultures.

Research question 2. How do the inquiries of case-based pedagogy influence preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity?

2-a. What are preservice and experienced teachers’ perceptions of case-based pedagogy?
Constructing Knowledge With Sensitivity to Different Cultures

Reflecting on teaching practice by being exposed to diverse cultures and perspectives. Unlike traditional teaching methods usually based on textbooks and lectures, case-based experiences have preservice and experienced teachers actively engaged in creating meanings about their learning, devoting time and effort to critically read, analyze, solve problems, and evaluate solutions within the “contextualized, local, and particular nature of teaching and learning” (Moje, Remillard, & Wade, 1999, p. 89). Interacting with case characters within specific sociocultural contexts, both the preservice and experienced teachers indicate that cases are useful tools in helping them to construct knowledge and understanding about different cultures. Through case-based pedagogy, the preservice teachers perceive that they become more aware of and sensitive to new, different, and unfamiliar cultural contexts. Exposing themselves to diverse cultural issues, cases let the preservice teachers reflect more on actual classroom situations in relation to diversity from multiple perspectives.

In the course of carefully observing the case teachers’ teaching practice, and comparing their own beliefs about diversity in teaching and learning with those of the case teachers, the preservice teachers emphasize that they are now more aware of and sensitive to the subcultures of each individual child. “I had never been happy with what I call the list approach to multicultural education (list of characteristics that supposedly describe the people of any given culture) because such lists often cause more problems than they solve” (Nieto, 1999, p. 189). Believing it to be problematic to categorize children in terms of cultural groups, the preservice teachers feel that cases about diversity
deeply affect their sensitivities towards individual children. They feel that cases are vivid, easy, and interesting tools of teaching and learning regarding diversity.

“How can I make this a diversity issue?” The experienced teachers describe their difficulties in identifying the case conflicts as diversity issues, even though they feel just as positive about the case-based pedagogy as the preservice teachers. The experienced teachers feel the benefits of case-based pedagogy rest with the opportunities to personally think more in-depth about diversity. Connecting the case situations to their own teaching practice, the experienced teachers find themselves broadening their perspectives about diversity and becoming more aware of and knowledgeable about children’s personal backgrounds in classrooms.

As the experienced teachers become more sensitive to issues of diversity, they feel a need to think more about different issues in their classrooms. After experiencing case-based pedagogy, the experienced teachers express a renewed sense of challenge to their teaching in terms of diversity: How can I make a more diversity rich curriculum and class circumstances? How can I look for opportunities in each and every subject I teach to introduce cultural diversity to the children in my class? The experienced teachers attempt to look at children and teaching and learning situations beyond the academic objectives. They try to find opportunities to enrich individual children’s experiences in a classroom beyond general stereotypical depictions of culture. The experienced teachers consider case-based pedagogy as a “good” tool to enhance awareness and sensitivity to diversity. As Nieto (1999) points out, through case-based experiences regarding diversity, the preservice and experienced teachers become more aware of children’s individual
diversity rather than simply focusing on cultural diversity with respect to groups of people. As Nieto (1999, p. 190) suggests,

No case study of a single individual can adequately or legitimately portray the complexity of an entire group of people….Cases can help to challenge theories that, after a while, take on a life of their own. Teachers need numerous examples of real students who behave in incredibly idiosyncratic ways, not as representatives of their entire cultural group.

*In-depth Reflections On Diversity and Knowing Personal Beliefs*

*Seeing diversity through “my” eyes on “their” positions: Constructing personal truth through reflecting on cases.* Complex cases with educational dilemmas of the real world provide opportunities for preservice and experienced teachers to investigate and reflect upon their own ‘knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs’ in teaching and learning (Lunderberg & Fawver, 1994). Analyzing cases, both preservice and experienced teachers report that they connect the case situations to their own experiences, thoughts, and beliefs about teaching and learning (Lundeberg, 1999; Lundeberg, 1994). In this sense, case-based pedagogy is considered as an active instructional method to facilitate teachers’ reflective thinking, providing them with opportunities to experiment with case dilemmas from various perspectives and to clarify their beliefs about teaching and learning.

Along this same line, the preservice and experienced teachers in this study perceive that case-based pedagogy contributes to their reflection on culturally diverse situations, providing them with opportunities to see other teachers’ experiences about teaching and learning. The experienced teachers keep trying to put themselves in the case
teacher’s position, thinking about the dilemma from the case teacher’s perspective. In this sense, they point out that they learn about diversity by sympathizing with and criticizing the classroom teachers in cases. They attempt to fully consider the case teachers’ specific cultural situations rather than criticizing them as an outsider.

Getting out of the comfort zone: Changing diversity practice through altering beliefs. Experiencing the open-ended case dilemmas and making an effort to resolve the issues regarding diversity during their analyses, the preservice teachers believe that cases help them construct their own personal beliefs and “truth” about diversity. The preservice teachers explain, “Truth is what a person personally believes to be true.” Based on their previous experiences, the preservice teachers note that they are able to experiment and reflect on how to deal with the case conflicts and construct a personal understanding of diversity. Confirming the argument of Pajares (1992), who suggests that teachers’ beliefs are strongly influenced by their prior life events rather than acquired through theories and knowledge in teaching and learning, one of the preservice teachers in this study – Shazia – describes the understanding she constructs about diversity. “If a child says to me Jesus is the Son of God, I’ll just say, Oh, well, I’m glad that’s what you believe.” As a Muslim, one of the preservice teachers points out that she develops a broader and more generous and empathetic perspective on religion in classrooms through the case-based experiences. She shows her willingness to create inclusion experiences for every child as a future classroom teacher.

The experienced teachers’ views about learning through case-based pedagogy, particularly with respect to diversity, show their epistemological changes about knowledge. They go beyond the positivistic conception of knowledge as “fixed and
neutral” and “taken-for-granted” (Moje, Remillard, & Wade, 1999, p. 81). However, from their reflections on the case situations, the experienced teachers experience difficulties and frustration. “What can the teachers do in the specific circle instances?” The experienced teachers wrestle with the issues of how to handle dilemmas to the extent that they “get out of their comfort zone.” It is this position that really makes cases tools for in-depth reflection for the experienced teachers regarding diversity in teaching and learning.

*Learning from cases rather than textbooks.* Developing and changing their epistemological beliefs, the preservice teachers believe that their culture is not always the norm in the world; it is mediated by relationships with the surrounding people. This implies, as researchers (Lundeberg, 1999; Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994; Pajares, 1992) contend, that the preservice teachers’ alteration of beliefs may later have impact on their teaching practice. The preservice teachers point out that their continuous peer conversation and social interaction about diversity issues helps them become more reflective about teaching and learning practice. Cases are “value-laden, if not explicitly, then certainly implicitly….dialogue allows us and our students to transcend the limitations of our own experience and values” (Harrington & Garrison, 1992, p. 717).

The preservice teachers note that case-based pedagogy is “definitely” better than textbooks in terms of opportunities for in-depth reflection about diversity in teaching and learning situations. Experiencing cases, they perceive that they can challenge or confirm their personal beliefs rather than simply conforming to existing theory or “truth.” They comment that they think about the other side of argument, adapt the ideas obtained from university to actual working examples, and imagine themselves in real classrooms in the
diverse context of cases. For them, textbook knowledge is considered to be a “harder way of remembering even though so many key ideas about diversity” can be found in books. The preservice teachers think that cases providing authentic context are “better than looking at an encyclopedia.” Yet the preservice teachers point out that learning from case-based pedagogy requires more time for in-depth reflection; they note that it is not easy to develop meaningful learning by simply reading the cases.

The experienced teachers also believe that they learn more about diversity through case-based pedagogy than from textbooks. Feeling excited about the possibilities of applying the teaching and learning knowledge from cases to their real teaching context, the experienced teachers reflect upon how the case situations can be transferred to their own teaching and learning practice in terms of diversity.

Suggestions for Experiencing Case-Based Pedagogy Regarding Diversity

**Need more background information.** Effective cases “describe in vivid detail the sociopolitical context in which students live….Details such as these need to be included in culturally relevant cases so that the influence of other contexts can be taken into account in explaining students’ school experiences” (Nieto, 1999, p. 191). Along the same line, the preservice teachers suggest that case authors include more background information related to case dilemmas. Expressing the difficulty in completely understanding the case dilemmas, the preservice teachers report the need for thorough knowledge of information relevant to a particular dilemma. They think that case authors should consider the readers or audiences for the cases and provide them with rich and contextualized details.
Need to understand sociocultural context of cases. “Put yourself in the person’s shoes.” Feeling that it is easy to criticize case teachers as an outsider, the preservice teachers point out that case readers should reflect on the case teachers’ unique teaching situations. Related to this, the preservice teachers also indicate that case readers should not generalize too much about cultures from cases. They feel that overgeneralization may actually be harmful or offensive to cultures.

Need more cases with various examples of diversity. Both the preservice and experienced teachers express the desire to experience even more cases about diversity. They feel that cases show them holistic features of teaching and learning that can be difficult to grasp through more traditional forms of instruction. Accordingly, they indicate their desire to experience other aspects of diversity through case-based pedagogy.

Need to balance curricular and case knowledge. Even though the experienced teachers feel that cases provide great learning opportunities for diversity in ‘real-life’ teaching contexts, one of them – April – feels strongly that there needs to be a balance between formal curricular knowledge and case-based knowledge. While she values formal curricular knowledge, she nevertheless mentions that through cases, teachers can get more authentic and realistic experiences beyond what textbooks convey. “I feel more comfortable with cases seeing their [teachers in cases] mistakes and struggles.” As Noddings (1999) indicates, the experienced teacher demonstrates her feeling of increased confidence by recognizing that every other teacher is also struggling in one’s own teaching and learning.
2-b. What learning do preservice and experienced teachers gain through case-based pedagogy?

*Perceived Meaningfulness*

*Learning to perceive diversity beyond racial and ethnic issues.* In this study, case-based pedagogy is not conceptualized as a treatment to make a distinction between participants’ practical knowledge about diversity between before and after case-based experiences. After the five case experiences, however, the preservice teachers exhibit more extensive understanding of diversity. Even before the case-based experiences, the preservice teachers shared the belief that individual children should be treated equally without discrimination, regardless of their personal backgrounds. Yet the preservice teachers’ initial views about diversity were more focused on macro levels of cultural categories such as race, ethnicity, and language. The preservice teachers now perceive that diversity is more complex than issues of ethnicity and race. Similarly, the experienced teachers initially expressed a view of “seeing culture in terms of exotic differences among different countries” and races. One of the experienced teachers – April – expresses that it is an “eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity that she has not previously considered.

*Learning to be sensitive to children’s personal situations.* Experiencing moments of “experience” (Scott, 1992) that is ‘subjective, linguistic, conscious, and reflective,’ both the preservice and experienced teachers become more sensitive to personal and micro levels of diversity as well as macro levels of diversity. The preservice teachers acknowledge individual children’s “subcultures within each main culture” and the deeper meanings “behind” them. As Irvine (2003, p. 47) suggests,
It does matter who is being taught – the students. The students’ age, developmental level, race and ethnicity, physical and emotional states, prior experiences, interests, family and home life, learning preferences, attitudes about school, and a myriad of other variables influence the teaching and learning processes.

In this same vein, the preservice teachers consider it important not to make pre-assumptions or pre-judgments until knowing children’s personal cultures. Feeling that it is not always possible to have enough information about diverse cultural values and beliefs of children, however, the preservice teachers think that teachers should conduct independent research and reflect on children’s personal and cultural backgrounds. Through case-based pedagogy, the preservice teachers perceive their increased sensitivity to children’s personal backgrounds, situations, and past experiences.

Addressing the issues of the challenge for teachers to create culturally responsive and meaningful learning environments for every child, Phuntsog (1999) describes the need for teachers to ensure whether individual children’s cultural experiences and backgrounds are used as a basis for learning. In addition, he states that classroom teachers should examine their own preparation to work with culturally diverse children in their classrooms. Having the same belief, the experienced teachers emphasize the importance of understanding the relationships between children’s personal backgrounds, including strengths, weaknesses, and personalities, and their culture and family backgrounds. One of the experienced teachers – April – indicates that she now sees her students more “uniquely” as individuals, rather than a “generalizing” the life experiences of all children in her class. “I hadn’t thought about that much, as far as how each child could be
considered diverse.” Another experienced teacher describes how she uses strategies of “more love,” “more close observation,” and “keeping journals” in order to capture an understanding of children’s broader life situations that may impact their performance in school.

Through the “empirical and analytical” (Elbaz, 1981, p. 45) thinking processes of case-based pedagogy, the preservice and experienced teachers show that they become more sensitive to the “knowledge of learners and their characteristics” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). More likely, the preservice and experienced teachers construct practical knowledge regarding ‘how and what to teach’ with respect to diversity, valuing their own experiences within and beyond case situations.

Learning to be culturally sensitive to oneself and others. In order to be multiculturally competent teachers themselves, and to help the children in their classes to be more culturally sensitive to diversity, the preservice and experienced teachers commonly emphasize the following characteristics: “awareness, sensitivity, open-mindedness, acceptance, appreciation, recognition of similarities and differences, mutual respect, interest about other cultures, and celebration.” The preservice teachers stress that teachers should be sensitive to the feelings of children from different cultures. They take into account the need for teachers to learn about “other” cultures without making superficial generalizations. For the experienced teachers, learning about other cultures involves developing respect for “self” and “others.” The experienced teachers attempt to boost children’s self-esteem, believing that when children respect themselves, they also appreciate others. They reflect on respect in various aspects such as personal beliefs, individual rights, cultural rights, and human dignity.
One preservice teacher – Lisa – indicates, “People are so much more the same than they are different.” One experienced teacher – Karla – points out, “I don’t even think about their differences because I just see them. They’re all children. They may be different colors, but they’re also different sizes…” Even though they emphasize the importance of recognizing children’s individual similarities and differences, they feel that children should be treated “equally.” These preservice and experienced teacher’s ‘sameness’ attitudes, the so-called ‘color-blind’ approach, is considered by some to limit conflicts and tensions among racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, or other kinds of diverse groups. However, rather than erroneously easing existing problems regarding children’s personal background, Irvine (2003) suggests that it is important for teachers to consider all aspects of children’s cultures, including beliefs, values, perspectives, and assumptions.

In contrast to the above teachers’ thoughts, other preservice teachers indicate that it is not equal or fair if teachers treat children from diverse cultural backgrounds in the same manner. They feel that teachers have to consider each child’s personal background and experiences. In this same vein, one experienced teacher – April – explains that even ‘respect’ is something that should be considered on the basis of an individual’s sociocultural context. “It’s hard to say that you have to treat everybody the same, because they are different.” Seeing more diverse meanings for respect in terms of children’s individual differences, this individual suggests that teachers need to be careful not to talk about simply “color of people’s skin.”
The Importance of Teaching Approach

The importance of bridging children’s personal cultural knowledge and knowledge of other cultures. As future teachers, the preservice teachers recognize the importance of balancing children’s home culture and experiences with other cultures. The preservice teachers think that care should be taken not to offend any students, particularly, when dealing with controversial issues. Feeling that teachers should be role models of diversity, they question how to approach sensitive issues in a culturally responsive manner.

Concurring with the preservice teachers’ point, Banks (1993) and Irvine (2003) assert that culturally responsive teachers should understand and appreciate children’s cultural knowledge from home and community and use their personal cultural knowledge as motivators to experience other cultures. These researchers think that children’s personal and cultural knowledge can play a significant role in bridging the differences between their culture and other cultures. For Banks (1993), children need to comprehend how knowledge is constructed from different perspectives and cultural assumptions. In this context, it is important for teachers to help children “reach beyond their own cultural boundaries.”

Participating in the case-based pedagogy experiences, the experienced teachers find that their teaching actions become more sensitive to children’s individual needs. Feeling a growing awareness of hidden assumptions about teaching, the experienced teachers consider how lessons might differently effect their students with diverse backgrounds. Becoming more culturally sensitive teachers, they feel the need to review all aspects of their teaching in terms of curriculum and their own attitudes towards
children. They put conscious effort into understanding and developing in-depth knowledge of children’s diverse cultural situations.

The importance of creating integrated multicultural curriculum. Both the preservice and experienced teachers point out the importance of integrating diversity with various disciplines. In order to increase opportunities for helping children understand diverse cultures, they consider that diversity issues should be incorporated with subject lessons. On this point, the preservice teachers mention the difficulties in constructing and designing culturally relevant curriculum that matches children’s prior experiences. Their feelings are captured in a statement by the NCSS (1992).

No single discipline can adequately explain all components of the life-styles, cultural experiences, and social problems of ethnic groups. Knowledge from any one discipline is insufficient to help individuals make adequate decisions on the complex issues raised by racism, sexism, structural exclusion, poverty, and powerlessness….Single-discipline or mono-perspective analyses of complex ethnic and cultural issues can produce skewed, distorted interpretations and evaluations (pp. 145-146).

Constructing an integrated multicultural curriculum is more than a simple issue of what to teach. It should be designed in a contextualized, rather than prescriptive, manner which carefully takes into account children’s situations. An integrated multicultural curriculum should also consider questions of “how” and “why” to teach in certain ways. In an integrated multicultural curriculum, both children and teachers actively interact to create the curriculum for diversity on the basis of children’s needs. With respect to this point, the experienced teachers emphasize the importance of connecting subjects with
issues of children’s community. Accordingly, there is no “one size fits all” conception of a ‘good’ multicultural curriculum. For contextually appropriate, integrated multicultural curriculum, Derman-Sparks (2003) indicates that it is critical for teachers to be aware of their own beliefs, norms, and values regarding diversity.

What issues teachers see and hear from children, parents, and society, and what they choose to act on or ignore, are strongly influenced by their own cultural beliefs, unexamined attitudes, discomforts, and prejudices, as well as by their knowledge of children’s development and learning and of societal biases (p. 176).

2-bb. Where do they perceive their learning comes from?

Sources of Learning through Case-Based Pedagogy

Case reading as mirrors of others’ and one’s own teaching. The preservice teachers indicate that case reading, responding to questions, and discussions are all interconnected. They feel that every process helps their reflection and meaning making about diversity cases. They especially perceive that case reading stimulates their thought processes by providing templates for reflecting and solving educational dilemmas. “I can go back to the case and look through it when encountering similar problems.” They value seeing how the teachers in cases deal with conflicts in classrooms by putting themselves in the position of the case teachers. In reading the cases, the preservice teachers consider their own experiences as learners and prospective teachers and construct meanings by interpreting them. Bakhtin, cited in Clarke and Holquist (1989), expresses this idea:

The self, conceived by Bakhtin, is not a presence wherein is lodged the ultimate guarantor of unified meaning. The Bakhtinian self is never whole, since it can only exist dialogically. It is not a substance or essence in its own right but exists
in a tensile relationship with all that is other and most importantly, with other selves (p. 65).

The experienced teachers realize that their knowledge and beliefs are constructed internally and through social interaction with external sources of knowledge. Repeatedly reading and thinking about the uncertainties and dilemmas embedded in cases, the experienced teachers perceive that they develop a greater understanding about diversity in teaching and learning. More than the preservice teachers, the experienced teachers continuously mention that they cannot criticize the teachers in cases without completely putting themselves in their shoes.

*Writing case reactions for metacognitive reflection.* During this study, both the preservice and experienced teachers have the opportunities to write personal reactions and responses to case reaction questions and post case discussion questions. The preservice teachers describe the process of writing about the cases as a “wonderful” opportunity to reflect on their own knowledge and beliefs about diversity in relation to the relevant issues in cases. The preservice teachers, connecting to familiar theory, describe the writing process as an opportunity to metacognitively analyze and reflect on what the case teachers and they experience in personal and educational ecologies.

In regard to writing the case reactions, the experienced teachers also indicate that it is a challenging experience to construct their intellectual and affective learning reflecting on the complicated and dynamic nature of case situations. They consider their case reaction writings to be a continuous contextualized meaning making process of building practical knowledge by weaving together the voices of others and themselves. As one preservice teacher points out, and as seems to be the case for both the preservice
and experienced teachers, they explore and construct their own practical knowledge about diversity, feeling comfort and discomfort in “the gray area” where it is hard to find “right” or “wrong” answers.

*Case discussion for individual sense-making through social interactions.* As Tippins, Koballa, and Payne (2002) suggest, case discussion is perceived to facilitate investigation of critical issues in teaching and learning through the taking on of multiple perspectives. The preservice teachers in this study point out that case discussion, in particular, helps them expand initial thoughts about case dilemmas by helping them to recognize new and different issues and discover more knowledge and information relevant to the case dilemmas. Rather than being passive recipients of transmitted “right,” fixed and static answers in education, the preservice teachers consider one another as “facilitators.” They consider that case discussion is a collaborative learning process and a form of peer mentoring where they learn by sharing their own ideas about teaching and learning. As Rodgers (2002) argues, reflective thinking requires teachers to identify and critically analyze their experiences about complex and rich teaching and learning practices. In the process of digging into the possible meanings and potential solutions of case dilemmas, the preservice teachers feel they construct new knowledge or confirm preexisting beliefs and values about diversity in teaching and learning. The preservice teachers add that having case discussions and then reading case commentaries helps them begin to reflect on the issues. It is not surprising that many of the case “solutions” generated by the preservice teachers reflect similar ideas as those posed by authors of the case commentaries. The preservice teachers’ point is supported by Shulman (1991), who
asserts that outsider commentaries can be a tool to foster teachers’ various interpretations and extended thoughts about case dilemmas.

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language, but rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own. And not all words for just everyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property. Many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriates them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 114).

The experienced teachers also feel that case discussions are beneficial for them, not only to challenge, but most often to strengthen and broaden their knowledge and beliefs about diversity in teaching and learning. Furthermore, the experienced teachers
indicate that individual discussions with their school colleagues contribute to their understanding of the difficulties and complex challenges regarding case problems and situations. Recalling that their colleagues are “knowledgeable, experienced, excellent, and insightful,” the experienced teachers perceive the individual case discussions as “expert level of professional mentoring.” However, even when experienced teachers share their thoughts with colleagues who are less experienced, they feel that these other teachers help them become more aware of and reflect about culturally diverse teaching practice, particularly as it relates to their specific school context. As Arellano, Barcenal, Bilbao, Castellano, Nichols, and Tippins (2001) point out,

“….cases are not intended to illustrate exemplary or ineffective practice. Rather, they reflect the inherent uncertainty and complexity of the world” (p. 506) of teaching and learning. Sharing their ideas with peers or colleagues during case discussion, the preservice and experienced teachers build their own meanings about case problems involving cultural diversity. Through the social interactions and individual sense making, the preservice and experienced teachers negotiate their own and other’s voices “beyond superficial understandings.” Considering their construction of knowledge and beliefs are both individual and social, case discussion and dialogue can never be overemphasized in teaching and learning. The findings of cross-case analysis are illustrated in the following table.
Table 7

**Final Comparison Table**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children's Personal Background</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
<td>- The importance of considering individual uniqueness - In-depth quality time</td>
<td>- Need to be aware of and sensitive to children’s personal backgrounds - Considering the potential differences between teachers and children - Reflection-for-action</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>During Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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<td><strong>After Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Who and What is Minority?: Norm, Situation, and Power</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Before Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
<td>- Feeling of being a minority and about minorities - Hidden meaning of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ in society</td>
<td>- No feeling of being a minority and about minorities</td>
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<td><strong>During Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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<td><strong>After Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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<th>“Race” as a Social Construct</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Before Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
<td>- Experience conflicts and fights among different races - No tension to categorize “race”</td>
<td>- Extensive understanding of diversity beyond racial and ethnic issues</td>
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<td><strong>During Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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<td><strong>After Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Inclusion or Sociocultural Empowerment in the Education of ESL Children</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
<td>- The importance of discussing ESL issues - Valuing children’s own language - “Culturally aware”</td>
<td>- The importance of discussing ESL issues - “Rules of the culture of power” - “Culturally transitional”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>During Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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<td><strong>After Case-Based Experiences</strong></td>
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- Complex perceptions about diversity beyond racial and ethnic issues
| Table 7 continued |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                    | Preservice Teachers | Experienced Teachers |
| Thoughts about Teacher Education Programs for Diversity | Before Case-Based Experiences | During Case-Based Experiences | After Case-Based Experiences | Before Case-Based Experiences | During Case-Based Experiences | After Case-Based Experiences |
|                   | - The importance of considering various diversity issues from multiple perspectives | - The importance of considering various diversity issues from multiple perspectives | - Difficulty in recalling diversity courses in their university programs | - The importance of constructing knowledge and practical teaching of diversity | - The importance of constructing knowledge and practical teaching of diversity | - The importance of field experience with culturally diverse children |
|                   | - The importance of considering personal experiences with diversity in teacher education | - The importance of considering personal experiences with diversity in teacher education | - Learning about diversity through staff development | - The importance of field experience with culturally diverse children | - The importance of field experience with culturally diverse children | - The importance of field experience with culturally diverse children |
|                   | - The importance of field experience with culturally diverse children | - The importance of considering various diversity issues from multiple perspectives | - Difficulty in recalling diversity courses in their university programs | - The importance of constructing knowledge and practical teaching of diversity | - The importance of constructing knowledge and practical teaching of diversity | - The importance of field experience with culturally diverse children |
| The Importance of Understanding Both Artifacts and Ideologies in Multicultural Curriculum | - Sensitive to issues of equality and fairness | - The importance of integrating subjects with diversity | - Creating opportunities that have the “potential to increase children’s joy for learning” | - Creating opportunities that have the “potential to increase children’s joy for learning” | - Creating opportunities that have the “potential to increase children’s joy for learning” | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity |
|                   | - Hands-on activities connected to children’s personal experiences | - Hands-on activities connected to children’s personal experiences | - Emphasizing “exciting, exotic, and different” artifacts | - Emphasizing “exciting, exotic, and different” artifacts | - Emphasizing “exciting, exotic, and different” artifacts | - The importance of creating integrated multicultural curriculum |
|                   | - The importance of creating integrated multicultural curriculum | - The importance of creating integrated multicultural curriculum | - Emphasizing “exciting, exotic, and different” artifacts | - Emphasizing “exciting, exotic, and different” artifacts | - Emphasizing “exciting, exotic, and different” artifacts | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity |
| Being Life-Long Learners | - Reflection-for-and-on-action | - Reflection-for-and-on-action | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity |
|                   | - Reflection-for-and-on-action | - Reflection-for-and-on-action | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity | - “Eye opening” experience to encounter dimensions of diversity |
Table 7 continued

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<th></th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Before Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>During Case-Based Experiences</td>
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</table>
| **Dealing with Sensitive Issues about Diversity** | - Becoming aware of teachers as cultural beings  
- Trying to avoid conflict-filled situations | - Becoming aware of teachers as cultural beings  
- Considering children as active and subjective co-builders of knowledge | | | |
| **Children’s Emotions and Motivation** | - Putting emphasis on ‘reflection-for-action’ to respect individual children’s feelings  
- Modeling for children’s attitudes of open-mindedness about diversity | - Put an emphasis on ‘reflection-for-action’ to respect individual children’s feelings  
- Class discussion, group work, peer tutoring, and the use of exaggeration to increase children’s interest about other cultures | | | |
| **The Role of Social Interaction and Different Reality in Knowledge Construction** | - No absolute knowledge in the world  
- Children’s views of the world influenced by social interactions with people | - The need for teachers to learn about their “own” and “other” cultures  
- The importance of balancing children’s home culture and experiences with other cultures | - Situation and positionality of people with different realities  
- “Truth is a product of social processes” | - Learning about other cultures developing respect for “self” and “others”  
- Need to reconcile and expose the discontinuities between home and other cultures |
### Table 7 continued

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<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
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<td>Before Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>During Case-Based Experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Role of Knowledge with Respect to Prejudicial Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>- Positive, interesting, and real life learning experiences with other cultures to foster enlightened attitudes toward other cultural groups</td>
<td>- The importance of not offending any children - Need for appropriate knowledge and experiences to reduce prejudice at personal and social levels - More willingness to create culturally inclusive and responsive learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity Based on Personal Situations</strong></td>
<td>- Equal learning opportunities based on each child’s personal backgrounds - Offering school supplies for class projects</td>
<td>- The importance of teachers to not treat diverse children in the same manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raising Awareness about Community Issues and Taking Social Actions</strong></td>
<td>- Empathies with children’s feelings of confusion - Facilitating children’s understanding about cultural issues - Equally addressing the multiple knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes of various groups of people</td>
<td>- Raising children’s awareness about what conflicts exist in community - Children as “the seed to change future problematic situations” - Helping children take social actions to address community issues</td>
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Table 7 continued

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<tr>
<th>Constructing Knowledge with Sensitivity to Different Cultures</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<td>Before Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>During Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>After Case-Based Experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Becoming more aware of new, different, and unfamiliar cultural contexts</td>
<td>- Thinking personally more in-depth about diversity</td>
<td>- Connecting case situations to their own teaching practice</td>
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<td>- Becoming more sensitive to each child’s subcultures</td>
<td>- Becoming more aware of children’s “individual diversity”</td>
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<tr>
<th>In-depth Reflections on Diversity and Knowing Personal Beliefs</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Before Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>During Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>After Case-Based Experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reflection on culturally diverse situations through other teachers’ experiences</td>
<td>- Trying to put themselves in case teachers’ positions</td>
<td>- Wrestling with the issues of how to handle dilemmas: “Get out of the comfort zone”</td>
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<td>- Constructing one’s own personal beliefs and “truth” about diversity</td>
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<th>Learning from Cases rather than Textbooks</th>
<th>Preservice Teachers</th>
<th>Experienced Teachers</th>
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<td>Before Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>During Case-Based Experiences</td>
<td>After Case-Based Experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Various norms mediated by relationships with the surrounding people</td>
<td>- Learn more about diversity through case-based pedagogy than from textbooks</td>
<td>- Reflecting upon how case situations can be transferred to one’s own teaching practice regarding diversity</td>
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<td>- Challenging or confirming personal beliefs rather than simply conforming to existing theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Experiencing</td>
<td>- Need more</td>
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<td>Case-Based Pedagogy Regarding</td>
<td>background</td>
<td>cases with various</td>
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<td>Diversity</td>
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<td>Sources of Learning through</td>
<td>- Case reading:</td>
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<td>Case-Based Pedagogy</td>
<td>Providing templars</td>
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CHAPTER 7
IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the implications of this study regarding multicultural education, early childhood teacher education, and research methodology. The first section centers on the implications for teacher education, multicultural education, and case-based pedagogy. The second section centers on the implications for research, particularly emphasizing methodological implications regarding the use of cases and implications for further research. The chapter concludes with a summary and final thoughts of this study.

Implications for Early Childhood Teacher Education

Implications Regarding Multicultural Education

Regarding Multicultural Education

Confronting the enormous need to prepare diversity competent teachers. Teacher education needs to confront the challenge of preparing diversity competent teachers in this multicultural era (Banks, 1995a). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), “people of color made up 28% of the nation’s population in 2000 and it is predicted that they will make up 38% in 2025 and 47% in 2050” (Dilg, 2003, vii). Diversity does not simply mean differences of race or ethnicity but includes the cultural experiences that children bring to school including language, beliefs, values, norms, and so forth. However, teachers for a diverse student body are predominantly “White,” middle-class,
and female (Nieto, 2000). In light of increasingly huge demographic changes, how can teachers be effectively prepared to work with diverse groups of children? How can teachers be culturally responsive and relevant teachers who acknowledge diverse children’s cultural and personal knowledge and beliefs and construct inclusive classroom environments for all children? A teacher with cross-cultural competence is considered as one

who has achieved an advanced level in the process of becoming intercultural and whose cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics are not limited but are open to growth beyond the psychological parameters of only one culture….The intercultural person possesses an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all humans and, at the same time, accepts and appreciates the differences that lie between people of different cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984, p. 230).

How then can teacher education programs be successfully created to improve both preservice and inservice teachers’ culturally appropriate knowledge, attitudes, and strategies? How can teacher education programs better help preservice and inservice teachers know what to teach and how to teach in relation to children with diverse backgrounds?

Encountering the imperative to respond to the enormous demographic changes and increasingly diverse cultural populations and to address diversity issues in teacher education programs, this study is an effort to understand preservice and experienced teachers’ epistemologies about diversity and teacher education programs regarding multicultural education. In addition, this study attempts to understand the preservice and
experienced teachers’ pedagogical reasoning and decision-making associated with
cultural and personal diversity, equity, and social justice. As a collaborative work with
the six preservice and experienced teachers, this study tries to connect to the preservice
and experienced teachers’ personal and professional lives, classrooms, and teacher
education programs. As an endeavor to attend to these issues, this study uses case-based
pedagogy, as a research and pedagogical tool.

Need for appropriate knowledge and experiences to reduce prejudice both at
personal and social levels. “A major goal of multicultural education, as stated by
specialists in the field, is to reform the school and other educational institutions so that
students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational
equality. Another important goal of multicultural education, as revealed in this literature,
is to give male and female students an equal chance to experience educational success
and mobility” (Banks, 1995a). Pattnaik (2003) argues that the goal of multicultural
education is to understand one’s own culture as well as others’ cultures. According to this
author, acceptance and respect of self and others’ beliefs, cultures, perspectives, and
values are not separable.

Along this same line, multicultural education is not just for “White” children. If
“Non-white” groups of children lack experiences and exposure to other cultures, they
may also retain stereotypic, prejudicial, and ethnocentric attitudes towards others. As the
preservice and experienced teachers indicate, with lack of or inappropriate knowledge,
children cannot understand others’ cultures nor can they develop positive attitudes
towards others. In relation to Banks’ multicultural education dimension of “prejudice
reduction,” teachers in this study concur that without proper understanding about other
cultures, children may exhibit the attitudes of “we are normal” and “they are abnormal.”
In discussing the issues of diversity and multicultural education, acknowledging and appreciating similarities and differences, sensitivity, open-mindedness, and respect among diverse cultures are typically raised as common themes. However, without genuine understanding about “self,” how can people even notice similarities and differences? If people do not perceive themselves as cultural beings, how can they respect and have equal attitudes towards cultural others?

In this study, the preservice and experienced teachers challenge their assumptions, considering themselves as sociocultural beings. Being aware of their lack of knowledge or experiences within diverse cultures, they reconstruct their beliefs and knowledge taking into account that teachers should be careful not to offend children’s culture by thoughtfully considering individual’s personal backgrounds in teaching and learning. The preservice and experienced teachers also feel the need to examine their own cultural backgrounds and experiences. They recognize that the realization of their own cultures and beliefs help them create more culturally relevant teaching and learning practice for all children. They feel that diversity involves understanding themselves as well as others. At the exit interview, both the preservice and experienced teachers show more awareness and willingness to create culturally inclusive and responsive learning communities, considering the need to be sensitive to children’s personal and micro levels of diversity as well as macro levels. Learning from the preservice and experienced teachers’ case-based experiences, this study emphasizes that there is no classroom that lacks diversity if we consider individual children’s ability, learning needs and interests, developmental level,
learning styles, family and community backgrounds, as well as distinctively visible factors such as race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status.

*Need to challenge the meaning of equality and equity.* “Everyone is different. All children should be treated in their own ways.” The preservice and experienced teachers challenge the meaning of equality and equity. Facing difficulties in terms of handling children’s differences in the same manner with respect to personal, socioeconomic, and cultural issues, the preservice and experienced teachers feel a strong need to address children’s unique, idiosyncratic diversity in their attitudes, knowledge, curriculum, and school environment. On the basis of Banks’ (1995a) dimension of “equity pedagogy,” this study suggests that equity for all children should be constructed on the basis of their personal cultural backgrounds. Having said this, the need for teachers to modify their teaching on the basis of individual children’s personal situations is an essential requisite for improving academic achievement. What was learned about equity pedagogy in this study points to the need for teachers with the ability to develop culturally sensitive teaching methods that promote equity.

*Need to reconcile and expose the discontinuities between home and other cultures.* This study also suggests that children’s home and school should find ways to reconcile discontinuities in terms of beliefs and expectations. Even though the values promoted in school can conflict with children’s home knowledge and beliefs, this study suggests that different cultural groups’ perspectives and knowledge should not be positioned as a hindrance to student learning. Reflecting on Banks’ (1995a) dimension of “knowledge construction,” open and candid discussion with both children and parents about diversity issues is meaningful in order for children to be exposed to various
perspectives about issues, experience diverse cultures, and construct knowledge and meanings in their own ways. Children need to understand how knowledge is constructed by different sociocultural groups and how people from various cultures differently experience equality and power according to their socioculturally constructed knowledge.

Need to reform schools to empower diversity. In order to empower all people involved in the education of children, schools have to be transformed in such a way that diverse groups of children experience equal status and opportunities. Considering Banks’ (1995a) approaches to multicultural curriculum reform – the contribution approach, the additive approach, the transformation approach, and the action approach, it is apparent that teachers need to help children develop culturally appropriate attitudes and knowledge both at personal and social levels. Along this same line, Rosaen (2003) argues that teacher education programs should emphasize both the ideologies and values of local communities and social justice in order to prepare teachers to help all children have access to equal educational opportunities.

Supporting the perspective of Banks and Rosaen, this study demonstrates that both preservice and experienced teachers take into account the multicultural dimension of “empowering school culture and social structure” (Banks 1995a). The preservice teachers emphasize that schools should empower diverse groups of people by valuing every culture’s unique beliefs and assumptions in school organization. The preservice teachers discuss diversity issues in this dimension with respect to the ‘transformation approach’ (Banks, 1995a), arguing the importance of teachers and schools investigating their beliefs, values, and assumptions regarding diversity and multicultural education. While the preservice teachers do not reflect upon the need for taking particular actions to reform
schools and societies, one experienced teacher demonstrates her passion to teach on the basis of the ‘social action approach’ (1995a), extending the transformation approach. From the preservice and experienced teachers’ learning, this study suggests that the school organizational structure must be reformed and restructured so that the social system of a school can effectively work for diversity. Schools reflect embedded values, norms, beliefs, power relationships, curriculum, material resources, teaching practices, and school members’ attitudes toward themselves and others.

*Gaining a bigger picture of diversity through Banks’ typology.* “The five dimensions are conceptually distinct but highly interrelated” (Banks, 1995a). This study reinforces Banks’ belief that experiences with the same issue can be interpreted in different ways in different dimensions. For example, the preservice and experienced teachers repeatedly emphasize the importance of teachers considering “children’s personal backgrounds.” The notion of sensitivity to individual children’s personal backgrounds can be discussed in the dimension of ‘content integration’ arguing that simple infusion of cultural materials without considering children’s personal backgrounds is not meaningful for children’s learning about diversity. It can also be conceptualized with respect to the dimension of ‘knowledge construction’ focusing on the idea that knowledge is not neutral; it involves sociocultural products and children’s personal backgrounds. The ‘prejudice reduction’ dimension argues that children should be respected and not discriminated against regardless of their personal backgrounds. In the dimension of ‘equity pedagogy,’ children’s personal background is important because without being aware of individual situations and cultures teachers cannot modify their teaching for more equality and equity. Finally, the ‘empowering school culture and social
structure’ dimension argues that schools should be sensitive to children’s personal backgrounds in order to ensure that the culture of every school participant be worthwhile.

Sometimes it was hard to define which category is the best fit for the preservice and experienced teachers’ descriptions of diversity. This study, however, attempted to focus on how their inner and in-depth interpretations of points is relevant to specific categories. The study indicates that the conceptual typology of Banks is extremely helpful in developing a deeper understanding of multicultural education by providing a closer and particular look at diversity issues.

Regarding Multicultural Preservice Teacher Education

Need to consider teacher education students’ prior life experiences both personally and professionally. With respect to teacher education, this study indicates that the preservice teachers are not satisfied with their preservice teacher education programs, even when these programs put great effort into preparing them to be multiculturally competent teachers. Throughout the study, both preservice and experienced teachers speak to the importance of considering personal life experiences in multicultural teacher education. Accordingly, teacher education programs for diversity should be constructed around the prior personal and professional life experiences of students. This implies that it is important to have a “No one size fits all” approach in multicultural teacher education programs in order to make meaningful differences in preservice teachers’ practical knowledge about teaching and learning with children from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Need to build integrated multicultural curriculum both in ideological and practical ways. The findings of this study suggest that multicultural teacher education programs should be grounded in opportunities to construct knowledge about diversity in
real classrooms alongside culturally diverse children, parents, and communities. The teachers in this study believe that their teacher education programs need to create integrated multicultural curriculum that incorporates subject-based courses and diversity. On the basis of Banks’ (1995a) multicultural dimension of “content integration,” the preservice and experienced teachers question, “How then can we make integrated curriculum?” This question points to the need for continuously examining Irvine’s (2003) perspective on multicultural education:

Multiculturalism is more than a field of study centered on ‘what’ issues. Thinking of diversity as a ‘what’ question leads to overly prescribed decontextualized, and additive teacher education models that miss the point, because they simply assign readings or tinker with existing course syllabi (p. 16).

Irvine emphasizes that preservice teachers, teacher educators, and institution’s incessant reflection and examination of values, beliefs, and norms through open discussion, ‘honest disclosure,’ and truthful cultural conversations are important for establishing genuine multicultural teacher education programs. In addition, Irvine indicates that ‘case knowledge, videotapes, inquiry,’ and the like, are effective ways to offer teachers opportunities to reflect on diverse cultures and connect multicultural issues to teachers’ personal knowledge and experiences.

Need to prepare university teacher educators in terms of professional development regarding diversity. Related to these issues of multicultural teacher education programs, Irvine (2003) argues that teacher educators should also be well prepared to facilitate education students’ abilities to teach diverse groups of children. When one preservice teacher shares her feeling of being a minority, she recalls the
noticeable attitudes of her professor: “Well, you are not a minority at this school because
the professors and the administration here are all WHITE.”

In order to achieve quality education in early childhood education programs, it is
essential for teachers to be prepared in terms of their knowledge, attitudes, strategies, and
dispositions to work with diverse groups of children (Ukpokodu, 2002). However, are
teacher educators sensitive and caring enough to have their students develop respectful
communities with children from diverse personal and cultural backgrounds? Do teacher
educators empower their teacher education students regardless of their various personal
and cultural experiences? Do teacher educators possess positive attitudes towards diverse
groups of students in order for them not to be isolated from universities? Do teacher
educators create culturally relevant learning environments and curriculum which include
all students in a culturally familiar context? Do teacher educators recognize how they
influence their students through their teaching? Do teacher educators examine their
values, beliefs, attitudes, and norms to interact with all students using a culturally
sensitive lens? And do Colleges of Education and universities seriously challenge all
multicultural issues and make meaningful change by supporting and committing efforts
for social justice and equality? This study suggests that teacher education programs need
to first look at the professional development of university teacher educators with respect
to multicultural education.

*Getting troubled again.* “No voice is allowed to dominate in this mostly White
classroom, nor are words permitted to hurt or offend. Yet how does one know which
words or stories or poems shock and anger another person?…This too becomes a goal in
(h)er courses: to find the words that honor individual sensitivities even as we push further
into the groups’ discoveries and conflicts” (Dilg, 2003, xiii). How can teachers and
teacher educators be multiculturally well-prepared for themselves and their students?
How difficult it can be to engage in crucial and powerful discussions of multicultural
issues. This study suggests the need to create spaces where preservice and experienced
teachers can openly discuss and pose questions, with respect to pressing multicultural
issues.

Implications Regarding Case-Based Pedagogy

Making connections among preservice and experienced teachers’ life
experiences, formal knowledge, and teaching practice regarding diversity. Teachers need
to develop appropriate knowledge, beliefs, and strategies for working with diverse groups
of children by elucidating and refining their own beliefs and ideas regarding multicultural
issues. Teachers need to bridge their fragmentary knowledge about diversity and teaching
practice. Teachers need to openly discuss sensitive diversity issues and continuously
refine their skills as culturally relevant teachers. Trying to make connections with
preservice and experienced teachers’ own social and cultural lives and diversity issues in
classrooms, this study used case-based pedagogy. Case-based pedagogy has great
potential for preservice and experienced teachers “to be reflective, to consider the moral
aspects involved in teacher decision-making, and to imagine ways to improve both
classroom practice and schools by recognizing the value of collegial discussion and
inquiry” (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994, p. 289). This study suggests implications with
respect to the possibility of case-based pedagogy in multicultural teacher education
programs both for early childhood preservice and experienced teachers.
This study shows that preservice and experienced teachers can clarify and expand their own beliefs and knowledge about diversity when given opportunities to be exposed to different sociocultural issues through cases. A analysis of their reactions before, during, and after the case experience, indicates that both the preservice and experienced teachers can reflect, integrate theory and practice, and develop problem-solving methods by analyzing critical dilemmas within the “non-linear, complex, and context-specific reality of teaching” (Kitano, Landry, Dougherty, Kanevsky, et al., 2001, p. 206).

Tippins, Koballa, and Payne (2002, p. 3) view cases as “a vehicle for reflection and changing practice” (p. 3) which stimulate pedagogical reasoning and decision-making in teaching and learning by providing teachers with opportunities to teach and learn by “wrestling with the experiences, ideas, issues, and dilemmas of practice.” (p. 9) Nieto (1999) argues that through culturally relevant cases “teachers can learn more about how culture, language, social class, and other differences are manifested in the lives of their students, and how these differences might influence students’ experiences in school” (p. 182). In this sense, this study provides support for teacher education programs to open discussions of diversity using the powerful vehicle of case-based pedagogy. Experiencing cases, both preservice and experienced teachers can construct multiple meanings about diversity and multicultural education within real classroom contexts.

*Confronting preservice and experienced teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions about diversity.* This study provides evidence that case-based pedagogy including reading, writing, and discussing, is perceived by preservice and inservice teachers as an interesting and valuable tool for their reflections and meaning making about diversity. Through the process of case reading, writing, and discussing, the
preservice and experienced teachers socially interact with other internal or external texts. Taking multiple perspectives about the uncertainty and complexity of case dilemmas, the preservice and experienced teachers in this study strengthen their beliefs and confront their lack of knowledge about or prejudices toward diverse cultures. By gaining deeper understandings and constructing shared meanings about diversity through social interactions, the preservice and experienced teachers become producers of their own knowledge and beliefs and “critical friends” (Tippins, Nichols, & Dana, 1999, p. 333) for their peers or colleagues’ construction of knowledge and beliefs. With respect to this point, Shulman (1996) points out, in his conceptualization of the work of Nelson-Barber and Meier, Gomez and Tabachnick, that teachers have to recognize their tacit beliefs and knowledge to confront deeply placed biases or prejudices about diversity.

Teachers need to make explicit their beliefs and assumptions about teaching, learning, and learners as they take in the new information; they must be given opportunities to discuss how to transform what they learned into tactics they can use in their classrooms; and they must confront their personal beliefs on issues of race, class, gender, and bias, even as they learn to teach (p. 138).

In the process, it is important to realize that the preservice and experienced teachers’ perceptions and interpretations about cases are not neutral acts but personal and social reflections of their knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions about diversity in complicated teaching and learning contexts.

*Constructing or reconstructing preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity.* The findings of this study suggest that case-based pedagogy can play a significant role in helping both preservice and experienced teachers’ construct
practical knowledge about diversity. Research (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Putnam & Borko, 2000) shows that preservice teachers’ prior beliefs and attitudes should be examined in order to meet the needs of diverse groups of students. Because their beliefs and attitudes are built through numerous personal and professional experiences, it is meaningful to see the “self” of preservice and experienced teachers. This study is premised on the belief that preservice and experienced teachers hold their own beliefs, values, knowledge, assumptions, and attitudes about diversity from their own life experiences, the sum of which is referred to as teachers’ “practical knowledge” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1983; Fenstermacher, 1994; Tirri, Husu, & Kananen, 1999; van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001; Zanting, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2001). Throughout this study many examples highlight the ways in which preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge works as an interpretive framework or filter in creating new knowledge about diversity by confirming or challenging their newly perceived experiences and understandings. Under the theoretical framework of social constructivism, this study also views preservice and experienced teachers’ “self” as an entity both of their biological and own sociocultural and historical conditions and previously existing practical knowledge. At times, this sense of “self” works to help them appreciate other selves’ voices (Clarke & Holquist, 1984). At other times, preservice and inservice teachers sense of “self” contributes to their resistance in terms of accepting or constructing new knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes about diversity. “Teachers” cannot be separated from their own “selves.”

The findings of this study suggest that without perceiving and reframing teachers’ beliefs and knowledge, their practices in teaching and learning are not likely to change.
Because teaching and learning involve very specific ways of weaving ‘the past, intentions for the future, and the present situations’ (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25), teachers should have opportunities to reveal and acknowledge their assumptions about teaching and learning. In this sense, both preservice and experienced teachers value case-based pedagogy as a productive tool for delving deeply into their own thoughts and those of others to reconstruct practical knowledge by investigating the complex world in teaching and learning. The broader implication here is that teacher education programs and other forms of professional development should continuously seek ways for teachers to examine and reframe their practical knowledge.

One of the big challenges in the field of teacher education centers on the question of how to adequately prepare teachers in ways which develop critical thinking and deliberate action. “Textbooks, biographies, and fiction concerning the experiences of different cultural groups can also be helpful, but they too are limited, especially if they describe culture in static, abstract, and decontextualized ways” (Nieto, 1999, p. 195). In this sense, case-based pedagogy can contribute to teacher education in ways which help teachers develop “practical knowledge that will allow them to survive the reality of the classroom in their first several years of teaching” (Richardson, 1996, p. ix). By providing teaching and learning experiences with culturally rich cases, teachers can reflect on the beliefs and knowledge they have about diversity from their personal life experiences, university courses, student teaching, and so on, and examine how their practical knowledge about diversity influences their teaching. This can help both preservice and experienced teachers construct or reframe their practical knowledge about diversity.
Experienced teachers have a plethora of practical knowledge that is constructed from their own teaching and learning. “Wrestling” with case dilemmas, experienced teachers describe their practical knowledge about diversity and relate it to their lifelong professional learning. The experienced teachers use the cases as exemplars for analyzing what they do or what they do not in their own teaching practice on the basis of their beliefs, knowledge, values, and assumptions regarding diversity.

This study can contribute to teacher education programs by offering insights for preparing preservice and inservice teachers more professionally and critically in their practice regarding diversity. This study is an ongoing conversation and reflection about teachers’ practical knowledge, decision-making, and practice in diversity and multicultural education through case-based pedagogy in teaching and learning. Considering that teachers are continuously evolving beings, this study is not an endpoint; rather it is situated in the midst of a continuing professional development process.

Implications for Research

Implications for Methodology Regarding the Use of Cases

Methodological Implications Regarding the Use of Cases

Generalizability. “No case study of a single individual can adequately or legitimately portray the complexity of an entire group of people. This is an especially important reminder because educational theories, no matter how helpful or insightful, are generalizations that do not explain every case” (Nieto, 1999, p. 190). This study used purposeful sampling according to the criteria of research site, teaching experience, participants’ interest in this study, and their willingness to be involved in this research. If other teachers had participated in this study, the portraits of preservice and experienced
teachers’ practical knowledge regarding diversity might possibly have been different and quite varied. This study does not attempt to generalize beyond the stories of the three preservice and three experienced teachers’ accounts of their experiences, knowledge, and beliefs regarding diversity.

This study analyzed data at both within-case and cross-case levels. Stake (1998) defines “comparison as an epistemological function competing with learning about and from the particular case. Comparison is a powerful conceptual mechanism, fixing attention upon the few attributes being compared and obscuring other knowledge about the case” (p. 97). Stake continues to point out that “generalizations from differences between any two cases are much less to be trusted than generalizations from one. Illustration as to how the phenomenon occurs in the circumstances of the particular exemplar can be valued and trustworthy knowledge” (p. 98). However, for the quality of this study, thick description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) is used at the level of within-case analysis. Confronting the tough issues of generalization, it is hoped that readers learn more about the issues surrounding preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge regarding diversity directly from the thick description of each case.

_Researcher as a tool for interpretation._ “There is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 31). Reflecting on this study of preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity, I wonder whether the “portraits” are participants’ reality or the researcher’s witnessed understanding of their ‘given’ reality. Since the researcher’s view is socioculturally situated, participants in a study are “seldom able to give full explanations of their actions
or intentions” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 31). Thus, there is a recognition that readers may actually create more portraits about preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge regarding diversity. Taking this point into consideration, I continuously attempted to keep my emotions, assumptions, and interpretations bracketed as much as possible, as a teacher, researcher, and ‘marginalized’ one in this society. Through the work of this study’s representation regarding the experiences, memories, feelings, knowledge, and beliefs of the three preservice and three experienced teachers, the readers are invited to openly and collaboratively share and reinterpret these moments of diversity.

**Implications for Further Research Regarding Multicultural Education**

There are unlimited kinds of diversity. This study is meaningful because, through case-based pedagogy, it opens and challenges diversity issues that go beyond the concepts of race and ethnicity. Further study about diversity using cases may shed light on teachers’ more sensitive, hidden, and strong conflicts and confidence with respect to a wider range of issues including gender, language, and other aspects of diversity. Further study should include multiple levels of diversity cases – personal-, micro-, and macro-level – as templates for teachers to acknowledge and reconstruct their practical knowledge about diversity. Drawing on what was learned in this study, recommendations for future research include the following:

- Future study can include cases with more varied diversity issues at multiple levels in order for preservice and experienced teachers to confirm or confront their knowledge and beliefs across a wider range of topics.
- Future study can use Banks’ (1995a) dimensions to multicultural education to get at more specific and deeper understandings about diversity.
• Future study can consider research participants’ diversity in terms of a more personalized oral history of their life experiences in order for them to more deliberately participate in the study and perceive their hidden knowledge and beliefs about diversity.

• Future study can recruit participants from diverse cultural groups in terms of macro-level of socialization and examine how they differently perceive selected diversity issues.

• Future study can investigate how preservice and experienced teachers’ confirmation or change of beliefs about diversity influences their teaching and learning practice in terms of curriculum, social interactions between teachers and children, communicative relationships between teachers and parents, and so on.

• Future study can explore how preservice and experienced teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about diversity influence students’ knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about diversity.

• Future study can research how teaching practice is related to curriculum design, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure.

Implications for Further Research Regarding Case-Based Pedagogy

This study bridges the gap between formal knowledge and practice regarding diversity. This study also presents evidence that case-based pedagogy is a productive vehicle to help preservice and experienced teachers understand and confront their practical knowledge about diversity. More qualitative research using case-based pedagogy as a tool to examine issues of diversity is needed to fill gaps in what is known
about teachers’ practical knowledge of diversity as it relates in-depth to their teaching and learning practice.

The preservice and experienced teachers in this study indicate through their participation in the case experiences that they have developed broader perspectives about diversity, more awareness of individual children’s personal backgrounds, more attention to communication and observation with children, more in-depth examination of their curriculum with respect to cultural sensitivity and relevancy and a greater use of metacognitive and reflective thinking to analyze their teaching practice on a daily basis. Further research needs to focus on the influence of preservice and experienced teachers’ changes in practical knowledge of diversity on their actual teaching practice in terms of attitudes, curriculum, social interaction patterns, and the like. In addition, considering that teachers have a critical influence on children, further study should investigate how teachers’ knowledge and beliefs effect students’ beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards diverse cultural groups of people.

The facilitator’s role during case discussions influences the quality or patterns of the discussions (Christensen & Hansen, 1989; Levin, 1999; Shulman, 1996). This study yields the possibility for further research to examine the impact of facilitators on case discussion. In addition, further research is needed of a longitudinal nature. If this study, or ones similar to it, could be extended to follow preservice and experienced teachers’ development of practical knowledge about diversity over time, we would have a more complex portrait of what actually occurs in their classrooms with respect to diversity. Because teachers’ beliefs are tacit (van Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2001) and not quick to change, it would be meaningful for preservice and experienced teachers to have a
longer time to reflect on their knowledge and beliefs about diversity. Drawing on what was learned in this study, recommendations for future research regarding case-based pedagogy include the following:

- Future study can use case-based pedagogy as a vehicle to explore preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity.
- Future study of a longitudinal nature can be conducted in order to better understand preservice and experienced teachers’ development of practical knowledge about diversity.
- Future study can use case reaction questions to provide preservice and experienced teachers with the opportunities to reflect on their own knowledge and beliefs, comparing and contrasting to case teachers’ practice in terms of diversity.
- Future study can focus more on case discussion, including the facilitator’s role, since preservice and experienced teachers learn by socially interacting with peers and colleagues regarding diversity.
- Future study can include cases which more fully describe background information about case dilemmas.
- Future study can look at diversity issues from the perspective of teacher-generated cases.

Summary

As an effort to meet the imperative needs for teachers to be well prepared and for teacher education programs to more fully conceptualize their approach to preparing future teachers for diversity and multicultural education, this study opens up a discussion about preservice and experienced teachers’ practical knowledge about diversity.
Considering that teaching practice is unlikely to change without altering teachers’ beliefs, teachers’ epistemological practical knowledge is significant for teaching and learning. Preservice and experienced teachers’ perceptions about their knowledge and beliefs regarding diversity provide them with the opportunities to deconstruct their prior meanings, assumptions, knowledge, and beliefs. The dynamic and continuing process of constructing and deconstructing practical knowledge can assist preservice and experienced teachers in becoming diversity competent teachers.

This study suggests the need for preservice and experienced teachers to wrestle with and reflect on their knowledge and beliefs about diversity, in complex and ambiguous teaching and learning contexts such as those provided through case-based pedagogy. Case-based pedagogy provides preservice and experienced teachers with opportunities to analyze and interpret puzzling situations of teaching and learning, experiment with pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and understand and apply theoretical formal knowledge to “real” cultures of teaching and learning. Experiencing case-based pedagogy, preservice teachers develop practical knowledge about multicultural education in teaching and learning based on their personal life experiences and university courses. Using case-based pedagogy, experienced teachers who develop powerfully practical knowledge about their own teaching are forced to be more knowledgeable about and reframe their teaching practice regarding diversity.

Through the use of case-based pedagogy in this study, the preservice and experienced teachers perceive, confirm, challenge, and reframe their knowledge and beliefs about diversity in teaching and learning. Case reading, writing personal responses to cases, and case discussions have preservice and experienced teachers metacognitively
reflecting upon diversity and teaching, and socially interacting and learning from each other. Throughout this study, the preservice and experienced teachers become more aware of diversity at personal and micro levels as well as at macro levels. They challenge their assumptions, considering themselves as sociocultural beings. Being aware of their lack of sensitivity about diversity, they become more attuned to children’s personal backgrounds, self-examination of their own teaching practice, and their own sociocultural backgrounds. They genuinely recognize the importance of sensitivity, open-mindedness, acceptance, and respect towards diverse groups of people. They feel that culturally responsive attitudes can result from people’s appropriate knowledge about diversity. They challenge their assumptions that diversity and multicultural education is for “others” and learn that multicultural education is to understand themselves as well as others. They also detect and challenge mentors’ or their own teaching approaches, considering the importance of meaningful and real experiences that go beyond tourist curriculum. Realizing the importance of taking into account children’s cultural beliefs, they learn that school curriculum should include and link to children’s community issues. Transforming school curriculum or taking social action participating in community issues, they consider that school organization can be reformed.

This study shows how preservice and experienced teachers confront their “implicit” and “tacit” practical knowledge about teaching and learning and how case-based pedagogy can be used in connection with diversity and multicultural education. Case-based pedagogy presents preservice and experienced teachers continuous contextualized reflective experiences that can help them reframe their knowledge and beliefs about diversity in teaching and learning. This study suggests the need for
opportunities in preservice and inservice teacher education for teachers to balance ideologies and practices in their multicultural programs. Multicultural teacher education that is limited to a one-sided “history class” or “snapshot approach” cannot develop culturally sensitive teachers that can work with “all” diverse groups of children. To do this, first and foremost, teacher educators should examine their own beliefs, values, and assumptions as well as curriculum regarding diversity.

Final Thoughts

I am grateful to the preservice and experienced teachers’ invitations to their world of diversity. Through their eyes, I become immersed in learning about their perceptions of diversity in people, and their visions for learning to teach for diversity in the future. It is regretful, however, that this study cannot fully capture all their endeavors to gain in-depth insights and meaningful learning about diversity. The preservice and experienced teachers’ incessant efforts to become more diversity competent teachers will be meaningful for children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, parents, teachers, and teacher educators who are recognizing that children do not have sufficient ability to claim their own rights and who are willing to be advocates protecting children’s rights.

This study also brings up my personal change. Reflecting on my subjectivities statement when I first opened this discussion of teachers’ practical knowledge and diversity, I positioned myself as an “external – insider.” I thought I was an ‘insider’ for my research because I considered myself as central to issues of diversity and multicultural education in the U.S. culture. As an ‘alien and marginal’ person in the U.S. society, I thought I understood and empathized with people in ‘non-mainstream’ cultures.
I now feel as though I deceived myself in conducting this study. I feel that the person who has a narrow view about diversity is I. I now confess that the person who has arrogant attitudes towards diverse groups of people is me. I am now even more confused about the larger picture of culture, diversity, and multicultural education. As I become more sensitive to people’s diversity, I turn to a stance of ‘external – outsider.’ I question what on earth I understand about others and even myself. So I am afraid to show this humble portrait containing “a partial understanding of and little appreciation for the values, perspectives, and knowledge of the community” (Banks, 1998, p. 8) I have studied. And I would like to ask you whether you are a “real” insider in this society and culture.

I don’t believe I’m doing this. But I don’t really like to build myself too high… because the higher you are, the harder you’re gonna fall. I don’t want to fall.

Paul Chavez (Nieto, 1999, p. 179)
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1. What do you remember most vividly from the case?

2. Why do you think the teacher in the case made the decision that she/he did?

3. What do the teacher’s practices tell you about her/his assumptions, values, beliefs, and knowledge about diversity?

4. What are the similarities and differences about the assumptions, values, beliefs, and knowledge regarding diversity between the teacher in the case and you?
APPENDIX B

CASE DISCUSSION FOLLOW-UP QUESTION
Which of your beliefs and understandings about diversity have been confirmed or challenged after discussing the case with your peers?
APPENDIX C

CASES TO BE GIVEN TO EACH PARTICIPANT
Who Eats the Mango?

Janice Koch

In this open case, my student teacher, Kim, develops a science lesson with our third grade students that explore the properties of edible plant parts. The students have been instructed to bring a fruit and a vegetable to class. The students come from a largely white, middle-class suburban area that is just beginning to experience some diversity from recent Central American immigration. Wanting to expose students to the plants grown and eaten in diverse cultures, this gifted novice teacher brings in many different kinds of fruits and vegetables. Anticipating that our students will be excited and curious to learn about these unusual fruits and vegetables, she is surprised and disturbed when they reject learning about these plant parts because they are “strange” and “weird.” She is not sure how to handle the students’ reactions and wonders what went wrong. The story is told in Janice’s voice as she observed Kim’s lesson. Commentary following the case is provided by Pamela Fraser-Abder, a science teacher educator with much experience working with teachers in the design of science learning experiences that acknowledge and build on students’ diverse cultural backgrounds.

As a science teacher educator, I encourage the preservice teachers with whom I work to help their children make connections between their science experiences and everyday life. I also challenge my students to engage elementary children in diverse learning experiences that encourage the children’s own understanding of diversity. Therefore, when Kim planned her lesson on fruits and vegetables as part of this seed-to-plant unit, I encouraged her to seek out fruits and vegetables that are not commonly grown, cooked, or eaten locally. This activity supports my belief that science curriculum can serve as a mirror and a window, a metaphor adapted from Emily Style (1988).

The children were instructed to bring in one fruit and one vegetable to explore in class. Kim explained that they were going to examine parts of plants that we eat. It was apparent that the children were very excited about the assignment. When they entered the classroom, they rushed to their tables. Then each child had an opportunity to describe the plant parts he or she had brought to share with the class. The array of fruits and vegetables included apples; pears; bananas; oranges; tomatoes; grapes; cucumbers; acorn squash; celery; lettuce; green, yellow, and red bell peppers; and cauliflower. The students
used plastic knives to examine their specimens carefully, and Kim challenged them to determine which of these plant parts had seeds. Working in small groups, the children made two piles of edible plant parts: those with seeds and those without seeds. Kim coached them as they struggled to determine whether the dots inside the banana were actually seeds. “What do you think?” asked Kim. “If they aren’t seeds, then what could they be?”

The pile of fruits was growing at each table with plant parts that the students were used to referring to as “fruits.” The fruit pile included the peppers, cucumbers, Tomatoes. And squash, in addition to the more conventional fruits – the apples, pears, bananas, and oranges. “If the plant parts have seeds,” announced Kim, “do you know what scientists call them?” The children shouted out, “Fruits!” and then started giggling that a tomato cannot be a fruit. Kim went on to explain that scientifically, the plant parts with seeds are called fruits. She then asked the students to describe the vegetable pile. “What part of the plant is the celery? The lettuce? The carrot, the cauliflower?” The students began to identify the stem for the celery, the leaf for the lettuce, the root for the carrot, and the flower of the plant for the cauliflower florets. They learned that these different plant parts are collectively called vegetables. Confident in this newfound knowledge, Ramon said to Kim, “I can’t wait to tell my parents that the tomato is really a fruit.”

At this point in the lesson, Kim introduced some new and different plant parts and challenged the students to identify them as fruits or vegetables. Kim had brought persimmon, avocado, mango, papaya, fennel, and collard greens. She showed these edible plant parts to the students and asked for group volunteers to explore these new and strange-looking specimens. “Oooh,” Keith shouted as he touched the rough surface of the persimmon, “this feels grow.” Ignoring Keith’s comment, Kim encouraged groups to examine the unusual plant parts. She held up a papaya, then a mango, then the fennel – no volunteers! Kim began to panic as she realized that her students did not want to explore strange and unfamiliar plant parts.

Struggling with the curriculum as window into other worlds, Kim was disappointed by the students’ reluctance to extend their initial discoveries. She wanted the students to classify the unusual plant parts as either a fruit or a vegetable and then to examine these plants and learn where they are grown and eaten. Frustrated, Kim held up a large mango. “Let’s look at this plant part,” she said. The students watched as she sliced the dark-green-skinned fruit in half and revealed a soft, juicy, yellow-orange pulp. Making a mess, Kim separated the juicy pulp until a flat, broad seed was revealed. The sound effects during this exploration revealed the students’ disgust for this new fruit, which not one student was willing to taste. “Who eats a mango?” asked Kim. “Where do you think it grows?”

There were no answers, and Kim’s desire to expose the students to plant parts from other cultures was thwarted by a class who experienced “different” as threatening or “disgusting.”

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What could Kim have done before the lesson to anticipate her students’ reactions to the unfamiliar plant parts?
2. What strategies might Kim have tried to engage her students in dissecting the strange plant parts?

3. Would students have been more willing to examine the mango and other unfamiliar plant parts had Kim involved them in planning for the lesson? Provide support for your answer.

4. How can elementary teachers prepare for making the science learning experiences of their students more culturally diverse?
This open case raises questions about the ethical treatment of animals in the elementary classroom. Stan, an experienced fifth grade teacher, faces a number of dilemmas when the lobster cookout he has planned for the end of his oceanography unit takes an unexpected turn. Stan is left wondering how he got into the dilemma and how he might find a way out. Questions of life and death, the issue of animals as a source of food and clothing, ethical questions about animal rights, and the treatment of these issues with elementary students all come into sharp focus for Stan on the day the lobster died. Some thoughts on Stan’s dilemma are provided by science teacher educator Merton Glass after the case.

Stan noticed the sudden change on Erin’s face. Her expression registered shock, as if she had just become aware of some awful truth. He would never forget the panic in her eyes. He stood transfixed as Erin’s emotions plummeted from engaged curiosity to anxiety, then fear. Her chair crashed to the floor as she ran to the classroom door and out into the hall. “Oh no! You’re going to kill it!” She shrieked in disbelief. Stan stood motionless in front of the class. A look of astonishment swept over him as another student ran from the room in tears. Pandemonium broke loose as some students hooted, hollered, and laughed while others sat in stunned silence.

Stan thought his idea to end the oceanography unit with a “lobster cookout” deserved a self-congratulatory pat on the back. He knew that lobster was not readily available and that most of his students would not have had an opportunity to see or taste this “Down East” treat. He thought the activity would give the class an opportunity to learn not only about lobsters but also about how a marine animal can shape the economy, life, and identity of a region. It reflected the interdisciplinary approach to teaching he favored. He had searched his kitchen to find lobster artifacts collected over the years – everything from a bib with the saying “The lobster you eat today spent the night in Casco Bay” to the mallets, shell cracker, and tiny forks for getting at the lobster claw meat. His enthusiasm was high enough to sustain the two-hour drive to Atlanta where he could buy live lobsters.

Stan was a fifth grade teacher in a small university town in the southeastern United States. He was born and raised in New England and, before coming to this rural school, had taught in a suburban school district outside of Boston for four years. He had come south to enroll in the graduate program of the nearby university. To establish residency, he had decided to teach in the local school system while taking evening classes. He had a mater’s degree in elementary education with an emphasis in science education.

Stan had started the lesson by showing the class a carefully wrapped box with ribbons and a bow and saying, “I would like you to make some observations about the box.” He had placed the lobster in the box and wrapped it before the class arrived. He wanted to reinforce students’ inquiry skills in making distinctions between observations and inferences. Stan believed that the basic process skill of observing was central to teaching science at this level. He wanted students to be able to distinguish between observed and inferred information. Student attention focused on the shoe size box
wrapped in gift paper. Enthusiastic student responses followed one after another: “There is a toy present inside!” “It has a red ribbon around it!” “It is about the same size as a shoe box.” “I can hear something moving inside!” Stan wrote the students’ responses on the board. After the class discussed differences between observations and inferences, he asked whether anyone could now identify which statements on the board were observations. Students were quick to eliminate the guesses and identify the observations. Stan then asked them for some inferences about what might be in the box. To make it more challenging, he told the class they could ask only questions that he could answer with a yes or no. “Is it a plant?” “No,” Stan replied, “It’s not a plant.” The class excitement began to build again after he answered “Yes” to “Is it an animal?” The next series of questions were wild inferences about what it could be based on the size of the box. Finally a student asked, “Does it have a backbone?” “No, it doesn’t, but that is a great question,” Stan responded. He was pleased with the level of questions that followed. After exhausting all of the students’ questions, Stan slowly unwrapped the gift box, opened it, and held up the lobster. “Oh, it’s a lobster! But I thought lobsters were red. This one is green!” one student exclaimed. “What’s its name!?” With a smile, Stan responded, “We don’t name our food, Erin.”

The door slammed shut after the second student dashed from the room following Erin’s lead. The loud sound snapped Stan out of his stunned silence and brought a momentary lull to the classroom commotion triggered by Erin’s exit. This, he thought, cannot be happening. “All right, enough!” His voice commanded attention with volume and a somewhat businesslike tone. As things in the room calmed down, Stan quickly reviewed his options. Should he continue with the class as planned? Should he run after the students who had fled the room? “I want you to take out your paper and pens and write a thank you letter to Mrs. Carson.” Email Carson, a marine biologist with the university, had visited the class the day before. This task bought Stan the time to follow the two students who had run from the room. He found them both in the hall crying. Erin sobbed inconsolably. Gretchen appeared more composed. Stan suggested that Gretchen accompany Erin to the restroom and was relieved to see that the students were diligently working on their letters. The water in the lobster pot, hidden out of sight in the back of the room, boiled. Okay Stan, he thought to himself, what now?

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Should Stan continue with the lobster cookout?
2. What is the message if he stops? What is the message if he continues?
3. How might the lesson be changed to avoid or soften the issues raised by the children’s unexpected behavior?
4. How should animals be treated in a science classroom?
5. Should fifth graders be protected from such life experiences?
Where Have All the Ipil-Ipil Trees Gone?:
Science Education through the Politics of Poverty

Teresa Silva

The culture of poverty is reflected in the science education experience of young children throughout the world. In some cases, poverty is intergenerational, existing across several generations. In other cases, poverty is situational, an artifact of temporary situations. In either case, children living in poverty enter the science classroom carrying with them a set of values, beliefs, languages and struggles which contrast sharply with the typical science curriculum. Historically, the question of young children’s success in science has been framed as a question of availability of resources, access to the community of science and culturally relevant pedagogy. Teachers across many diverse contexts echo the common sentiment that “if only we had enough up-to-date textbooks, hands-on equipment and materials reflecting the natural resources of our own communities, then all children would experience success in school science.” For children living and learning in poverty, however, success in school science is elusive and far more complex. Far too often their life experiences and ways of knowing, doing and communicating are devalued from a standpoint of what constitutes legitimate science. For teachers, worldwide, finding connections between the lifeworlds of children in poverty and school science is a daunting task. In this open case, Perla, a grade four teacher in a rural barangay community of the Philippines wrestles with the lack of fit between the home lives of her students and what she is teaching in science. Perla is a composite of many elementary teachers living and working in rural areas of the country.

My name is Perla Salizar and I teach grade four in the barangay school of Casay in the Philippines. I grew up in this barangay with my six brothers and two sisters. My brothers and father were fishermen and my mother was a plain housewife who washed clothes, cleaned the house and cooked food for the family. As the eldest daughter of the family, it was my responsibility to get a college education. Thus, after completing 10th grade, my final year of high school, I left the quiet life of Casay for the city to attend Teacher’s College. I’ll never forget how it felt, at the age of 16, to make the 10-kilometer walk with my father to San Joaquin, where I would catch the jeepney bus for the city. Along the way we crossed several streams that fanned out into the ocean, and I knew that I would miss the fresh fish of Casay. Nevertheless, I worked hard to obtain a teaching certificate in Elementary Science and Health. I knew my family depended on me to provide a stable source of income that would see them through the unpredictable seasons of typhoon and drought.

It is now nearly 20 years later and I have six children of my own. We live in a two-room cement house next door to the nipa house where I was born. Over the years it has gradually become more difficult to make a living from fishing and rich farming here in Casay. There are fewer fish as large fishing vessels encroach on the traditional fishing grounds of our barangay. Likewise, diminishing soil quality and unpredictable weather have created increasing challenges for rich farmers. As new roads and bridges are built more people are leaving our barangay for the city or abroad where they can obtain higher paying jobs. My husband used to fish, but now does odd jobs throughout the barangay. Some days he fixes fences, gathers firewood or makes bamboo tables and chairs. Often,
at the end of the school day, I may find him at the *tubaan*, sharing stories with his friends over a glass of *tuba*, a fermented drink made from coconut sap.

My teaching day begins in the early hours of the morning. I rise at 4:00 a.m. to feed the pig and wash the clothes while my husband ties up the goat and carabao. After bathing, I prepare a breakfast of rice and fish for my family and pack lunches of rice placed in plastic lunch boxes. In the earlier days, we packed our lunches of rice in banana leaves. At 7:00 a.m. I shout at my mother in the next house to inform her that the two youngest children are still asleep and that we are leaving for school and she should look after the young ones. My two eldest have gone ahead to join classmates at the high school. As I walk with my two other children to school, I begin to think about my class activities for the day.

There are 50 students in my grade four classroom, so my lessons must be carefully prepared ahead of time. I stayed at school until 5:00 p.m. last night, drawing pictures for my science lesson. I have given a lot of thought to today’s science lesson on deforestation and soil erosion. This is an important topic for the people in the *barangay*. Our school sits on a bluff overlooking the Sulu Sea, and the schoolyard is eroding rapidly along the shore. As more and more *ipil-ipil* and other trees are being harvested for charcoal and fuel, erosion is quickly becoming an environmental concern of the *barangay*.

It is now 7:45 and most of my students have arrived for the day. They arrived on foot walking long distances from their homes along the road, beside the seashore or near the mountains. Some arrived barefoot. Others have gathered fruits along the way which they will eat for snacks. As the last few students trickle in, I begin today’s science lesson.

**Perla:** Good morning class. Our science lesson for today, is about the importance of trees in our environment. I’ll show you two pictures. Look at the pictures very closely. Who can describe what they see in the first picture?

**Anita:** I can see big trees and small trees in the picture.

**Perla:** What else do you see?

**Mario:** The leaves of the trees are green. There are many trees. There are starapple, coconut, guava, *ipil-ipil*, mango, and tamarind trees.

**Perla:** Now let’s take a look at the other picture. What can you say about this picture?

**Paul:** The trees are cut in the picture. Maybe some farmers cut down the trees. I cannot see any more trees in the picture.

**Jen:** I feel very sad when I look at this picture because there are no trees to play under. We cannot have a contest to see who can climb the trees first.

**Anita:** There are not any trees so we cannot make any dresses from the leaves.

**Perla:** What do you think will happen if all the trees are cut?

**Mario:** It will be very hot. There will be no homes for the birds.

**Anita:** There will be more land and space to plant more rice and corn.

**Antonio:** But when the rain comes the soil from the farms will be carried away by the water.

**Perla:** Why do you think that will happen?

**Antonio:** Because there are no more tree roots to hold the water. Too much water will wash away the soil. We will have many floods.
Perla: So what shall we do to prevent floods?
Class (in unison): We plant more trees. We will not cut down the trees.
Perla: That ends our lesson for today. On Monday we will perform a science activity to look at the effects of cutting trees on our soil.

The following day was Saturday and so there was no school. Antonio went with his father to make charcoal on the neighbor’s farm. When they arrived at the farm Antonio was amazed to find that all of the trees had been cut. He helped his father gather the logs and pile them in a pit. They made a fire to burn the logs. When most of the logs were burned, they covered the pile with soil so that only smoke could escape. Antonio knew they would return in a few days to remove the soil, gather the remaining charcoal and place it in sacks. As Antonio helped his father he thought about what he had learned in yesterday’s science lesson. Antonio, being a very curious boy, addressed his father:

Antonio: Father, why did you cut all those trees? My teacher says it is not good to cut all those trees because if you will cut the trees the soil will be washed away.
Father: Well, we have to cut all the trees in order to make charcoal. We must sell charcoal in order to have money to buy our food.

Antonio was confused. He wondered who was right, his teacher or his father. He went to sleep that evening with questions on his mind. The questions bothered him throughout the weekend. He planned to ask his teacher about them early Monday morning.

Antonio arrived at school early Monday morning, anxiously waiting for Ma’am Salizar to arrive. As she entered the room he said:

Antonio: Good morning, Ma’am.
Perla: Why are you very early today Antonio?

Antonio was hesitant to speak up so Perla continued,

Perla: What’s bothering you Antonio? Why do you look so puzzled?
Antonio: Ma’am, you were saying that it is bad to cut all the trees. But my father said we have to cut the trees to make charcoal so that we will have money for food. Is my father doing the right thing?

Perla thought to herself, “what will I tell this boy?” As a teacher, I seem at a loss… I cannot simply say that the father is wrong and I am right. There must be a better way of explaining these things to Antonio so that he won’t be confused. This is a dilemma for which I have no immediate solution.

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How should Perla respond to Antonio’s question? Is there a “right” or “wrong” in this case? If you were Perla, what would you say to Antonio? What might be some possible implications of your response?
2. Indirect forms of communication are often valued among Filipinos. What are some indirect methods of communication or activities that Perla might use to educate Antonio’s father about environmental problems associated with deforestation? How effective is it when Perla simply tells Antonio that his family should not cut down trees?

3. What are some science experiments and activities that Perla might use both in and outside her classroom to help students understand the complex relationships between deforestation and soil erosion? How could Perla involve students in authentic inquiry into environmental issues in the barangay?

4. How should Perla handle the emotional and value-laden aspect of environmental science topics in the science classroom, especially those issues which directly impact the economic livelihood of community members?

5. Confronted with a similar situation, how would you help Antonio negotiate between the world of school science and the hard reality of poverty?
This story is written by Cynthia and Jessica, two fourth grade Mexican American girls, together with Angie, an adult white science teacher educator. As elementary students in an urban center in the southwest, Cynthia and Jessica are surrounded by many peers with life stories like their own. In this open case, Cynthia and Jessica, both children of immigrant parents and poor, tell the secret story (with Angie’s help) of why they do not like science in school even though their teacher engages the class in many fun, student-centered projects. Cynthia and Jessica’s story raises questions about what exactly access to science in school really means, especially for poor, immigrant girls. This case is followed by a possible solution to the dilemma by Claire Hamilton, a former teacher and elementary education professor who works through a community service program to provide support for homeless children and their families.

My name is Cynthia, and I am nine years old. I am in the fourth grade. I have lived with my family in Austin, Texas, for five years. Before moving to Austin, I lived in Mexico. Most of my family still lives in Mexico, but some of my family lives here in Texas with me. Right now, my family lives in a homeless shelter. We have lived here for one year. Although I have lots of friends to play with here, I don’t like living here when it gets dark outside. It is not safe. I also do not like it when boys think they are better than me or when they think I cannot do all of the same things as them!

My name is Jessica, and I am eight years old. Cynthia is my best friend. I also go to school in Austin, Texas. My parents are originally from Mexico, but from a different part of Mexico than Cynthia’s family. I live in the same homeless shelter as Cynthia. Our families moved into the shelter at about the same time. I really like spending time over at my friends’ places, but I don’t like it when people fight, especially when people fight in my face! I also don’t like it when boys try to show me up. I can run as fast as any of the boys around here! I also don’t like going outside at night because it is not safe around here!

My name is Angie and I am a science teacher educator in the same city where Cynthia and Jessica live. I have known Jessica and Cynthia since the beginning of the school year (it is now December) because I teach and do research at the shelter where they live. We came to write this story together because these two girls were always particularly active and interested in our after-school science program, and I was interested to learn more about why. Well, I certainly got more than I bargained for when the direction of our writing was not about why they liked science but why they did not like science!

We want to tell about learning science in school. Actually, when Angie asked us to write this story with her, we did not want to do it at first because it was about science in our school. The truth is, we really do not like science. Our favorite subjects are math and reading.

We called our story El Secreto de las Niñas because the reason we do not like science is that we are not used to science! Sometimes when we complain about science in school, people think we don’t like it because we are girls, and that is not true. They tell us
we can be anything we want to be. We know that, sort of. We are just as good as boys, we just don’t want to explain our reasons. It is our secret.

I told the girls that I thought their secret was interesting but that I was not sure exactly what they meant. What did it mean to be used to something, anyway? Did it mean that their schoolteacher never teaches science at all, and so they were not used to having science class at all? Did it mean that their teacher did teach science but the girls were not used to the topics, the content, or the pedagogical methods the teacher used to teach science? Finally, I wondered, did it mean that they were not used to the language or the skills the teacher required them to use? I asked the girls to explain their secret to me.

Okay. Let us tell you a story about what happened in school to show you what we mean.

Our teacher told us we were going to start a unit on movie making. We both thought this would be really cool because we love to go see the movies! One of the first activities we were going to do was make a shoebox camera. We would make this camera out of a shoebox, and it would take real pictures. And then we would be able to keep the camera and take whatever pictures we wanted! At the beginning, we were really excited about this project because neither of us has ever owned a camera before. We remember only one time when we were able to use a disposable camera because Cynthia’s mother bought her one from the store for her birthday.

The day before we were to start the camera project, our teacher asked each student to bring in an empty shoebox. Well, where are we going to get empty shoeboxes? I told my teacher I didn’t have an empty shoebox, so then she said to the whole class, “If you don’t have a shoebox, you can ask your mother or an older brother or sister to take you to a discount shoe store and ask for a shoebox. They will give you one for free.” Then she said, “For those of you who cannot get your own shoebox, you can bring in fifty cents and but one from me.” She then told us that we are getting older now, and we have to learn to become more responsible for our own education. Well, we are still like, where are we going to get a shoebox? My mother cannot take me to the store! She doesn’t even have a car, and she cannot speak English that well, and she has to watch my baby brother. And then we are also like, where are we going to get the fifty cents? So the next day we went to school without our shoeboxes and without fifty cents.

Your story so far reminds me of how easy it is to link what children are able to bring to school with them (whether it be cultural capital, material items, or feelings of power of belonging) to their “success” in science class. In other words, it seems that your teacher is trying your own ability to succeed in her class (or at least to develop positive feelings of belonging in science) to the kinds of things you might have access to at home. Did she understand how your situations at home affected how you might be able to participate in school science? What happened next?

Well, at the beginning of the day, the teacher collected the shoeboxes. A couple of other students in the class did not have shoeboxes or money either. Our teacher gave the class a lecture about being responsible. So we told her in private right before recess that our mothers could not take us to the store and we did not have any money, and that is why we did not have a shoebox. She asked us why we didn’t tell her earlier. She also told us it was okay and that she understood. She told us we could help clean the erasers during recess to “earn” the shoebox and that it would be “our secret.” Well, we both decided to go to recess because we were mad at her, and we didn’t want to share a secret with her.
When it came time for science, our teacher said nothing to us but gave us shoeboxes anyway so we could make our camera. But we were the last ones to get shoeboxes, and they were ugly. By that time, we did not want to make cameras anymore, and we just sat there and poked at our boxes.

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Where did the girls really mean when they said they are not used to science?
2. What should the teacher have done once the girls disengaged from the project?
3. Doing projects in science class is often difficult because the supplies budget is often small. How should the teacher have handled the situation at the beginning? How should the teacher have handled the situation once the girls decided to go out for recess anyway?
When Do You Perform Tuob?:
Culture at the Margins of the Science Classroom

Esperanza Parcon

As a teacher in a rural barangay school in the province of Antique, Esperanza Parcon enjoys a close relationship with her grade three students and their families. Esperanza was born and raised in the barangay and returned to teach science at the elementary school after graduation from the university. This case portrays the tension that Esperanza experiences when faced with two competing referents – the traditional health beliefs practiced in her home and the modern ideas of health care she has learned at the university. Feeling uncomfortable with students’ questions, Esperanza begins to question the role of traditional knowledge in the science curriculum.

I’m a grade three teacher in our school barrio. I grew up in this barangay and I’m aware of the beliefs and traditions of each family living in this community. I have also experienced many of the traditional rituals firsthand, including paobra, especially pabangon and papukaw, rituals commonly initiated by quack doctors. The truth is, I perform most of these rituals and many more. Over the years, as I have observed the practices of the quack doctors, I have come to believe that there are things that happen in this world that science can not answer. But is this really the case? Sometimes thinking about these ideas creates a puzzle in my mind. At times I wonder whom to believe – the quack doctors or the professors and others I have encountered during my university teacher preparation program. Some people hold the opinion, and would agree with the saying “to see is to believe.” But there are other people, especially professionals such as science teachers, who insist that we must first proven an idea through empirical evidence and theories before we can accept and believe it as truth. Personally I believe that if we only open our eyes and imagination, we will conclude that some of the rituals performed by our ancestors are based on truth. There are other times, however, especially when I am teaching science, that I’m not really sure what to believe.

I can still remember what happened in my science class one day, when students were learning about first aid as part of a unit on proper health care. The specific topic was about allergies, and I introduced the topic saying,

Mrs. Parcon: Some of the plants around us will likely cause us to itch and then red spots will appear on your body. What do you think are some of the precautionary measures we should take to prevent this from happening, since we are always surrounded by plants?
Chris: We should wear gloves or mittens when we are working with plants.
Mrs. Parcon: Yes, that’s a good idea. What else?
Roger: We can apply Caladryll. That’s what my nanay uses when I feel itchy.

(I noticed that Mark and Mary Rose had raised their hands and were eager to answer. I called on Mark first).
Mark: Ma’am! You can perform tuob. Just put a little sugar in and it will stop all the itchiness.

(I smiled, and tried to ignore Mark’s answer by calling on Mary Rose to answer next but…)

Mary Rose: Yes ma’am! Mark’s answer is true! I have also experienced that tuob can help with itchiness and will help the babies sleep. I have observed my mother performing tuob on my baby sister. She mixes nine different plants and some blessed palm leaves with charcoal. The smoke from this mixture is passed over my baby sister. My mother says that the smoke from the tuob will drive bad spirits away and help my baby sister sleep soundly. I have even helped my mother gather the dried leaves that are needed to perform tuob.

I was stunned for a minute and unsure whether I should entertain the comments of Mark and Mary Rose or ignore them altogether. Some of the other children also began to volunteer that their parents, too, performed tuob in the home. As I struggled to think of a response, I suddenly seized on the idea of performing an experiment. I went next door to Ma’am Fe’s room to borrow an aquarium and cigarette stick. Upon returning to the room, I gathered the students around the aquarium and said,

Ma’am Parcon: I’ve heard that most of you are practicing tuob at home, using the smoke to drive away evil spirits. Let’s see if we can carry out an experiment to study the effects of the smoke. We will use the fish in this aquarium to represent ourselves. Let’s see what will happen when I fill the aquarium with smoke from the cigarette. The smoke from the cigarette will represent the smoke that comes from burning the leaves in tuob.

(All the students gathered around the aquarium, eager to observe. In a short time they began to comment:)

Sara: The fish looks like a drunk person. It’s groggy. It seems like it’s looking for a place to stay – a secure, safe place.
Warren: It looks like the fish is gasping for its breath.
Mrs. Parcon: How do you think the fish feels?
Roger: Maybe like it is suffocating.
Chris: Maybe like it will die. The poor fish.
Ma’am Parcon: How would you feel if you placed yourself in the role of the fish?
Mark (joking): Ahh….I might die!
Mrs. Parcon: Do you really believe that Mark?

(By this time the fish was moving slowly downward, drifting toward the bottom of the tank. Finally it rolled on its side and floated. As Mark observed the fish, he looked at me with a serious and sorrowful expression).
Mark: It’s dead…that means…
Mrs. Parcon: Yes, children, smoke is not good for our lungs or that of fish. Smoke has tiny dust particles which might clog our heart. Smoke can also be the cause of some asthma and shortness of breath in children just like you. What do you think about the practice of tuob now?
Mark: I am going to tell my nanay about this.
Mary Rose: But ma’am, why is that my alaw was cured when my mother performed the tuob on me?

I just smiled and told Mary Rose that there are some things that we can not explain through science because they are beyond the control of man’s world. I advised her not to inhale smoke during the practice of tuob. She nodded in agreement. But I know that there is still some confusion in her mind. And as I look at myself, I am even more confused, because I know that when I go home tonight I will see my mother performing tuob on my child. Should I stop my mother from performing the practice of tuob? I could be very stubborn and insist that she not use tuob on my baby. Or should I listen to her when she explains that not only are they used to tuob, but past results testify to the effectiveness of this practice in driving away evil spirits? As a science teacher, I can’t help but feel a tiny bit of hypocrisy. On the one hand, I am trying to demonstrate to students through experimentation the harmful effects of smoke. On the other hand, I want to believe that the smoke from tuob really has some benefit in driving away the evil spirits.

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Given a similar situation, should the teacher employ investigatory strategies in an attempt to prove or disprove an existing belief? Explain your answer.
2. To what extent should Esperanza consider or ignore the points and observations of the students? If you were the teacher, how would you respond to their comments and observations?
3. If you were the teacher in this case how would you reconcile cultural knowledge, such as the driving away of evil spirits, with scientific explanations for health issues such as asthma or allergies?
4. In this case, Esperanza used a fish in an aquarium tank to illustrate the negative effects of cigarette smoke. What is your opinion on the appropriateness of this demonstration? What are some other demonstrations, experiments or activities that she might consider using to illustrate the harmful effects of cigarette smoke?