

Investigating the Influence of Race on the Teaching Philosophies and Practices of
Effective Teachers of Diverse Students

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ABSTRACT

This research study examined the most salient experiences that facilitated the multicultural understandings, development, and practices of effective teachers of diverse students. Field notes collected during four months of participant observation in addition to teacher and student interviews provided the data for this study. Critical race theory was used as a framework for exploring the factors influencing the teachers' educational philosophies and pedagogical practices. The data for this study were analyzed according to emerging themes, depicting each teacher's background experiences, instructional philosophies and practices, and their recommendations for pre-service teacher education. The following themes emerged from the data analysis and interpretations: (1) Teachers' background experiences provoked an awareness of societal influences on race; (2) Teachers' understanding of the sociocultural factors of race influenced their pedagogical decisions; and (3) Teachers' critical awareness promoted a comprehensive view of students and their behaviors. The implications from this study suggest that opportunities to critically examine society promote an understanding of how societal messages both implicit and explicit influence thinking which in turn affects how teachers and students participate in the process of "schooling."

Dedication

This work is dedicated in the memory of my father Mr. Alpheus Derick Wallace who always encouraged me to “never give up” and to “start what I finish.” I would also like to dedicate this work in the memory of my great grandparents Mr. Jonathan Douglas and Mrs. Elizabeth Cooke. This accomplishment would not have been possible if it weren’t for their legacy of life and love, strong work ethic, and belief in education. I am who I am because of all of you.

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*"...And my soul looked back and wondered
How I made it over..."*

-- Negro Spiritual

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vi
Chapter I: Introduction to the Study	
Chapter Introduction	1
Understanding the research problem	3
Research Purpose	5
Research Questions	5
Definition of Terms	5
Chapter II: Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Perspective	
Chapter Introduction	7
History of Multicultural Education	7
The multiple meanings of multiculturalism in education	9
Multicultural approaches	10
The intended purposes of multicultural education: Are we missing the point?	12
Multicultural approaches in teacher education	14
Multicultural courses in teacher education	15
Multicultural field experiences in teacher education	16
Multicultural Silences: The role of the cooperating teacher and university mentor	16
The need for the infusion approach in teacher education	18
Critical race theory and mainstream multicultural education approaches	19
Understanding the origins of critical race theory (CRT)	19
Multicultural education from a CRT perspective	20
Examining issues of whiteness in teacher education	21
Discomforting pedagogy and student resistance	23
Culturally relevant teaching theory and related theories	24
Culturally responsive teachers: What are they like?	25
Reconceptualizing Multicultural Teacher Education	27
Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers: How do we do it?	28
Chapter III: Methodology	
Chapter Introduction	32
Motivation for research study	33
Past experiences that influenced my research interest	35
Methodology	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	Page
Description of the Research Environments	39
City Middle	39
Rockville, VA	40
University Community	44
Data Gathering Procedures	45
Selecting the Participants	45
Informed Consent Procedures	47
Data Sources and Collection Procedures	48
Observations	48
Field notes	49
Timeline for interviewing	50
Types of interviews	50
Unstructured, interactive interviews	50
Life history interviews	51
Teaching philosophies and practices interview	51
Recommendations for teacher education interview	52
Focus group interviews	52
Interviewer's Log	53
Documents	53
Researcher's Relationship with Participants	54
Role of the Researcher	54
Steps for Data Transformation	55
Establishing Credibility	58
Verification	58
Rich, detailed description	58
Peer Review	59
Member Checks	59
Triangulation	60
Data Presentation	60
Chapter IV: Vignettes	
Chapter Introduction	62
Early Life Experiences	62
Len	62
Marie	70
Teaching Philosophy and Practices	82
Len	82
Marie	93

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	Page
Recommendations for Teacher Education	107
Len	107
Marie	111
 Chapter V: Discussion	
Chapter Introduction	115
Theme 1	117
Theme 2	123
Theme 3	128
Chapter Conclusion	132
 Chapter VI: Implications	
Returning to the Literature	133
Suggestions for Teacher Education Programs	136
 References	140
 Appendix	
IRB	146
 Consent Forms:	
Form A: Teachers	150
Form B: Students	152
Form C: Parental Permission Form	154
 Thematic Analysis Charts:	
Teaching Philosophies and Practices	156
Salient Experiences	157
Focus Group Interviews	158
Marie's Analysis: Experiences, Beliefs, and Practices	159
Len's Analysis: Experiences, Beliefs, and Practices	160
 Curriculum Vitae	161