Chapter 17

Creating Praxis for Pre-Service Teachers:
Developing Critical Consciousness Through Book Clubs

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ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces a storied learning model to create opportunities for praxis within teacher education courses in order to humanize student experiences through book clubs. As many argue that people perceive the world in narrative form, embedding book clubs within methods courses creates opportunities for pre-service teachers to explore and reflect upon unfamiliar experiences, identities, and stories in order to cultivate their critical consciousness. Building off of Bishop's metaphor of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, as well as existing literature that discusses the use of book clubs in pre-service teacher methods courses, two case studies are offered highlighting theoretical and practical ways for book clubs to be embedded within methods courses. Case studies are followed by a framework for implementation that considers research in both critical pedagogy and reading comprehension.

INTRODUCTION: THE NARRATIVE QUEST TOWARD HUMANIZING TEACHING

Across scholarship on teacher education, there exists a common thread of a quest similar to the colloquial "hero's journey"[1] rooted in a desire to change. Unlike the traditional hero's journey, however, the manifestation within teacher education seeks not to change the individual, but rather to develop transformative policies and practices aimed to provide more equitable and sustainable teacher learning and practice. As this journey within the field of teacher education does not always have a recognizable

pattern, like those stories that employ this well-known structure, there exist opportunities for new paths to be chosen and new learning to be had.

This chapter centers on one path within this larger quest, asking how we might (re)imagine teacher learning through the lens of storytelling as a way to provide humanized learning experiences while cultivating teachers' critical consciousness. Thinking about this through the lens of diverse literature to build pre-service teachers' critical consciousness, we consider this question as part of the body of scholarship focused on preparing teachers prior to stepping foot in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2014). As we are interested in engaging with this question through the lens of storytelling, we position this work aligned with scholarship that understands teacher learning and experience in narrative form (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and construct this chapter as our quest toward storied learning within pre-service teacher methods courses.

We begin this chapter by providing a theoretical framework used to frame the storied quest both from an identity perspective (McAdams,1997) and a literary perspective (Fang & Coatoam, 2013; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). We follow this by discussing traditional methods courses taken by pre-service teachers and problematize research which considers standardized approaches to learning as aligned with increased rigor, and we draw on literature discussing the benefits of book clubs within pre-service teacher methods courses and connect with the ways book clubs with K-12 students can inform pedagogies in higher education. We then present two case studies to provide insight into how we (re)imagine this work in our own courses. While each of the case studies draws on different theoretical frameworks, they both attend to the integration of book clubs as a practice by which to hold space for individual stories to become collective learnings and for collective stories to become opportunities for teacher development. The chapter closes with a storied framework for embedding book clubs within methods courses mapping two existing frameworks as an offering for how books clubs can serve as a vehicle to support the development of critical consciousness among pre-service teachers.

While this chapter provides insight into varied ways one might embed book clubs into teacher methods courses, the main objective is to highlight the fact that we do not need to continue on the same quest that has been the focus of teacher education since its inception. Rather, we have the opportunity to "...look beyond the given, beyond what appears to be unchangeable" (Greene, 2009, p. 397) in order to dream and imagine new quests and new pathways by which to offer a truly humanizing learning experience for all.

CENTERING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: DEFINING OUR TERMS

In an effort to ensure the concepts grounding this chapter are clear and the scholarship we are drawing upon allows for (re)imagining pre-service teacher education, we find it important to define and connect the concepts being used. We use each of these concepts to further our ontology as well as consider the ways in which these concepts intersect.

The first set of concepts used throughout the chapter are *literary* vs. *literacy*. These terms, while often used interchangeably, have varied meanings. For the purposes of this chapter, we describe *literacy* as being fluid in nature, both individual and collective, concrete and abstract, and spanning beyond the field of education. The term *literary*, on the other hand, refers to literature and the means by which an author uses specific devices to convey meaning (Lee & Sprately, 2010).

Within this chapter, we draw on both literacy and literary to think about how storied learning through book clubs impacts teacher practice specific to one's ability to engage with a text deeply enough to

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