

education faculty. Feedback and suggestions were provided by the Standard IV (Diversity) committee in an effort to demonstrate explicit course alignment with NCATE standards and the teacher education faculty's definition. The resulting feedback and suggestions were presented and discussed for further input and insights during the multiple NCATE meetings chaired by the NCATE steering committee and by the Standard IV committee. Teacher education faculty were given multiple opportunities to discuss Standard IV committee's analysis of syllabi with Standard IV committee members and other teacher education faculty. At the time of accreditation review, all elementary education courses incorporated issues of diversity. Furthermore, NCATE Standard 4a was deemed acceptable and without any restrictions or any indicated "Areas For Improvement" (AFI). The "revised" syllabi were examined for the purposes of this study. Particular attention was paid to assessments.

Professional Development. The university offered multiple professional development opportunities for faculty that addressed issues of diversity in myriad ways. However, we focus on one professional development that was created and implemented by members of the Standard IV committee, and that coincided with a (required) faculty meeting. The professional development workshop was based on the *Cultural Learning Process* [20]. Faculty were asked to fill out a questionnaire based on 12 identities and bring their responses to the workshop. To begin the workshop, Standard IV members presented a framework for the workshop—one that explored the intersections of power, privilege, and oppression. Next, four members of the committee shared narratives related to one (self) identity that were particularly significant to their experiences and worldviews. Finally, small group discussions about faculty members' identities and cultural lenses were facilitated by committee members.

Other Experiences. We include other experiences – such as faculty meetings – in which we perceived a non-inclusive environment or attitude regarding Others.

3. Findings and Discussion

Three key findings emerged from the analysis of the teacher education unit's definition of diversity and the operational definition of diversity in syllabi. First, curricula within syllabi continued to present

content and information about underrepresented students as problems or as issues of diversity as relevant to classroom management or "at-risk" children. This perspective on curricula suggested the continued superficial understanding of diversity and as a means to propagate deficits. Second, analysis revealed hegemonic pedagogies and/or understandings that promoted and reinforced dominant cultural practices of schooling underscoring the teacher education unit's curricula for teacher education. Finally, the analysis revealed that the propagation of deficits and hegemonic practices seemed to emanate from teacher educators who reflected potential (probable) discomfort with issues of diversity and social justice, particularly those who had dominant culture identities and who have rarely been asked to think about their (subjectivity and/or identity) privileges and power.

3.1. Propagating Deficits

The first revelation illuminated a few curricula in which concepts and strategies to address diverse ability levels and behavioral issues were introduced, yet presented information about learners in urban environments with an emphasis on racial and ethnic differences and stereotypes rather than address the range of socio-cultural factors impacting these learners. An example of such stereotyping was a handout given to candidates in one course that summarily categorized racial groups (African American, Asian American, Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American) according to "expected" attitudes and behaviors. Rather than inform candidates in order to build cultural competence, it reinforced existing belief systems about groups rather than approaching individuals with unique characteristics, histories, and talents. The most unfortunate result was that candidates were sharing this information across courses and cohorts, thus regenerating a specific worldview about difference.

Other curricula highlighted deficit understandings within course goals and course assessments. For example, within the course exploring "special learners," a course designed to address issues of inclusive education and English language learners, issues of "urban schooling" problematics were identified as one of the primary course goals. One research participant stated that she felt this course goal defined diversity as a "faulty thing" to be repaired or as a "problem" to be resolved. In addition,

in the standard lesson plan, which was also the only “diversity” evidence for several core courses, “diversity” was assessed in two criteria listed toward the end of the assignment description. One criterion was “accommodations/adaptations,” which evaluated how effectively “Modifications address all students’ individual needs.” The other criterion that may have been remotely connected with diversity was “Connections to home-community,” for which an exemplary rating was described as “Activity reflects strong link to home & community.” This criterion would have been diversity-focused only in the case of identified “diverse” students.

Further evidence came from analysis of teacher candidates’ perceptions of the syllabi and the focus of diversity within their methods courses. For example, candidates assumed that the presence of non-White students, particularly African-American students in the classroom mooted the need to integrate diversity. This inclination towards integrating diversity in response to the presence of the “other” in most cases was due to the “other” being conceptualized as a problem that needed to be resolved. Clearly, candidates were being mis-educated, that is, they were being mis-informed that diversity was a problem to be tackled with and resolved rather than an already integral and inherent part of educative experiences.

3.2. Hegemonic Understandings

The second theme revealed the hegemonic understandings and practices of teacher education faculty. Much like preservice and inservice teachers who identify as white, male, middle class, abled, heterosexual, and so forth, teacher educators may also adhere to discourses of deficit, discourses of privilege, and dominant culture (and unquestioned) understandings of schooling. These teacher educators may not have been called to examine how they are complicit with or advocates of hegemonic practices. Teacher educators’ hegemonic understandings of diversity were evident in one professional development session, which was aimed at understanding one’s Self and one’s identities. Reflecting on our experiences, we noted that several white, middle class, heterosexual faculty resisted considering more challenging identity issues. For example, one male faculty member presented a case of “reverse discrimination,” as he felt that he was a “minority” (i.e. lacks power or privilege) within

education because he was white and male even though he was a full professor.

Other examples of hegemonic understandings were revealed in our reflections on department meetings. During one the meeting, a tenured faculty member suggested that the “accommodations/adaptation” of the lesson plan was sufficient to “cover” diversity. In another meeting, an African American female preservice teacher’s academic abilities were questioned. During this meeting, one faculty member commented that this preservice teacher was extremely quiet during class and rarely provided her opinion or experiences, thus exhibits a “lack of cognitive process.” The abilities of a white female preservice teacher demonstrating a similar quiet demeanor were never questioned.

3.3. Discomfort

Regardless of the commitment to diversity some faculty members had articulated at the start of the accreditation endeavor, the realities of classroom discourses seemed to undermine that commitment. Whether consciously or unconsciously, some faculty members seemed unable or unwilling to address issues of diversity directly, and/or seemed to cause discomfort or discordance in the classroom. This avoidance or discomfort also suggested that faculty members themselves may have had limited knowledge and exposure to the range of potential diversity within the classroom and the larger community and, therefore, limited development of their cultural competence. Their intentions may have been sincere, but they may have lacked the depth of knowledge and experience to understand what it was/is like to be Other.

4. Conclusion

Through this inquiry, we discovered that teacher educators were willing to incorporate syllabi revision suggestions made by the Standard IV committee in ways that articulated elements of diversity. However, as evidenced by preservice teacher perspectives, the *pedagogical practices* employed by teacher educators reflected the course as status quo. Furthermore, several teacher educators’ language and behaviors within program professional spaces (professional development and meetings) reflected hegemonic understandings of teacher education. That is, some of the course curricula transformations appeared only on paper – they were skin deep.

It is also clear that the preparation process for professional accreditation through the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) used as a catalyst for transforming program curricula and permeating diversity throughout our teacher education program was, at best, superficial. Diversity was often not addressed in critical ways, if at all, and at times addressed in ways that maintain the hegemonic status quo. Problematic, too, is that the diversity evidenced by the program were deemed as “acceptable” by NCATE Board of Examiners, and thus contributing to the program’s national accreditation. That is, through accreditation, a stamp-of-approval was given that most likely encouraged the program’s continuance of such practices.

This reflective exploration has raised some questions and issues for future inquiry. One issue is teacher educator dispositions. As Merryfield (2000) suggests, teacher educators teach what they know, and rate student dispositions according to their lenses. How might we provide teacher educators spaces in which they can come to understand critical diversity in order to incorporate such lenses in the courses they teach? Might it be worthwhile to investigate teacher educators’ dispositions and understandings of diversity as a standard within accreditation processes? If what is assessed is valued, then how might Promotion and Tenure criteria incorporate teacher educators’ practices and understandings of diversity within service, teaching, and/or scholarship? Perhaps most importantly, how might teacher education programs approach diversity as a community endeavor that leads to programmatic underpinnings and curricular, pedagogical, and field experiences practices?

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