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EXAMINING CULTURALLY RELEVANT
AND RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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2001

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ABSTRACT

This year long self-study focused on how my self-knowledge and shifting awareness of my multiple cultural identities (as an Indian / Asian / English speaking / woman) affected my attempts to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner in a U.S. fourth grade urban classroom of ethnically, culturally and socio-economically diverse students.

Culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995) and responsive pedagogies (Gay, 2000) provide teachers with effective methods to teach and learn with ethnically and culturally diverse students. While these studies give teachers many ways to affirm students' diversity in classrooms, few document how a teacher's changing conceptions of her own cultural identity (e.g. Paley, 1979) affect teaching in diverse classrooms. This study documents my changing conceptions of my cultural identities and how those affected my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in a classroom setting where teacher and students came from diverse cultural backgrounds.
The data gathered included field notes, interviews and discussions with classroom teacher and students and videotapes of my classroom teaching. Central to my pedagogy was the use of classroom drama, including the use of discussions, small group work and individual writing. The data were analyzed through self-reflexive writing and principles of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as guides.

An important finding of this study was the significance of my shifting understanding of my cultural position in relation to students and the classroom teacher, which allowed me to position myself culturally 'parallel' to students and teacher, (as in viewing my cultural differences and theirs on an equivalent plane) rather than in a culturally 'hierarchical' relationship (as in viewing my cultural difference as 'privileged' or 'marginal' in relation to theirs). The findings from this study supports Ladson-Billings' (1994, 1995) concept of cultural competence as central to culturally relevant pedagogy. Following Ladson-Billings (2001) and others, this study explains five features of cultural competence: Recognizing students in culturally different situations; acknowledging teachers' cultural identities; acknowledging students' cultural identities; encouraging students' understanding of cultural difference; and using self-knowledge as template to build cultural knowledge in the classroom. Further, a sixth feature is also proposed: using cultural knowledge as pro-active pedagogy.
Dedicated to Badema
The experience of your stories are still fresh in my mind

Dedicated to Amma
You have taught me more than you know

I follow in both your forceful footsteps
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I drew my ‘woman power’ from you, Thank you. Amma and Appa, words
cannot fathom the depth of my feelings of gratitude and love for you in this
challenging journey – Thank you for making me who I am. And finally to my
husband Bala, your unconditional love, care, commitment... has enveloped me
in this cocoon of bliss – this achievement is partly yours, Thank you.
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CHAPTER 1
DEFINING THE STUDY

"Numerous people in education are recognizing the importance of coming in touch with the patterns of their own self-formation if they are to find connection points with other human beings whose memories may link with theirs at certain junctures, and perhaps, seem alien at others and [through these narratives] we gradually impart meanings to our own lives"  
-- Maxine Greene, (1994, p.14)  
"Multiculturalism, Community and the Arts"  
In A.H. Dyson & C. Genishi (Eds.) The Need for Story NCTE

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to describe how my shifting awareness of my multiple cultural identities (as an Indian / Asian / English speaking / woman) affected my attempts to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner in a fourth grade urban classroom (of ethnically, culturally and socio-economically diverse students) in the United States. At the heart of this narrative is my belief that teaching and learning in classrooms are complex cultural events and are affected by many cultural factors. Among the factors I focused on are the teacher's cultural identities, the individual students' cultural
identities, the culture of the classroom, the culture of the institution in which the classroom and school are located, and the particular cultural contexts in which all of these interact.

Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson – Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Villegas 1991; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) assert the importance of centering teaching in classrooms within students' cultural frames of reference. These pedagogical approaches provide teachers with effective methods to teach and learn with ethnically and culturally diverse students. Although these approaches to teaching have variously been called culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a, Osborne, 1996), or culturally responsive teaching (Erickson, 1987; Gay, 2000; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995), culturally sensitive teaching (in Gay, 2000), culturally appropriate teaching (Au & Jordan 1981 cited in Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000; Villegas, 1991), culturally congruent teaching (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981 cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995a), these approaches are all based upon conceptions of an ethical and equitable approach to educational practices at all levels. They advocate that when there is cultural congruence between classroom practices, whether these are teachers' styles of teaching or their philosophy, and students'
ways of learning, researchers have found that students are more successful in
school and classroom tasks (see for detailed examples in Gay, 2000; Villegas,

In the United States, changing demographics in large urban settings,
have particularly affected classroom practices in urban public schools (Gay,
2000; Weiner, 1999, 2000). More than at any other time, students in urban
public schools come from diverse socio-cultural, socio-economic, racial and
linguistic backgrounds (Banks & Banks, 1995a; Banks, 1999; Weiner, 1999).
However, school and classroom practices in most urban institutions have not
adequately changed to mirror students' diversity nor do these practices affirm
students' diversity (Banks & Banks, 1995a; Nieto, 1996). For example, most
teachers in urban schools often come from a predominantly white background
and are not adequately trained to teach all diverse students effectively (Gay,
2000; Ladson-Billings, 2001). Studies show that some institutional practices,
like tracking used in some urban public schools, are not supportive of students'
Further, practices like tracking often impact 'minority' students more because
they are not able to perform up to school expectations (Ladson-Billings, 1994).
Studies also show that often, diverse student learners are framed in a deficit

---

2 I use the term minority within quotation marks to acknowledge the debates around the word minority. Here I use it as an umbrella term to include any student who has been in any way marginalized within a school system.
model of failure and underachievement (see for example McDermott, 1997; Nieto, 1996; Villegas, 1988; 1991; Gay, 2000).

While the studies cited above, trace one of the reasons for students' academic failure as differences between teachers' and students' cultures, other studies also question the macro-level social and political issues that contribute to this failure (Villegas, 1991; Gonzalez, 1993; McLaren, 1994; Apple, 1997 in Halsey, Lauder, Brown, & Wells 1997). To address these disparities in urban classroom practices and some of the macro-level social and political issues, educators advocate approaches to teaching and learning that position students not only as active contributing members, but also as participants who are encouraged to engage with classroom teaching and learning in significant ways. That is, they advocate and encourage students to strive for 'critical consciousness' and teachers to strive for 'cultural competence' in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995; 1995a; 2001; hooks, 1994).

"Critical consciousness", emphasizes Ladson-Billings (1995a) is a necessary step "that students must develop ... through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order." (p.160). Although Critical thinkers have defined critical consciousness in various ways (a detailed account is given in Chapter 2, p. 45), the word 'consciousness' can be traced to the teachings and writings of Freire (1970). Developing critical consciousness is an essential criterion in a culturally relevant and responsive approach. Cultural competence
constitutes the awareness that teachers need to develop about their students' cultural backgrounds and the ways in which these influence and shape the way students learn so that teachers can teach them in culturally relevant and responsive ways (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 1995a). Cultural competence is also an essential component of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as Ladson-Billings (1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) envisions it. In this study, I have documented ways in which my awareness of my cultural identities facilitated my being able to develop critical consciousness and cultural competence in relation to students.

Research as Personal Encounter

Before I begin to narrate the story of my journey in this research, it is important to explain briefly why I became interested in this topic. As post positivist researchers explain, specifically in the field of qualitative research, research topics often emerge from biographical elements and that one of the reasons for choosing a topic could be the desire to make meaning of one's own life (Smith, 1994). Further, the methods through which we conduct research "are biographical, in the sense that they (methods) work outward and inward from the personal histories of the researcher and those studied" (Smith, 1994, p. 205). I understand this phrase to mean that the methods through which we choose to study our research topics are embedded in our personal histories and

---

3 At the end of this chapter, I provide detailed explanations of terms like culture, cultural identities and so on as used in this dissertation.
it is through our personal histories that we are able to relate / understand those we study. Therefore research also becomes a personal encounter. My interests in this research topic grew out of my personal experiences as a student and as a teacher in India and in the United States. In the following paragraphs I briefly trace how I arrived at my present research topic and question.

As a student growing up in India, in a school system that was rigid in its ways of assessing student performance, its teaching style and in what it counts as learning, I struggled often with how these shaped my school successes and failures. In fact, in my own experience, when I went to a school that followed more interactive classroom practices, I remember being more successful in school tasks. Later, when introduced to educational drama in high school, I found I had a renewed interest and engagement with learning. Educational drama involved me in lessons that until now I was learning only for the sake of examinations. It quickly became a method through which I could explore 'life experiences', and gain a broader perspective of learning rather than rote memorizations of individual subject units for rigid assessments that never reflected my abilities. These experiences interested me in the ways in which classroom practices seemed to contribute to some students' achievement and to some students' failure in schools.

---

4 I use educational drama as a strategy and convention in the classroom to teach. It does not mean stage acting or performance for an audience in this study. For a more detailed definition of educational drama as it is used in this study see page 17. For a review of how educational drama is used in the classroom see Chapter 2.
As a teacher in India, I began to use educational drama to teach students from various cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds. I found that when I used educational drama in classrooms in India, the students engaged themselves deeply in lessons. This was similar to my experience as a young student. Needing to learn more about educational drama's value in the classroom from a teacher's point of view, I pursued my interest in educational drama as a graduate student in the United States. As a part of my graduate work, I consulted and worked with classroom teachers in using educational drama. Although I did not intend to do a focused study and therefore do not have documented evidence, I again began to see similar effects in using educational drama. That is, students in classrooms in the United States also seemed to be more engaged with learning when educational drama was used.

However, as a teacher working in this country, I became acutely aware of an aspect of classroom teaching that I had not become perceptive of in India — my cultural identities. I realized that people here perceived me as ‘other’, as

---

5 I want to emphasize here for those who may not know - that India is a country where many distinct cultures exist. Every state has a distinct language (not a dialect, but a fully formed language with its own written script), distinct cultural practices, food, clothing, and so on. In larger urban cities, like Bombay, New Delhi, Madras, Calcutta, Bangalore and Hyderabad, one can find people living together from various multilingual, multicultural, class and caste backgrounds. Classrooms in these urban settings are very similar to large urban cities in the United States where students come from large multiethnic and multilingual backgrounds. Classroom practices therefore become complicated in terms of cultural and linguistic differences that exist.

6 I use the term ‘identities’ as opposed to ‘identity’ to locate that I come from a multilingual, multicultural Indian background. I explain my cultural background in more detail in Chapter 4, Part II, p. 154.
embodying diversity and as a 'minority'. I wondered what difference this realization would have on my teaching. And I now developed an interest in the ways in which my classroom teaching could be affected because of my own cultural identities and the ways in which I was perceived as different and diverse in this country.

During my search of the literature, I read about theories of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, and their underlying principle of classroom instruction as situated within the cultural frames of reference of students. As I read about examples of culturally relevant and responsive teaching used in the classrooms, I began to see how I could use culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as a means to address my core interests. That is, I could examine cultural identities and how those affected my classroom teaching. Could the theories about the efficacy of culturally relevant and responsive teaching work when applied? How would they work? With these thoughts in mind, I envisioned a research project for my dissertation where I could use educational drama to access and understand teaching from a culturally relevant stance. As educational drama had been successfully used to engage students in connecting with and mediating diverse and multicultural material (Heathcote, 1984, and in Manley & O'Neill, 1997), I felt the use of educational drama might be suited for this pursuit. What pedagogical processes do these two philosophies have in common? When applied in the classroom what would
culturally relevant and responsive teaching look like—what steps could one take to achieve them? These were the questions that spurred my research project initially.

**Shifting Focus**

In order to answer the questions that I asked in my research project as I envisioned it initially, I first investigated what typically happens in a classroom by observing the day-to-day events of a typical urban classroom[^7], in this instance it was a fourth grade class. As culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy are culturally driven (Gay, 2000), I conducted detailed interviews and discussions with students and teacher around their cultures and the culture of the classroom. Then using this knowledge, I planned and taught some lessons using educational drama in this classroom. I thought my dissertation would be an account of students and teacher (including myself) developing culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy through educational drama.

However, in my on-going analysis of the data I noticed that my field notes, taken before I began to teach in this classroom, centered on my efforts at understanding the ways in which my cultural differences were affecting the classroom. I was not in a position of ‘cultural situatedness’ in this classroom on many counts: a) I was not a resident in the community in which the students or teacher came from; b) I was not a full time teacher in the school; c) I did not

[^7]: I describe my methodology in more detail in Chapter 3.
have access to the students in terms of being familiar with all of their families, their social and cultural contexts and, d) because I had not grown up in this country, there were many cultural and social referents that students affiliated with that were new to me (e.g. Pokemon). My notes reflected my self-doubts on teaching through a culturally relevant and responsive stance given that I was not 'culturally situated' in these ways. I needed to shift focus to include my subjectivity or personal history in this study and I now centered on how my cultural identities affected my culturally relevant and responsive teaching in this classroom. Through self-reflexive writing I could now use these observation notes to locate my own cultural stance and myself in relation to the students. Writing thus extended my research rather than becoming its end product and became a piece of the research itself. Writing also helped me understand my cultural competence and critical consciousness in relation to the students and the classroom teacher. Therefore, in this study I focused on my shifting awareness of my cultural identities and how that affected my culturally relevant and responsive teaching in this classroom.

The Need For This Study

Current research in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy documents, analyzes and posits certain epistemological assumptions that teachers need in order to effectively teach students from backgrounds different from their own (Banks & Banks, 1995; 1995a; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1992; 1994; 1995; 1995a; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). For example, one of
the basic epistemological assumptions is that learning is culturally situated in contrast to a ‘banking’ view of education in which students are considered a ‘bank’ to deposit knowledge (Freire, 1970, 1973). Another basic assumption is that teachers need to learn about students’ home cultures and communities and that teaching in schools and classrooms should meet the home cultures of students for them to be able to learn effectively (Banks, 1999; Gay, 2000; Ladson – Billings, 2001). Some educators attribute this principle as the defining factor of culturally relevant and responsive approaches to teaching (Erickson, 1987; Nel, 1995). Many recent case studies (Hollins & Oliver, 1999) also describe particular classrooms where the teacher because of her cultural competence in knowing her students’ home cultures was able to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner. Some of these studies also give specific lesson plans and strategies that teachers could follow in order to develop cultural responsiveness towards their students (Shade, Kelly and Oberg, 1997; Irvine & Armento, 2001).

These studies provide teachers with conceptualizations of cultural relevance and responsiveness and provide many effective methods of teaching with ethnically and culturally diverse students. However, while these studies provide ways for teachers to affirm students’ difference and diversity, few of them address how teachers’ own conceptions and understandings of cultural differences and cultural diversity affect the way they teach in the classroom.
One study (Paley, 1979), does address the teacher's cultural identities and how that affected students' teaching and learning in her classroom. However, Paley's (1979) study, although based on cultural and social factors, did not specifically use culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as a guide to analysis.

An important question that needs to be asked in relation to viewing teacher's cultural identities and how they affect students' learning in the classroom is – how do teachers characterize difference and diversity in a classroom? Does the teacher locate difference and diversity as embodied by ethnically diverse students and not herself? Are ‘minority’ students termed to ‘have’ cultural identities and not the teacher? Ladson-Billings (2001) writes that often, White teachers choose whiteness over their own cultural backgrounds and do not think of themselves as embodying cultural identities. Notions of whiteness, she believes, are taken for granted. Such teachers, she asserts are not culturally competent to teach with ethnically and culturally diverse students because they consider the students as ‘others’ and themselves as the ‘norm’. In order to develop cultural competence and through that, to teach in a culturally relevant manner, Ladson-Billings (2001) feels it is important to first address how the teacher's own cultural identities affect teaching in the classroom. The present study contributes to the body of research in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy from a teacher's point of view by documenting how my own cultural identities affected teaching in this classroom.
The Big Picture Or Why Culture Matters

Teaching As Social and Cultural

Various goals and reasons can be stated as needs in education. Some personal goals could be to learn to read and write so that one can be ‘literate’ and in order to climb the social ladder or improve material prosperity. Another personal or practical reason could be that one wishes to gain intellectual, cognitive and social skills in order to live harmoniously in a society. A philosophical reason could be to acquire a moral and ethical code or to experience intellectual freedom. An ideological reason could be that education is a process by which one should be able to develop one’s potential. Some social goals for education could include creating a ‘good society’, maintaining the social order, and teaching students the rules and authority of the government or the ruling body. Social goals could also be personally motivated such as those, which eliminate crime, poverty, and immorality and so on (Spring, 1994, Pai and Adler, 1990). Although not an exhaustive or even an inclusive list, all of the above are based upon the prevailing worldviews of a particular society. Every society and community has different worldviews and values they hold in esteem depending upon the cultural, social, political, historical and economic contexts in which these are based. In other words, education is at once a social and cultural process rooted in the historical context of a society, which has its foundations in the particular cultural values, practices and philosophies of that society (Pai and Adler, 1990). This line of thought
suggests that teaching is also a social and cultural process that one cannot teach effectively without acknowledging the culturally bound ways in which a society makes meaning of its world. Consequently, the cultural identities of the people who teach and learn in classrooms also matter.

Cultural Identities And Teaching

A view of any large, urban metropolitan area, especially in the United States, shows several cultural groups / societies living together in one geographical place (McLaren, 1994). However, as cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1990), points out, we live in a 'shifting world'. These shifts are manifest in the rise of transnational movements especially, of “tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups and persons” (p.192). Territorial borders are "deterritorialized" because of war or other political or religious changes (p.192). We can no longer speak of people's cultures and identities as static or even in singular terms. Geographically, linguistically, due to relocations, or due to hegemonized realities, people's cultural identities are ever forming and shifting. These relocations and shifts

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8 Here the 'cultural' functions as inclusive of the social aspects of the worldview.

9 I take myself as an example of this – My identity is that of an Indian woman who came to the United States to do graduate work; and includes being and living as a minority ethnic group here, while I was part of the dominant group in India; it also includes being a multilingual person who considers English my first language but is perceived by people in the United States as a second language speaker; and so on. My identity is distinctly different from a second generation Indian person in the United States whose parents came here many years ago; my identity is also different from a refugee from India who came here because of hegemonized realities – although we might all share similar aspects of our cultures like food, we are all different in our cultural identities.
affect and are affected by wealth (re) distribution, trade-relations and other perceived and unperceived effects of economics. Further, Appadurai (1990) especially comments about the effects of the mass media and the internet, and claims that now more than ever before, people's cultural identities, subjectivities, and perceived realities also include their imagined "appropriations" which they want and need as realities. In this sense, people's identities are (also) affected by their "imagined life possibilities" (p.198)\textsuperscript{10}.

Such a 'deterritorialized' or 'shifting world' has differing points of foci in terms of education. One might wonder — what might be the educational worldviews of people whose cultural identities are ever shifting and ever — forming? And how can we begin to attend to this question, most importantly students' learning in such a deterritorialized world? And what are students' identities in such a deterritorialized world and how can teachers begin to address them? These questions raise further ones, related to what language(s) should be used in instruction in an "ever-shifting" or "deterritorialized" world? Further, how should students from different cultures be assessed and what kind of standardization, if at all, can there be? Is it fair to have standardization when

\textsuperscript{10} To give an anecdotal example: When I was visiting India a couple of years ago, I was driving down a busy street and stopped for a red light. A boy no more than eight approached my car begging for some change. While I contemplated on what the consequences of my giving him a few rupees in change would be, I rolled down the window and asked him what his name was. "Michael Jackson" he replied with a deadpan expression on his face. Before I could react, he grabbed the change and ran off with a half grin on his face. To him, because of the mass media, Michael Jackson was a possible imagined identity.
there are so many different worldviews? If so, whose point of view should we have? Particularly in urban settings, educators are only now beginning to comprehend some of the effects around teaching and learning in such a deterritorialized world, although there is still much debate on how questions that arise can be addressed in the classroom (see for example, Nieto, 1996, Fine, 1991, 1995, Ellsworth, 1989, 1997, McQuillan, 1998).

Educators believe that we need a pedagogy that has at its center, formulations and practices of a democratic, ethical and equitable approach – a pedagogical approach that realizes the student at the center of teaching and learning (Banks & Banks, 1995, 1995a; Banks, 1999). The student needs to be the center of foci in the classroom with points located in the students' specific cultural, social, political, economic values, philosophies and ideologies. As is apparent from the debates on many of the above questions that abound in academic circles, I agree with educators that these ideals cannot be realized easily or even through a single pedagogical view.

Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in practice, strives for many of the ideals implicit in the questions identified above. This pedagogical approach is based upon practices that strive to put the students at the center of learning. Advocates of this theory encourage teachers to find ways to actively involve all participants in classroom practices that include each individual's personal situatedness and subjectivities in connections to and with the present social world. Although one could argue that practices advocated by culturally
relevant and responsive theories are what any good teacher would do, nevertheless as the literature says, it is not something we can assume of all teachers. Further, Ladson-Billings (1995, 1995a) responds to this with a counter question of her own by asking why so little of ‘good teaching’ such as this seems to be happening in especially classrooms where there are students’ from socio-culturally and socio-economically diverse backgrounds. In this study, I tried to use educational drama as one of many pedagogical approaches that have possibilities to place the student at the center of classroom practices.

Educational Drama

What might constitute a classroom practice that includes each individual’s personal situatedness and subjectivities in connections to and with the present social world? One of many possible ways is through the use of educational drama. Educational drama allows us to have encounters with and from a variety of perspectives in order to negotiate and build understandings of one’s cultures and identities (Heathcote, 1984, 1995; Manley & O’Neill, 1997). Educational drama at its simplest form is imagining “What if…?” (Edmiston & Wilhelm, 1998). In my conception of educational drama and for the purposes of this study, it does not mean staged performance, nor does it mean ‘acting out’ or role-playing. In a classroom it means taking on roles and interacting with each other in imagining what it would be like to be in different situations or to be other people. As Heathcote (1984) succinctly puts it, in educational drama:
[you] put yourself into other people’s shoes and, by using personal experiences to help you to understand their point of view, you may discover more than you knew when you started (p.44).

Because we can imagine ourselves into different contexts, situations and worldviews (put ourselves in other people's shoes), educational drama can be used as a useful tool in the classroom. Further, O'Neill (1997) writes that, “Drama approaches ... invite (s) students to inhabit and transform the possible world of their imagination.” (p.xii). And through these drama approaches we may imagine how our world might be if viewed differently. This view of educational drama is reminiscent of Appadurai's (1990) “imagined life possibilities,” in that our imagined life possibilities (within the classroom) may help us to include possibilities that may not otherwise be available to us in the realms of our ordinary experience. In this study, various educational drama strategies were used to facilitate students taking on roles and interacting within classroom drama episodes.

Research Question

The main research question that drives this study focuses on myself as the teacher. I asked:

How does my self-knowledge and shifting awareness of my multiple cultural identities (as an Indian / Asian / English speaking / woman) affect my attempts to teach in a

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11 See Chapter 3, under educational drama as sources of data for a detailed explanation of the strategies of educational drama that were used in this study.
culturally relevant and responsive manner in a U.S. fourth grade urban classroom of ethnically, culturally and socio-economically diverse students?

Over a period of one academic year I observed a fourth grade urban classroom in which there were students from diverse ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. From September to January of that academic year, I observed regularly on two days each week as a participant-observer in this classroom. During this time, I worked along with the classroom teacher, Lisa\textsuperscript{12}. From the end of January until May I planned and taught a series of lessons using educational drama, small group work, discussions and students' writing.

Through my central research question, I documented my conceptions of my cultural identities in relation to the students. I documented and analyzed how I developed cultural competence and critical consciousness in relation to the students. And I documented how I taught the students using educational drama and analyzed my teaching using principles of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as guidelines.

Limitations Of This Study

This study was conducted in a single classroom, and is situated within the processes that are unique to this classroom. Although many of these processes are common to many classrooms, because classroom processes are socially and culturally situated, the findings of this study cannot be generalized.

\textsuperscript{12} Pseudonym – this name will be used to refer to the classroom teacher throughout this dissertation.
to other classrooms. However, following from other qualitative studies that have been conducted in classrooms, the present study stands on the merit that I utilized a grounded theory methodology to analyze how I developed cultural competence and critical consciousness in this classroom in relation to the students. This study is further limited because it is related in the first person, in the voice of the researcher and the findings could be considered personal and subjective. However, the strength of this study also lies in portraying my voice because I follow a self-reflexive process to analyze and interpret the data. This self-reflexive process establishes the subjective nature of the study and acknowledges the limits of its applicability to other situations. This study is a complex tale in that it does not, in fact cannot, conclude anything in certain terms – however, it can make clear through a personal story how one teacher's shifting awareness of her cultural identities affected attempts to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner in this classroom. Therefore the limitations of this study can also be described as its strengths.

Definition Of Terms As Used In This Dissertation

The terms defined in the following paragraphs are all interrelated in the way they function in this dissertation. As such, the emphasis is on clarification of the way in which these terms have been used in this dissertation rather than individual comprehensive definitions.

Culture: A system of meanings and actions which a group creates, experiences, shares and engages in – that are socially established, ever-changing, and bound together
and transformed by many factors inclusive of geographical location, common history, language, religion, race, ethnicity and gender (Nieto, 1996; Cole, 1988; Cohen, 1998; Nanda, 1987). Every individual in such a system is "suspended in webs of significance" (Geertz, 1973) that create the context within which his / her actions can be interpreted.

**Cultural Identities:** The particular affiliations, worldviews, values, norms, experiences and actions that make up the multiple layers of an individual person's cultural contexts dependent upon their geographical, social and historical location, their language, race, ethnicity and gender. As I define it in this study, these cultural contexts include family contexts, societal contexts, environmental contexts and intellectual or educational contexts. Cultural identities also include how I identify myself in relation to others and how others identify or relate with me.

**Cultural Positions:** The specific locations that a person identifies with or affiliates with in terms of their own cultural identities. There are three aspects to cultural positions – As perceived by an individual person about themselves; as perceived by others about the individual person; and as perceived by the individual about others.

**Cultural Competence:** The critical awareness of one's own culture, cultural identities, cultural positions and the role these play in the everyday actions and behaviors that one engages in. Being culturally competent means to have a firm sense of oneself in relation to others in particularly social and / or cultural and interactional settings (like classrooms) (Ladson-Billings 1995, 1995a, 2001).

**Critical Consciousness:** Drawing from Freire's (1973) term conscientização, which he uses to describe liberatory action that people engage in through dialogue, I describe critical consciousness as a process of coming into being and knowing oneself (including culture, identities, positions, and cultural competence) in relation to the world. Developing critical consciousness is taking more responsibility for the choices we make in our lives, and taking more positive actions towards transformation.
Conclusion

In this Chapter, I defined this research study and situated it in the larger context of urban education in the United States today. I also situated it in the various conceptions of education that differing societies have and illustrated the view of education as a social and cultural process. Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy provide teachers with many ways to accommodate students' multiple perspectives and multiple ways of viewing. I identified the need for this study as contributing to the few studies that examine a teacher's conceptions of her own cultural identities and how that affected culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Further, I identified developing 'critical consciousness' and 'cultural competence' as the basis of culturally relevant and responsive practices. I identified the use of educational drama as a teaching tool that is central to my pedagogy in this study. I ended with the research question, limitations of this study and definitions of terms used in this study.

In the following chapters I explore these issues in depth. In Chapter 2, I give details about the theoretical and practical bases in which I have grounded my study. I also give specific definitions of terms and processes that I have used in the study including the use of educational drama. Further in Chapter 2, I review a selection of the many accounts of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology that I used to explore my research question and the issues of validity surrounding this study. In this
chapter, I also give details about my own cultural situatedness and how that has had an impact on my teaching in this classroom. Related to this are issues of ethics and politics of research. Further, I give a detailed description of the site and the classroom. I end Chapter 3 with details on my data analysis.

Chapter 4 has two parts. In Part I, I analyze through self-reflexive writing, the portion of research where I participated as a participant—observer. I describe the context of the classroom and help to situate the study within the cultural and social context of this classroom. Here I elaborate on my research question and show the process that I went through as I began to understand my own role in this study. In Part II, I describe my cultural identities and analyze that portion of research where I taught in the classroom using the guidelines of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy identified in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 5, I end this dissertation with my learning in this process and with projections and conclusions of this study.
CHAPTER 2
FRAMING THE STUDY: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, I review literature that situates this study in particular theoretical frames that will provide the many layers of interpretation necessary to help understand how these various meaning systems coalesce. Within these theoretical frames, I have chosen particular interpretations to throw light on this study.

First, I review studies from a social and cultural frame that views the classroom as a culture (Kantor, Elgas, and Fernie 1993) and I explain why cultural identities are important to consider in the classroom. Next, I review studies from a critical theoretical framework to establish the epistemological assumptions of this study. In this section, I explain in detail the concept of critical consciousness and why it becomes important to consider it in relation to cultural identities in this study. Finally, I review current research on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and explain cultural competence and its relation to cultural identities. In this section, I also give details about the
principles of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy that I used as guidelines to analyze my teaching. I end this review with a brief discussion of studies that have linked the use of educational drama to classroom teaching and learning. In this section, I also outline my definition of educational drama.

The Social and Cultural Theoretical Frame

Following the psychological perspective, some social constructivist theories like those of Vygotsky (1978) and later as extended by Wertsch (1990, 1989), and Rogoff (1998) informed teaching and learning practices in the classroom as social constructions built in relation to and within groups.

The goal of a socio-cultural approach is to explicate the relationships between human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional and historical situations in which this action occurs, on the other. (Wertsch, Rio, & Alvarez, 1995, p.11)

While these social constructivist perspectives centered on human action as a cognitive or higher mental functioning (Vygotsky, 1978, Moll, 1990), Wertsch (1989; Vygotsky, 1978) connects higher mental functioning to classroom practices that are socio-cultural. Here the term 'socio' or 'social' is inclusive of a wide range of phenomena:

The social is seen to encompass a wide range of phenomena, from historical, political, and cultural trends to face-to-face interactions, reflecting group processes both explicit and implicit with intended and unintended consequences (Au, 1998, p.299).

Specifically, social constructivists focus on the process of meaning — making or the “collective generation of meaning” (Au, 1998, p.299) among groups of
people and the 'inter-subjectivity' established through these interactions (Schwandt, 1994; Au, 1998; Egan-Robertson, 1998). These groups form a subculture which have their own rules. In such a view, classrooms and the interactions within classrooms are thought of as being a subculture but located within the larger unit of the social world.

Educational researchers with a socio-cultural perspective hold that classrooms can be viewed as cultures where life is patterned, constructed over time by its members interacting with, and reacting to, each other (Kantor, Elgas, and Fernie 1993, p.125)

Because socio-cultural theorists view classrooms as distinct subcultures, it follows then that social interactions within a classroom are also viewed as holding cultural meanings. Similarly, these cultural meanings are viewed as constructed collectively by inter-subjective interactions established amongst all the participants in the classroom — that is teacher, students, aids, researchers and anyone else who is present. Thus a classroom is thought of as a distinct "socio-cultural world that classroom participants construct and maintain" (Kantor, Elgas, and Fernie, 1993, p.129)

Another social constructivist perspective, but coming from an anthropological view like that of Spindler & Spindler (1997), Levinson & Holland (1996), and Wolcott, (1994) also informs teaching and learning practices in classrooms. These studies also agree with the conception of classrooms as distinct socio-cultural worlds, further, they recognize the classroom as a site of social and cultural production. This means that these studies emphasize the
school and classroom as a site of cultural acquisition and cultural transmission (Spindler & Spindler, 1997; Wolcott, 1994). According to these studies culture is ‘transmitted’ through every individual in that classroom and that each individual will be affected by the culture of the classroom through his or her associations and affiliations.

Socio-cultural perspectives view and interpret various phenomena, as social and cultural constructions, as dynamic and as situated in multiple, interdependent cultural contexts (Kantor, 1999, in class notes).

From such a view, classroom culture is further complicated as each member of this ‘social world’ embodies individual social and cultural aspects like class, ethnicity, gender, race, and language.

There are two important implications on my study, amongst others that can be drawn from a social and cultural framework. Firstly, because classrooms are cultures and because they include the individual social and cultural aspects of all members in the classroom, cultural identities become an important factor to take into consideration when viewing interactions within the social / cultural world of the classroom. The cultural identities of individual class members such as teacher and students, contribute to how the cultural / social world of the classroom will be constructed. In fact, research in the classroom from a socio-cultural viewpoint argues that the roles of students and teachers are socially

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13 Although termed cultural identities, in the sense that it is used in this study, this term includes the social as well as the cultural aspects like race, class, gender, ethnicity, language and so on. Henceforth, I will refer to cultural identities as also inclusive of aspects of the ‘social’ world.
constructed ways of being (Green, Kantor & Rogers, 1991 cited in Prentiss, 1995). These roles are formed over time spent in the cultural world of the classroom and shaped by the quality of the interactions amongst its members – that is the teachers and the students (Dixon, Cruz, Green, Lin, and Brandts 1995). Therefore, the 'quality of interactions' or "repertoires become part of their student histories and part of their personal point of view for looking at the world" (Kantor, Green, Bradley & Lin, 1992 cited in Prentiss, 1995). This implies that the students' and teachers' cultural identities are also shaped by the interactions in the classroom culture and in turn shapes the classroom culture. Such a view has implications for a culturally relevant and responsive approach because as mentioned before, teaching and learning are conceptualized as located in the cultural referents of the individual participants who make up the classroom culture. Thus a consideration of all participants' cultural identities and points of view become imperative. It becomes necessary to take account of who we are in the classroom in relation to each other.

Secondly, if classrooms are sites for cultural acquisition and transmission, then there may be cultural disparities between the ways in which teachers teach and the ways in which students learn. This is especially true in classrooms where there are large differences between the cultural identities and backgrounds a) among the students who make up the classroom and b) between the teacher who teaches in the classroom and the students. These cultural disparities may cause disharmony because teachers who may be
trained in certain ways to teach may unconsciously focus on cultural differences as students' deficiency (Erickson, 1985, 1987). This view was also the basis for studies that examined students' school success in terms of differences between home and school environments (Villegas, 1988, 1991). Because classrooms and schools are sites of cultural acquisition and transmission, and because of considerable school failures of ethnically diverse students, researchers have striven to find solutions to continued low performance of students through studies of culturally relevant and responsive approaches to teaching and learning.

The implications from a view of the classroom as a site of cultural acquisition and transmission for the present study are two-fold: firstly all members in a classroom are affected by (are said to acquire certain cultural traits) and contribute to (are said to transmit certain cultural traits) the culture of the classroom. Secondly, teachers who have been trained in certain ways may teach (transmit culture) in ways that may not be inclusive of all students' cultures. It follows that, any action that teachers take or students take, is a manifestation of the expectations and rules set up in the cultural world (and social world, implicit in the cultural world) of the classroom. As discussed earlier, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy is culturally driven and therefore, it becomes important to recognize students’ and teacher’s cultural identities and how these identities contribute to the classroom culture.
Cultural Identities In The Classroom

From the selective review of studies that view the classroom as a culture, I am attempting to demonstrate how cultural identities become important to consider in a classroom. When viewed in relation to a classroom however, the concept of cultural identities, takes on a different meaning than what is commonly understood as ethnic or national identity. In a socio-cultural framework the self is always in relation to the social and cultural world, simultaneously functioning as a “people identity” (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and an individual identity. A ‘people identity’ is defined as a collective identity that extends from the people who make up a group.

Further, Bakhtin’s concept of the self (in Morson and Emerson, 1990 and in Holquist and Liapunov, 1993) holds meaning for the ways in which teacher’s and students’ perceptions of cultural identities in the classroom affect the culture of the classroom. Bakhtin (in Morson and Emerson, 1990 and in Holquist and Liapunov, 1993) explains the self’s relationship to the social world in terms of three central “emotional-volitional” moments – “I” or “I-for-myself” (how my self looks and feels to my own consciousness), “I-for-other” (how my self appears to those outside it) and the “the other” or “other-for-me”(how outsiders appear to myself) (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p.180, p.217, Holquist & Liapunov, 1993, p.54). This concept, when applied to a culturally diverse classroom suggests that how individuals perceive of themselves and of others has an effect on the culture of the classroom. For example, as a teacher, in my
own eyes, I may view myself as the ‘norm’ while I see my students as culturally diverse from me. Applying Bakhtin’s concept, as a teacher, it is important to know how I perceive of myself in my consciousness (“l-for-myself”). Do I see myself as ‘diverse’ or as the ‘norm’? Following this, I may teach in ways that I consider the ‘norm’ but these may not be inclusive of my students’ ways of learning. Similarly, do students perceive themselves as diverse or as the norm? Further, as a teacher, do others perceive me (l-for-other) as ‘diverse’ or as the ‘norm’? Do I, as the teacher perceive my students (other-for-me) as ‘diverse’ or as ‘other’? Depending upon where we locate ourselves and where others locate us, our perceptions of cultural identities change.

Let me clarify this further with my own example – I am a middle class Indian woman (l-for-myself). I am a foreign woman who speaks English with an accent (l-for-other). White people and Black people constitute American identity to me (other for me). Thus, depending upon where I position my students and where I position myself in relation to me, and in relation to my students, my perceptions affect the classroom culture. Similarly, where students’ position me, and where they position themselves in relation to each other affects the classroom culture and our classroom identities. Following from the above line of reasoning, cultural identities take on different meanings in a classroom depending upon who make up the culture of the classroom and how they view their own and others’ cultural identities.
Ladson-Billings (1994) emphasizes this view of the self in relation to the social and cultural world when she demonstrates how culturally relevant and responsive teaching in a classroom, encourages a community of learners. Specifically writing about the African American self-concept, she writes:

The African worldview suggests that 'I am because we are and because we are I am'. In so emphasizing, this view makes no real distinction between self and others...they are in a sense always a people identity...or what can be called an extended self (1994, p.69).

In recognizing this view in the classroom, teachers encourage a community of learners rather than individual competition.

Critical Theory: Epistemological Assumptions

Thus far, I have explained how classrooms function as cultures and the importance of a conception of cultural identities in classrooms. I have also explained how perceptions of cultural identities and cultural differences in the classroom affect the classroom culture. Now I turn to Critical Theory in order to situate this study in a Critical theoretical approach. First, I review those studies that show deficit models at work in urban classrooms and how cultural differences between students' and teacher contributes to this. Then, I make a case for critical consciousness and why it becomes important to consider in the classroom in relation to cultural identities, thereby connecting the focus of this study with literature reviewed here.

Critical theorists identify ideological constructs and structures of power and domination that, they assert, underlie educational practices at all levels,
from institutional to interpersonal, that stand in the way of democratic practices in the classrooms (Apple, 1993, 1997; Delpit, 1995; McLaren, 1994; and in Halsey, Lauder, Brown & Wells, 1997). According to these theorists, one of the major processes that stand in the way of student achievement and academic success in urban settings is viewing students from a 'deficit' model, as socio-culturally different (Erickson, 1985, 1987; Villegas, 1988, 1991). It is well documented that often socio-cultural differences especially between teachers and students impede 'minority' students' achievement and academic success in urban settings (Delpit, 1988, 1995; McQuillan, 1998; Nieto, 1996;). These differences when identified and interpreted through a deficit model, places the blame and responsibility for academic failure, entirely on the students (see for examples, Delpit, 1988; Fine, 1991; Gonzalez, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994; McQuillan, 1998; Nieto, 1996;). McQuillan, (1998) is of the opinion that deficit models are generated because of four core cultural notions of 'educational opportunity' that exist in American society. These are:

1. Educational opportunity is a valuable social resource
2. Educational opportunity is an individual matter
3. Educational opportunity is taken for granted and
4. Educational opportunity should be defined for students not by students.

In the next section, I support my case using McQuillan's (1998) notions of American society's cultural values and how these contribute to deficit models in
the classroom. I follow this with another section on how cultural differences contribute to deficit models in particular classroom interactions between students and teacher (Erickson, 1987).

**Cultural Beliefs**

McQuillan (1998), in a 'cultural analysis' of an urban American high school identifies four central beliefs (as listed above) of educational opportunity that are valued by the dominant groups in the United States. His ideas follow other Critical theorists like Apple (1993, 1997), Giroux (1996, in McQuillan, 1998; & in Halsey et al, 1997) and McLaren (1994). I discuss these in some detail here because I think it is a useful analysis to understand where present cultural beliefs of education in American society come from. McQuillan (1998) describes ‘educational opportunity’ as the opportunities that the educational experiences in schools offer to students to be successful in life. As listed above, McQuillan (1998) suggests that these cultural beliefs are, and I elaborate:

*Educational opportunity is a valuable social resource*

McQuillan (1998) posits that American society believes educational opportunity is vital for society as well as for individuals. McQuillan (1998) illustrates this by quoting the National Commission on Excellence for Education:

[Education] is the major foundation for the future strength of this country... more important than developing the best industrial system or the strongest military force (p.11)
Educational opportunity is an individual matter

Although educational opportunity is a valuable social resource, it is considered in practice an individual matter. That is, learning is understood to be an individual matter – no one can learn for you except yourself. Therefore, although educational opportunity is a social resource, educational success and failure are seen to depend to some extent, upon personal motivation and achievement. In such a conception, success and failure become a reflection of personal strengths or shortcomings, thereby absolving institutions of failures that do not provide students with the resources necessary to succeed.

Thus, in terms of education’s most basic features – what is studied, how it is studied, how it is evaluated, who succeeds, and why – Americans view formal schooling as primarily an individual experience (McQuillan, 1998, p.12).

Educational opportunity is taken for granted

While the two points above represent a view of American educational values as they have been perceived historically, McQuillan (1998) writes that with the shift to desegregated schooling, American society has taken for granted that everyone has access to education as a democratic right. Few question whether educational opportunity is actually a democratic choice. He clarifies that the educational opportunities given by public schools are rarely viewed as discriminatory. School processes in public schools are considered to be neutral even though these may contribute to school failure of students from socio-culturally different backgrounds. Quoting Oakes (1986), he writes, “All
children are seen as entrants in an equal, fair, and neutral competition.” (Oakes, 1986, p. 63, qt. in McQuillan, 1998, p. 13). In such a view, it becomes apparent that few question whether the educational opportunities given at a public school are desirable, equitable, useful or even, necessary. It is assumed that educational opportunity already exists and that this educational opportunity is valuable. Further, this view is structurally manifested by institutional practices. It is unquestionably accepted that typically all schools should have 180 days in a school year, that each day is divided into six or seven periods of fifty minutes each, and so on, because this has been the norm for the past one hundred years (McQuillan, 1998, p. 13).

*Educational opportunity should be defined for students not by students*

McQuillan (1998) writes that, as intended recipients of public school education, students are rarely consulted in defining what constitutes educational opportunity for themselves. He also feels that this is perhaps the single most enduring rule that many unquestioningly accept. The cultural practices that have become a ‘norm’ are sometimes not even taken into consideration because they are not viewed as oppressive. In McQuillan’s (1998) analysis, in this final belief of educational opportunity administrators, policy makers, teachers and generally everyone except the students make decisions about what should be taught and learned, how it should be taught and
learned and finally how it should be evaluated. Students rarely have a chance at mediating and shaping what they learn and what they are taught, let alone how they are taught.

Studies of American schools and classrooms fully accord with this view, portraying students as subordinate, passive recipients of information, not as active and responsible participants in a school community...In terms of formal power and responsibility, students are institutional nonentities (McQuillan, 1998, p.14)

This particular belief of educational opportunity contributes to deficit models of students' school failure. While students cannot define what they see as educational opportunity, and therefore have little power or responsibility for their education, they are expected to be individually responsible for their own educational success and achievement. Whether these students are from racially diverse backgrounds, from socio-economically and socio-politically different backgrounds, whether these students are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ultimately they have no choice in what they learn, how they learn and how they are evaluated. However, they are held personally responsible if they fail. In other words, the prevailing assumption is that no one can learn for you except yourself and educational success depends on personal motivation and achievement. And it follows therefore, that if students fail, it is their responsibility and fault – not the institution, or any other differences that may have existed. It becomes a deep-seated deficit model for those students
who do not have the experience or means to make the ‘fit’ needed to allow learning to take place in the way that it needs to for ‘success’ to happen.

**Cultural Difference And Deficit Models**

Cultural difference theory, as put forth by Erickson (1985, 1987; and in Nel, 1995), points to the socio-cultural differences between ‘minority’ students and teachers, and focuses on how cultural ‘difference’ becomes a category for standardization. Any academic problems that ‘minority’ students have are attributed to cultural differences between home and school. In the classroom, these are manifest in terms of differences in dialects, cognitive styles and the resulting differences in communication and communication patterns (Delpit, 1988, 1995; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981; Villegas, 1988, 1991). In a vivid example, Erickson (1987) illustrates how a teacher, through her interaction with ‘minority’ students in a particular classroom context, perceives her students in a deficit light. In what should have been a simple read-aloud lesson, the teacher, by repeatedly correcting students’ dialect, does what Erickson calls ‘cultural border work.’ By correcting the students’ dialect, the teacher is trying to standardize a cultural trait – language and patterns of communication. Erickson (1987) is of the opinion that cultural border work of this sort leads to students’ resistance to learn. Similarly, McQuillian (1998) goes into a detailed description of a class that he observed at an urban high school. He demonstrates how over a period of one year the teachers in a tenth grade class systematically became convinced that students in this class could not learn and had very low motivation and
achievement levels to learn. The teachers became convinced that their students were deficient. The teachers began with extremely high expectations for the students, but because of overt factors like students not showing up to class, and teachers introducing a new method of learning that confused students, most class times were taken up in explaining the assignments and little being done. This resulted in the teachers’ expectations becoming very low by the end of the year and, the students being blamed in the end for their ‘incompetence.’ McQuillan (1998) also writes that when he interviewed one of the class participants who went on to college, she said that the above class was perhaps the most difficult that she took in high school, although in the teachers’ minds it had been specifically restructured so that it would be easier. However, McQuillan does not explain why the student may have felt that way.

Urban Classrooms And Deficit Models

While I present Erickson’s (1987) analysis of classroom interactions and McQuillan’s (1998) analysis of an urban high school to show how deficit models work, I also want to emphasize the unique characteristics of urban public schools that make teaching in these schools more of a challenge for teachers. There are complexities and larger socio-political issues that are specific to urban schools that contribute to students’ being termed as deficient. Weiner (1999, 2000) demonstrates that teachers working in urban and inner-city schools have their own distinct problems because these schools have characteristics that set them apart from other schools. Firstly, urban schools,
she writes, serve the "greatest concentration of poor, immigrant students" (Weiner, 1999, p.13), and teachers in urban schools have historically had the responsibility of educating a tremendously diverse group of students. Further, students' cultural differences in urban schools, in terms of ethnicity, race, class, religion and other socio-cultural constructs are so great that now 'urban' has become synonymous with poverty and ethnic minorities (Weiner, 2000). The second and more important characteristic of urban school systems is the bureaucratic nature of these schools. Weiner (1999) writes:

Urban schools are run by bureaucracies that function quite poorly and are cut off from the communities that they are supposed to serve. Since their creation a century ago, urban school systems have been under pressure to resolve political and religious tensions in the nation's social fabric. The school system had to appear to treat all groups fairly, and the method of organization that seemed to do this most effectively was an impersonal bureaucracy. Rules and regulations were put into effect to standardize educational practices and treat students anonymously. However, learning by its very nature, is an intensely personal individual matter, so teachers and students in urban schools are caught in a system that undercuts their efforts to allow individuals to learn in the ways that are best for them (p.14)

While it is true that similar bureaucracies run all schools, in urban schools the effects are more evident and disturbing because of existing cultural differences between students, teachers and often administrators. As Weiner, (1999) mentions in the quote above, educational practices that standardize and treat students as anonymous entities erase personal, cultural aspects of learning that are crucial for students' success in school.
Another important aspect of urban schools that Weiner (1999) points out is that funds allocated to urban schools have always been inadequate. Kozol, (1991) analyzes schools' fund allocations in detail and informs us that inadequate and inequitable school funding also keeps students from achieving and teachers from teaching.

The urban school and classroom in which I conducted this study also showed similar distinct characteristics. There were students from all strata of society, from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. While some students were bussed to the school, some others attended from the local community. There were disparities between the teachers and the students in terms of cultural differences. I was unable to get information about funding.

In terms of deficit models, the fact remains that unfortunately, the student is ultimately the one who suffers because deficit models' conceptions locate the deficiency in the victim. As Erickson (1987) describes it, the cultural deficit model has the following consequence:

> Given the power difference between teacher and student, what could be seen as an interactional phenomenon to which teacher and student both contribute ends up institutionalized as an official diagnosis of student deficiency (p. 338)

Other Critical theorists, like Fine (1991) and Gonzalez (1993), also analyze the deficit model of schooling. In a study where she analyzes the reasons why women have a higher dropout rate from high school, Fine (1991)
spoke to one student named Portia who dropped out because she had to take care of her grandmother at home. On approaching the school guidance counselor about Portia, Fine reported the counselor as saying:

Anyway, if Portia is concerned about her future she needs not to get so involved in her family but worry about herself (qt. in Fine, 1991, p.86).

It is not perceived as the school’s concern that Portia has responsibilities at home; it is not that Portia is given a choice about her responsibility; it is that Portia is ultimately personally responsible for missing school. The message sent to students, as Fine (1991) points out, is that ‘schools don’t care.’ The danger of this conception is that views of this sort translate into educators and teachers thinking that students may be low achievers, that students cannot learn, and therefore less should be expected of them (Gay, 2000; McQuillan, 1998). Gonzalez (1993) captures this succinctly, she says:

We are shackled by our own beliefs, by the mores, values, and comforts of our own benefits, and pressured by society into believing that what we see, what we experience every day is reality, when in fact we are only seeing the shadows of our students.... We return to our illogical deductions that explain the behavior of the shadows. We say that these students have a restricted code, that they are semi lingual, that they do not speak the proper dialects, that they cannot make inferences and lack the ability to think abstractly, that they cannot learn and that their parents do not care. We tell ourselves that the reticent, even belligerent, student just has a bad attitude, or is not interested in learning. We make this conclusion based on our superficial classroom encounters, and then we drive away to our suburban homes, light years away from the ghettos, barrios, or

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14 A detailed description of the site and participants is given in Chapter 3.
cultural towns of our students. If we were only to ascend to
the light we could see the reality that these students are not
reticent, but defeated by racism. They are not belligerent,
but tired of being hurt. They are not uninterested in our
knowledge, but desirous of knowledge of themselves. They
are not hostile, but angry at continual rejection. They are
not bored, but hungry, tired and worried about their lives.
(p.18-19)

The contradiction manifested through the fourth belief of educational
opportunity that contributes to deficit models (McQuillan, 1998) is even more
extreme when we realize with Nieto (1996) that this cultural view permeates the
thinking of students as well – it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. While talking
about African American students and people, Rich Miller, (who is also African
American), one of the students in Nieto’s case studies says:

It’s up to me as an individual; it’s up to others in the Black
race, to take on these opportunities to further ourselves
education-wise and as far as living is concerned (p. 69).

Although Rich does say that “standards [in his school] would be higher, if there
were more white students”, thereby recognizing the institutional biases that
exist; he still believes that what he achieves and does not achieve is an
equitable representation of his personal effort, and that it has nothing to do with
school structure. Nieto (1996), in her analysis of Rich Miller’s talk, shows how
Rich has been ‘enculturated’, into what the dominant belief system holds. She
writes:

Rich has benefited academically from school, but in the
process he has picked up some disabling messages: that
Blacks are lazy, unproductive, and too ready to take “the
easy way out.” Rich has no doubt had experiences in his
own community that reinforce these perceptions, but by presenting the problem in such broad strokes, it becomes an indictment not against particular Blacks but against Blacks as a class. Rich has learned to “blame the victim”, although he himself becomes one of them. (p. 73)

In other words, Rich also buys into the deficit model widely accepted by this society.

**Cultural Identities And Critical Consciousness**

Through the examples given in the studies reviewed above, I have demonstrated how deficit models work in schooling and specifically in classrooms where there are great cultural differences between students and teachers. Although these studies acknowledge the larger socio-political and institutional practices that also contribute to students' failure, they also implicate teachers as partners who unknowingly participate in the construction of students as deficient. As teachers are directly in contact with students each day of the school year, a larger portion of the responsibility of students' success in school falls on the teacher's shoulders. Therefore, it becomes important for teachers to develop an awareness of the ways in which they contribute to conceptions of deficiency, especially in classrooms where there are large cultural differences between the teacher and the students. One of the ways in which I developed an awareness of how, I as a teacher, contributed to conceptions of cultural deficiency, was to examine my own cultural identities and, through that the worldviews that I affiliated and associated with. By doing this I hoped to develop an awareness of my own conceptions of cultural
differences. As evidenced by Erickson's (1987) vivid example of classroom interactions, how the teacher perceived her students' cultural identities (and through that cultural differences) contributed to her conception of her students as deficient. It follows then, that teachers must become aware of how they perceive cultural differences in the classroom in order that cultural differences (between teacher and students) do not impede teachers from teaching in ways that assure students' school success. In the next section, I elaborate on the concept of 'critical consciousness' that is central to any exploration of cultural identities and perceptions of cultural differences. In a culturally relevant and responsive approach it becomes important to be 'critically conscious' of the ways in which I as the teacher affect students' lives and the ways in which their lives affect ours.

Critical consciousness

At its simplest, critical consciousness can be understood as a process of coming into being and knowing of oneself – of becoming conscious of ourselves in relation to the world, in relation to every moment in time past, present and future. I believe that developing critical consciousness is taking responsibility for the choices we make in our lives. It is a process through which we become conscious of the ways in which these choices have repercussions on others across time, space and generations. It is also a process of developing an
awareness of the ways in which the choices we make at this moment affect those beyond boundaries and borders, in ways that sometimes we can never comprehend.

Although scholars have defined critical consciousness in various ways, as I have mentioned earlier, the use of the phrase in an educational context can be traced back to the teachings and writings of Paulo Freire (1970, 1973). He explains a process through which we can choose to effect change and be responsible for change in an active, engaged and critical manner through ‘praxis’ – which Freire (1970, 1973) defines as a continuous cycle of action and reflection. Taylor (1993) cites Freire (1970) and clarifies for us what Freire means by critical consciousness:

[An] evolution of critical consciousness [is] a move away from a state of either naïve consciousness or even magical consciousness. The former perceives causality as a static, given fact, and is thus deceived in its view of the changing world. The latter apprehends change but attributes to it powers beyond the human control, and is thus released from responsibility for it. In rejecting both these perspectives of the world and of change as less than human... only critical consciousness perceives the true causality of the world and the human potential to direct and influence that change (cited in Taylor, 1993, p. 61)

We can relate this to teaching and learning in classrooms. When teaching is conceived merely as transmission of knowledge and learning is conceived as acquisition of knowledge, it can be described as naïve consciousness – that is, when the causality between teaching and learning is conceived in a linear and static manner. Magic consciousness, as Freire (1973) describes it and as
Taylor (1993) clarifies it, can be related to teaching and learning when it is conceived as being beyond the control of the teacher or student—when the teacher gives up on the student and when the student gives up on the teacher. Deficit models in school practices can be an example of magic consciousness where responsibility is designated to aspects beyond teachers' and students' control—like class, race, gender, ethnicity etc. Critical consciousness, as described here, can be related to teaching and learning where students and teachers strive for transformation by coming into their own being or knowing. It is a process by which we can theorize, interpret, historicize and write ourselves into this world. The emphasis here is on developing an understanding of the world we live in through not only intellectual curiosity but also a "sense of wonder" and an awareness of one's own ignorance (Taylor, 1993, p. 46). What follows are examples of critical consciousness in practice in the classroom:

Dyson (1993) cites an example of the use of critical talk in the classroom around issues of race and gender, through which the teacher helps her kindergarten students interrogate who they want to become when they grow up. Paley (1979) practices critical consciousness when she helps her students comprehend the civil rights movement through role-playing the incident with Rosa Parks in the city bus (although Paley does not use the term critical consciousness).

Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a) uses the term critical consciousness in the sense of "making knowledge problematic", of questioning the status quo. She
connects this abstract construct to the classroom when she describes students and teachers engaging in classroom teaching and learning practices that raise questions about the given curriculum, that go against the prescribed practices; to gain critical understandings of material — of education that empowers.

Ladson-Billings (1994) cites an example where the teacher pushes her students to think about their cultural connections to World War II. Through that process, the teacher facilitates her students' questioning the status quo, of what is written in their history texts and to form their own understandings of material they were reading. Similarly, Shor (1992) writes about critical teaching in the classroom for social change that constitutes empowering education.

Shor, (1992) like Taylor, (1993) draws from Freire (1970, 1973) and explains a three-step model of development that leads to critical consciousness. This model is similar to what Taylor describes above. Shor terms critical consciousness as three levels of ‘thought’ — intransitive, semi-transitive, and critical transitive thought. Intransitive consciousness he explains “denies the power of human beings to change” (p.126). Similar to naïve consciousness (Taylor, 1993), Shor terms it as a "static condition of fatalism which rejects human agency, denying that people can transform their conditions." (p.126). According to Shor, semi-transitive consciousness can be linked to Taylor's magic consciousness.

Semi-transitive thought is partially empowered because it accepts human agency in the making of personal and social change (Shor, 1992, p.127).
Shor also connects this kind of consciousness with practice, and gives the example of making changes in practice, without thinking of the effects of those changes or without thinking of the repercussions that those changes will have. An example he gives is a situation where:

Educators concerned about the literacy crisis can emphasize grammar skills as the students' problem, without holistically considering the language students bring to class and the role of participation in helping students learn (p. 127).

Critical consciousness is termed as critical transitivity by Shor (1992):

Critical consciousness or critical transitivity, allows people to make broad connections between individual experience and social issues, between single problems and the larger social system. The critically conscious individual connects personal and social domains when studying or acting on any problem or subject matter. In education, critically conscious teachers and students synthesize personal and social meanings with a specific theme, text, or issue. ... A class for critical consciousness explores the historical context out of which knowledge has emerged and its relation to the current social context...Any subject matter examined in a critically conscious classroom belongs to a larger context of history and society and has a relationship to the students' context (p. 127-128).

hooks (1994) also drawing from Freire (1970, 1973), writes about education that empowers students to ask questions, find answers and effect change when she defines an 'engaged pedagogy' – a pedagogy where everyone is actively contributing to and participating in building and constructing. Her vision of an engaged pedagogy is 'liberatory' and responsive, a quest for the practice of freedom. It is located in the various lives of the
people who make up the group. It is the responsibility of every individual in the
transaction of teaching and learning to ‘claim knowledges’ for themselves.
Liberatory pedagogy, or engaged pedagogy, is not a means to an end, but
rather a process of ever growing, ever forming a knowledge of how to ‘live’
(hooks, 1994).

In the studies cited above, critical consciousness is linked intricately to a
sense of knowing who we are as people and being aware of what our
responsibility towards each other is. Critical consciousness is intricately linked
to knowing our own cultural identities, cultural backgrounds and how they affect
others. Viewed in this way, classroom teaching becomes a preparation for life –
a preparation for how to live in this world. The task of teachers becomes a
complex building of a relationship that includes philosopher, mentor, friend,
family, and much more, limited only by the words that one can find in a
language.

Connecting these notions to the present study, the focus of the central
question of my study relates to my self-knowledge and shifting awareness of my
multiple cultural identities. Intrinsic to my culturally relevant and responsive
teaching is how I developed a critical consciousness about my cultural
backgrounds, and what shapes my cultural worldviews. In my analysis of my
teaching, I explain the way in which I developed critical consciousness. In the
next section, I review studies that explicate culturally relevant and responsive
pedagogy.

50
Culturally Relevant And Responsive Pedagogy

Although culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy undergirds the focus of this study, I have not addressed my interpretations of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy until now because I wanted to first situate this study in the larger context of the field of education. From the literature I have reviewed, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy comes from a framework of both Social Constructivist and Critical pedagogical stances. I begin this section with a review of studies that explain notions of cultural relevance and cultural responsiveness. I then move into a discussion of those studies that contributed to my understanding of this pedagogy and explain certain principles that I used in this study to guide my analysis of my teaching. Finally I explain ‘cultural competence’ as an essential component of this pedagogy and its relation to cultural identities.

Cultural Relevance and Responsiveness

It is my understanding from the many examples that I have read that the concept of culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy as a theoretical perspective is still in its infancy. Only recently have educators like Ladson-Billings (1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) and Gay (2000) begun to define a grounded theory of this approach. Grounded in the ideological foundations of multicultural education in general, and effective classroom practices in
particular, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy is a broad approach to successful and democratic teaching and learning practices with students (Wlodkowski, & Ginsberg, 1995, Nawang, 1998).

The literature suggests that there are two broad streams in this pedagogical approach. One comes specifically from excellent and successful practices of teaching and learning, particularly with African American students and is termed, culturally relevant teaching. Popularized by Ladson-Billings (1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a), this term has been used in relation to mainly African American students and teachers who use this pedagogy for successful teaching and learning practices for African American students. Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) especially mentions that this view is invested in 'Afrocentric feminist epistemology' following Patricia Hill Collins' work. Foster (1995, 1997) and Byrd, Lundeberg, Hoffland, Couillard & Lee (1996) also use this term specifically in terms of African American students and teachers who practice successful methods. Ladson-Billings (1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a) explains that there are three main points that culturally relevant teaching emphasizes. These are: academic achievement for all students, cultural competence and critical consciousness or social political consciousness (Osborne, 1996).

Whereas, the other term, 'culturally responsive teaching', draws its theoretical bases from multicultural education based upon Banks and Banks (1995, 1995a) and Banks (1999) concepts of equity in education. One study (Nel, 1995), attributes Erickson's (1987) 'cultural difference theory' as directly
having given rise to this term, while others like Wlodkowski & Ginsberg (1995), Nawang (1998), Leavell, Cowart & Wilhelm (1999), Gay (2000), Hollins & Oliver (1999), and Irvine & Armento (2001) use this term as a broad concept of reflective, democratic, practices in teaching and learning, especially with, but not exclusively for, students who come from culturally diverse backgrounds. In fact, Irvine & Armento (2001) make no distinction between multicultural pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy (p.4). Viewed in this way culturally responsive teaching is, they write, "responding to or reacting appropriately to or being sensitive to culturally diverse students" (Irvine & Armento, 2001, p. 4) so that teaching "uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students" (Gay, 2000, p. 29).

In my review of studies that use either the term 'culturally relevant' or 'culturally responsive', I found that they emphasize many similar principles, although they focus on different philosophical aspects. Studies which use the term relevant, are based on successful teachers and teaching of African American students and emphasize the importance of making teaching culturally relevant for students, however, they do not identify it as exclusively for African Americans. Studies, which use the term responsive, emphasize care and sensitivity to students' cultural difference and diversity. For the most part, both of these terms are used interchangeably. Osborne (1996), in an exhaustive ethnology of culturally relevant pedagogy, acknowledges Ladson-Billing's
definition of culturally relevant pedagogy. However, in his article he reviews and quotes any article that is inclusive of both the terms relevant and responsive and does not make a distinction. For the purposes of this study, while I had begun with Wlodkowski & Ginsberg’s (1995) conception of culturally responsive pedagogy, and moved into Gay’s (2000) comprehensive view of culturally responsive teaching based upon Banks’ (1999) notion of multicultural education and Noddings’ (1992, 1996 in Gay, 2000) notion of care, I mainly draw from Ladson-Billings (1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) conceptions of culturally relevant teaching. In this study, I concentrate on two of the concepts of culturally relevant teaching following Ladson-Billings’ (1994, 1995, 1995a) notions – critical consciousness and cultural competence. However, throughout this study I have used the term ‘culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy’ to also acknowledge that my theoretical framework also relies on scholars who use the term responsive.

**Towards A Definition of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy**

Wlodkowski & Ginsberg (1995) define ‘culturally responsive pedagogy’ in the following manner

...culturally responsive teaching is an evolution of sound educational practices that respects the principle that all cultures are significant to the construction of knowledge. Culturally responsive teaching is consistent with the historical and central purposes of a liberal education – that is to promote intellectual development and the ideal of responsible and active political participation... commitment to democracy and its basic values of justice and equality” (p. 283 – 284).
The authors elaborate on some of the 'essentials' of this pedagogical approach and state:

An approach to teaching that meets the challenge of cultural pluralism and can contribute to the fulfillment of the purpose of higher education has to respect diversity; engage the motivation of all learners; create a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment; derive teaching practices from principles that cross disciplines and cultures; and promote justice and equity in society. (Wlodkowski et al., 1995, p.19)

While this definition speaks in very general terms about teaching and learning practices, it nevertheless emphasizes the importance of affirming cultural differences.

Banks (2000), in the preface to Gay's (2000) Culturally Responsive Teaching says that the roots for this pedagogy came out of a need to find solutions and answers to why large numbers of students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds were failing in school. He writes:

This theory postulates that discontinuities between the school and low-income students and students of color is an important factor in their low academic achievement. The theory also postulates that the academic achievement of these students will increase if the schools and the teaching are changed so that they reflect and draw on their cultural and language strengths. (Banks, 2000, p. ix)

Gay (2000) comments that culturally relevant teaching is a "conceptual proposal for correcting these achievement problems" (p. xiv) and clarifies:

Its [culturally responsive pedagogy] key anchors are the simultaneous cultivation of the academic success and cultural identities of ethnically diverse students (p. xiv)
Ladson-Billings (1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a) also bases her foundations for culturally relevant pedagogy in the academic achievement gap of students of color and low-income students. She, however, emphasizes on the notion of cultural relevance.

The notion of “cultural relevance” moves beyond language to include other aspects of student and school culture. Thus culturally relevant teaching uses student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture. Specifically, culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes. (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p.17 – 18)

Ladson-Billings (1995, 1995a, 2001) also writes that the theoretical notions of culturally relevant pedagogy are based upon three propositions: academic achievement, cultural competence and sociopolitical or critical consciousness.

As evidenced by the studies reviewed above, a culturally relevant and responsive approach to teaching advocates for ways to affirm, validate and use the cultural knowledge of students coming from different backgrounds (Nieto, 1996; Banks & Banks, 1995, 1995a; Banks, 1999). In the classroom, they suggest that teachers need to be aware of the different learning styles, cultural frames of reference and ways of knowing that students bring to the classroom (Gay, 2000; Villegas, 1991). Further, they suggest that teachers need to be
'culturally competent' in the sense that teachers need to be aware of their
cultural assumptions and attitudes towards culturally different students (Ladson-

Cultural competence

Earlier in this chapter I stated the importance of being critically conscious
of my cultural identities as a teacher in the classroom. I have also stated the
importance of knowing how I, as the teacher perceive cultural difference and
diversity. According to Ladson-Billings, (1995) this is one step to gaining
'cultural competence'. Although Ladson-Billings does not give a comprehensive,
concise definition of cultural competence, she explains this concept in various
ways. "First," she writes, "it [cultural competence] requires that teachers
themselves be aware of their own culture and its role in their lives." (Ladson-
Billings, 2001, online abstract). She goes on to explain that teachers must
explore their own cultural identities and through that their conceptions of others.
Further, in order to be culturally competent, teachers must know about their
students' cultures and individual life circumstances. Emphasizing the
importance of conceptions of difference and diversity, Ladson-Billings (1994)
explains that teachers need to have a firm sense of themselves and their
students. They must take into account cultural factors like race, class, ethnicity,
gender and so on that contribute to conceptions of difference.

Gay (2000) explains cultural competence in terms of curriculum content
and making the curriculum culturally relevant to students' backgrounds.
Although Paley (1979), a classroom teacher, does not call what she does cultural competence, she is a predecessor to theorists who conceptualized culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and in her book *White Teacher* she explains the way she developed cultural competence in her classroom (Paley, 1979). I believe that although Paley did not identify her work as culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy per se, her work is seminal to these conceptions of teacher's cultural identities as it relates to students. Hence, in a culturally relevant and responsive classroom, cultural competence (along with critical consciousness) is another important concept that is intrinsically linked to cultural identities.

**Principles And Specifics Of Culturally Relevant And Responsive Pedagogy**

In this study, I draw especially from the works of Ladson-Billings (1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) and Gay (2000) and I have reviewed in detail their studies on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. What follows is a synthesis of their theories. As mentioned earlier, Ladson-Billings (1995, 1995a, 2001) envisions three major components of culturally relevant teaching. Briefly these are cultural competence, academic achievement and sociopolitical or critical consciousness. Gay (2000) explains the specifics of culturally responsive teaching in terms of four major categories. These are caring, cultural communication, curriculum content and instruction. In the following, although I have synthesized both of their works, I organize them using Ladson-Billings (1995) broad categories (numbered 1,2,3 in the following). Both Ladson-Billings
and Gay suggest that teachers who teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner have the following qualities (numbered a, b, c, under each category)\(^\text{15}\):

1. Conceptions of self and others

   a. Teachers believe that all students can succeed and are capable of high academic achievement.
   b. Teachers believe that teaching is an art and that they are the artists.
   c. Teachers believe that teaching and learning are ever forming.
   d. Teachers believe that all students and themselves are members of a community of learners.
   e. Teaching is giving back to the community.
   f. Teachers believe that teaching is like ‘mining’ or ‘digging knowledge out’ of students and not as ‘banking’ knowledge in students.

2. Manner of social relations

   a. Teachers have fluid relations with their students. No one holds power rather relationships are reciprocal and equitable.
   b. Teachers are socially connected with their students and the relationship is built upon a demonstrated recognition of all the students’ cultural competence.
   c. Teachers make efforts to know their students and interact with their students in the community, thereby encouraging a community of learners.
   d. Teachers are responsible and encourage collaboration and competence within and amongst students. Students are also responsible for one another.

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3. Conceptions of knowledge

a. Teachers' conceptions of knowledge are built upon 'doing' in terms of curriculum content, assessment and teaching.
b. Teachers believe that knowledge is not static – it is shared, recycled, and constructed.
c. Teachers believe that knowledge must be viewed critically: It is situated within a context and therefore must be critically questioned.
d. Teachers believe that knowledge is scaffolded: It is not taught in an isolated way rather teachers scaffold or build bridges and connections to the larger historical context of society and the way in which they relate to the present.
e. Teachers' assessment is multifaceted allowing for various forms of success.

Further, Ladson-Billings (1995), drawing from Collins (1991), argues that the theoretical notions of culturally relevant teaching are centered around:

1. **An ethic of caring**: This refers not only to affective caring for individual students it also refers to a sense of commitment to help students succeed.

2. **Personal accountability**: This refers to a firm sense of self and the ability to stand for one's beliefs. In other words, teachers through their self-knowledge knew what they believed in and were committed to taking pro-active action.

3. **Cultural competence**: Teachers show a cultural competence towards their students by recognizing every students' individual cultural strengths and by helping them use that in the classroom.

4. **Critical consciousness**: Through their teaching teachers encourage students to challenge the status quo.

In this study, I collapse personal accountability and an ethic of caring into the concepts of cultural competence and critical consciousness.
I have also summarized culturally responsive teaching specifically according to Gay (2000) in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring</th>
<th>Cultural Communication</th>
<th>Curriculum Content</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Teacher Expectations  
- High for all students  
- Respect and belief in success for all  
- High cultural and personal competence  
2. Caring beyond the Classroom  
- Responsibility to self  
- Responsibility to others  
3. Caring as Accountable  
- Reciprocal  
- Not giving up on students  
- As deliberately cultivated  
4. Caring as Responsive  
- As commitment to students  
- As competence in students  
- As critical consciousness  
- As Personal Efficacy  
- Must be deliberate  
5. Responsive Caring is based on  
- Knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity  
- Personal and professional self-awareness  | 1. Recognizing Styles of communication  
- As cultural styles  
- As part of students' identity  
2. Communication as it affects students  
- As critical self-awareness  
- As critical discourse  
- As intricately related to learning style  
- Topic – associative rather than topic centered  
3. Communication as participatory  
- Teaching not as passive-receptive  
- Teaching as participatory – interactive  
4. Communication as Positioning  
- As presenting self as collaborative  | 1. Based on Multiple Perspectives  
- As directly meaningful to students  
- As situated in their multiple cultural values  
2. Not relying only on prescribed Tests  
- Based on a wide range of genres including literature, arts, and so on  
3. Content as historical  
- As connected to real people, about real times  
- As situated in certain views  
4. Content as critical  
- Used to raise critical consciousness  
- To raise cultural competence  
5. Media as Curriculum content  
- Breaking ideological beliefs  
- Serving many areas of learning  
6. Making curriculum content personally meaningful  
- Contextual  
- Cultural  
- Comprehensive  
- Dialogic  | 1. Instruction as culturally congruent  
- As culturally situated  
- As scaffolding  
2. Based on students' learning styles  
- Has multidimensional processes  
- Has eight key dimensions:  
  - Procedural  
  - Communicative  
  - Substantive  
  - Environmental  
  - Organizational  
  - Perceptual  
  - Relational  
  - Motivational  
3. Based on teaching style that is  
- Cooperative  
- Affective  
- Active  
- Academic  
- Culturally situated  
- Personal  
4. Instruction as Dialogic  |

Drawing from Ladson-Billings (1992, 1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) and Gay (2000), the two theorists that have most impacted my understanding of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, in this study the following are the principles and specifics that I use as guides to my teaching.

1. All students can succeed and especially those students whose educational, social, political and cultural futures are most tenuous are helped.
2. All students are members of a community of learners and are apprenticed into the classroom learning community through instruction.
3. Students' real life experiences are legitimized as they become part of the "official" curriculum.
4. Teachers and students engage in a collective struggle against the status quo.
5. Teaching is political and facilitates critical consciousness.
6. Teachers help students become culturally competent through empowering instruction.
7. Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy is culturally validating and affirms personal efficacy in both students and teachers.

In part II of Chapter 4, I have referred to these points specifically to describe my teaching.

Educational Drama As Used In This Study

Across the curriculum, drama pedagogy has contributed to deeper student engagements in classrooms (Morgan & Saxton, 1987; Warner, 1995), especially in terms of reading, writing, and language (Booth & Haine, 1982; Bolton, 1986; Edmiston, 1993; Roger's & O'Neill, 1993; Wolf, 1994).

Educational drama has also been used to facilitate students' development of multiple perspectives and shifting perspectives in relation to literature (Enciso, &
Edmiston, 1997; Wolf, Edmiston & Enciso, 1997). Further, it has been used in the classroom to facilitate reflection, to address ethical issues (Heathcote, 1984; 1995a; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; O’Neill, 1995; Edmiston, 1991, 1998) and in connecting with and mediating diverse and multicultural material (Heathcote, 1984; Manley & O’Neill, 1997; Enciso, 1997; Saldana, 1995; Grady, 2001).

Educational drama has also been used across fields as a methodological concept to examine research practices (Saxton & Miller, 1998; Wagner, 1998). However, it still remains on the fringes of educational practices and school curricula (Bolton, 1984; 1986; Heathcote, 1984; O’Neill, 1997). As with the other arts, educational drama is often “exoticised” to the point where special times are set aside for students to engage with and educational drama practitioners come in as ‘special agents’ who ‘help’ the teachers and students (O’Neill, 1997). In this study, my endeavor was to combine the use of educational drama within the practices and curriculum of the classroom. As explained in Chapter 1, it has been my personal experience that educational drama engaged me across the curriculum so that I may learn and explore ‘life lessons’ rather than merely individual subject units that were not engaging. In this study, I used educational drama as a central part of my pedagogy. Drawing on educational drama practitioners (Heathcote, 1984; O’Neill, 1995; Edmiston, 1998; Saxton & Miller, 1998), I define educational drama in the classroom in the following way: In a classroom, students and teachers are positioned as knowledgeable partners and participants who explore themes, events, relationships, situations, and
contexts in order to develop new and significant perspectives and understandings about themselves and about others. In this study, I took the view that educational drama strategies were inherent and necessary to classroom practices that are engaging and critical, and potentially could be used for culturally relevant and responsive practices. Heathcote (1984) describes educational drama as "human beings confronted by situations which change them because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges" (p.48). In a classroom, the teacher and students mutually agree to be confronted by these challenges in the form of situations that they create. For example, in this study, the students, as well as the classroom teacher, Lisa and I, all agreed that we would take on the roles of Indian Chiefs who were about to face the United States Army in the historic signing of the Treaty of Greenville\textsuperscript{16}. We mutually agreed to take on various roles, as we interacted with each other and confronted a situation where Indian Chiefs were challenged by the U.S. government to sign a treaty. We imagined what it might have been like for these Indian Chiefs when they were forced to forfeit all their lands. We allowed ourselves to be challenged by the imagined situation in the classroom and later in reflection we were able to make meaning out of what might have happened\textsuperscript{17}.

I used educational drama in this way as a central part of my pedagogy in this

\textsuperscript{16} On August 3, 1795, over one thousand chiefs and warriors from various native tribes were forced to sign the Treaty of Greenville and give up their lands amounting to all of present day Ohio and a good part of Indiana.

\textsuperscript{17} For a detailed discussion including transcript see Chapter 4, Part II.

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classroom. For a detailed description of specific strategies that were used in this classroom, refer to Chapter 3 under educational drama as sources of data.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I selectively reviewed the literature that has impacted this study. Beginning with a social and cultural framework, I reviewed those studies that demonstrate the conception that classrooms function as subcultures and showed the importance of taking into account cultural identities in such a subculture. I situated my study in a critical theoretical framework and demonstrated how larger social contexts impacted classroom teaching and learning. Through a detailed account of critical consciousness I clarified its relation to cultural identities and the need to develop critical consciousness in the classroom. Finally, I elucidated those principles of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies that have impacted this study and explained cultural competence as envisioned by Ladson-Billings (1995, 1995a, 2001). I also explained how cultural competence is linked to cultural identities. I ended with an explanation of the ways in which educational drama was used in this classroom. In the next chapter I give details about the methodology that I followed in this study.
CHAPTER 3
DESIGNING THE STUDY: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I discussed the literature on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy that has impacted my research. I identified the importance of taking into account all participants' cultural identities in the classroom and explained how these relate to two areas of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies— that is cultural competence and critical consciousness. Further, in Chapter 2 I indicated that this study is situated in a Social and Cultural framework and a Critical theoretical framework. In this chapter, I describe the methodology that I used within these theoretical frameworks to explore the central question of this study, which is:

How does my self-knowledge and shifting awareness of my multiple cultural identities (as an Indian/Asian/English speaking/woman) affect my attempts to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner in a U.S. fourth grade urban classroom of ethnically, culturally and socio-economically diverse students?

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16 I differentiate between ‘ethnic’ and ‘cultural’ in the following manner: Ethnic describes the national or geographic location from where the person regards that they ‘come from’ and cultural describes how they identify in terms of class, race, language and so on.
As Guba and Lincoln (1994) caution, "methods must be fitted to a predetermined methodology" that follows from the worldview in which a study is situated (p.108). Therefore in this chapter I describe:

1. Where I locate myself conceptually and
2. The methodological choices based upon both the ontological and epistemological frames.

Locating Myself In Conceptual Frameworks

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), Critical theory is based on the belief that reality is shaped by "historical realism" (i.e. reality is virtual, shaped by time) and:

...over time has been changed by the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender factors, and then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as real (p.110).

Therefore, in "absence of insight, they are as limiting and confining as if they were real" (p.111). In terms of epistemology then, the 'inquirer' and the 'investigated' have a transactional relationship and both of their "situatedness" (subjective / cultural / social situations) affect and inform the inquiry (p.110).

Therefore, the knowledge that is gained is "value-mediated" and "value-laden"—"what can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular object or group" (p.110, emphasis in text). Guba and Lincoln (1994) emphasize that a Critical theoretical approach calls for a "dialogic and dialectical" methodology where the "inquiry requires a dialogue between the investigator and the subjects of the inquiry"; and this
dialogue must be dialectical so that previously held notions (for example historical realism in critical theory) are transformed and changed giving rise to new and more informed knowledge (p.109 – 110). However, the power to transform is always seen as situated in the inquirer.

Closely related but different, is the worldview or paradigm of Social Constructivism. The ontological nature of social constructivism is that of relativism. That is:

Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature...dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110).

What can be known in such a view is similar to Critical theory in that the relationship between inquirer and investigated is transactional. But, it is different in that what is known is subjective. In other words, the inquirer and the investigated are assumed to be interactively linked, but “the ‘findings’ are literally created as the investigation proceeds” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.111, italics in text). The methods in Social Constructivism are also similar to Critical theory but differ in that the personal / subjective nature of social constructions are affected by the investigation (i.e. the process) and not the investigator (i.e. the inquirer) as in Critical theory. The focus of inquiry is not on the transformation (of inquirer and investigated) but on the process.

I locate myself in both of these theoretical frameworks. I used the lens of Critical theory to question and critique the workings of power in educational
processes and to open up possibilities to interrogate these power relations in
classrooms. I used Social Constructivist theory to understand and interpret the
workings of interactions and relations in the classroom. A Critical lens gave me
a way to examine how the power of one group has affected the lives of others.
A way to uncover situations in which, one group unconsciously or
unquestioningly has accepted the value system that results in privilege for
some, and acceptance by others. However, while I have 'uncovered' differential
power situations, I have also endeavored, through reflective praxis, to facilitate
my own (teacher's) transformation into critical consciousness in the classroom.
As a facilitator, I have tried to interact with students and teacher in the role of
participant in order to strive for a means to balance power as it is played out in
the classroom.

My methods drew from both of these theoretical frameworks. From a
Critical perspective, I used observations and one-on-one small group interviews
and whole group discussions as a way to question power relations, as a way to
gain historical, social, cultural, and structural insights into classroom processes.
From a Constructivist perspective, I used educational drama and whole group
discussions in the classroom as a way to construct multiple knowledge along
with others in the classroom. As discussed in Chapter 1, I also used self-
reflective writing (along with educational drama) so that I could gain a more
informed and sophisticated means of interpretation through my personal
experience. A Critical stance helped me uncover the cultural beliefs and
assumptions (including my own) that have been confused and mistaken for 'facts' that permeate school and classroom teaching and learning. A Social Constructivist stance helped me learn critical assumptions that underlie classroom processes. A Critical stance allowed me to know that I do certain things because I chose to and not because of unquestioned habit — that every moment had many possibilities and every situation had many angles. A Social Constructivist stance allowed me to know that my subjective self affects and is affected by every moment and the choices I made in every moment. Knowing that we have the power to choose one of many possible ways gives us the power to transform our reality in the direction that we want. As teachers, knowing we chose one of many possible ways to interact with students, and as teachers, being conscious that we chose one of many possible ways to interact with students, gives us the power to imagine how it might be if we chose one of the other ways. Using a Critical stance would give me, (as a teacher) the power to view my practices as one of many possible ways of interacting with students — I could develop a critical consciousness of the ways in which I may use power to shape the classroom and then work to transform these practices through self-reflection and self-knowledge. This is important because "in failing to recognize privilege or power that we [might] have inherited, we fail to see the consequences of our position and choices" as they affect others (Hinchey, 1998, p. 32).
I also want to add here that in this study, I take an anthropological view of the classroom rather than a psychological view, in that I concentrate on factors like cultural identities, social class and ethnic background including linguistic identity that contribute to classroom processes rather than cognitive abilities. Having stated this and having located myself conceptually, I now locate myself in terms of my cultural identities within the research. Because in this research project I have taken the view that every interaction is changed by the individuals who participate in that interaction, it is important that I locate myself in this research.

Locating Myself In The Research

With the current shift in inquiry in the last few decades, from empiricism to relativism, from objectivity to subjectivity, from a ‘found truth’ to ‘socially constructed truths’, the voice of the “lone ethnographer” to the multiple voices of the ‘native’ and ‘other’, from Western views to the multiple views of the ‘oppressed’, the struggle for scientific recognition and legitimacy is on (Erickson, 1986; Greene, 1994a; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lather, 1986; Moss, 1996; Neilson, 1990; Richardson, 1997). In such a complex sphere, to locate myself and to ‘do’ research is always a struggle.

I am invested in ‘science’, a science that spans many paradigms as it tries to define itself – paradigms that cross and shift across the borders of feminist / resistant, constructivist, emancipatory, critical and the postmodern. However, I locate this science foremost in social and cultural situatedness,
bounded and opened simultaneously by the event of time. I practice a ‘science’— educational drama that is situated within the dominant discourses of education and theater. Educational drama is on the edges of recognized or legitimate knowledge within the fields of education and theater, being recognized only by being “othered” (Fine, 1994).

Similarly, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy is only recently coming into its’ own. Situated in the larger discourses of multicultural education and in Afrocentric epistemology, I recognize it only by ‘othering’— only by recognizing what it is not. However, it is as familiar to me as I am to myself because I can locate in it my struggles with schooling as a child especially in India, locate in it language and identity issues in learning that people close to me have faced and I can locate through it the ways in which students’ achievements (including my own) were termed successes or failures because of cultural differences.

I try to situate myself in all of these amorphous fields as a woman, recognized in this country as a woman from a ‘third world country,’ resisting being ‘othered’ but also “working the hyphen” (Fine, 1994, p.74), that is working

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19 I describe the use of educational drama as a ‘science’ to emphasize the nature of its use as a pedagogical approach in classrooms. Although it functions primarily as an art form, in the way that it has been applied and used across the curriculum, educational drama theoreticians and practitioners (e.g. Heathcote, 1984, Heathcote & Bolton, 1995, O’Neill, 1995, practitioners in Wagner, 1998, and in Saxton & Miller, 1998, Wilhelm and Edmiston, 1998 to name a few) have legitimized its use, through their practice, into a methodological view that draws from various epistemologies.
to extend the space between the two locations of 'other' and 'not other.' As a woman from India and as an international student, I am often perceived as 'different' or 'other' in this country as someone from a 'minority,' as someone from a disadvantaged, 'third-world' background. However, those are not the terms in which I would define myself because in India, I am from a privileged, dominant discourse, in terms of class and caste20. In the U.S., although I perceive myself as a native speaker of English, having studied in English (in British colonized India), my accent and differing discourse strategies sometimes do not give me agency in accessing interpretations here.

I work from multiple cultural positions in this country in terms of being in and doing research in education and educational drama, in terms of my classroom pedagogy, in terms of the everyday living that I do in this country and now in terms of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. I am reminded of this multiplicity in all my dealings with the classroom, the research and on a daily basis when my accent and the way I look is perceived through preconceived notions of 'difference' and 'diversity.' It was these notions of diversity and difference that led me to culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and to find out how my shifting awareness of my multiple cultural identities affected my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Similarly,

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20 Class and Caste are two very different concepts that are often confused in this country. Caste is a designation that came from ancient times while class directly relates to the economic status of a person. Caste is what we are born into — it cannot be changed according to Indian terms.
Tyson (1998) writes about the “epistemologies of competing agendas” faced by ‘minority’ groups in this country, that echo my struggles:

To be Black and a scholar in America is to experience competing agendas. The tenor of American race relations demands it. Each racial or ethnic group in America labors under this burden in specific ways (p.21)

Politics In Locating Myself

This research project has been a strange and interesting journey in that, I was not in a position of 'situated methodology' on two counts: while I was perceived as a ‘foreigner’ in this country, I am working through a means that is located in Western ways of knowing and being. To clarify, the multiplicity in my location is complicated by the fact that my ways of doing and being in research are ‘privileged’. I have been trained in Western ways of viewing and knowing – not only as researcher, but also because of ways in which language (English / colonized / Western) shapes the agency through which I come to know. So although I am perceived as ‘other,’ my methodology, because of my training is situated in Western / dominant / privileged ways. Then again because I have not grown up here – in these viewpoints, I cannot entirely locate myself in Western ways. Therefore, I am always in a space somewhere in between situated methodology and ‘native other’ (“working the hyphen,” Fine 1994). Western ways of knowing give me the agency through which I can express my views, but my complex Indian background gives me the cultural experience to recognize ‘marginalization,’ although I may not call it that. In the classroom,
striving to practice culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, I was simultaneously in two positions— that of researcher with theoretical knowledge and that of teacher who is not culturally knowledgeable about the ‘cultures’ I was ‘observing,’ and therefore could not claim to teaching these students from a culturally relevant and responsive position.

Locating Methods In Research Design

Given all of the foregoing, methodology especially in this research is complicated. In some ways this has become a study about myself as well as a study of what methodology I should use, although that had not been in my original intention. As I progressed with the study, I realized that I became more interested in the question of how difference and diversity were viewed as categories for ‘others’ like me. I began to think about how I view difference and diversity and part of the nature of my research became exploring my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as it related to my own cultural identities and how I am situated as a researcher and teacher. As Wolf (1991), while doing research in Taiwan, writes in retrospect “I knew that I did not and could not think like a Taiwanese” (p.57); I too realize that I can never think or have the same experiences as the students I teach in this country. This further complicated the methods I used to collect data doing research through a perspective that is not ‘natural’ to me.

In my struggles with methodology, analysis and interpretation, in my struggles with / against studying / looking at myself, in the context of this
project, I began to theorize that I could use my ‘difference’ to interrogate how difference is understood and perceived in this classroom. My methods unconsciously changed as my focus changed. I became more interested in having discussions around difference and diversity with the students and the teacher in the classroom that was the site for this research project. I used my cultural experiences and myself as an example to demonstrate how difference and diversity can be used to categorize and normalize. Through this process, I found I could use cultural competence as a point of reference to view how my own cultural identities affected my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. In my wish to do emancipatory research – research that I anticipated would help the students and the teacher to develop critical consciousness, I had become the object of my own study.

Lather (1986) writes that “In the name of emancipation, researchers impose meanings on situations rather than constructing meaning through negotiation with research participants” (p.265). However, the opposite happened in my case where the research forced me to take a long hard look at the way I view difference and diversity – to take stock of my own cultural competence because I was not in a position of situated methodology when it came to observing the classroom. Especially in talks with the teacher, I became aware of my own cultural competence. An example to clarify follows: On one of the days that I was observing, the teacher in the class – Lisa was handing out book order forms for students to take home so that they could order books from
it. Because she was five short of the forms, she gave me a list of students who "usually never order anyway" and asked me to remove the order forms from their mailboxes and put them in others mailboxes whom she felt could use them. I happened to notice that while Lisa was a White teacher, the students who were on the list (and therefore who would not get an order form) were all Black. In my field notes on that day I wrote about this incident and termed it 'racism' in my notes. However, later, by critically questioning my own interpretations of the incident, I began to wonder if I had in my mind already termed Lisa as being racist. In fact, what if this had been an all white school? What if my interpretations were colored by the fact that I as 'other' / 'oppressed' was watching for the teacher as 'white' / 'oppressor' to make a mistake and therefore termed it racism? In fact, when I offered to make copies of the order forms she readily agreed and wondered why she hadn't thought of it. I relate this example to show that I began to develop cultural competence when I began to view Lisa as a person (teacher) instead of Lisa 'the white teacher' (emphasis added).

Reflecting on the incident above and my self-realization of how my notions of difference and diversity affected my interpretations, I decided that I needed to include talking with students and Lisa about the notion of cultural competence. My methods now included talking with them about our personal situatedness, in terms of our cultural identities. My research had to include talking with the students and teacher about our cultural experiences because
“experience is messy” (Wolf, 1991, p.129) and “when human behavior is the data, a tolerance for ambiguity, multiplicity, contradiction, and instability is essential” (p.129). It became necessary through self-reflexivity to interrogate and analyze my own cultural competence.

Through discussions with the teacher and the students around conceptions of difference and diversity, especially by using myself as an example – I began to practice “research as praxis” (Lather, 1986). I began to conduct interviews “in an interactive dialogic manner that requires self-disclosure on the part of the researcher” (Lather, 1986, p. 266). Through talking and writing about my own example I began to have discussions around culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, difference, diversity and school.

As can be gathered from the detailed explanation above on methods, I used a grounded theory methodology in this research project (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). “Theory evolves during actual research, and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (p.273). Given the nature of the research, “a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomena”, I felt that an approach that has elements of ethnographic studies would be best suited for data collection (Atkinson & Hammersly, 1994, p. 248). Further, Zaharlick & Green (1991) emphasize that this approach is “an interactive-reactive, context responsive approach to the study of everyday life of a social group driven by cultural theory” (p.211). With this study’s emphasis on cultural processes and the contextual situatedness of
interactions, this approach seemed most appropriate. My role in this project was that of a participant–observer in the beginning and later as participant in the study, I looked at my involvement in this study.

Issues On Validity

My claims to validity in this research come from my engagement with the site and self-reflexivity in the research. Given that I was invested in research that emancipates and therefore is "communitarian" (Lincoln, 1995); that is research "that takes place in and is addressed to a community" (p.280); and given the above concerns that I had specifically about methodology and interpretation, I am inclined to agree with Lather (1997) in her call for "... a profusion of situated validities, immanent validities, within the context of a particular inquiry" (p. 15). Therefore, the validity of my research is situated within this particular inquiry and within the methods that I used to collect data and to evaluate the research. Mainly, this research is characterized by my efforts at self-reflexivity, where I became the object of my study as a result of the data that I collected and as a result of my on-going data analysis. Rather than claiming 'objectivity' or 'subjectivity' – binaries that hold little meaning (given my frame of reference) – validity in my research comes from my involvement with the ‘field’. It comes from my involvement with the students' lives, their school success, their small and large struggles with classroom processes, the teacher's struggles around effective teaching, her struggles with teaching in an urban school in an overcrowded classroom and so on. Validity
comes from the ways in which I repositioned my views and not only included, but also mainly focused on, myself as the object of my study. Finally, this research study is characterized by the notion of catalytic validity (Lather, 1986). Lather (1986) explains:

Catalytic validity represents the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it, a process Freire (1973) terms conscientization (p.272)

In this research, as I was the focus of the study, catalytic validity within the research process re-oriented and refocused my practices of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as I developed critical consciousness and cultural competence. It was during the research process through ongoing self-reflexive writing that I began to question my assumptions about the field.

Research Question

Thus, as stated previously, this qualitative research study focuses on myself as the teacher and asks one central question:

How does my self-knowledge and shifting awareness of my multiple cultural identities (as an Indian / Asian / English speaking / woman) affect my attempts to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner in a U.S. fourth grade urban classroom of ethnically, culturally and socio-economically diverse students?
Site And Participants

I was introduced to this fourth grade classroom through an earlier research project that involved the classroom teacher. This urban school is situated near a major university campus in a metropolitan area in a Mid-western city in the United States. As a doctoral candidate at the university, I was interested in working with a diverse group of students. Because of the location of the school and because I knew this teacher, this class and school suited my purposes. This urban school followed an alternative arts curriculum. In this school, there is an emphasis on arts integration, on an integrated approach to the curriculum, on diversity and on building community. All through the school students' art works, projects, studies and writing were displayed on the walls, along stairways, outside each classroom and within each class. This school has a music room, art room, drama room and a dance room and each week students worked with these respective teachers. This school drew its students from the entire city, where they were admitted through a lottery system and were bussed in. The specific site for this research was a fourth grade classroom and consisted of 28 students (14 boys and 14 girls) from various socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (see table 2 for a breakdown of ethnicities):
African American / Black Boys: 4
African American / Black Girls: 5
European American / White Girls: 6
European American / White Boys: 9
Biracial Boys: 1
Biracial Girls: 1
Other (of Cambodian and Hawaiian descent): 2
Total: 28

Table 2: Cultural Makeup of the Class

Methods Of Data Collection

Data were collected in two phases. Phase 1 involved observations and interviews over a period of three months before which time Human Subjects clearance was obtained and permissions were also sought. Consents to participate in research and permissions to collect writing and artwork were gathered from all of the participants in the classroom. During this phase I volunteered regularly in the classroom twice a week for the whole day.
volunteered in order to get to know students and to familiarize myself with the existing practices of this classroom, as I was planning on teaching later. Phase 2 involved my teaching in the classroom.

**Phase One: September to December**

Most successful stories of teaching describe community based teaching and learning where the students, teachers and the larger community not only knew each other but also shared a rare bond of friendship and caring. For most of the students in this class, the word ‘Indian’ meant ‘Native American’ or ‘American Indian’. As an Indian person from South Asia, it was imperative that I shared my culture and ways of knowing and being with this classroom. It was also important that I get to know the students of this classroom as individual contributing members. With this in mind, I decided to spend a considerable amount of time observing and spending time with the students. From the beginning of the school year in September until January, I spent two full days each week volunteering in the class after all necessary clearance to conduct research had been granted. Although I was simultaneously observing for my research, I spent most of those days talking, interacting, reading, sharing, and working with individuals and groups and sometimes substitute teaching in the classroom. Often I would play with the students on the playground or in the classroom and also eat lunch with them. I participated in their classroom parties for Halloween and birthdays, and other activities and they participated in getting to know about India, helping me with my ‘university’ homework and so on.
During this time, it was my privilege to be considered their confidante. I was privy to their secret crushes, their thoughts and feelings, their likes and dislikes about popular media, friends, family, school and home. My sources of data during this phase included my observations or field notes, which were written on each day that I visited the school site (twice each week). These notes, written from a personal point of view, concentrated on:

- Teaching and learning practices and processes of the classroom
- Students interactions within and outside of the classroom, but within the school premises

These notes also included detailed researcher field notes and personal, reflective field notes. I also had discussions and interviews with the classroom teacher, Lisa on a regular basis (at least once each week I attended) where we spoke about students, classroom processes such as grouping and lesson plans, school, and personal issues. These unstructured interviews and discussions were usually held over lunch or after school or before school in the classroom or in the teachers' lounge or sometimes on the telephone. Although these talks happened at least once each week I attended, only four of these were audio taped, and no telephone conversations were audio taped.

**Phase Two: January to May**

During Phase 2, while I continued with my weekly observations / volunteering with the class, I also began unstructured, audio taped interviews with students. I conducted one hour-long interview per week with one to three
students. These interviews were entirely voluntary and the students chose whether to participate alone or as a group or with a partner. In all, there were ten interviews conducted in this fashion. Students volunteered for these sessions and interviewed with me during breaks or when they had finished their classroom work, with permission from Lisa. These sessions were intended mainly to get to know the students’ likes and dislikes, what their lives were like outside of school, their interests and anything else that they wanted to share or talk with me about. As I have discussed in Chapter 1, because I was not in a position of cultural situatedness in this classroom, these interviews were my main source of getting to know students in terms of their cultural, social, ethnic identities. Therefore, these interviews were only used as data in terms of getting to know students in order to plan for my culturally relevant and responsive teaching in the classroom. As such no interview data from these ten sessions were coded or analyzed for the purposes of writing this dissertation. Although I taught my first lesson at the end of January, I conducted these interviews until March because I was planning each lesson based upon what I had learned from these interviews. In the beginning of January, I conducted one three hour long semi-structured interview with Lisa focused on discussing the specifics of the research project (See Appendix A for interview protocol). The data from this interview is presented in chapter 4. For analysis of this interview see the data analysis section. Thus, in Phase 2 the following sources of interview data were collected:
Audio tapes of unstructured interviews with students –
   Total of ten sessions
Audio tape of semi-structured interview with Lisa

Educational Drama Sessions As Sources Of Data

The reading of literature is an inherent part of this classroom's pedagogy. Based upon the literature read in class, various educational drama strategies and conventions were used as sources of data. Educational drama strategies and conventions that I used included:

- Taking on an imaginary perspective – where the students' and / or teachers took the attitude or viewpoint of an imagined person / role
- Still image or tableaux – where students and teachers worked together in small and large groups to make an image or frozen picture in time with their bodies. This symbolic representation was then interpreted by students
- Imagined fictional or metaphorical representations – where students read, wrote, discussed in role or through a fictional perspective or metaphorical perspective

Other strategies like reading, writing and interacting in role; drawing, making and creating artifacts within dramatic situations; interacting in mutually agreed upon dramatic contexts in small groups and large groups; and taking on expert perspectives were also used. These interactions were used variously during the following times that I taught using educational drama in the classroom:

- January – I introduced the *Encounter* by Jane Yolen and used educational drama to address stereotyping. Sources of data that were collected were:
• Students’ reflective writing and
• Audio tape of whole group discussions

➢ February – I used educational drama focusing on the signing of the Treaty of Greenville. Sources of data collected were:
  • Video tape of entire session
  • Audio tapes of small group discussions
  • Students art work produced in small groups
  • Students writing in role produced in small groups

➢ March – No data were collected in March due to Proficiency Examinations.

➢ April – I used educational drama focused on the Carlisle Indian school following themes from the previous two educational drama sessions. Sources of data collected included:
  • Video tape of entire session
  • Audio tape of entire session
  • Students whole group writing
  • Students in-role reflective individual journals

➢ May – I used educational drama with small groups of students focused on the case of Elian Gonzalez as a way into looking at cultural differences. Sources of data were:
  • Four video taped sessions lasting an hour each

All data were focused on my teaching with students and on our interactions in whole groups and small groups within the context of the educational drama. I also supplemented these data with personal reflective field notes so that my cultural position as a participant is also documented.
Data Analysis

Data analysis and interpretation were ongoing and emergent throughout the course of this study. There were two ways in which I analyzed the data – first I used a grounded theory methodology, and I began looking for "...patterns, themes, and categories of analysis [as they] come from the data" (Patton, 1990, p. 390). Then I used writing as an ongoing self-reflexive method of inquiry to view and analyze the data including my personal field notes, which had become a part of the corpus of data. The three hour-long semi-structured interview with the classroom teacher was also analyzed through a grounded theory methodology and the following categories emerged. In representing this interview (in chapter 4), I have broken the interview into segments that are representative of the topics discussed in each category. The following categories emerged:

- Culture of the classroom
- Language and speech patterns in the classroom
- Cultural difference and diversity in the classroom
- Notions about difference and diversity
- Teacher expectations and culturally relevant teaching
- Cultural identities
- Cultural competence
- Personal and professional responsibility

Further, the principles of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy that I identified at the end of chapter 2 were used as guides to analyze audio and video-tapes of my teaching in this classroom. Through a grounded analysis of my field notes, interview with Lisa and my teaching, I formed five important

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have situated myself in the field and in this research study. I have described in detail the complexities involved in choosing and following methodology. I have described the site and participants, details about data that I collected and ended with the process of data analysis that I used. In the next two chapters I analyze my field notes and audio and videotapes of my teaching using the categories of analysis that have been identified above.
CHAPTER 4
DELVING INTO THE LAYERS: ANALYSIS

Introduction

Although the process of writing up dissertation data, is often perceived as done at the end of the research process as a means to take one's story to the world, it is, I discovered, very much a part of the research process. Writing becomes a form of inquiry, a "method ...a way of finding out about yourself and your topic" (Richardson, 1994, p. 516). As I went about the challenging business of writing up my field stories, I discovered that the story I had intended to narrate had changed. As I have discussed in Chapters 1 and 3 it became clear that my focus had shifted to narrating the story of how my cultural differences affected my teaching in this classroom. My field notes, the initial data that I collected before I began to teach in this classroom, were centered on my efforts at understanding my own cultural identities and cultural differences and how those affected my relation to this classroom as a teacher. I realized that I had to narrate this tale (my process of discovery) in reflection, as a confessional tale (Van Maanen, 1988), because it provides critical information that speaks to my observation of the students and of their regular classroom
teacher. Further, as I am accountable to the field and to the people I studied and because of my cultural situatedness in this particular classroom, I needed to incorporate my reflections on my field notes as part of my research.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In Part I of this chapter, I narrate how I became critically conscious of the ways in which I was perceived and through that how I perceived the students and the classroom. The narration in this part follows two streams – A Critical stance of what I had observed and a reflexive stance of what evolved in the process of writing. While the self-reflection traces my shifting awareness of my cultural identities and how those affected what I had observed in the classroom, the critical stance analyses my observations of the classroom processes. These two streams are represented stylistically in the structure of this chapter by the use of two different fonts. The reflexive commentary to guide the reader through the data and analyses is written in the following font – double-spaced and in font that looks like this. The actual field notes are single spaced and indented as are analyses and they are written in this font. I have used these two fonts as a way to represent two streams in my thinking that happened simultaneously. The different font (that looks like this) is used to ‘talk’ with the reader as if I am narrating this story to the reader – hence the more informal tone in the narration. However, the regular font is used to present more academic writing that analyzes research data. Sometimes, the field notes were written in Hindi to keep confidentiality in
the classroom while I took my notes. In my commentary, I have indicated where I wrote in Hindi and I have translated them here for comprehension.

In Part II of this chapter, I narrate how I taught in this classroom and I analyze my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy using the principles of this pedagogy synthesized at the end of Chapter 2 as guides. Again there are two streams to the narration – a critical stance of what occurred in my teaching as I perceived it and a self-reflexive stance of what evolved in my writing. I follow the same stylistic pattern of writing in Part II as I do in Part I. Part II specifically concentrates on my developing cultural competence and the features that emerged confirming Ladson-Billings’ (1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) conceptions of cultural competence. At certain points of this chapter I synthesize the five features of cultural competence and present them in italics and in indented paragraphs.
Part I: Analysis And Culture Of The Classroom

I began by observing two days each week in the classroom. I started when school started and ended when the day ended for them. My initial observation notes talk about the regular activity of the classroom – how it was laid out, what was posted on the walls, and what was the daily routine. The notes also reflected my efforts at getting to know the students – learning their names, explaining who I was and what I was doing there, what my role was in the classroom and so on. As stated in chapter 3 in the description of the site, there were twenty-eight students in the classroom from various socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. On the first day I wrote:

Got here at 2mnts past 8, Lisa also just got here, I see the day's plan written up on the board. Made copies for Lisa. Discussed briefly about this week. I'm excited about being here; I wonder how the rest of the day is going to be. Nice idea for attendance – do they do this at every school? Students take their clips of a board as they walk in and it's their job to do it. I introduced myself to everyone while they were doing their journals; I only missed one person. Will I remember everyone's names...? Yes...they have math assessment now. I can already see some CRT here, Can I call this CRT? Lisa shared the entire days' schedule so that everyone is aware of expectations and everyone is aware of the plan. Lisa is also 'person of the week' on the bulletin board in the corner. Every body gets a turn to be person of the week. Lisa just shared a whole lot about her family, hobbies, interests etc and then showed photos. The photos are displayed on the board and the students can ask questions whenever they want. Really nice idea. I am going to enjoy this!

(Field Notes, September 9, 1999)
This excerpt illustrates how I ‘read’ the teacher’s actions as reflective of being culturally relevant because she had shared a lot about herself to a class that she was also just getting to know. But is it enough to share about oneself – does that make one culturally relevant? My notes above reflect this question when I ask, “Can I call this CRT?” where I have used ‘CRT’ as an acronym for ‘culturally relevant or responsive teaching.’ Tracing back my thought process when I wrote these field notes, I clearly see that I was beginning to form an understanding of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as getting to know students through sharing or making known one’s own culture / agenda. Literature on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy says that if the teacher is clear about her own agenda and makes that information clear to the students, it helps to build trust with the students (Gay, 2000). If the students know what to expect from the teacher, then learning can happen. However, being unsure of what that sharing should look like or what information needs to be shared, I wanted to know whether Lisa’s ‘sharing’ about herself in the classroom can be described as ‘CRT.’

The notes also reflect my questions about specific processes in the classroom. For example, the way attendance was taken in the class appeared different to me. It seemed novel that it would be the students’ responsibility to make sure that they let the teacher know they were present by taking a clip off the board as they walked in. I wondered if this happened in every school because I wanted to make the distinction between this classroom’s cultural
processes and other classrooms'. Another cultural practice in this classroom, that I noticed, was being 'person of the week'. Each week one of the students brought photographs and comments to put up on a bulletin board specifically designated for this purpose. Through this the students and teacher learnt about each other's families. As that had been the first week, Lisa had modeled it for the students. This classroom had begun to form its own culture from the very first week.

The school followed an alternate curriculum based on the use of literature. The school also claimed that the "Literacy Collaborative Initiative" of a major Midwestern University is an integral part of their school program (refer online description of school). Many classrooms reflected the use of literature in their structure and had comfortable areas for reading with a couch, pillows, sometimes a wooden loft and so on. Lisa's classroom also had these and because the classroom was located in a corner of the second floor of the building, it had the advantage of getting natural sunlight from two sides. There was a loveseat, a single comfortable chair and a big wooden loft with pillows and cushions in it. The room also contained a book display shelf with many books on it, a circular bookshelf that could turn and built in shelves along the walls with books. Lisa's table sat at the rear end of the room between two corners. Students could sit at large round tables and one long rectangular table. The coatroom was situated along one side of the classroom and designated as a
'storage - coat rack - secret place to hide out' for students. There was also a 'rug area' where every afternoon everyone gathered with pillows to be read to. It was unlike any classroom that I had ever experienced as a child and I began to see it not as a classroom but as a fun place to be. Every once in a while the furniture would be changed around to accommodate new things or to give themselves a 'makeover' as the girls called it – like the time they received four brand new computers. The loft was the students' favorite spot – seated high up or in the secret place below – it was coveted by all the students. Everyone got a turn to be in the loft.

A few days after I had been there, my attention had moved to watching the teacher and pedagogy in this classroom. How did teaching and learning happen in this classroom? What were the techniques of instruction that this teacher used? As you might remember, when I collected data, specifically while I wrote these field notes, I thought I would be writing an account about gaining culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, therefore my field notes reflected what I imagined I had to establish first – the existing ways of instruction. Accordingly, I asked questions about the teacher and her pedagogy as I was trying to make sense of what I was observing. However, I would soon realize that the classroom culture changed each day, and especially on those days that I was present.
Instruction here does not seem any different from what I had as a child and I thought mine was boring! Well the students seem engaged, they are sitting all over the room, and although they are answering specific questions are they getting it?? How about students in the back? Those are whom I have to watch out for – like Kate and John. How can I gain students trust when I teach? Choosing topics they like…? They've been sitting for a really long time. How can I make sure they are all engaged? They seem interested but there’s Davis looking out of the window. …They are doing writing workshop. Lisa has made this into a fun game and they are enjoying it now.

(Field notes, September 15, 1999)

Although I did not know it then, as I read through the notes during analysis, I found how critical I began to be. At the time when I took the notes, I had also been doing a survey of literature on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and had read examples of culturally relevant and responsive teaching in the classroom that had been successful. Could it be that I was forming an ideal of what a culturally relevant classroom should look like and I was viewing Lisa and the classroom processes through this ideal? As noted in Chapter 2, literature on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy recommends teaching students from their cultural points of view, frames of reference and ways of thinking (Gay, 2000), because that will engage students. In order to do that, scholars (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 1995a) recommend that teachers need to 'know' their students. I recognized that Lisa

21 All names are pseudonyms chosen by the students themselves. I have substituted their names with these pseudonyms in all my notes and transcripts as well.
had only been with the students for about three weeks at this point and that I, on the other hand, had the luxury of observing and getting to know the students before I needed to begin teaching. Following from the ideal I was forming, I was concerned about gaining these students’ trust.

Erickson (1987) explains how students place a great amount of trust in the teacher in their consent to learn. In agreeing to learn from the teacher the students trust that “one’s own identity will be maintained positively in relation to the authority” (p.344), in this case the authority being the teacher. Perhaps intuitively or otherwise, my biggest concern before I taught was to find ways to gain students’ trust. As Erickson (1987) demonstrates, trust is important from a culturally relevant and responsive point of view, for when students’ and teacher’s cultural identities match, students could then maintain their identities in relation to the teacher’s authority. This helps them trust the teacher and learn from the teacher. However, as stated in Chapter 2, in urban classrooms such as this one, students’ and teacher’s cultural identities and backgrounds rarely matched (Weiner, 1999, 2000). Teachers have the extra pressure of teaching students from a wide range of cultural identities and backgrounds. Further, as Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (2001) reveal, teacher training does not prepare most teachers to teach such a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

I wondered if teachers like Lisa ever got a chance to know their students individually before they begin to teach them? I noticed that Lisa had not had a
chance to get to know her students before she began to teach in this
classroom. In my interview with Lisa (which I analyze later in this section) I
found teachers like Lisa had to rely mainly on what they learn about students in
their classroom through their interactions.

As the weeks passed I also began to wonder how my position as a
participant-observer affected the culture in this classroom. Initially in an
attempt to blend into the classroom and in an attempt to make Lisa’s job easier,
I let her know that I would help with instruction or anything else that she may
need help with. On many occasions, I had made copies for the classroom or run
to the office with a note and so on. Mostly I helped her early in the morning
before class began so that we had a chance to sit down and talk with each other
for at least ten minutes. Although Lisa rarely asked me to help out – in the
sense that she never cast me as an aide or assistant – on many occasions I had
insisted that it would be okay for me to help even during class time. This help
varied from day to day – sometimes it was working with individual students
and sometimes it was working with small groups. Lisa, I remember was always
extremely thankful for the help and I was happy to help out. Was it my skewed
attempt at ‘giving back to the field?’ Or was it that being a woman and having
been in situations where I wished I could get some assistance, I assumed she
would need my help? I can only introspect on that. Nevertheless I felt helping

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out in the classroom was one way to begin knowing the students and becoming a part of the classroom culture.

After the first few weeks of working with the classroom, many students thought I was a student teacher. They even introduced me as such on one occasion. I wondered if I was positioning myself as an ‘aide’ by doing things like making copies and running to the office? How involved with classroom activities could I get? How involved could I become given that I was there two days a week and for a purpose that was (to a large extent) self-serving – I was ‘collecting data’. From a culturally relevant and responsive approach it was important that I didn’t position myself as ‘distant researcher’ completely cutting myself off from all classroom activities. As I was planning on subsequently teaching in this classroom, I did need to get involved with the classroom activities. However, in those initial weeks of ‘field work’ there were many times that I was confused about which activities I could involve myself in without intruding in the regular running of the classroom. Therefore, I followed whatever Lisa asked me to do – hence the ‘help’ that I mention in my commentary above and hence the position of classroom aide. I also speculate that Lisa may not have had someone in her classroom throughout the entire period of a day as regularly as I was coming. I knew that she had not had a student teacher before and as I was not a student teacher, she was also unsure (it seemed) of what to expect of me. These differences in my perception of my role in this classroom, and Lisa’s perception of my role in her classroom, lead me to think about what
difference I made to the classroom culture when I was there. Although initially this was only in terms of me as a researcher, as I gained more experience working with this class and as I gained more confidence as a researcher, it became clear to me that I had to begin viewing my cultural stance in the classroom also. I began to understand that a study about culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in a classroom could not happen without taking into account the cultural stance of the researcher — especially when the researcher was as involved as I was in the classroom and especially because I was observing the classroom in order to teach in it later.

As I have explained in Chapter 2, the culture of a classroom is constructed by the inter-subjective interactions established amongst all its participants (Kantor, Elgas, & Fernie, 1993). Therefore, the classroom culture changed when I was present and when I was not. Consequently, what I was observing as the 'culture' of the classroom included my own involvement and in that sense, I was also 'under observation' in this research right from the beginning. However, as I have mentioned earlier, I did not see it in that way when I began.

When I had initially approached Lisa with the idea for this research, she had eagerly agreed because she was excited about using educational drama techniques in her classroom and herself learning to use educational drama. This school in which Lisa's classroom was had teachers who were famous for
working with educational drama. These teachers used educational drama as a regular part of their curriculum and many international practitioners of educational drama sometimes came to watch and work with these teachers.

Educational drama, therefore, held a place of prestige in this school. It was one of the ways in which a classroom and the teacher became well known outside the school. Further, being located near a large research university with a unique educational drama program, many professors of educational drama worked closely with some teachers in this school to use educational drama in their classroom. As far as I knew, no one had worked in Lisa’s classroom with educational drama. When I approached her with this research idea, the part about my using educational drama to teach with the students attracted her the most.

I am really enjoying today! Lisa wants me to begin using educational drama next week itself. My ideas were a little different. I want to gain students trust. I want to get to know them a little more. I only know their names and some of the more verbal students have talked with me but others still keep a distance. Many are comfortable with me already though. I did convince Lisa that I should start slow though. But she is so excited and has come up with all these ideas to use with a book that they are reading... Maybe I can start with something small...

(Field notes, September 22 – 23, 1999)

My doubts around trust were resurfacing again. In the notes above, it is clear that I was concerned about using educational drama this soon in this
classroom because to me educational drama was the way I taught. And when I was writing these observation notes, as stated earlier, my objective had been to use educational drama to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner. However for Lisa, not having the background in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy that I was gaining, using educational drama was a change from her usual instructional strategies. Although I had given a copy of my proposal to Lisa before starting to observe in the classroom – because I considered her co researcher – it was the beginning of the school year and an extremely busy time for her. There were many things at stake and these took up most of her time. It was the first time she was teaching fourth grade – a big responsibility for Lisa because she would have to prepare the students for proficiency tests. And because this was a new group of students for her, she only had information about the students that she had gathered from other teachers in the school. I had explained as best as I could that I was examining culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in the classroom using educational drama and that the research was focused on my teaching not hers. As a researcher my responsibility to Lisa at that time was to portray her perceptions and pedagogy as it affected the classroom culture and as it affected the research, as honestly as I could.
What I wrote down in those initial days in the classroom was crucial to my later analysis and planning. My field notes show my doubts around when I should begin to use educational drama to teach. I was unsure of when I would know if I had gained students’ trust — in many ways my notes reflect my efforts at understanding what it means to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive manner. As I read these field notes for analysis, I realized that they reflected my wonderings about culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. While I was reading about exemplar teachers’ classrooms where culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy were great successes, I wanted to know how to do this. How can I teach in this manner? Where should I begin? What should I do first? The first step, as written in the literature was to get to know the students. Therefore, I wanted to follow that — I did not want to begin to teach (even with educational drama) before I felt comfortable that I had begun to know the students in this classroom.

I did help Lisa use drama. I helped her plan and lead a session using educational drama, however I could not follow up on it the following week due to university commitments that I had to take care of. I called and talked Lisa through some ideas that she could follow up with. Lisa told me later that she had done what I had suggested and seemed pleased with the way the use of educational drama had progressed. In fact, when I went in the following week I noticed the students artwork created in response to the use of educational
drama, displayed in the hall outside the classroom. Students excitedly pointed things to me they had made and written about. While early on I had written “Instruction here does not seem any different from what I had as a child and I thought mine was boring!” (Field notes September 15, 1999), my views of Lisa’s pedagogy changed as I learnt more about her through our talk and through watching her teach in the classroom. She let me know that she was training for a marathon and wanted to begin a unit on health issues related to her training with her classroom. She shared that her day consisted of rising at 5 am to go for a swim or a run for an hour and then get ready to go to school. She had two children who went to the same school and came with her to school at 8 am. I could only imagine how busy her mornings might have been getting them ready for school and preparing to come herself. Once they reached school, her younger child spent the mornings doing homework or drawing in her classroom while we talked until school began. My admiration and respect for Lisa grew as I saw her deal with a thousand things at the same time on some days. Along with a rigorous schedule that she followed each day, there were some days when the classroom had its own challenges. The following segment of field notes shows how one day she dealt effectively with 37 students in her classroom, more than normal.

…..How quickly the days have passed! Today is really strange. There’s a meeting going on and most of the other
teachers are in it. Lisa has almost 37 students in the class! – four from grade 5, 3 from grade 2 and 2 from grade 3. Apparently they could not get any subs. It's fun though. I am working with these really well behaved fifth graders. They are just quietly doing their work! Lisa is wonderful. She is very effectively keeping track of all the students and they are all doing different things! I have a lot to learn from her.

(Field Notes, October 5, 1999)

While I was involved as a participant observer in this classroom, I wanted to know Lisa's views on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and how that affected the classroom culture. Although we had been having talks on the mornings that I was there, we had not had a specific discussion on the topic of the research. To learn more about Lisa's views I conducted a semi-structured interview towards the end of phase one of my data collection. This interview happened only towards the end of phase one because of scheduling problems and not because I had specifically planned it that way. Soon after the interview I began to teach in this classroom. In presenting this data I juxtapose segments from the interview with my field notes because these segments throw light on Lisa's views and through that I was able to understand Lisa better.

In our interview, when I spoke with Lisa about culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and its ideal of knowing every students' cultural

22 Refer to Chapter 3 for the specifics of each phase of data collection
backgrounds in order to teach them, she responded that she was always surprised by diverse students' speech and that it was always changing. She said:

L: I am constantly surprised by things that I find out about children that I would have never guessed.

A: Can you give me an example?

L: Well, I mean simple things like language and patterns of speech especially African American kids. I mean you think you've been around diverse kids for so long -- and every year it seems like I notice some new pattern that they use in their speech that's definitely a cultural thing.

According to Lisa, culture in the classroom was manifest in language and patterns of speech that were different from her own in the classroom. Emergent in this segment was her characterization of culture as something that is embodied in diversity -- that is, culture was not something that everyone had -- only different people had it. In that sense, Lisa characterized culture and diversity as fixed entities. Her assertion that she is surprised to hear different patterns of speech each year in spite of being around "diverse kids for so long" points to culture and diversity as fixed entities. She continued talking about particular students in the classroom and what she was learning about them.

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23 L stands for Lisa and A stands for Ambika (myself). Throughout this chapter all of the interview segments represent portions of one three hour-long semi-structured interview that I conducted with Lisa. I have broken the interview into units where we talk about specific topics represented by the segments. Although I have re-ordered the segments so that each topic fits with what I am describing in each section of this chapter, the segments themselves are represented as taped. No paragraphs within segments have been collapsed or compiled. See Chapter 3 for more details of how the interview was broken into topical segments.
L: And also having Fanny in my class this year I'm realizing that the roles that people take on in a family are little bit different in Malaysia and Cambodia where her parents are from.

A: How is it different? I mean how did you feel it was different?

L: Well her father – and it could just be her family – it seems as though her father has a very dominant role in her family but yet his presence is not something that I see a lot of.

A: You mean in school?

L: Right, but from the way that she talks I can tell that mom is heavily influenced by – and that’s something that’s true for American families too but much less so – that mom is influenced by dad and even though mom takes care of the family dad decides how that’s going to happen.

A: Does that in any way manifest itself in the way that Fanny experiences school? Have you seen any of that?

L: That’s a good question. Not really no – And maybe that’s because she has all these cultures mixing around her.

A: Yes she does and that’s what is interesting about her.

Lisa was learning about cultural differences in terms of roles people take in family situations, especially in Fanny’s case. From the response that Lisa gave me I began to understand that in schools especially in urban areas where often the teachers come from a different geographic location than the students (Gonzalez, 1993; Gay, 2000; Weiner, 1999, 2000), there is a practical problem in being involved in the community and therefore knowing students culturally.
and socially. Similarly, Lisa explained that this school had a lottery system and drew students not only from the neighborhood but also from all over the city. As such, it was more difficult for her to know students as closely, as if they had been a part of her neighborhood and community. This takes me back to my earlier query of trust in terms of learning. When I asked Lisa if this difference in culture affected the way Fanny experienced school she did not feel that it did, illustrative of Gay’s (2000) assertion that often educators separate the individual and his/her race or ethnicity when it comes to teaching and learning. For example, Lisa did not feel that ‘a cultural thing’ such as gender roles manifested by Fanny’s family might affect Fanny’s experience of school. Although, it is my hypothesis that Lisa would not have noticed the role of Fanny’s father, if it had not affected Lisa and Fanny’s experience of school in some way. Through this conversation I was beginning to see the ways in which Lisa perceived culture and the ways in which education related to culture for her.

In the weeks following the use of educational drama on the session that Lisa had lead with my help, I felt a new sense of friendship amongst the children. It had been about a month since they had all come together as a class, they knew Lisa by now and they were doing really fun things in the classroom. The children were also used to seeing me by now and we began to enjoy being with each other. I began to play with them in the playground and through this I was introduced to others in the school. The initial curiosity that the students
had about me changed to a comfortable acceptance – they expected to see me twice a week and expected me to join them on the playground. Initially when we played on the grounds we had a few students, but as the days passed, more and more students joined us. Interestingly there was a gender division; more girls joined our play than boys. We played games like run and catch, freeze, four corners (a game I taught them that I had played as a child in India) and so on.

As mentioned earlier, Lisa and I talked for a few minutes each day in the morning. Sometimes, if Lisa and I had not had a chance to talk with each other in the morning, we spent lunch together either talking in the teacher's lounge or talking in the classroom. Lisa also had a system where she took two children each week for lunch to McDonalds as a reward for completing their work. I went along on one such occasion.

Lisa took Nicole and Marie to McDonalds today. They talked so much. I haven't heard Nicole talk so much; she's usually very quiet in the classroom. They were discussing how this classroom was for them. Nicole and Marie have both been in this school since first grade and although they knew each other this was the first time that they had been together in the same class. It was interesting to hear Nicole talk about her previous class and missing her friends. She said it was strange to be in a class with Bob, John and Billy – she didn't think she could be friends with them! But she was glad that Ray was now in the same class with her, she was her friend... They also talked about their favorite
teachers so far. Surprisingly Nicole said she hated being in S's class! I thought S was one of the best teachers in the school – she was certainly rated as such! It was fun to hear them talk outside of a classroom situation.

(Field notes, October 12, 1999)

It was interesting to hear the students' point of view for a change. In our initial interview, Lisa had talked about how her classroom consisted of students blended in from three different third grade classes. She would have these students for two years. Students were not consulted on which classroom they were put into and with which group of students. As such it was interesting to hear their perspective on which teachers were "good" and which teachers were "worst". I began to understand the new friendships that were being formed. As evidenced by my field notes and commentary, I was gaining an understanding of this classroom as a distinctive culture.

Language and Cultural Identities

Although the classroom consisted of students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, they all seemed to speak the same language and in classroom situations they communicated using what I recognized as Standard English. Students came from African American, European American (of Irish, German and Polish descent), White American (of Australian, Jewish and Appalachian descent), Hawaiian, Cambodian American and bi-racial (African American and European) backgrounds. However, as I spent more time with them and as my ear became more trained in listening to differences in patterns
of communication, I began to hear the differences in their patterns of speech.

Lisa too commented that for some, the dialect was different.

A: You'd mentioned earlier about speech patterns with African American children who speak differently. In this year did you have any experiences like that?

L: Where someone has spoken...? Well yes Davis. And I wish I would write it down. And I can't put my finger on it but often times I'll hear him say something and think to myself you know I don't know that I've heard that before. I wonder if that's Davis's immediate neighborhood or that particular family or — he uses a lot of slang, more than a lot of kids, more than I'm used to.

Research on language and communication patterns, especially between students and teachers point to differences in discourse patterns that impede students from achieving in the class (Au & Jordan, 19? in Gay, 2000; Heath 19? in Villegas 1991). Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy advocates for an awareness of those differences in language and communication patterns especially because communication is intricately linked with culture (Gay, 2000). Villegas (1991) points out the importance of recognizing differences in spoken language and the resulting communication patterns in the classroom between the teacher and the students. Villegas (1991) describes the ways in which these differences contribute to students learning processes and emphasizes that it cannot be ignored in classroom situations because spoken language is the predominant way in which “teachers instruct their students, and students in turn display their knowledge” (p.6). Davis’ the student that Lisa talks about in the interview segment above, had patterns of speaking that matched (what can be
described as) Black vernacular (Delpit, 1988). Even in classroom encounters with the teacher and his classmates, Davis used his natural pattern of speech – black vernacular. Although some of the other African American students did too, they changed to Standard English when addressing others in the class and when speaking to Lisa. In informal interviews and discussions that I audiotaped of students to learn about their individual backgrounds, students usually spoke in Standard English. Although I speculate that because there was a tape recorder in front of the students, some of them may have felt that they should speak formally, i.e. in Standard English, Davis still spoke in his vernacular.

In our interview when I asked Lisa about culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy she immediately had spoken about language and speech patterns that were different in her classroom. This suggested how Lisa was aware of the association between culture and speech patterns in language, especially in her classroom. During the interview, Lisa said that Davis especially used patterns of speech that she was not used to hearing. Although Davis was not the first African American student in Lisa's classes, she made the point earlier (see p.102 this chapter) that although she had been around diverse kids for so long, patterns of speech that she hears each year from especially African American students surprised her. Perhaps having been trained in Standard English and having been socialized into speaking Standard English, Lisa characterized Davis' speech as "slang". Or as Gay (2000) states, the black vernacular is often confused for slang and Lisa could be characterizing Davis'
use of black vernacular as slang for the same reasons. However, Lisa did not stereotype Davis's talk as reflective of all African Americans because she was aware of the differences that social class, geographical location, education etc. played on the language. This is apparent when she mentions Davis's immediate family and neighborhood. I learnt that in Lisa's opinion socio-economics played the largest role when it came to speech patterns.

A: So Davis and his language are very different from other African American kids in the classroom also. Is that what you are saying?

L: Yeah...I was thinking about this – It really just seems to be — I mean the language especially seems to be tied to the socio-economic in the African American culture. I mean when you look at for example Kevster or Alia — you know some of the African American kids who are from a more you know middle class background. I mean I hate to generalize but the language is different. It seems to be pretty standard.

Not only had Lisa characterized Kevster and Alia as coming from a 'more' middle class background than Davis, she felt that their speech patterns were closer to Standard English. Although Alia and Kevster were African American, according to Lisa, their language was standard. It was interesting that Lisa characterized Kevster as from a similar background to Alia. Kevster was bi-racial and he lived with his mother who was from a White background. Alia spoke black vernacular when she was with her friends on the playground but always switched to Standard English. Kevster however, rarely spoke black
vernacular – it may have been because he lived with his mother. Lisa was right in that Davis' speech was distinctly different from both Alia and Kevster.

There were two boys that Lisa asked me to work with on a regular basis. I readily agreed – sometimes this meant reading with them or working on math with them. Sometimes it just meant being with these students so that Lisa could attend to other students in the classroom. Davis, who was one of the students, seemed to need extra encouragement and on some days I spent the entire day working with him one on one. Davis worked a lot better when an adult was working with him alone. Lisa thought it was because he needed instructions repeated to him all the time. It was true that while other students understood Lisa’s instructions right away, he got stuck because he had an unusual take on the matter. His ways of speaking and meaning making differed vastly from many of the others in the classroom and especially from Lisa’s. He had a very different way of viewing things. For example, on one of the days, Lisa was teaching them what synonyms were. She asked if anyone had any idea what a synonym might be. After a few guesses, from the students, she passed out a sheet, which contained many ‘synonym poems’, approximately like\textsuperscript{24}:

\begin{quote}
Earth
World, planet, globe, sphere
Layered by the atmosphere
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{24} This is not the actual poem, I have re-written it just to show an example.
She then asked them to guess what a synonym could be now. They had to write it down in their journals. Many of the students understood rightly that a synonym is a different word that means the same. However, Davis wrote – “A synonym is a poem with rhyming words”. As one can imagine, from his point of view he was absolutely right. The examples for synonyms that were given by Lisa were poems with rhyming words. Accordingly, in his view he had followed directions and got the answer right. When Lisa checked papers and told him he was wrong he said, “What? I followed directions didn’t I?” He was very aware that everyone said his problem was that he could not follow directions.

Later the same day, Lisa asked the students to bring out their homework calendar and write down something that was due a month later. Everyone wrote it down except Davis. He sat there with a very confused look on his face. When I asked him what the problem was he said, “There isn’t December on this calendar, this is November, where do I write it down?” Good point! It suddenly dawned on me that I probably would not have written it down either. I suggested he could check with what the person beside him had done – George had simply written “due Dec.” on top of the calendar! Davis then did the same.

Erickson (1987) speaks about particular classroom encounters between teachers and minority students and cites a case where the teacher might
confuse students by concentrating on the importance of correct pronunciation rather than on learning the lesson itself. Although this was not the case with Davis in the incident above, Erickson writes that when teachers characterize cultural differences as a deficiency in the student, they are doing “cultural border work” rather than teaching and learning (p.347). For example in the incident above, Davis did not specifically understand what Lisa required the students to do. While Lisa wanted the students to use the synonym poems as clues to find out the meaning of the word synonym itself, Davis thought that Lisa meant these poems were examples of synonyms. There was a cultural difference in communication styles between Lisa and Davis. However Lisa does not characterize it as such, she characterizes it as Davis’ deficiency when she says he got it wrong, and does not question that her instructions may have been confusing to Davis. Erickson (1987) writes that ‘cultural border work’ leads to student resistance because (referring to his own example) the teacher in trying to correct pronunciation is crossing a cultural boundary – to change the students’ style of speaking which is an inherent part of cultural identities for the student. More importantly Erickson notes that:

What may have begun as simple misinterpretation of intent and literal meaning can develop across time into entrenched, emotionally intense conflict between teacher and student. The cycle can repeat from year to year during elementary school. Teachers and students in such regressive relationships do not bond with each other. Mutual trust is sacrificed... (1987, p. 348).
Similarly, Lisa may unconsciously have been doing 'cultural border' work. In the interview when she characterized Davis' speech as slang, she characterized her own speech as the norm, although she recognized that his speech could be the result of his family or environment. As I reflected on my responses in the conversation with her and as I became more conscious of my own perceptions around issues of cultural diversity, I understood that for Lisa 'cultural border work' of this sort was part of her training. Her training was in the dominant discourse where Standard English was the 'right' way of speaking. Further being a European American herself, she may not have had experiences in her life that made her critically conscious of speech and language as cultural differences that affect teaching and learning. Gay (2000) states that:

> Teachers need to know well their cultural ethos and communication styles. This can be a challenging task because socialization in different cultural systems produces different modes of speaking and thinking (p.82).

Although in the following excerpt Lisa seems to realize that speech and language does affect someone like Davis and she identifies that Davis does not have the same 'framework' as another child, she did not feel that this was necessarily cultural.

**A:** How do you think that [language and patterns of speaking] affects the way these kids experience school. I mean take Davis for example.

**L:** I think it does affect Davis. Davis just doesn't have the same framework to work from that maybe another child would have. The language of school is not a language that's used in his home – like it's not I mean school is
not held up in esteem like it is in other families, where we have these – and this could be him – it doesn't have to be cultural. I mean there are lots of American families who don't hold school in esteem. But he oftentimes stumbles at something that seems very obvious to others and a lot of times it's language. And this could be his disability as well. I don't know.

There were some contradictions that I was noticing from the above segment. Lisa and I seemed to be operating from different ideas of 'culture,' especially what constituted the cultural. Further, we were also operating from different ideas of what cultural aspects affected teaching and learning. Earlier in the interview Lisa had mentioned that she did not feel Fanny (the Cambodian American student) experienced school in a different way just because a "cultural thing" such as gender roles were different in her (Fanny's) family (p.107 this chapter). However, as with Fanny, while Lisa was very attuned to Davis in the above segment, and recognized that Davis' framework was different, she felt that this might have been his disability and not something cultural (such as language). There was a difference between her perceptions and mine at the level of what we perceived as cultural difference and therefore what might affect students' cultural identities. I wondered if, Lisa, because she considers herself to be White, did not consider herself to be embodying a particular culture. Ladson-Billings (2001) states that typically the "average white teacher" does not consider herself to have a cultural background. She feels that: "The persuasiveness of whiteness makes the experience of most teachers the accepted norm" (qtd. online, www.rethinkingschools.org, 2001). In not
recognizing language and gender roles as cultural differences Lisa might be viewing her own experiences as the accepted norm.

I was in the library one day, at the University, making photocopies when this older woman struck up a conversation with me. After the usual 'where are you from' and 'you speak English so well' kind of comments and questions, that I have now come to recognize as standard when someone new meets me; she introduced herself as a kindergarten teacher. She proudly announced that she had many students from diverse backgrounds in her classroom and although it was always a challenge to teach them, she "enjoyed" the diversity. When she learnt I was from India, she began talking to me about this student in her class who she said had difficulty speaking English. Suddenly she came very close to me, almost in my face and with an intense stare at my lips she cocked her head upwards and said "Say 'shhh', I think 'shh' is not a sound that you have in your language, you know 'shh' 'shh'. Jay, the boy in my class who is from India always has a problem saying anything with 'shh'.” Resisting the temptation to shout "shh" back in her face, I calmly explained that firstly it’s a very commonly used sound, in not one, but many, Indian languages and then said that perhaps Jay, that particular student, had difficulty saying that. I also added that as he was in kindergarten, it was not surprising that he was still learning many sounds and ways of saying things.
Ladson-Billings (2001) explains that when teachers choose whiteness over their cultural backgrounds, they are really choosing to ignore their cultural identities. The cost of such a choice is that they are unable to develop 'cultural competence' about their students. Cultural competence as I have explained in Chapter 2, is intricately related to cultural identities and is an essential component of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001). Teachers are said to be culturally competent when they have a firm sense of who they are in the classroom. When they are aware of the role of culture in their lives, and aware of their own cultural identities, they can operate from a position of cultural competence.

Gay (2000) is of the opinion that, although most teacher education programs have a multicultural component requirement in their program, the kinds of cultural experiences that teachers are exposed to did not prepare them for culturally diverse classrooms. For example, Lisa did not feel that Fanny's experience of school had anything to do with gender roles in (Fanny's) home and Davis' language did not have a cultural effect on the way he was perceived. In Lisa's experience gender roles and language may not have meant anything personally to her for it to be recognized by her as affecting the students' (Fanny and Davis) cultural identities. Although she was trained to recognize difference, she did not recognize it as cultural differences that affected students' cultural identities. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2001) writes that while teachers may
recognize aspects of cultural difference in the classroom, they do not relate this
to students’ inherent cultural identities. She writes:

The average white teacher has no idea what it feels like to
be a numerical or political minority in the classroom...White
teachers don’t understand what it is to “be ashy” or to be
willing to fail a physical education class because of what
swimming will do to your hair...And although African-
American youth culture has become increasingly
popular...the amount of genuine contact these people
[average white teachers] have with African Americans and
their culture is limited (Online abstract,

Further, Ladson-Billings (2001) adds that this is not against the teachers
themselves but against the kind of education that they receive. She does not
feel that there is evidence that prospective white teachers can “get along” with
people different from themselves. Similarly, in my own experience of teaching
novice teachers, students who come from a White or European American
background rarely think of themselves as cultural beings, rarely did they feel
that they had cultural identities. Often diversity means being African or Asian
American. Cultural experiences did not mean anything personally to some
White teachers for them to be able to link it with cultural identities, and
therefore, cultural competence.

In the anecdote above where I talk about the kindergarten teacher who
suddenly came up to me saying “shh”, it was quite apparent that the
kindergarten teacher had made a generalization based upon one Indian child in
her classroom. She had probably never experienced ‘difference’ on a personal
level, where it posed a challenge to her cultural identities. Otherwise she would not have come up to me in quite such an obnoxious manner and tested if I could say “shh”. And I understand that in this particular instance she was not trying to be rude – she genuinely wanted to know if that was a sound commonly used in “Indian” as she put it. However, I felt disrespected by her approach because I recognized that she was being condescending towards me; that she was viewing me as culturally deficient, not culturally different. When she saw me, I embodied a prototype of an Indian person (who perhaps cannot say “shh”) not another teacher / professional / woman etc. And as a kindergarten teacher she ‘tested’ her hypothesis – that Indian languages do not have the sound “shh”, on me. She did not even seem to view herself as cultural being because she positioned herself at the center, as the norm – I was different, I embodied diversity to her.

In seeking what it means to be culturally relevant and responsive, and in seeking how my shifting awareness of my cultural identities affected my teaching I was learning that I had to first consider cultural competence. What was my perception of difference and diversity? What constituted cultural difference for me? What constituted cultural difference for Lisa? How does that perception contribute to the way we perceive others and others perceive us? In the next section Lisa and I discuss how cultural differences and diversity affect our lives not only as professionals in the field but also personally, as in affecting
our cultural identities. We talk about what we know about our personal, cultural identities and the ways in which we perceive others and how others perceive us.

Cultural Difference And Cultural Identities

Although I had taught in India and conducted various workshops in schools in this country, this was the first time that I had been involved this closely with a classroom in this country. When I first came to this country, I was extremely shocked to see that I am different; that I embody a minority; that I was not the norm. I think I can safely say that often this is what European American / White teachers might feel when they begin to encounter difference. In the sense that, they begin to view themselves as embodying certain cultural identities when they realize that they are perceived as different. As I began to become a part of this classroom and this school, there were many instances when my ‘foreignness’ presented itself. What may have appeared mundane everyday tasks to people in the school and people who had lived here for many years, posed a challenge to me. These instances presented a problem in that I was sometimes confused about what action to take.

I went to music with the kids today! They have art stuff all morning on Wednesdays – first music then art, then some go for instrumental music. I must say I was very lost at first because I didn’t know how to read the music and how to play any of those instruments. For the first time since coming here I was actually painfully shy and felt like I stuck
out like a sore thumb because I didn’t know how to participate! Every child had to choose an instrument and the teacher asked if I wanted to also – and I said No! Oh God! I just wanted to be out of there!

But suddenly Erin took control and gave me one of those small hand drums and said follow the rhythm, she even made place for me between the kids – Wow! what a sensible child. I enjoyed myself so much! I didn’t need to know how to read music to play the drum! I later particularly thanked her and she was just like “Oh your welcome Ambika” In fact as soon as Erin stopped the music and asked me to pick a drum, Macy, Tasha, Davis and Dina made space for me beside them to sit down. I was so moved – I loved today.

(Field notes, October 13, 1999)

Part of being accepted into the students’ social worlds in this classroom was my being able to interact with them in situations such as the one described above. By making a space for me amongst them, they demonstrated that I had been invited to participate. It was up to me to rise to the occasion, to be sensitive enough to learn their ways now. The shift in power in the above situation had cast me for a moment as the ‘awkward person’. However, the students, especially Erin demonstrated that she recognized my awkwardness enough to extend an invitation. The way she did it helped me trust that I would be able to participate in this cultural event without making a fool of myself. The music lesson was a cultural event in the sense that all the students knew how to participate – because of certain cultural cues. The cues include reading Western musical notes, knowing how to play different musical instruments, the routine of everyone participating in making music, sitting in a circle and so on.
This was the first time that I attended their music class, so I had not yet learned the ritual of this cultural event. Therefore, I felt awkward. However, Erin, in inviting me, recognized my awkwardness simply as my not knowing the ritual – she did not think that I might not know how to play music. She invited me to play music because she recognized me in a culturally different situation not me as culturally different as in culturally deficient. In culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy when teachers recognize that students are in culturally different situations in classrooms and take steps to make the class culturally similar to the students or take steps to teach the students the power culture in the classroom (Delpit, 1988), they show their cultural competence. From this I can say that Erin showed her cultural competence. Although I didn’t learn how to read music I did begin to find the courage to ask questions in other situations like this – like the time some of the boys decided I should know about *Pokemon* and did a mini presentation for me. They were beginning to include me in their cultural worlds and I really appreciated that. In terms of cultural competence, I was learning that:

As teacher I must recognize that students may operate differently because they are in a culturally different situation (i.e. classroom) and not because they are culturally different. The difference is located in the cultural context of the classroom and not in the student.

In reflecting on my own experiences I began to develop cultural competence when I began to recognize myself as coming from certain cultural
identities. Therefore, this classroom personified a culturally different situation for me – it was not that I had suddenly become culturally different. I began to be critically conscious of my cultural identities, as embodying a certain cultural stance, as representing to others a different cultural positionality. As described in Chapter 2, using Bakhtin’s theory of the self, (in Morson & Emerson, 1990) cultural identities take on different meanings in a classroom depending upon how participants (including students, teacher and in this case, researcher) view their own and others’ cultural identities. The recognition that my cultural positionality affected my students’ cultural positionality helped me develop my cultural competence, to recognize differences as culturally different situations to my students. I discussed this with Lisa with a view to knowing her opinions.

A: Given that our classroom is very diverse, how does teaching change because of the diversity of this classroom?

L: Well it depends on what perspective you are taking. And I keep talking of this because it is reality. But first and foremost it changes because usually diversity means different levels of education and different levels of socio-economic status. And the reality is that the majority of kids from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more needy as learners and come to school without a strong foundation in the things that you would want someone to come to school knowing. So that changes your focus from the start because you are trying to try and catch up and it’s not always possible.

A: That’s interesting.
L: Yeah and there comes a point in time where you really become stagnant and it's really hard to move from that point and it's really sad and frustrating. And I'm starting to see that with fourth grade this year as one of the biggest obstacles to overcome. It's not always possible.

A: Why does that come? Is it because ... I mean I'm just questioning not necessarily you or this classroom but I am questioning why is it that if they are say from a different socio-economic background or from a lower socio-economic background they do not meet some of the expectations that a classroom in this school may have.

L: If you want my honest opinion it's happening because parents aren't being parents. I mean they are not taking responsibility for their child in the way that they should you know as a learner. Parents are not doing their jobs. It's not just lower socio-economic but they send their kids to school with oftentimes the attitude that the school will take care of it. But the school cannot take care of it obviously.

To Lisa, differences it seemed were a result of socio-economics, suggested by her remark that “usually diversity means different levels of education and different levels of socio-economic status.” Earlier she had spoken about language and patterns of speech that were linked to socio-economics rather than culture. Here again she spoke of diversity largely in terms of socio-economics. Ladson-Billings (1994) speculates that often teachers claim that they do not 'see color' in an attempt to demonstrate that they do not treat their students differently. However, in an attempt to mask difference as not racial or ethnic or cultural they are refusing to acknowledge culture and by doing that they are refusing to acknowledge cultural identities. In
other words, by trying to see only similarity they are setting a standard or norm through which they view all students. Nieto (1996) explains that “Equal is not the same” (p.136). By choosing to see all students as equal and therefore assuming that one is being equal, fair and impartial, it implies that one is “refusing to accept differences and accept that such differences may influence how students’ learn” (Nieto, 1996, p.136 -137). Therefore ‘equal’ becomes detrimental to students who come from different cultural identities. Lisa, although she may not be conscious of this may be characterizing difference in terms of socio-economics because she does not want to seem as if she ‘sees color’ and thereby treating her students differently.

As noted in Chapter 2, from a Critical theoretical stance, viewing students as culturally deficient rather than culturally different, frames students in deficit models. As I have elaborated in Chapter 2, the deficit theory places the blame and responsibility of academic failure, entirely on the students (see for examples, Delpit, 1988; Fine, 1991; Gonzalez, 1993; Nieto, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994; McQuillan, 1998). Similarly, as noted in Chapter 2, cultural difference theory, as put forth by Erickson (1986; 1987; and in Nel, 1995), not only points to socio-cultural differences between ‘minority’ students and teachers, it focuses on the interactions between minority students and teachers in particular classroom contexts where students are viewed in a deficit light. In such a deficit model, any academic problems that ‘minority’ students have are attributed to cultural differences between home and school (Villegas, 1991;
Delpit, 1988; 1995). Lisa’s assumption that students need to come into the classroom having a strong foundation in certain aspects that she feels are basic (although in the interview she does not explain what these are and I did not probe her), reinforces my understanding of her conception of students in the classroom as deficient. When Lisa says that “parents are not doing their jobs” in the above quote, she speaks to these cultural differences between home and school. From her point of view it is the parents’ job to make sure that students do better in school. Her perception of cultural difference was equated with a deficit model in that she locates parents and therefore home cultures as deficient.

On the other hand, let us examine that conclusion for a moment. Lisa is a teacher in an urban school in a metropolitan Mid-western city. Her school’s philosophy includes an arts and literacy based alternative curriculum and the school draws its students from all over the city through a lottery system. As such there are students from all strata of society and many ethnic backgrounds. The school, because it is situated very close to a large research one university has the advantage of attracting highly qualified professors and researchers who come into classrooms often with their expertise. Many of these professors’ children also attend the school. In fact, there were students in Lisa’s class whose parents were professors and they volunteered to tutor students whenever possible. So the student population had huge disparities in terms of not only socio-economics but also in terms of parental education. In Lisa’s
class, there were a handful of students who went home to large houses with their own rooms with a computer, TV and other amenities, whose parents could help them with their homework and such on a regular basis; while some children, at times, went home to a shelter. Lisa is a middle-class European American teacher who has a Bachelor's degree in teaching elementary school and that was her third year working in this school. Before that she had been a teacher in Southern California. Given all of this, the way that this school and Lisa had been ‘taught’ to view children supported Lisa’s view that “diversity means different levels of education and different levels of socio-economic status”. What I have done in the above paragraph is an attempt to trace Lisa’s cultural identities (as a European American, middle-class, teacher who teaches in an urban school), to show that her cultural identities affect the way she views cultural differences and the way she characterizes her cultural difference as the norm.

While I make this observation of Lisa, as a researcher who has theoretical knowledge and while I interpret Lisa’s conclusions as a manifestation of deficit models at work, I must consider how I view Lisa. Using the same Critical lens, I would be viewing Lisa through a deficit model because as researcher presenting this point of view I become the “voice of authority” and “toss around the natives’ vernacular” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 64). I must consider how my cultural identities affect how I view Lisa. Lisa, situated in the context that
she is in, and viewed through her training and socialization speaks from her own cultural stance as a European American middle class person. Her identities as a middle class / European American / woman informs her observations of her classroom. I want to caution that this line of argument should not be construed as a ‘cultural determinist’ assumption – that is I am not saying that her identities allows her to view her classroom only in certain ways. What I am trying to get at is that her cultural stance and socialization includes certain assumptions and values where students come to school with certain knowledge that she identifies as “the things you would want someone to come to school knowing”. And as a product of the European American middle class cultural stance, Lisa also holds the view that there are certain things that everyone should already know. Her view, based in the dominant discourse, comes from an assumption that everyone has access and assent to certain ways of living, certain beliefs and certain values – that there are some basic things, which are ‘true’, ‘real’ or ‘equal’ for all students. Such an assumption, I believe, is born out of one’s cultural identities or cultural view, because it constitutes a person’s way of comprehending reality. In other words, Lisa’s epistemology includes these ways of living.

I also want to caution that by showing Lisa as a product of this process of dominant socialization, I am not trying to excuse teachers in her position who
may operate from a deficient model. However, my aim is not to show Lisa in a
deficit manner – in the sense that as a researcher who has had the time to study
about cultural and critical processes at work in classrooms, I have certain
knowledge that Lisa does not. As a person who had learnt about being a
cultural minority myself only when I came to this country, I have had certain
cultural experiences – like the anecdote in the library – that have heightened my
cultural competence because of the experiences I have had. And for me to
project her lack of knowledge on the workings of deficit models in classrooms
would only be showing her in a deficient light.

As Critical theorists have rightly pointed out, deficit models overlook the
constructs and structures of power underlying educational practices at all levels,
from institutional to interpersonal, that stand in the way of ethical practices in
the classrooms (Apple, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Ogbo & Simons, 1998; McLaren,
1994). Hinchey, (1998) also points out that often, we mistake our cultural
assumptions or cultural views to be facts or truths – i.e. we think that is the way
things are for everyone. Lisa, I believe, was being perfectly honest when she
talked about her experience in the classroom and how she had reached a point
of stagnation. As a teacher she admits to being "sad and frustrated" because
from her point of view she alone is being held responsible for student success,
while researchers, education theorists, and parents, prescribe rules to
overcome these issues. When I questioned her on this, I framed my question to
include the system that allowed the ideology that is behind her feeling. In retrospect, it might have served us both better, if I had questioned her directly about why she feels that way. Because I included the system and made it an ideological question, I might have trivialized a complicated situation. In not wanting to hold her accountable for ‘giving up’ on students and reaching a point of stagnation, and by making it a universal question, I might have seemed indifferent to the issue we were discussing in the interview.

It was interesting that Lisa had based her entire argument on the meaning of ‘diversity’ as she perceived it – that is as differences in socio-economics. Why is it that we are so afraid to talk about skin color and race and ethnicity – aren’t those ‘diversity’ too? Aren’t those what we usually react to in a classroom – physical appearances? Isn’t that what the lady in the library had reacted to when she saw me – my physical appearance as different from her own? In this conversation I surprised myself by my reluctance to react to her definition of diversity. All I said was “that’s interesting”! In retrospect, I realize now that if I had probed her on why she felt diversity was only differences in socio-economics, I would have to commit myself to explaining what diversity meant to me. I was not ready at that moment in time to face that part of my cultural self – the part in me that may define diversity in static terms and commit myself to a faux pas! The point of the whole matter, as I see it now is that I was beginning to develop an awareness of my cultural identities as they
affected my views, and Lisa through this conversation was doing the same.

Now at the end of this study, one definition of diversity that I have is in terms of being ‘culturally parallel’. That is my cultural identities and cultural differences are culturally parallel or on a culturally equivalent plane to another person.

Later in the conversation we talked again about diversity in terms of how teaching might change because of the diversity in this classroom. This time Lisa talked from a personal point of view and addressed it in terms of cultural values. She spoke eloquently of how her son, who attended the same school but was in a different classroom, struggled because his teacher was not able to give him enough time. Lisa felt that his potential was not being met because “the same kids in his class all the time ruin it for everybody...which unfortunately is a lot of times part of diversity in public schools”. Lisa said that she and her husband were considering a private middle school for him because of this. In a sense, her personal goals as a parent were clashing with her professional goals as a teacher because of the cultural differences that her son was encountering in the classroom. It was the first time that Lisa had spoken to me in terms of her own cultural identities, her own cultural values. I probed her on her view about diversity.

A: Let me flip that and ask you – In your own classroom – I mean it’s interesting how you are a parent and a
teacher in the same school and you teach at the same level that your son is in. In your classroom do you think that might be happening to some children and whom do you think that might happen to? Do you think that parents feel the same way about kids in your classroom?

L: That's a really good question. I'm sure they do.

A: Who do think may feel like that?

L: Panda and Bob

It was really interesting that Lisa spoke of two students who in many ways came from the same cultural background as herself. In their cases, she had begun to use her cultural competence based upon her cultural experience and recognized that she might not be the teacher that their parents might wish for. As I saw it, Lisa had begun to consider that her cultural identities and her position might affect the way she views cultural difference. Later she talked honestly about particular classroom instances where she saw herself letting her cultural assumptions direct her actions. I was glad that I had gained her trust enough for her to be able to talk about this with me. I mention this here to show that developing cultural competence and becoming critically conscious of who we are in the classroom was essential in beginning to work towards a culturally relevant and responsive approach.

L: I walk this line. I don't know — it's hard because you blur these things, you blur behavioral problems with singling people out and it's hard. Treesa and she is a behavioral problem. For instance I'll catch myself you know looking
on the rug and I see so and so whispering to their friend and I just kind of let that go and then I turn and then there’s Treesa doing the same thing and I go “Treesa”! And I don’t like when I do that and I try to be aware of that but I don’t always do a good job. Now see that’s really hard for me to say I mean these are my biases that I have developed against Treesa and my expectations that Treesa is not going to respond to me no matter what I do.

As I have discussed in Chapter 2, McQuillan (1998) identifies that one of the roots of deficit models lies in the conception of education that prevails. American society, he says, is based upon beliefs that educational opportunity exists for everyone and that this opportunity is “equal, fair and neutral” (p.13). In other words, educational opportunity in an urban school or public school is taken for granted as a democratic right. Further educational opportunity is an individual matter. “Thus” he says, “in terms of education’s most basic features – what is studied, how it is studied, how it is evaluated, who succeeds, and why – Americans view formal schooling as primarily an individual experience.” (McQuillan, 1998, p.12). In other words, no one can learn for you except yourself and educational success depends on personal motivation and achievement. And it follows therefore that if students fail it is their responsibility and fault – not the teacher’s, not the institution, or any other differences that may have existed.

As the conversation unfolded I became aware of how Lisa’s and my positionality changed. We had each brought our cultural and social identities to
the table. These informed our observations of the classroom. We realized that we would need to formulate and understand what represents culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy for this classroom. We could not speak of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy without situating and contextualizing ourselves in the classroom. With this in mind in the next section Lisa and I talked about our cultural identities and how our positionality affected this classroom. We talked about how we can begin to be critically conscious of our positionality and our cultural identities.

Critical Consciousness And Cultural Identities

I began to notice patterns in Lisa’s teaching. There were some things she had a low tolerance for and some things she was very effective at. For example, she was a very organized person in her life and was able to accomplish a lot in a few hours. This organizational skill was reflected in the way she ran her classroom. Neat day plans were on the board every day when students walked in. She had charts all over the room for everything from whose turn it was to water the plants to whose turn it was to be able to sit on the couch. There were charts on who needed to complete what work and who could do a presentation of a book to the class. Through these she efficiently kept track of how many books each student reads, how often students volunteer to do things etc. Everything had a place and time to get done and was usually accomplished in
that time. Even Lisa's lessons had a pattern to it – she usually began with reading out to students about a topic, then dividing them into groups to do individual research on subtopics within the larger topic and finally she would assign each of them a project that was art and craft based to complete the topic. Sometimes the project ended in a class presentation. On some occasions she would let the students choose what they wanted to pursue but usually they were only allowed this if they had completed their assigned work satisfactorily. There was something about this predictability in Lisa's pedagogy that was personally cultural to her – she dealt with her classroom in much the same fashion as she was in life – disciplined and planned. I know the students appreciated the calm routine where they all knew what to expect and what to do.

On the days that I was there two adults were present to help the students. Sometimes the students 'tested' my position – while I helped them with their work in small groups and individually. When I recognized that some of the students might 'try me' in this way, I made a conscious decision not to take on an authority position.

Today I was really busy. Through the day both Lisa and I worked with everyone on their writing workshops. They had written journals already on topics they were researching and we had to go through each one and help them look for spelling mistakes, word choices, the way the paragraphs connect etc. Lisa worked with the students who needed
more attention and help with their writing and asked me to review the ones she felt were moving along better. I still worked with Davis though – Lisa felt he was responding to me. Because we were both sitting at two corners of the class, and had a group of students around each of us, the noise level was much higher. Kids were running around and some were doing other stuff… many kids expected me to tell them to keep quiet or at least reprimand them in some way. I did not; I refused to even look at their eye because I want to make it clear that I won’t take on the teacher role…not yet….

(Field notes October 19, 1999)

Lisa had a very low tolerance for noise and distraction. She expected her students to be still and work quietly when learning. I learnt this early on when I first used educational drama with her. During that session, while I was comfortable with the ‘controlled chaos’ of students working together in groups, rushing around excited about figuring out things, Lisa came to me on more than two occasions saying some students didn’t know what to do. Later on in the year when I taught, she understood that I was okay with noise and let me run things the way I wanted. However, her presence always calmed the students – it was as if they knew not to mess with her. On one part of the wall near the coatroom, she had a hanging plastic rack with pockets. This rack contained a card for each student and if provoked beyond a point she would tell a student to ‘flip their card’, as a system of discipline – which meant that at the end of the day they would get some kind of detention. I guessed it was her way of keeping track of who needed to be disciplined at the end of the day.
However, this did not happen often, she rarely asked students to ‘flip their card’. Instead when she felt the class was getting out of hand she first tried using other techniques like calming exercises. She had many calming exercises that she would lead the classroom through at certain times of the day. Like after recess and before reading time – she always did some breathing and stretching exercises with them to help them unwind. Lisa would talk very soothingly in a calm voice and help the students settle in to begin reading to them.

I continued to work with Davis on a regular basis on the days I was present and sometimes this took away my time on the research. While working with students was part of my research, I had not anticipated being responsible for a single student on such a regular basis. But I began to build a bond with Davis that I could not ignore. While I enjoyed this one-on-one interaction with Davis, there were times when I realized my ‘foreignness’ affected the way I interacted with the students in small groups. Both Lisa and I did not realize the implications of my helping with testing on her request.

Lisa began testing kids about two weeks ago. She has been doing this since the beginning but in the last two weeks they have been having some informal whole class and small group tests. Preparing for the dreaded proficiencies – Why do people test at all… anyhow she asked if I will do dictation with the students. [Dictation was what we called it in India when I was in school. It meant calling out words that the students would have to spell] I said yes without realizing what was involved. Annie, Kit, Panda, Marie, Kate, Camje, Bob, Billy, Jay, Fanny, Nicole
and Alia were sent with me. We went to the coatroom and as I called out words they had to write down the spellings. After I had read out a couple of words, I felt it may have been unfair — both Lisa and I didn’t realize that my accent might affect the way the students’ hear the words. I do pronounce them differently from Lisa and in fact Kit and Bob got some words wrong because of that. I’m sure some others did too. When I pointed out to Lisa that perhaps I should not do this kind of testing she suddenly realized and agreed. Wow! I hope this won’t affect the way I am able to teach in the classroom. I’ll have to be careful…

(Field notes, October 20, 1999)

In a culturally relevant and responsive classroom, the teacher teaches from a position of ‘situatedness’ — that is she teaches students using their points of view, frames of reference and backgrounds (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995). Teaching and learning are situational, contextual processes; located in the cultures, ethnicities and perspectives of both the teacher and students (Gay, 2000). However, more often than not education is thought to be an intellectual and individual activity — it is sometimes thought that teaching automatically happens and it may result in learning, if the student wants it to. Does this mean that if I am from a different culture, and different framework, I might not be able to teach these students effectively? Or does this simply mean that I will have to work harder at teaching provided I am sensitive to how these students learn and what affects their learning? I was beginning to understand that in order to teach from a culturally relevant and responsive position, I had to be constantly conscious of the ways in which I affect students learning. And this did not mean merely being aware in the sense of what was happening in the classroom at a
certain point of time – that I was aware of and most teachers are too, as in the example quoted above. What I was beginning to understand was that, if I wanted to be culturally relevant then, I had to use my cultural experience as a template to begin to view my cultural competence. I had to gain self-knowledge and take account of who I was – my cultural identities – in relation to the students. Further it was also my responsibility as researcher to convey to Lisa what I was beginning to understand about cultural competence. From my position as researcher, as ‘outsider’, as participant observer – it was ethically necessary for me to discuss with Lisa her understanding of how her cultural identities and how her position of privilege affected her students. I did this by first asking her a question and then using myself as an example I talked about how I take account of myself in the classroom.

A: How do you take account of who you are as a European American in this classroom and how you relate to diversity in this classroom?

L: I don’t know – on one level I think I can answer this. Especially when we deal in certain ways with the curriculum that happen to be my favorites like literature or reading or social studies, because I am European American I look for a source... and look for another perspective to introduce to the class so that they can work out of that role and I try... I’m very cognizant of that I mean I really try to give them an experience that is not one sided that is not just my point of view.

I had framed my question in terms of ethnic identity and Lisa, being aware of issues related to multicultural education responded in terms of giving students other points of view in curriculum content. However, I was trying to articulate my
growing understanding of cultural competence — how I can use my cultural identities and experiences that I have had because of who I am, in the classroom to understand who students are and where they come from. In forming an understanding of what constitutes cultural competence I wondered if I am able to take account of who I am in the classroom, whether I can practice a pro-active cultural pedagogy. By pro-active cultural pedagogy I mean, could I gain access to my students as cultural beings and anticipate how students might respond and learn? I tried to situate my question by giving an example of my personal experience hoping that she would understand.

A: Actually I’m talking about this at a deeper level. Let me tell you from my perspective, and maybe it will help. One of the things that I really struggle with everyday is that I am a different speaker of English, my accent is different, I look different, I’m from a different country and therefore my entire framework — I like the word you used earlier with Davis — my entire framework is different from anybody else that I would encounter in this country. Except perhaps another Indian person. So the way I view the world, comprehend it and understand it will be very different from someone like you and it will be very different from someone like Davis. And I think in some ways I work harder at relating and trying to see the other person’s point of view because I don’t want them to be condescending towards me. I mean I don’t want them to assume I don’t understand. It happens everyday to me....

L: Yes, they make an assumption — Right..

A: Yes, like this morning when I went to court because of the car accident and the bailiff assumed I would not know English and pronounced out the words “Sit Down” like that — so just little things that I would overlook but at the same time I comprehend it. So I wonder as a
teacher in a diverse classroom, I wonder how much the kids comprehend, of those kinds of things. How much do they comprehend that I am condescending towards them, how much do they comprehend that I am making assumptions about them, how much do they comprehend that I make concessions for them where I probably don’t need to.

L: That’s a good point. It’s a really good question.

A: So in that sense, that’s what I mean by how do I take account of who I am — An Indian person in the United States, in this classroom, and how I relate to diversity in this classroom.

L: Wow… Well I’m not sure I …it is complicated… (silence). Like I said before where it might be easy for me to do that in choosing literature selections or in social studies topics that I envision — sometimes I find myself in other areas where it’s not so clear cut. You know realizing that I have certain viewpoints because of who I am and what my experiences have been even in something like math. That someone else may not have the same experience, the same background or the same framework…I guess… — I don’t know that I’ll ever do the job that I wish I could do but I just do what I can. I don’t know whether that answers your question but — it’s complicated.

And it was complicated even for me to explain. Lisa was trying to grapple with a situation that she still envisioned in terms of curriculum content. To her it must have been a big step to state “you know realizing that I have certain viewpoints because of who I am…” and finally to conclude “I don’t know that I’ll ever do the job that I wish I could”. Perhaps this was the first time that she had to begin to question who she was as a teacher in terms of her cultural identities. She was beginning to comprehend that being a teacher was more than using
curriculum content that was different from her own likes and dislikes, more than helping students learning to read, write and do math. When I articulated to Lisa what I felt about taking into account who I was as an Indian person in the classroom, when I voiced myself as an example — that is when I began to understand the complexity of the situation. That is when I began to theorize for myself that teaching and learning were intricately linked to who we are as people, as cultural beings, as situated in particular contexts. That is when I began to form for myself a concept of cultural competence. In this concept of cultural competence I was beginning to hypothesize that:

As teacher I can use my cultural identities and cultural experiences as a template to understand students' or teachers' cultural identities and experiences

Cultural Competence And Cultural Identities

Being in this classroom and working with the students gave me a sense of fulfillment. I had also begun to substitute teach regularly in a Kindergarten classroom and had substituted for Lisa on some occasions. The scope of the research and my personal commitments did not give me a chance to become a part of the students' community beyond school. But I shared a lot of information not only about myself but also often had talks with them about their homes, likes and dislikes, who they live with, what they do at home etc. I met some of their families during class parties like Halloween and got to know
some of their parents and grandparents. Even a clique of boys who had been consistently ignoring me were thawing out— in fact they invited me to play a special game of “push the pumpkin with your nose” during the Halloween party!

The last few days in October and the beginning of November passed rather uneventfully. At this point I had also begun writing in Hindi because students became very curious about what I was writing. Due to purposes of confidentiality I could not share my field notes with them. My days consisted of working with students in small groups, working especially with Davis on a regular basis and coaxing students to bring back their permission slips so that I could begin interviewing them. I noticed that my field notes increasingly talked about Davis and his position in the classroom. It was almost as if I was especially drawn to those students like Davis who were marginalized. My notes during those days reflected this and I would write mostly about Davis and the ways in which he remained on the fringes of the classroom.

This morning while I was helping Davis do his journal, Lisa suddenly called out across the class “Davis, I see you’ve completed all your homework! You must be so proud of yourself!” Davis just beamed and in fact when Lisa turned away, he bowed as if accepting a prize! He’s so funny. I don’t know why, but I felt a little surprised at the way Lisa framed it— “you must be so proud of yourself”, that too in front of the whole class— condescending? Or am I being terribly judgmental as usual?
They are doing Critic's Corner – that's when the students sign up to read a book at home and then present on the book. Davis is doing great! He presented a picture book. He's so clear when he is confident and knows what to do – oh he just got discounted by Nicole – “I already read it and did it for my critics corner “ she announced. But Lisa is really encouraging him. She’s asking a lot of questions too and making sure he knows the answers – He's so proud he's almost bursting! John and Billy are also presenting today...

(Field notes, November 2, 1999)

I began to form a suspicion that Davis remained on the fringes of the classroom culture not only in terms of instruction but also in terms of friendships. He didn’t particularly seem to get along with anyone although he named many as good friends of his in an interview with me (I had received his permission slip). On many occasions, like the above, I had seen Lisa encourage Davis and he would simply ‘flower’ – he would try very hard to please her. Sometimes he succeeded and sometimes he did not and those days upset him greatly – he would just get this look of utter dejection on his face and his usually bright smiling demeanor would be reduced to a sullen, dreary expression.

What a contrast with Davis today! He just seems down and completely put off with everything he is doing. I'm helping them make glaciers. They just read about glaciers and now they are doing their projects. He is so disinterested in this model. What's the point of making a model if he does not want to? He seems particularly upset today – I asked if everything was okay at home and he was just like “fine”. He does not seem to have or gain any respect/affection from
the other students. He likes George a lot and wanted to work with him today – He even asked Lisa if he could and in front of him George was like NO – and Lisa asked Davis to make another choice – He was just disappointed and I could see he was angry and hurt. But he keeps quiet and acts as if he doesn’t care. Does he?

(Field notes, November 10, 1999)

Lisa and I spent many hours discussing how we might approach this.

She let me know once that he was at the ‘level’ where he was too competent to get individual help but not enough to be able to make it on his own. Lisa with 28 students had a full load. When we talked about teacher expectations and how that might affect Davis, Lisa talked honestly about her struggle with expectations.

L: Well honestly I constantly struggle with that Ambika. When I look at somebody like Davis I have to meet him where he is and he is not where the average fourth grader is. So I don’t feel like it’s acceptable to have the same expectations for Davis as it is for somebody else … as it is for Camje. Because Davis is at such a different place. So I can’t say that just because I’m expecting less he is giving me less because he is giving me what he can based on where he is.

Was I more attuned to this student’s classroom struggles because I was working with him on a regular basis? Or did it have something to do with the fact that Davis matched the profile of the student who could not achieve because of cultural differences between him and the teacher? Or did he simply fit the profile of the student on the periphery recognizable in perhaps every
classroom? There was a crisis facing me. On the one hand I was 'collecting data' for when I would begin to teach and on the other hand, I was reading about culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. I was forming an ideal of what culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy should look like and what cultural competence means. However, I found myself entwined in a situation where I began to feel personally responsible for Davis's school success and failure. I recognized in Davis my own feelings of failure and hopelessness as a grade school student in India. I realized that my experiences as a child being in similar situations as Davis, helped me understand his point of view. However, in my idealistic belief that I could set everything right for Davis, all else took a back seat including my research. I think I can safely say that facing a crisis within myself in Davis's case was the point at which I began to develop an awareness of my shifting cultural identities and what it really means to become culturally competent in a culturally relevant and responsive sense.

As Lisa and I discussed about culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and the implications of it in this classroom, we began to voice our cultural assumptions that sometimes inform our actions in the classroom. Although my focus began to shift at this point from an idealistic "how can this classroom be a site to gain culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy" to a practical "what does it mean for me, the teacher, to teach in a culturally relevant
and responsive way," I was unable to articulate this until I began writing up my data. Until I began inquiring through writing, it did not become clear that I could use cultural competence – that is my own cultural experiences as a template to address and teach from a position of cultural relevance.

Developing Cultural Competence

Based upon my experiences in this classroom so far and based upon the interview with Lisa, I formed a conception of cultural competence through which I could evaluate my own culturally relevant and responsive teaching. Although there was no comprehensive definition of cultural competence it is a concept (as envisioned by Ladson-Billings) that is intricately linked to cultural identities. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) explains this concept in various ways. Mainly, it requires that teachers must have a firm sense of themselves – who they are in relation to their own cultural identities, how they envision cultural differences in themselves and their students, and what role cultural identities (theirs and their students') play in the classroom. With this explanation and through examples that Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001), Gay, (2000), Paley (1979), Nieto (1996), and Delpit, (1988, 1995) give of teachers who know the importance of recognizing culture in the classroom, I was learning that when teachers have a firm sense of themselves as cultural beings, they can begin to encourage their students' cultural competence. It was evident from my interview with Lisa, that when I spoke to
her about my own cultural identities and where I was culturally positioned, I was able to maintain my cultural competence in relation to her. Further, through my talk, through sharing with Lisa my recognition of my cultural background, in this country, I was able to convey to her where I was positioned culturally. And by positioning myself culturally parallel to her (as in viewing my cultural differences and hers on an equivalent plane) I was able to find out where she positioned herself in the classroom. I was able to understand Lisa better because I understood my cultural position better.

This finding was very significant because I could now see if I could use it to understand students' cultural differences. Just as I had done with Lisa, I wanted to see if I could use my awareness of my cultural identities to develop a critical consciousness and maintain and encourage cultural competence where the students were concerned. And how would this process affect my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy? In Part II, first I describe my own cultural identities to situate myself in this classroom and second I describe my teaching with educational drama and how my awareness of my cultural identities affected my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in this classroom.
A significant outcome of my analysis of my field notes and interview with Lisa was that I was able to use my own cultural identities as a template to view and access Lisa's cultural position through sharing core cultural stories in the interview. In terms of cultural competence, my experience described in Part I of this chapter confirmed the following:

As teacher I must recognize that I come from certain cultural backgrounds and cultural identities. I must take into account all of my cultural knowledge and how that shapes my views.

Therefore in this section I begin by explaining my cultural identities and through that my cultural knowledge.

**Multiple Cultural Identities**

Cultural identities can be defined in various ways depending upon the framework from which one approaches it. Cultural anthropologists view cultural identities in terms of geographical locations and assert that shifting borders and boundaries, voluntary and involuntary transnational movements, even imagined subjectivities through media in recent times, affect a person's identity (Appadurai, 1991). Educational anthropologists argue that schools and institutions of formal schooling affect cultural identities because they are a form of cultural acquisition and cultural transmission (Spindler & Spindler, 1997). Educators who come from an economic or critical pedagogical framework envision culture in terms of “capital” so that cultural identities are seen as a unit.
of financial / economic value because of the power it lends to the person who 'owns' it (Apple, 1997, Bourdieu, 1997 in Halsey et al/1997). Some educators represent culture in terms of literacy, and as 'narrative identity' (Bruner, 1996; Ferdman, 1990). Drawing from many of these frameworks, I theorize that there are four major contexts that have an immediate effect on the development of a person's cultural identities. These contexts have a cumulative effect in that the multiple layers transform as a person's location and affiliations change over the course of time. As people's locations and affiliations change, so do the effects of these multiple layers of the various contexts. These contexts are:

1. **Family Context**: Along with our individual gender and sexual orientation, this context includes the people, beliefs, traditions, and values in whomever we identify as immediate family and / or the beliefs, traditions, and values that we grew up with and are now growing with and consider as family.

2. **Societal Context**: This includes people who were/are around us. The communities we identify with including groups we move around with, the location/s that we live in and socialize in, and more.

3. **Environmental Context**: This is a more global view of all things that affect us and are affected by us. These may be related to media, economic conditions, shifting borders, natural phenomena, industrial and trade movements, transnational movement due to war and so on.

4. **Educational / Intellectual Context**: This includes all that we may learn throughout our lives. This learning also includes how formal schooling (in any culture) affects our lives.
It is imperative to note that the concentric circles in the following figure (figure 1) do not in any way represent a hierarchy nor are they intended to show a chronology. I represent these as concentric circles because I want to emphasize that each context mutually affects other contexts and all the dynamics of all these contexts may or may not change with the passage of time.

Figure 1: Model of Four Contexts That Affect Cultural Identities
In my own situation, I can speak about my cultural identities from two different positions that differ according to geographical location. On one, is the side of me that grew up in India – multilingual, upper middle class, upper caste, a woman (therefore ‘lower’ according to ‘Indianess’), and educated in English, where my first language then became English. These aspects are what I personally identify with the most. The other is the side of me that has lived as an adult in this country – international graduate student, a minority, from a ‘third world country’, ‘accented’ speaker of English – these aspects are what many people in this country see in me. Both of these positions together constitute my multiple cultural identities now, at this point in time. Both of these positions also contain all of the different dynamic contexts. Applying this model to my position in India, I can describe being the youngest and only daughter of three children in a middle class south Indian family, in the family context. The voices of my father and brothers, all of whom have Western college educations, were always strong because being male they had a ‘responsibility’ towards the women. My mother, who did not attend college, rarely thought her thoughts, opinions and suggestions were valuable to me. And yet I consider my pragmatism, my “mother wit” (Ladson-Billings, 1994), my capability to know deep down of what to do and when to do, I have received from her. We call it “vakku” in my language, Tamil (I am multilingual) – a ‘knack’ – a poor translation of the word, the cultural connotation of which cannot be explained in English.
In my societal context, I can speak about growing up in a multilingual, multifaceted society – hearing and learning different languages simultaneously, having friends from different religions, faiths, castes and classes. Learning about differences on a personal level – where when I visit friends across the street, I am almost in a different land in terms of food, clothes, cultural practices and so on.

In my environmental context I can speak about living in different southern states in India where not only the landscape but also the experiences I had in schools I attended, and different people I met, affected the ways in which I think about myself and the ways that others think about me.

Finally, in the educational or intellectual context I can speak about the privilege of having access to certain kinds of schools – a private boarding school and an all girls' school. However, because of the rigid system in terms of nationalized curriculums, standardized assessments, instructional style and in what counts as learning and what counts as intelligence, my experiences in my educational or intellectual context have been unsatisfactory. I say this because while I was considered by the schools I attended to be academically 'mediocre', I personally believed that my academic achievement had to do with how much I was involved in learning by the teachers who taught me. I began to believe it was the teacher's primary responsibility to teach so that students can learn.

Similarly, following the same four contexts I can trace each of these contexts in this country. Briefly, in this country, in my family context, are those
people whom I have begun to consider as family being away from my home
country. In my societal context are those who make up my graduate school
friends and other international families whom I socialize with in the different
towns that I have lived in. In my environmental context are aspects like media
representations, being perceived as minority, sometimes being considered
‘poor’, ‘disadvantaged’, ‘exotic’, ‘second language speaker of English’ and so
on. In my educational / intellectual context are the Western discourses that I
have read about like Western Critical, Feminist ways of viewing the world. All of
these experiences, both in India and in this country, cumulatively added to what
constitutes my multiple cultural identities today. All of these experiences and
aspects (including many that I have not mentioned here) impact the way I view
my students’ cultural differences and the impact on their cultural identities. As
Ladson-Billings (2001) posits, exploring where I come from and becoming
critically conscious of all the aspects of my multiple cultural identities that shape
my view is the first step to becoming culturally competent.

Having explained my knowledge of my cultural identities, I now explain
how I planned and taught in this classroom. Initially, I planned on teaching in
this classroom continuously for five to six weeks, with at least four to five hours
of contact time with the students. However, it was already the end of January
and Lisa was beginning to coach the students in earnest for proficiency tests. As
it was a fourth grade class and proficiency tests were fast approaching, Lisa had
to complete her plans for the classroom. After some discussions we decided that it would help her if I taught a topic that was part of the curriculum. Lisa indicated that history (in this case Ohio history) was a focus of fourth grade and that soon they would need to begin a unit on "native tribes of Ohio." Given the limited time that I had, and so as not to disrupt the regular running of the classroom, I decided to base my plans on a basic web that Lisa gave me, which charted out areas that students needed to learn. After two or three initial discussions with Lisa to plan these sessions, I decided to use a series of educational drama encounters over a period of four months with a gap of one month when proficiency testing would take place. I taught in the end of January, in February, in April and in May. Although the use of educational drama was central to my pedagogical approach, I also used other teaching strategies like students' writing, small and large group discussions, and independent research. In the following sections I narrate my teaching with these students.

Cultural Differences And Cultural Competence

In my observations of the classroom from September to January and in my interactions with students during that time, although I was able to know many of the students in this classroom in terms of their school lives, there were few opportunities for me to get to know them outside of the school, in their...
community. From a culturally relevant and responsive approach, it was important for me to understand where these students came from in terms of cultural identities. As mentioned in chapter 1, I was not in a position of cultural situatedness in many ways: a) I was not their full time teacher and therefore had limited contact with them; b) I was not a resident in the same communities in which these students lived; c) I did not have access to the students in terms of being familiar with all of their families, their social and cultural contexts, and d) because I had not grown up in this country, there were many cultural and social referents that students affiliated with that were new to me. Added to these constraints, I had only a limited amount of contact time with the students in which to teach, and because of proficiency testing, I was now limited in my curriculum content. Given all of these, one of the ways in which I could begin to understand these students' cultural experiences in terms of their cultural identities was through their individual writing. I used educational drama in order to set the context for them to be able to write, and to introduce the topic of "native tribes" that Lisa and I had agreed upon.

For our first lesson, I used the book *Encounter* by Jane Yolen. The objective of this lesson was to look at stereotypes and how they are manifest in the story and in the larger context of the classroom. I began by reading aloud the story from the book. I had prepared a large chart on which I wrote the meaning of stereotyping. Through questions and with the help of the chart, we discussed what stereotypes might be, if there are stereotypes in the story, how
the characters in the story may be stereotyped and so on. We also spoke about what could be the consequences of stereotyping for the characters. Using an educational drama strategy called still images, the students, in pairs created frozen pictures or tableaux of what might have happened when the European settlers arrived on the Taino Island. Looking at the tableaux we talked about stereotyping and if stereotyping may have been going on here. We then talked about stereotyping today and if it happens today. What might be the consequences of stereotyping today? We ended the activity by writing about what we had experienced. For the purposes of data collection, I had prepared a single page handout on which they could respond and turn in to me (See Appendix C).

I reproduce some samples that show students' personal experiences that also related to their cultural identities. The single page handout gave the students a choice of writing in role about stereotyping or of writing about the experiences that had happened to them in their lives or of the experiences of someone else they knew.

One time when I was five I was playing outside the school. I had no one to play with. So I seen some girls I asked if I could play with them and they said no! you don't have bown skin. Then a little girl came she asked if she could play and they said yes. Because she had bown skin.

Kate

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26 I have spelt the words in these passages as the students have in order not to change their meaning in any way.
Once in Malaysia Singapore everybody looked at me. Because I only spook English and Cambodian. They thought I was weird. But some people knew a little English. My aunt told them I never been there before, they also knew that I came from Ohio because I was really lighter than them. 

Fanny

Kate and Fanny made personal connections to stereotyping that had happened in their own lives. While Kate wrote about differences in skin color that affected her on a personal level, Fanny wrote about language differences also as a factor that set her apart from the others in Malaysia. Ladson-Billings (1995) states that teachers who teach from a culturally relevant and responsive approach recognize students and themselves as a community of learners and students are apprenticed into the classroom learning community. In striving to teach from a culturally relevant and responsive stance, it was important for me to establish myself in relation to them in the classroom. These students' writing helped me know them in terms of cultural and personal aspects like language and skin color that affected their lives. Kate as a White American (of Appalachian descent) wrote about differences in terms of skin color that affected her personally. Fanny, as an American (whose parents were from Cambodia27) while she wrote about skin color, also indicated being stereotyped in Malaysia because she spoke English. Their writing helped me access and understand the connotations of their cultural identities. For example, it was

27 Fanny always insisted that she was American, that her parents were Cambodian and not she. As such she did not characterize herself as 'Cambodian American'
interesting to hear that Fanny had been stereotyped in Malaysia as an American because she spoke in English. The connotations of being identified as American in Malaysia were apparently less empowering. Although I identified with Fanny a lot (she and I had similar features and skin color as she pointed out once), in India, being identified as American would be considered empowering. In that way, although Fanny and I were similar to look at her cultural experiences and mine were very different for obvious reasons (although in this country, we were both dubbed “Asian!”). The imagined experiences in the still images and their interpretation of each others’ still images helped them make “concrete experiences” that they had in life “into meaningful reality” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 472). Their resulting writing helped me develop a more critical consciousness about them.

Another student, Marie wrote about an experience that had happened to her stepbrother.

One day my stepbrother was walking home from school with his friends. Two of the boys were the same color. They were playing ruffly & guys across the street were white. The men came across the street & pulled them apart one man said I don’t like your color get off of my street. Then the other guy said leav. So the dropped there stuff and ran. My brothe came home and tould my mom but she did not do anything because the men said they had guns.

Marie

Through this writing I was learning important information about Marie and her social and cultural world. Marie was of Hawaiian descent and like Fanny
and Kate she wrote about skin color and in particular, discrimination based upon skin color. She also indicated through her writing that sometimes people are silenced because of brute force (having guns).

Through such writing I was beginning to understand what these students considered as cultural differences and their meanings of stereotyping. In terms of cultural competence, I was beginning to understand that my social and cultural worlds were very different from these students. Although I found similarities with my experiences and those of Fanny's, it was more of a stretch for me to relate to Kate and Marie. Their social worlds were different from mine. In my personal interviews with Fanny, whose parents were from Cambodia, she strongly resisted being identified as Cambodian. She identified herself as American and, as the above writing shows, from Ohio. This writing was significant because it was the first time (in my observation) that she had talked about difference and being treated differently. I had often noticed her being teased on the playground for looking “chinky”, although her features were not East Asian. However, she never mentioned these and in this classroom seemed to be well adjusted. In fact, once she came up to me excitedly and in her usual low quiet voice said “Someone asked me if you were my mom,

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28 Although I noticed Fanny being teased thus, I did not intervene because Fanny effectively dealt with this teasing in the sense that she was not threatened or victimized in any way. She would retort back with her own comments. Further, I remained an observer because I felt Fanny may not like my intervention—it might make her look unable to defend herself.
they think I look like you.” It wasn’t until much later, in a subsequent educational drama episode, that she felt comfortable enough to talk publicly about her feelings of discomfort at being teased sometimes. Many of the other students made connections in other ways in their writing. I used these writings and my ongoing interviews of them to plan my next lesson on the same topic.

From this teaching episode, and from the literature, another important point about cultural competence became apparent to me. Although conceptually I knew about affirming students’ cultural identities, in striving to teach in a culturally relevant and responsive way, in practice this became apparent in their writing as a result of this teaching episode. I confirmed for myself another feature of cultural competence and I state it as:

As teacher I must recognize that all of my students come from certain cultural backgrounds and all of their cultural knowledge must be affirmed as ‘strengths’ in the classroom

Critical Consciousness And Cultural Competence

As explained in Chapter 2, Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 1995a) states that in a culturally relevant and responsive approach to education, students and teacher engage in a collective struggle against the status quo. She also states that teaching is political and should facilitate the development of critical consciousness. As a follow up to the preceding lesson, I planned another lesson on the same topic of “native tribes”, this time concentrating on tribes in Ohio. In striving for a culturally relevant and responsive approach, I wanted to
facilitate a lesson that challenged the status quo. I wanted to facilitate a lesson that helped the students and myself gain critical consciousness. This lesson concentrated on the historical signing of one particular treaty – the Treaty of Greenville. Ohio history has it that on August 3, 1795 over 1,100 chiefs and warriors from various native Indian tribes signed a treaty under the terms of which they were forced to give up Indian lands amounting to all of present day Ohio and a good part of Indiana.

Lisa had already divided the students into six groups for their class projects making picture books on various Indian tribes. The students had begun researching the six major tribes that had lived in what is now known as the state of Ohio. I decided to concentrate on the signing of the Treaty of Greenville that I read was a significant incident involving many Chiefs from various tribes in the Ohio Valley. Using many of the same sources of information that these students used, like textbooks of history, internet resources from the Ohio Historical Society, documents from local libraries and information that Lisa gave me, I prepared information packets for each group consisting of a map showing approximate areas that were populated by each of the tribes; portraits or photographs of famous Chiefs and leaders who had made a difference in the lives of their tribes' people; and drawings of artifacts that were unique to each tribe. I also had a copy of the actual Treaty of Greenville printed out (taken from the Ohio Historical Society's website), showing the various articles and agreements that the United States army had drawn up. The treaty, although
written in English, was archaic and difficult to understand because it was written in the English that was commonly used during the late 18th century. Not wanting to change the authenticity of the document, I did not try to translate or transcribe the treaty. I also wanted to use this historical event in the drama to demonstrate to students that amongst the people of tribes who were forced to sign this treaty, there were many who were at a distinct disadvantage because they could not understand the language.

During the lesson, the students interacted in role as the chiefs of various Indian tribes (the same ones that they were researching in their collaborative research groups). Lisa represented the United States Army representative who wanted the tribes to sign over their lands in this treaty and I mediated the educational drama as “Wind-spirit” an imaginary liaison between the tribes and the United States Army. After an initial discussion about the various tribes that they were representing, and what they already knew about these tribes from their research, the students in role as various chiefs interacted with us. Lisa, as the United States army representative read out parts of the actual treaty to establish where these tribes had lived at the time that the treaty was drawn up and to establish some of the specific demands of the treaty.

At this point I asked:\footnote{In the following transcript A/Wind is me in role as Windspirit, S / Chiefs are students in role as Indian chiefs. If one student had spoken I have indicated it as S/ chief. L / US T is Lisa in role as the United States Troops' representative.}

A/Wind: Should we sign this Treaty as it is?
S/Chiefs: No!
S/Chief: If we want war, No, if we want peace, yes
S/Chief: Could we try to make an agreement?
S/Chief: Why can't we live together and be friends? Why
should we divide the land?
L/US T: The land is not yours to decide. We fought a war
with the British for this land and now it is our land
S/Chief: We were here first you know
S/Chief: Yes we were, and I think you should show us
more respect
S/Chief: I think it is unfair for you to expect us to sign your
treaty, because you didn't even ask our opinion

After much discussion like this, one student / chief asked if he could show us on
the map (projected on an overhead), how he wanted to split the land. This
started a whole new discussion on whether to split the land or not and whether
it was fair to each tribe. Because any way the land was split, at least one tribe
would lose its home and further because the United States Army were
demanding the Ohio River. It was a tense moment in this educational drama
episode.

S/Chief: We want to split the land straight down the
middle.
L /USA: You would keep most of the land?
S/Chief: We would keep only our land.
That gives us hardly a thing. Anyway, we should be the ones to decide – it's our country.

No, it's not... No...we were here first – you came to our land and stole it...

We are human beings too, we deserve fairness!

Yes we do – We should stay right here – We should not split...

What do we agree on? Quickly Great Chiefs – this is our last chance.

We should not split the land... you should sign our treaty.

Yeah, we should live together in the same land as friends.

Yeah – that would be like saying I can't go over to my own home.

You can't just live off any of our land this is our land. You should be glad that you have any of our land. This is our land and you have no right to any of it. We will fight this.

We may both have all of Ohio, you may have Ohio and we will just stay in the land that we usually were in.

All for the motion for not splitting the land?... That's the everyone – all but one, two. So then we are decided that we are not going to sign this treaty and split the land.

As chiefs who were forced to lose their lands because of some powerful people's need, the students in this classroom had begun to question the power represented by the United States Army. In this educational drama I tried to
facilitate an experience of what it might have been like to be dignified chiefs of tribes who were forced to give up their homes and lives forever. Their reactions, quoted above, show their feelings of betrayal and despair at the United States Army's imposition. The students and I, through our engagement in this educational drama tried to “make knowledge problematic” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 92). Collectively as members of a community of learners, we were trying to comprehend what it might have been like to be an Indian Chief during the signing of the Treaty of Greenville. And as participants in the classroom engaged in this educational drama episode, it was our attempt at developing critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 1995a, hooks, 1994, McLaren, 1994). “Critical consciousness”, emphasizes Ladson-Billings (1995) is a necessary step “that students must develop … through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (p.160).

As they had already researched a lot of facts and figures about the various Indian tribes, I could use their knowledge to extend learning by giving them an opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of the very Chiefs they had just read about. In other words, the dramatic frame facilitated my being able to “dig knowledge out” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 52). Gay (2000) points out how culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy is not only comprehensive but also multidimensional.
Using educational drama strategies as a part of my pedagogy gave me the tools to make this lesson multidimensional in terms of instructional techniques and student-teacher relationships. Lisa and I used various instructional techniques including small group work, whole group work, discussions, in-role work, reading, writing and so on.

Although in this educational drama episode the students spoke very eloquently as is evident from the transcript above, I wondered if I had met my objective of raising critical consciousness about native tribes. Unlike in the initial lesson, which I taught, there was no chance in this lesson for them to make personal connections to their cultural identities. The time constraint and the way I had structured this lesson (mainly focusing on small and large group work), did not allow for personal connections. However, at the end of the lesson, we did have a reflective discussion session on what we as a class had experienced. Many of them again commented that what happened was unfair. I was happy that as chiefs in role all twenty-eight students had commented and reacted. This was evident from the video recording. Everyone had participated, even Lisa commented on that. Lisa did a fantastic job of enacting the United States Army representative pushing them to give up the land and to sign the
treaty. I could not have facilitated the educational drama without her collaboration. I had specifically chosen to take on a role that positioned me along with the students while at the same time being able to "talk" with the United States Army. I had done this because I wanted to position myself parallel to students so that in this lesson power would be more equitably distributed. Although I was confident in using educational drama, as I was striving to teach from a culturally relevant and responsive stance, I tried to keep in mind all of what I had read in the literature. Mainly, I tried to encourage the students to consider critically that this treaty affected real human lives. I tried to help them connect their lives with what they were reading about in their research on the various tribes. Although I did not specifically assess them on whether they had connected with their lives or not, Lisa and I had decided that as an outcome they might rewrite the treaties in their own words.

After much negotiation with the United States Army, the students as chiefs of various tribes rewrote parts of the treaty and presented it to the United States Army. In the act of rewriting and producing their own versions of what they felt would have been fair, I argue that they were not only questioning the status quo they were also practicing critical consciousness (Shor, 1992). The language in many of these new 'treaties' was commanding and full of persuasion. For example the Delaware group wrote:
We will make a deal with you, we want to divide the land half and half. We will keep our land and we will keep our hunting ground. We will not fine the people to use our hunting ground and we will not fight, we will keep our promise and you must keep yours.

Similarly the Ottowa group wrote:

Split the land and let our tribes go and we’ll let yours go. Not till you return our chief without harm, shall we return yours. We ask to meet up in the middle and free the people. We ask that you bring our people safely.

The Shawnee group’s writing suggested people who were brave, courageous and cared for their tribe members:

We want a treaty that’s an oath in peace. We want to make the line equal. We do not have an agreement until this is fair. We want more respect. Why can’t we live together and be friends? We will not return your hostages until our orders are followed and you will return our hostages. We will kill them if you do not support this.

This treaty showed their understanding of the politics of negotiation and their sense of fairness. For example the Wyandotte group wrote:

We are a peaceful tribe — we don’t want any war — but we also don’t want you to take our lands. We can be friends and share this land together — there will be no war and it will be peaceful because we just want to live in peace. Please sign this treaty. We’ll also free your people so you can free our people.

Other groups writing showed how they grapple with questions of trust, injustice, fairness and much more. For example the Miami group wrote:

For this treaty of Greenville, we would like to say that it is not fair. We think all of the land should be shared with everyone. We also think the rivers should be shared equally. We don’t think you should have most of it.
And the Seneca Mingo echoes the same sense of fairness and injustice.

It is not fair that we do not understand this treaty. We will not sign it unless you make it clear. We demand interpreters. We don't think this will make us happier as you say you are just taking away our homes and our happiness.

Lisa and I discussed the outcome of the use of educational drama within the lesson and we were very happy to see the students' writing. Lisa encouraged them to add these new 'treaties' to the picture book project that they were doing as a group. Although many of the students already knew this information through their regular research, the educational drama frame afforded them ways to personalize the curriculum. One question that arose for me was could we do this without using educational drama? In other words, was it because of the use of various educational drama strategies that students wrote so strongly or was it because of the cultural interaction that we had in the educational drama? From the many examples of successful culturally relevant and responsive teaching that I had read so far, it was not a matter of technique as much as a matter of the cultural relationships that were built amongst the participants in a classroom. There were many times when using educational drama did not work for me – especially when I had no idea who I was teaching in terms of knowing students individual cultural identities. In terms of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, because I had spent almost four
months observing, interacting, and getting to know these students culturally, I felt confident that the use of educational drama had made a difference. As one of the students said later “I didn’t know the Indians were troubled so much” (Tony). The students had made personal connections through their imaginary interactions. More importantly, because I had embarked on a self-study – How does my multiple cultural identities affect teaching – the challenge for me was for a cultural exchange in teaching rather than merely knowledge exchange. I was beginning to understand another feature of cultural competence and I state it as:

As teacher it is my responsibility to encourage students’ understandings of cultural differences in terms of critical consciousness.

Encouraging The Development Of Cultural Competence

Ladson-Billings (1995) writes that culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy is personally validating and affirms the personal efficacy in both the teachers and the students. Who makes knowledge claims is just as important as what knowledge claims are made. We are personally accountable for the value claims that we hold. In Chapter 2, I discussed the importance of self-knowledge in knowing what perceptions of cultural difference and diversity we hold. In part I of Chapter 4, I confirmed for myself that cultural identities and competence are important aspects of a culturally relevant and responsive
pedagogy. Especially in terms of being able to relate to Lisa the classroom teacher, I used my own cultural knowledge as a template to understand and access her cultural knowledge. In this section, I describe my efforts of doing the same with students. I wanted to know, in what ways these students connected their cultural identities with specifically the ways in which school was shaping them. Through a discussion on schooling I discussed their experiences in school and how school affected them personally.

A: I want to know your ideas and opinions. How is schooling for you all? What do you think if you didn't go to school?

Macy: I don't think that if we didn't go to school we would be stupid or anything, but, the bad thing is in this world you basically won't be able to get a job because you won't be able to read, you need to add & multiply and those are things you need to know and if you didn't go to school you would be able to learn some stuff but not all that you would need.

Nicole: I think schools are important. But if somebody asks you a question and you don't know the answer then they would think that you haven't learnt anything.

A: What about stuff that you learn at home and then when you come to school you are told it's not right like it happened to the Indians [Native]?

Kate: I think schools are great but if you were like an Indian [Native] they probably have their own maths and stuff and they had already had their school they might know their education and they had already done their things.
John: I think that if we didn't have schools we probably wouldn't know how to speak right.

A: That may be true, how can you decide what the right way to speak is? Let me give you an example of what I'm trying to get at - some people when they hear me speak think that I don't really understand what's going on. They think that I'm dumb and speak back to me that way, like they would pronounce their words very precisely and sort of in my face; Remember when I had my car accident? The policeman really spoke to me like that. I was angry that they should think I was not educated. What I'm trying to get at is, is there a right way to speak or wrong way to speak and why should only one way be considered 'educated'?

Marie: So that's sort of like stereotyping?

A: Well yes... It is like stereotyping.

Kate: It would be kind of like an insult to say that you were dumb because of the way you spoke. If he [policeman] just thought that you didn't know English that wouldn't be an insult.

A: Yeah, that's true. Do you think this sort of thing happens in schools? I mean how do you think the children who went to the Carlisle Indian School\(^{30}\) may have felt when they were told they could not speak right? Do you think these kinds of things could be happening today?

Kevster: Well this happened to me at M School in first grade and mostly all of it happened to me. They started calling me names. Well see most of the people were black and they would call me white boy and stuff.

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\(^{30}\) I had used educational drama with them focusing on the Carlisle Indian School and what the effects of that school might have had for Indian children who attended.
Camje: That's racist.

Fanny: Well this happened to me in preschool. I was the only Cambodian and like, I could speak only Cambodian and didn’t know any English and these kids used to come up to me and tease me and call me names and stuff and the teachers they sort of flunked me and my parents had to go talk with them and stuff.

Lisa: I have a perfect example. When I taught fifth grade in California there was a boy called Frederico in my school whose parents had just moved from Mexico and he didn’t know how to speak English and the school district thought that he was dumb and decided that he just needs to be put down a few grades. And Frederico was actually almost 14. So they put him in fifth grade even though he was supposed to be in 7th grade. They judged him just because of the way he talked.

Kate: If they put Frederico, in fifth grade that wouldn’t help his language!

Lisa: That’ right. It didn’t help it at all and I was insisting that he needed to learn English with kids of his age because he was a bright kid. But, the school wouldn’t listen.

Kate: Aren’t we supposed to prevent that from happening?

A: Yes. Ideally, yeah.

Davis: Well, Frederico he shouldn’t be judged like that. Didn’t he get a school in Mexico that could take him?

Lisa: I’m sure he went to school in Mexico but he had to move here because his parents moved.
Davis: Well before they put him in your school they could have put him in couple of weeks of Spanish English School because then he can adjust. But they shouldn’t have teased him anyway. That was cruel.

Kate: It also happens to people who are handicapped.

A: That’s true, it does.

Kevster: Do you all remember when there was that knock-kneed boy from Japan or China and people would call him names in the cafeteria?

Everyone: Yeah. They would and … (everyone talking at once…)

A: Did he know how to speak English?

George: Yes. He did, he was very good. But, they still called him nasty names.

John P: It doesn’t really make sense that they are making fun, and if I were them I would say you are really making fun of yourselves because there’s nothing really wrong with me.

Kate: You have to remember who that person is before you say something because if that person is like different you shouldn’t like judge them.

John: Everybody looks different and acts different and that’s not bad.

A: That’s true John. Well, thank you everybody.

I was learning that sharing my personal stories in an honest and open way elicited dialogue about cultural assumptions. They had discussed their cultural identities as school affected them. Through their narration of self-stories (Kevster: “this happened to me at M___ school…” and Fanny “This happened
to me in preschool...”) I was able to understand and get to know them better. It could be that my narrating my experience helped them narrate theirs and through that I encouraged cultural competence. In these discussions they also made connections about people whom they have noticed in the school (like the Asian boy who got teased in the cafeteria). By quoting an example of myself in an honest manner, I showed my knowledge of how people perceive me. The students responded with stories of how they were aware of other’s perceptions of them. Through this we were beginning to negotiate and mediate cultural competence – maybe finding ways in which schooling could be culturally validating and affirming. By encouraging this discussion I confirmed for myself the importance of cultural identities in the classroom. My shifting understanding of my cultural position in relation to the students allowed me to position myself ‘culturally parallel’ to the students (as in viewing my cultural differences and theirs on an equivalent plane). Specifically, by making my cultural position explicit to them, I was able to understand them better. In terms of cultural competence I formed the following feature:

As teacher I can use my self-knowledge (my critical consciousness) as coming from certain cultural identities to build cultural knowledge amongst students.
In forming my own conceptions of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, through this self-study, I found that cultural identities, critical consciousness, and cultural competence are the three major components that must be taken into account in teaching. As I have explained in Chapter 2 and through my self-study, I have perceived these three components as interlinked in the following way as illustrated by figure 2.

First I have to know myself, through a self-study. That is, what constitutes my cultural, social, ethnic, racial, and linguistic background. Through
this I must develop a critical consciousness about my worldviews – what affects and shapes the way I view the world and the way the world views me. Through this evolving critical consciousness of my cultural identities, I can develop cultural competence – a strong sense of myself in relation to the world. In a classroom as a teacher, I must have a critical awareness of what shapes my views in relation to my students and how I view their differences, how I affect and shape their learning, and how they affect and shape my teaching. Through this critical journey to know my cultural identities I can begin to know my students and their cultural competence and strive to maintain the cultural competence of my students.

Conclusion

1. As teacher I must recognize that students may operate differently because they are in a culturally different situation (i.e. classroom) and not because they are culturally different. The difference is located in the cultural context of the classroom and not in the student.

2. As teacher I must recognize that I come from certain cultural backgrounds and cultural identities. I must take into account all of my cultural knowledge and how that shapes my views.

3. As teacher I must recognize that all of my students come from certain cultural backgrounds and all of their cultural knowledge must be affirmed as 'strengths' in the classroom.

4. As teacher it is my responsibility to encourage students' understandings of cultural differences in terms of critical consciousness.

5. As teacher I can use my self-knowledge (my critical consciousness) as coming from certain cultural identities as a template to build cultural knowledge amongst students' cultural identities and experiences.

There was a further finding in terms of my positioning. When I positioned myself culturally parallel to my students – for example viewing and expressing my cultural differences and theirs on an equivalent plane – I was able to develop a deeper understanding about their cultural identities. I consider this the most important finding of this study i.e. my shifting understanding of my cultural position in relation to students and the classroom teacher. This shift in my understanding allowed me to position myself culturally 'parallel' to the students and the classroom teacher, (as in viewing my cultural differences and theirs on an equivalent plane) rather than in a culturally 'hierarchical' relationship (as in viewing my cultural difference as 'privileged' or 'marginal' in relation to theirs).
Specifically through sharing critical knowledge about myself I was able to understand the students' and teacher's cultural knowledge. Figure 2 illustrates the link between cultural identities, critical consciousness and cultural competence.

In the next chapter, I summarize the findings of the study and make suggestions for future research and projections of this study.
CHAPTER 5

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: BY NO MEANS A CONCLUSION

Introduction

This has been an incredible journey for me on many levels. On a personal level this study has changed me in ways that are too numerous to count and too complex to name. As a teacher and researcher, this study has been my ‘test by fire’ in identifying myself as teacher in this country and in identifying myself as researcher. My original intentions with this research stemmed out of a deep personal commitment to ‘valuable’ education. As I have discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, my attraction to and intentions of becoming a teacher came about because of the unpleasant experiences I had as a student in India. Further, in this country, when I became aware for the first time that I was culturally different, that I embodied a cultural ‘minority,’ my interest and engagement with culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy increased. I now wanted to know how teacher’s cultural identities affected teaching. When I began reviewing literature on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, I found that while there were many examples and ways to address difference and diversity in students, few studies addressed teacher’s cultural identities and
how an awareness of teacher's cultural identities made a difference. Further, there were even fewer studies that I found that had inquired into a teacher's conceptions of her own cultural identities and how those affected teaching. As discussed in Chapter 2, although Paley's (1979) self-study inquired on this topic, she did not use culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as a guide to analyze her teaching. Ladson-Billings (1995) writes, citing Lather (1986) that along with more self-studies of this sort, there is a need for "research as praxis" in the field of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. That is, more studies are needed where teachers and researchers collaborate. Therefore, throughout this project my emphasis was on my shifting awareness of my multiple cultural identities and how that affected my culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in this fourth grade urban classroom. And while I principally viewed my own teaching, my collaboration with Lisa, the classroom teacher in this class, affected my learning in this research.

Reflections On My Learning / Findings In This Research

There were three broad concepts within culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy that I worked from in this project. These were cultural identities, cultural competence and critical consciousness. As explained in the end of Chapter 4, it became apparent to me that I had to develop a critical consciousness about my own cultural identities, where I came from, what my worldviews were and how those shaped my teaching, in order to develop cultural competence. From this knowledge and from the conceptions of cultural
competence that Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) and other educators posited, I explained the following features of developing cultural competence.

1. As teacher I must recognize that students may operate differently because they are in a culturally different situation (i.e. classroom) and not because they are culturally different. The difference is located in the cultural context of the classroom and not in the student.

As I have described in Chapter 4, when I found myself in a ‘culturally different’ situation, (e.g. the music class, p.126), and Erin helped me participate by recognizing me in a culturally different situation, I began to understand that I could do the same as teacher. This recognition (of myself in a culturally different position and how that could be perceived as my cultural deficiency, i.e. my not being able to play music) helped me understand that for students, classrooms are sometimes culturally different situations and they could be considered deficient. Another example, in this classroom illustrates this point: When Davis, the student I worked with on a regular basis, did not understand Lisa’s (the classroom teacher) directions in recognizing what a synonym poem was (p.116, Chapter 4) he was operating in a culturally different situation. I characterize this as a culturally different situation because Lisa’s language patterns (cultural) were culturally different for Davis and he could not understand what he was supposed to do. However, Davis was characterized as culturally deficient by the classroom teacher (Lisa: “The language of school is not a language that’s used in his home…” p. 120, Chapter 4).
The second feature of cultural competence relates to the first above in that it emphasizes the need to take account of who we are in the classroom as teachers and how our perceptions affect teaching:

2. As teacher I must recognize that I come from certain cultural backgrounds and cultural identities. I must take into account all of my cultural knowledge and how that shapes my views.

As discussed in Chapter 2, how I as the teacher perceive of difference and diversity is important in determining how I will perceive my students. Do I see myself as the 'norm' and the students as 'different' and 'diverse'?

Recognizing that both students and teachers come from certain cultural backgrounds is important in maintaining each other's cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 2001) and this leads to the third feature:

3. As teacher I must recognize that all of my students come from certain cultural backgrounds and all of their cultural knowledge must be affirmed as 'strengths' in the classroom.

As cultural relationships are built in the classroom and as I get to know students and their individual cultural strengths, I was able to teach from a more culturally relevant and responsive stance because I knew who I was in relation to them. It became apparent to me that:

4. As teacher it is my responsibility to encourage students' understandings of cultural differences in terms of critical consciousness.
In Chapter 4, I described how I became aware of my own cultural identities, my cultural experiences as a result of being culturally different. I also described how this knowledge gave me a template to view and recognize others' cultural differences. It gave me 'insider' knowledge — in the sense that I found I was highly attuned to recognizing when a student might be marginalized in a classroom because I saw my own marginalization in them (for example Davis). Further, when I had conversations with Lisa and explained my cultural position in this country and how I was perceived, through her sharing, I began to understand her cultural position. In the classroom, I did the same with students and understood that:

5. As teacher I can use my self-knowledge (my critical consciousness) as coming from certain cultural identities as a template to build cultural knowledge amongst students' cultural identities and experiences.

Finally, as noted in Chapter 4 and following from the above, the most important finding in this study is that my shifting understanding of my cultural position in relation to students and to Lisa allowed me to position myself culturally 'parallel' to students and Lisa, (as in viewing my cultural differences and theirs on an equivalent plane) rather than in a culturally 'hierarchical' relationship (as in viewing my cultural difference as 'privileged' or 'marginal' in relation to theirs). Specifically, through sharing critical knowledge about myself I was able to
understand students' and Lisa's cultural positions. The significance of this understanding illustrated the importance of a self-study to me.

Implications Of This Study

Although this was a self-study and therefore limited in its applicability to other situations there are some implications that can be drawn from this study. It is a fact that in most urban schools, while students come from various socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, the majority of teachers are White or European American (Gay, 2000; Weiner, 1999, 2000). Further, Ladson-Billings (2001) states that often, white teachers choose whiteness over their cultural identities. The implications in terms of urban school settings and in terms of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, is that those students who are ethnically and socio-culturally different are considered to 'have' diversity, to 'have' cultural identities. That is, they are thought to embody cultural difference while the teacher embodies the 'norm' (Whiteness). In such a view, teaching becomes a way to standardize and normalize as evidenced by Erickson's (1986) example of the teacher doing 'cultural border work.' Any 'differences' in the classroom are located as differences in the student rather than the students in a culturally different situation. When difference is viewed as a category to reinforce normative practices, then difference and diversity are viewed as embodied by "others". However, if we, teachers, were also to think of ourselves as embodying difference and diversity then the awareness of our embodiment of difference becomes cultural competence.
As I have discussed throughout this study, when I first came to this
country that is when I realized that I embody a minority; that I was not the norm.
I speculate that often, this is what European American / White teachers might
feel when they begin to encounter difference. That is, they (White / European
American teachers) begin to view themselves as embodying cultural identities
when they realize that they are perceived as different. If teachers were
encouraged to do similar self-studies to know their own cultural identities and to
develop a critical consciousness about their cultural background, then they
might be more likely to teach from a culturally competent position. Further, the
features of cultural competence identified in the literature and applied through
this study, have proved to be useful in developing and understanding of cultural
competence in the classroom.

The cultural experiences that I have had and continue to have on a daily
basis, inform my sense of cultural competence. I support Ladson-Billings (2001)
view that the more teachers are given opportunities to dialogue about culture,
cultural identities, themselves as cultural beings and so on, the more they can
develop cultural competence and thus teach from a culturally relevant and
responsive stance. The more critically conscious we are about the ways in
which we affect students' lives, the more we can teach from a culturally relevant
stance.
Projections: A Move Towards A Pro-Active Pedagogy

Pedagogy is complicated; it is relational between student and teacher, teacher and student (Van Manen, 1994). To me, pedagogy is about being perceptive about the small things that happen everyday in life, in classrooms, in schools, and in our community. We 'do pedagogy' in the way we smile at our students, in the way we share with each other, in the way we talk about each other, in the ways we reflect and in the way we live together (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Ladson-Billings (1994) discusses self-knowledge in teaching in terms of teachers having a high self-esteem as well as a high regard for others (p.33). She continues that such teachers have a grounded sense of themselves not only in terms of who they are culturally but also how their cultural identities relate to the larger "community, national and global identities" (p.49). These teachers find connections between themselves as cultural beings and the wider community in which they teach. Similarly, Freire (1970) describes self-knowledge as reflexive praxis – as practice that is a constant cycle of action and critical reflection in pursuit of social change. Shor (1992) borrowing from Freire, talks about self-knowledge in terms of practicing critical consciousness in the classroom where "teachers and students synthesize personal and social meanings" (p.128). For hooks (1994), personal testimony, personal experience, the talk of everyday living and being is transformative pedagogy; it is empowering.
Because of my cultural position and because of my multiple cultural identities, as a teacher in this country, I don't know that I will ever teach from a position of 'cultural situatedness'. However, I do know from this self-study, that I can use my cultural experiences and self-knowledge to learn to teach from a position of cultural competence and from a position of critical consciousness.

My idea of a ‘pro-active’ pedagogy comes from Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 1995a, 2001) vision of cultural relevance. As noted in Chapter 2, the notions of cultural relevance and cultural responsiveness differ in their emphasis of action. While relevance (as envisioned by Ladson-Billings, 1995) advocates a pro-active action by its emphasis on the quality of excellence in teaching, thereby highlighting that teachers need to prepare ahead of time and take all necessary/relevant steps to teach; responsiveness advocates for an action towards taking required steps in teaching, thereby highlighting that teachers need to ‘react appropriately to’ (Irvine & Armento, 2001) students’ requirements in the classroom. Both relevance and responsiveness however, stem out of the same rationale – a concern for ethnically and socio-culturally diverse students who are failing consistently in classrooms. Because of this, both relevance and responsiveness are actions that must work simultaneously in order that we can practice a pro-active pedagogy. If we consider ourselves a part of cultural difference and diversity, if we view ourselves as coming from certain cultural backgrounds / viewpoints, then we can position ourselves ‘culturally parallel’ to our students. We may practice a pro-active pedagogy by
first emphasizing the value of self-study, among teachers to develop critical consciousness and cultural competence, and then teaching by positioning ourselves 'culturally parallel' to our students. Therefore, a sixth feature in developing cultural competence (in addition to the five stated in the findings) may be added to those explained here:

6. As teacher I can use cultural knowledge about my students as pro-active pedagogy.

Throughout this study and this dissertation, I have concentrated on myself as the object of inquiry. Aware that one might describe this inquiry as "vanity ethnography" or 'solipsism' (Van Maanen, 1988), I want to point out that the nature of inquiry – developing cultural competence – necessitated a confessional tale. The significance of a confessional tale, like this one, is that by its very nature it acknowledges an interpretive act. It acknowledges the complexity involved in interpreting and describing a social phenomena where human actions are themselves complex (Van Maanen, 1988). Through self-reflexive writing, I hope I have conveyed the complexity of this process and I hope this dissertation conveys the complexity involved in interpreting seemingly abstract concepts such as cultural identities, cultural competence and critical consciousness. It is my hope that the complexity of this tale will open up possibilities for more complex self-studies by teachers so that we may work towards teaching in a culturally relevant and responsive manner for all students.
REFERENCES


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Appendix A

Information Letter And Consent Forms

Dear Parents or Guardians,

My name is Ambika and I am a Ph.D. candidate at the Ohio State University. I am interested in exploring the use of educational drama in understanding different cultures in the classroom. I was excited when your child's teacher, Ms. , supported and agreed for me to conduct research on this in her classroom. I am requesting your permission to have your child participate in this study.

Your child is already in a school and classroom where elements of educational drama are being used. Along with Ms., I will be working in your child's classroom to enhance and facilitate aspects of learning through the use of educational drama. I will work with the students from January until June 2009. Educational Drama does not involve children's performing or acting out in front of an audience. Rather, it uses our imagination to understand and learn. For example, it involves, using our imagination in various situations and imagining how we would interact if we were in those situations.

I am hoping that through this study, teachers may gain a deeper understanding of teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds and your child's participation will directly contribute to this.

For the purpose of the research, I will be interviewing, observing and collecting some written work or art work that students produce during drama encounters. I will need to audio record and video record sessions especially where educational drama is used. I will need to use portions of audio, videotapes and interviews in written form, for professional presentations and/or publications, especially in my final dissertation. You have my assurance that all of this work is kept confidential and is protected at all times. Further the entire data including written reports of audio, videotapes and interviews will only be used by the teacher and me to discuss about our classroom practices.

Although I value every child's participation, at any point during this study, your child will always have the choice not to participate. If your child chooses not to participate at any time, you have my assurance that this will not result in any kind of less to your child who will participate in the regular classroom activities planned by the teacher.

I have enclosed two consent forms along with this letter. One asks for your consent to have your child participate in this research and the other asks for your consent to audio and video record in this classroom and to collect written or art work. If you are willing for your child to participate, please sign both the forms and please return them to your child's teacher.

If you have any questions regarding this study or if you would like to know more, please feel free to contact me at any time. My phone number is . You may also contact my advisor Dr. Brian Edmiston if you need any clarifications or references about the study or me.

I thank you and appreciate the time you spend on this.

Sincerely,

Ambika Gupta/Brandi
Ph.D. Candidate
Ohio State University

Dr. Brian Edmiston
(Principal Investigator)
Ohio State University

Ohio State University

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CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to my child's participating in Research entitled

USING DRAMA FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM.

Dr. Brian Edmison, or his authorized representative - Ambika Gopalkrishnan
(Principal Investigator)

(Co-Investigator)

has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my child's participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study. And that any questions that I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that my child is free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to my child or me.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ________________ Signed: ____________
(Parent/Guardian) /

Signed: ____________________________
(Principal Investigator or his authorized representative)

Signed: ____________________________
(Co-Investigator)

Witness: ____________________________

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CONSENT TO AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORD

I understand that the research entitled:

USING DRAMA FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

will involve video and audio recording in my child's classroom. I understand that these tapes will be used to discuss and analyze the researcher's use of educational drama. I also understand that portions of the tapes may appear in written form in professional presentations and/or publications. In these presentations and/or publications, my child's name will be changed and the location and name of the school will be altered to protect my child's privacy.

PLEASE INDICATE WITH A CHECK YOUR CONSENT OR NONCONSENT FOR AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING

Audio

_____ I consent to my child's participation in any portion of this research that requires Audio recording.

_____ I DO NOT consent to my child's participation in any portion of this research that requires Audio recording.

Video

_____ I consent to my child's participation in any portion of this research that requires Video recording.

_____ I DO NOT consent to my child's participation in any portion of this research that requires Video recording.

Date: 

Signed (Parent / Guardian) 

Signed (Principal Investigator or authorized representative) 

Child's Name:

Office of Academic Success - 614-292-2222
Institute Teaching and Learning - 614-292-6155
Language, Literacy, and Culture - 614-292-2141

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Appendix B

Interview Protocol For Classroom Teacher

1. Go over meaning and connotations of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy

2. How does teaching change because of the diversity in this classroom? (Especially because of who is in the class)

3. How do you take account of who you are (As a European American) in the classroom and how you relate to diversity in this classroom?

4. How has the population in this school changed

5. How do you see this group as diverse?

6. Given the diversity in this classroom – how might we begin to address specific students' teaching and learning?

7. What would be a useful conception of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy for this classroom?

8. What goals could we set for our drama lessons in terms of culturally relevant pedagogy keeping in mind the diversity?
Appendix C

Student Writing Assignment

Name: __________________

Experiencing The Encounter Through Drama

Write a story on the consequences of Stereotyping from

a) Your own experience OR

b) An experience your friend or family member or someone you know has had OR

c) An experience from the point of view of a character or characters in this story.