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Introduction

In 2019, Bettina Love published a call for abolitionist teaching, an effort for educational freedom and racial justice. In her work, she centered the role of theory in teaching calling it a "North Star." She suggested that theory provides teachers a "steadfast tool" that explains the experiences of people minoritized due to racism, sexism, ableism, linguicism, etc., as well as provides language for and knowledge about intersectional issues of injustice. Love literally calls theory a "practical guide" as well as a "location for healing" (Love, 2019, p. 132).

The work of Paulo Freire has long served as the kind of practical guide and location for healing as well as steadfast tool that Bettina

Love centers in abolitionist teaching. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire (1994) forwarded important ideas that have become core theories for 'socially just teaching and learning. Specifically, he argued, "Authentic liberation-the process of humanization is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (p. 79). This notion of liberation as a praxis has long taken root in educational spaces dedicated to social justice and equity. Specifically, ideas from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* like the importance of reading the world not just the word, striving for the end of oppression (not just the oppressed to become the oppressors), and 'pedagogical practices that make this possible by blurring the lines between teachers and learners, have long influenced the theoretical and empirical work in education generally as well as in the context of preparing teachers to work with multilingual students specifically (e.g., Huerta, 2011; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

For instance, though not conceived explicitly in Freirean terms, a recent review of the literature (Viesca et al., 2019) reified the arguments stated above from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* This review analyzed the preparation of teachers to work with multilingual students in general education classrooms as well as the research on teaching multilingual students in general education classrooms through a complex, nonlinear, theoretical lens. The analysis resulted in an argument for a complex teaching assemblage for multilingual students and their teachers to account for context, orientations, and pedagogy. While not expressly articulated as such in the review, the kind of attention to context suggested is reflected in Freire's idea to read the world, not just the word. Similarly, the arguments around orientation in the review relate to Freire's suggestion that the oppressed not become the oppressors, rather the goal is liberation and the end of oppression for all. And finally, the arguments around pedagogy, related to both the arguments above as well as Freire's blurring of the lines and boundaries between the identities and practices of teachers and students. Whether explicitly named as such, Freire's philosophies and ideas are constantly being (re)turned to and discussed in varying contexts for the purpose of creating liberation as praxis.

Context

This study is an examination of such an attempted (re)turn through a course for pre-service secondary content teachers learning to work with multilingual students. Grounded in notions of abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019), Freirean liberation as praxis (Freire, 1994) and the findings of the recent literature review discussed above (Viesca et al., 2019), the course under investigation was designed in an attempt to substantially disrupt the status quo in terms of traditional notions of teaching, learning, and community as often operationalized in classrooms (both K-12 and in higher education). Such operationalizations often reduce teaching as monitoring, learning as compliance and community as mere collective existence (Viesca & Gray, In Press). The following describes how the course was designed to disrupt this.

Course Design

A (re)turn to Freirean pedagogy through the lens of abolitionist teaching (as described above) requires much more than minor tweaks to teaching and learning approaches. In the context of the course under examination, it took reading, research, reflection, and substantial revision to teaching and learning norms to name and enact the principles that would turn a theoretical "north star" into an actual liberatory praxis. The following sections describe the principles that grounded course design and what those ideals then looked like in practice. It is our assertion that these principles matter most in terms of their interconnectedness and what they in total co-produce rather than what any of them are or mean independently. To adequately describe each component of the principles that grounded this (re)turn to Freirean pedagogy, we will explore them through the lenses of teaching, learning, and community.

Learning

This course on preparing secondary content teachers to work with multilingual students sought to blur the line between teacher and

learner through the principles of agency, leadership, and collaboration far the learners. In the course syllabus, these principles and how they would be enacted were described as such:

> This course has been designed for you as a learner to have substantial agency over your learning, for you to take leadership roles over your learning, but also the learning of the whole community (you will share your learning in class and design and implement learning activities to share your ideas/growth with the class). Finally, the learning in this class is foundationally about collaboration. Our time together on Thursday afternoons is centered on this learning principle and practice. You may also choose to collaborate around your learning outside of our time together in class. Further, you will engage in regular collaborative conversations with [Course Instructor] around both your learning and assessments of your learning. Your grade for this course will be collaboratively determined based on those conversations and your collaborations/participations in class.
>
> *(Viesca, 2020, p. 2)*

These principles were further put into practice through course assignments that were largely open in format and inquiry-oriented, reading assignments that allowed for a great deal of choice (including students adding in their own reading suggestions) as well as assignments that required the co-planning and co-teaching of the class with the instructor. Specifically, students were given an inquiry question each week along with various resources to help them explore that question; they were also encouraged to seek out their own resources and link to their own experiences and ideas as they explored the inquiry question. Then students were given several choices of how to put the ideas they explored into practices. Students could select from one of the options provided, which typically included activities like interviewing multilingual learners, analyzing texts, designing learning opportunities, and collecting data, or they could design an activity of their own. They did not have to select one of the pre-designed activities. When students completed their activity of choice, they posted online about it, read each other's work and discussed their learning, and supported one another in answering their inquiry question for the week.

Class time was co-planned and co-taught with the students. Above and beyond the inquiry questions, students read several books as a class to explore the lived experiences of multilingual students, issues around race as well as to learn practical strategies to support multilingual language development in classrooms. Groups of students took turns leading discussions around the reading, linking it to the inquiry work they had done online as well as modeling supportive strategies or multilingual language development. These approaches optimized the time that was spent together as a whole class for deepening learning and thoughtful collaboration. It required some meetings and coordination between the instructor and students before each class period, which typically meant 30 minute co-planning meetings with the different groups responsible for co-teaching each week.

In this way, agency, leadership, and collaboration functioned collectively to not only transform and blur the role of the learner in the classroom from a passive recipient of knowledge to an active seeker, creator, and sharer of knowledge, but it positioned the course instructor in a similar role as well. Because the "students" in the class were engaging in their own agency, taking leadership over their learning and the learning of others as well as working in collaboration with each other and the course instructor to do these things, the course instructor was often a learner of "students'" ideas, perspectives, and life experiences. The instructor was often leading learning through question posing and pathway opening, rather than direct instruction. Additionally, the instructor was positioned as a meaningful collaborator in the work the students did independently and collaboratively. This required frequent and regular meetings outside of class with "students" both individually and in groups as they worked to complete their assignments. In order for the instructor to have sufficient time to spend meeting and collaborating with students, different kinds of grading and planning decisions were made. The time typically allocated to monitoring student work (also known as grading) and planning for the time spent in class together was reallocated to these individual and collective conversations. Then course-time was largely led by "students" in the class allowing for the instructor to be a learner participant as well. Blurring the lines between teachers and learners grounded in the principles of learning through agency, leadership, and collaboration created the context for strong learning gains, but also meaningful relationships among

and between the "students," the instructor, and the material. To capture this successful blurring of the lines, we will use the term student teachers[1] to describe members of the learning community and participants in this study here forward.

Freire explores the notions of student autonomy and freedom in the classroom as well as its inherent tensions. He suggests that there is no such thing as absolute freedom or total autonomy for how all humans are intertwined and the reality that our actions inherently impact others. In a similar way, the principles guiding this class as a (re)turn to Freirean pedagogies are intertwined and the kind of agency, leadership, and collaboration this course sought to create for learners is best understood in relationship the other principles described below.

Teaching

Because of the bidirectional relationship between teaching and learning in Freirean pedagogy (e.g., "Whoever teachers learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning" (Freire, 1998, p. 31), the approach to learning described above is also, by design, the approach to teaching in this course. However, the content of the course or the ideas that were explored (and thus taught) were grounded in the findings of the literature review described above (Viesca et al., 2019); context, orientations, and pedagogy. Each course session had one to two inquiry questions that created the context for exploring great teaching in secondary classrooms for multilingual students through attending to either context, orientations, or pedagogy. It is typical in a class preparing teachers to work with multilingual students to focus on pedagogical practices and/or strategies that are important to implement to support multilingual student learning. However, in this course, those learning opportunities included and were related to the Freirean practice of reading the world, not just the word. The syllabus described it this way:

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1. We note the tension with this label as it typically implies that pre-service teacher candidates are actively teaching in schools, which was not the case during this class. However, they did actively take teaching roles in the class, so they were both students and teachers throughout.

The curriculum and content of this course has been designed around the principles of inquiry. Grounded in my own research on teaching multilingual learners in content classrooms (Viesca et al., 2019), this course has been designed to ensure we engage in thoughtful, inquiry-based problem solving regarding three important elements of quality curriculum and instruction for multilingual students: context, orientations and pedagogy. For each of these three elements of quality curriculum and instruction, several research-based problems are offered for us to engage in collaborative inquiry around. By the end of the course, you should have a strong theoretical, empirical and practical toolkit to support your effective teaching of multilingual students in your content classroom. Further, you should have a strong learning community to continue to rely on as well as approaches and resources for ongoing problem solving as you continue working with multilingual students.

(Viesca, 2020, pp. 2-3)

The syllabus also listed the inquiry questions that would ground the learning across the course. For orientations, student teachers examined and taught about dominant narratives, the cultural nature of content and knowledge, and translanguaging. For context, student teachers examined and taught about historical and contemporary events and perspectives on immigration and migration, language policies, collaborating with families and how to affirm linguistic and cultural diversity. And for pedagogy, student teachers investigated and taught about meaningful collaboration, dialogic teaching, language demand in instruction, identifying essential concepts, grouping dynamics, developing literacy skills, oral interaction, multimodal assessments, and lesson and unit planning. Student teachers also read stories of immigration (e.g., the book "Newcomers") and about anti-racism (e.g., the book "How to be an Antiracist") while engaged in weekly inquiry cycles guided by questions that explored either context, orientations, or pedagogy. This cycle is used in the ICMEE project (see: https://cehs. unl.edu/icmee/) and described briefly above as well as in-depth by Viesca et al. (2016).

Community

In order for the kind of teaching and learning outlined above to be possible, a strong, anti-oppressive community needed to be built. The syllabus described the principles guiding this work as follows:

> In order for us to establish a strong learning community where each learner can have agency, take leadership and work well in collaboration, we will practice the principles of self-actualization, reciprocity and accountability. These principles are intricately connected and in combination generate incredible possibilities for transformative, equity-based learning to occur. Self-actualization is important individually as well as collectively for it is how we both work towards being and bringing our truest selves to the learning space while we also create that possibility for the other members of our learning community. Through self-actualization we strive to have all of the identities (understood as dynamic and potentially shifting, even during the short timeline of our course) of the learners in our community affirmed in our learning space. We recognize that self-actualization can only successfully occur in reciprocity where our own self-actualization cannot come at the cost of that of another. Further, we have to hold ourselves accountable to the principles of self-actualization as we live in a colonial, white supremacist, ableist, heteropatriarchy, that has been established to limit self-actualization in very tangible ways.
>
> *(Viesca, 2020, p. 2)*

These principles come from Indigenous scholarship (e.g., Kimmerer, 2013; Simpson, 2017) as well as Freirean notions of freedom, authority, and democracy (Freire, 1994, 1998) and were grounding tools to co-construct a classroom community agreement that guided our interactions together. We[2] spent time in every course working to get to know the other members of the learning community through activities

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2. The lead author was the "instructor of record" for this course and the second author was a graduate research assistant supporting various aspects of the course.

that centered on learning about and personally connecting with each member of the class. We even insisted that each member of the class learn all of the names of each other member of the class (something students reported was new for them in a college class). The result of ongoing, meaningful, and sustained efforts at community building created the context for shared vulnerability and thoughtful engagement with one another. One student mentioned often feeling judged in her classes, even by her instructors, for expressing a more conservative ideology. However, in our class, she frequently posed important questions that forced everyone to think more expansively and openly about the topic of inquiry. In our individual conversations, she expressed her gratitude for being able to bring the truest version of herself to our class. Similarly, a trans student made the decision to officially transition during this semester and named the welcoming space of our community as a reason for finding the courage to do this. While there were still some issues that came up and needed attention, our efforts striving for each person's self-actualization in reciprocity and with accountability gave us stronger tools to address those issues and create a meaningful learning community for all.

What is particularly important about this, especially from a Freirean perspective, is that our freedom for self-actualization cannot come at the cost of another's. Thus, as Freire (1998) suggests, freedom is not limitless, rather importantly conceptualized in community. Due to the oppressive projects (e.g., patriarchy and racism), our (re)turn to Freirean pedagogy was importantly grounded in holding accountability for those spaces between-between one person's self-actualization and another's. This commitment is fundamentally an ethical and moral one that creates the context for ongoing humanization for all engaged in teaching/learning efforts (Freire, 1998). It also is the space of tension between freedom and authority that Freire explores and positions as a productive place to live. He suggests that the tensions between authority and freedom play a mutually reciprocal role in the democratic endeavor of seeking solidarity and equality. Thus, through a commitment to self-actualization in reciprocity with accountability, learners and teachers can strive for solidarity and equality while grappling with the tensions between freedom and authority.

Methodology

This study is grounded in an analysis of learning artifacts produced in the course described above to understand the teaching/learning/practices that were co-constructed and produced. This analysis seeks to illustrate the possibilities of (re)turning to Freirean-Philosophy to support the development of strong antioppressive pedagogies for teachers and students in multilingual classrooms. We asked: What are pre-service teachers' understandings and perspectives regarding pedagogy from participating in a course that implemented a liberatory praxis pedagogy?

Context

The course under investigation is part of an undergraduate teacher preparation program for secondary pre-service teachers. It is a required course on working with multilingual students, though at the time of this research it did not have a component that allowed teacher candidates to work with multilingual learners directly. Research consistently illustrates the value of such learning opportunities (e.g., Payant & Mason, 2018; Pu, 2012) and is an aspect of course improvement that is currently underway. Additionally, this course took place during the Spring semester of 2020, which means it also was abruptly disrupted due to COVID-19 global pandemic shut-downs. So, some of the original plans for the course had to be let go of and the course had to be finalized completely online (though it was designed for full face-to-face delivery).

In addition to the global pandemic, this course faced other barriers due to personal loss and health issues (e.g., a student passed out and had a seizure in class). Overall, roughly half of the class was disrupted due to these additional challenges. However, because the course was designed around the principles described above, strong learning and continued collaborative engagement were possible even during a time of substantial stress and disruption for the whole learning community. We believe that the positive learning outcomes that were possible in the midst of global crisis are largely due to the Freirean pedagogy that grounded and guided this course design. Were it not for the community of collaboration, ownership, and co-constructing of

knowledge that we intentionally established from the beginning of the course, learning outcomes would have been much more negatively impacted during the crisis. Because the lines between teacher and learner were blurred effectively through this ideology, learning was not solely dependent on the instructor's knowledge. This, we believe, wonderfully illustrates the strength and importance of (re)turning to Freirean pedagogy.

Participants

A total of 29 pre-service secondary content student teachers were enrolled in the course. A total of 22 of them consented to participate in the current study and gave permission for us to use data generated through course participation for our research. We used a purposive sampling procedure rather than a random procedure in order to choose those who would be most likely to help fulfill the objectives of the study (Henry, 2009). Therefore, five participants were purposefully selected, so that we were able to include participants from the five different content areas that the secondary student teachers in the class represented: English language arts, social studies, math, business, and social sciences. None of the student teachers had yet begun their student teaching in their program at the point when data were collected.

Data Sources

The qualitative data for the current study were collected from course engagement activities across one semester from the five participants. These participants represented the class as a whole in that they were majority white and monolingual. The research team selected two major types of assignments to analyze for this study: a weekly inquiry assignment (across 11 weeks, described above) and students' final project for the course. The final course project was open in terms of format-students could create art, write an essay, design lesson plans, write a children's book, and create a game. All possibilities for format were on offer. But what they all needed to do was answer the course essential question in their own authentic way and present their work to the class. The course essential question was, "How can my

pedagogical approach improve bi/multilingual student learning as well as contribute to educational equity for bi/multilingual learners?” We analyzed a total of 55 inquiry assignments and 5 final projects to uncover student teachers’ understandings and perspectives regarding pedagogy while participating in course that implemented an abolitionist. liberatory praxis pedagogy themselves.

Data Analysis

The five participants’ qualitative data were compiled into Word documents and were first read through by all of us. After an initial analysis of the data, the segments related to their perspectives regarding teaching and learning in the multilingual contexts were highlighted. Then. these segments were discussed by us to obtain initial codes. Next, two overarching themes were generated after we examined the codes through an in-depth rereading of the data. The two themes were named as “Philosophical Growth Towards Inclusivity” and “Disconnects and Tensions.”

Research Team Positionality

The team of researchers conducting this study represents a variety of backgrounds, life experiences, and perspectives. We include the course instructor and graduate teaching assistant for the course under investigation. We are from a variety of national, language, and racial backgrounds including White, Latinx, Asian, and bi-racial. We share perspectives regarding the importance of disrupting the inequitable status-quo for multilingual students and other students from minoritized backgrounds.

Findings

Philosophical Growth toward Inclusivity

The first theme emerging from an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data is participants’ noticeably deepened understanding of Freirean philosophy and pedagogy in relation to teaching and learning in

multilingual contexts. Aligning with Freire's liberation praxis that places an emphasis on humanization and humankind's agency to transform the world (Freire, 1994), participants reflected upon their prior schooling experiences and critiqued the status quo of the current US education system, which is characterized by one participant as "designed for American, English speaking students," and thus remains intrinsically monolingual, inequitable, and oppressive to multilingual learners. As an effort to combat the prevailing high-stakes and standardized assessment, several participants believed that incorporating multimodality into the assessment process could be one possible way to authentically engage multilingual learners and encourage them to take ownership of their learning. Multimodal possibilities to improve assessments for multilingual learners are an explicit topic of exploration in one of their weekly inquiry cycles. By exploring this topic in the context of the (re)turn to Freirean pedagogy that grounded the class, the participants developed a stronger faith in the agency and creativity of their students, particularly in "their power to make and remake, to create and re-create" (Freire, 1994, p. 90). One participant, for instance, contextualized multimodality in assessing multilingual learners' learning outcomes in history or other social studies domains, emphasizing the importance of enabling the learners to have options, freedom, and agency in their own learning:

> Because this project is already very unique to the students, allowing them to choose the method of production would also be a decent choice, or at least a list of options. These options could include an essay, storybook, screenplay, detailed series of paintings/drawings, a series of poems, or anything else that students recommend.
>
> *(Participant 22)*

In, addition, the participants showed an increasing awareness of perceiving teacher-student relationship as horizontal, democratic, and dialogic rather than hierarchical. As is argued by Freire (1994), building such a relationship requires us to blur the lines between teachers and students, "overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism" (p. 86). For instance, several participants mentioned the importance of co-constructing the content and course with their students

rather than making it merely teacher-centered, as this helps improve students' level of engagement and commitment to the course and reconstruct a more democratic and equitable teacher-student relationship. One participant specifically talked about how much they valued students' input in designing and developing the course:

> I want my lessons to be directed by the students, to be compelled by their own curiosity and engagement with the material. I want to know them, and I want them to know me. In no way will I be glad to settle in the fact that my precious time with students has been resorted to the impersonal, to the disengaged, and to the missed opportunity. Life itself is relationships. Everything revolves around them, and to pave the way for my students while ignoring their authentic thoughts, opinions, desires, and personalities is to do them a profound disservice and is morally wrong.
>
> *(Participant 18)*

While in this course students did not explicitly read Freire's work, the impact of putting his ideas into practice is clear in the sentiments expressed by the student above (Freire, 1994, 1998).

Another major pattern identified from the five participants' data is their self-perceptions and a growing awareness of the "world in which and with which they exist" (Freire, 1994, p. 95), which is then challenged and problematized by some of the participants. Through examining the dominant narratives, one participant reflected upon their own lived experiences while recognizing the privileges they enjoyed and the importance of honoring differences. Furthermore, this participant went on to write about the inherent ethnocentrism of social studies subjects such as history, particularly in terms of centering dominant white narratives while marginalizing the stories of People of Color.

> After reflection, however, it was very ethnocentric of me to think she would have learned about MY country's history and not her own .. .I think often social sciences, especially history, recognize the white narrative as the most important ideas and what matters. In the United States content

> has predominately been "whitewashed" focusing on the stories and narratives of prominent white people, "washing" over minority narratives such as Native Americans, Chinese Americans, or African Americans.
>
> *(Participant 10)*

It is noteworthy that though some participants appeared to be more conscious of the oppressive nature of the reality, such awareness does not seem to translate into concrete actions or pedagogy that can help fight against the oppression (see below). Yet substantial evidence pointed to strong philosophical growth toward anti-oppressive pedagogies, such as those used to teach the class. Another aspect of their philosophical growth was an emphasis on inclusivity. Student teachers actively positioned their learning around the theme in a variety of ways including theorizing classroom assignment design:

> One resource for students on the ESL/ELL website is a picture dictionary, something I think would be greatly beneficial for multilingual students in my social science classroom. The site allows searches to be correlated with a picture, making the understanding of words much easier. Social science is a comprehensive discipline, this allows me to use a wide variety of visuals and pictures making the content much more tangible for multilingual learners.
>
> *(Participant 10)*

The results of having inexperienced pre-service teachers crafting innovative pedagogies for multilingual students in the classroom, a challenging proposition for even veteran educators, in a classroom utilizing a Freirean approach to pedagogy yielded interesting results. Student teacher assignments across multiple content areas yielded consistent examples of their ideating on how to foster student inclusivity and diversity within a multitude of aspects of the classroom:

> I would break up the groups by pairing each student with another at a similar level. If I had two students whose first language was Spanish, and one is slightly better at writing English, while another is better at speaking, I would pair them

up as their strengths are complementary. I would try to do this as much as possible for all my students, according to which language they are most comfortable in and their ability. Because the goal of the lesson is to understand the basic structure and formality of emails, I would not be concerned about proper grammar or sentences.

(Participant 17)

Student teachers hypothesized multiple strategies that would benefit their future multilingual learners in their own classrooms once they became educators. And across these strategies, the theme of inclusivity and growth toward acceptance of diversity was represented from multiple perspectives.

As described above, student teachers saw their future potential coursework in their own classrooms as opportunities to offer avenues of engagement in course content for their future multilingual students that traditionally has been overlooked by the US educational system for minoritized students. Following along the paths of discovery and experimentation, student teachers explored various modifications of existing lesson plans to break the monolingual and monocultural paradigm of traditional classwork for students whilst still providing meaningful interaction and learning. Student teachers also pursued the creation of original lesson plans and content with the tenant of inclusivity guiding the creation process from the onset. The freedom to hypothesize, create, and reflect on their own future pedagogies was an essential element fostered by the Freirean approach to the student teachers' course, and this resulted in a unique opportunity for student led innovation.

As the course progressed, student teacher self-identity combined with their growing identities as professional educators emerged as additional important aspect of their inclusivity and growth toward acceptance of diversity. Reflecting on self-identity allowed student teachers the opportunity to examine the path and events which led them to the field of education, but interestingly, the student teachers also commonly reflected on the positioning of their own personal identities in congruence with their future multilingual and multicultural students leading to greater understanding of how their self-identities will interact with the identities of their future students, as well as how student identities may be brought into the design of class communities.

Student teacher commitments to inclusivity and growth toward acceptance of diversity for multilingual students appeared to grow from the foundation of a Freirean-based pedagogy. With the freedom of exploration and the responsibility of directing their own learning and growth, student teachers organically identified and arrived at identifying issues surrounding multilingual students and began to craft solutions to those issues. While the solutions and understanding of the issues addressed by the student teachers are in parallel to their inexperience as classroom teachers, the journey which they have begun is the preeminent issue at hand. When enabled and empowered to explore the pedagogy at the core of education, student teachers under a Freirean model organically began to learn of and attempt to address prominent systemic issues within education with commitments to inclusivity and diversity as positively productive.

Disconnects and Tensions

Where we found focus on growth and strengths as described above, we also found evidence of some disconnects and tensions in students' thinking and approaches. It is worth noting that these disconnects and tensions could be the result of a variety of factors impacting the class (having to move the course online because of the pandemic, teaching a course on working with multilingual students that also does not yet have a practicum component where student teachers get to work directly with multilingual students, etc.). Yet, they are still disconnects and tensions worth noting and exploring, particularly for how they illustrate important barriers and challenges in implementing a (re) turn to Freirean pedagogy in preparing teachers to work with multilingual students.

We found that student teachers showed an increased desire to engage in equitable teaching themselves but also illustrated an absence of practical knowledge for how to effectively achieve this ideal. Students teachers' writing about the kind of professional they are seeking to become and the ways in which they'd like to engage with their future students showed tremendous growth toward anti-oppressive thinking, coupled with unrealistic, impractical, and vague assertions about how this is to be accomplished. Granted, participants were at varying stages of their teacher preparation and the ability to translate anti-oppressive thinking into actual practice is a difficult task for

even many experienced educators. However, the tensions and disconnects that came out of our analysis are illuminating.

First, student teachers often drew from monocultural, monolingual reservoirs to create wide-ranging teaching strategies. Engaging in imaginative understanding of what tangible experiences might be like for multilingual students proved difficult for participants, all of whom were monolingual and monocultural themselves. For example, one participant (P10) wrote about the importance of building social bridges, demonstrating a clear understanding of the need for these avenues to be actively inserted into the learning experience for multilingual students. However, in their final project, this participant writes, "As an educator, I will strive to create a classroom environment and ample opportunities for multilingual learners to be seen as assets, not liabilities in the classroom." This statement showcases the participants' commitment to inclusivity. However, it rings hollow as it was not coupled with evidence that the teacher knows how to do this in practice. There was often an absence in our data that could link student teachers' philosophies and commitments to inclusivity to what antioppressive teaching will look like in day-to-day learning.

Another participant explicitly expressed this disconnect between the theoretical and the practical in their own mind. They wrote:

> Honestly, I think that for most 'plans' I make in this class for these [class assignment], I can confidently say I'll probably never use. That's why I usually opt for the 'you make it work' option, because even though I don't think I'll value an activity enough that I create for an assignment, I do value the ideas and spirit and motivations and heart behind the creation of the task that will never be brought to life.
>
> *(Participant 18)*

This students' confident assertion that the activities he designs for this course will never be activities he uses in a real setting can be interpreted in multiple ways. Is this because he recognizes the complexity of planning for a future imagined space and the reality that any plans today may not be meaningful for the reality of tomorrow? Or is it because he lacks the tool-set to make such plans? Is this a lack of vision? Or an honest grappling with the complexity of this work? At any rate,

across the data, and despite the course modeling and creation of space for meta-conversations linking anti-oppressive teaching ideologies to practices, it is clear that students left the class with a strong foundational understanding, but with areas for growth that should be anticipated and continuously worked on as young professionals. The data also reveals potential reasons for this.

Participants often illustrated an inability to relate to students from varying backgrounds, even as their intentions were clearly to be inclusive and accommodating. An example of this was when a student attempted to connect their own experiences in a privileged learning space with that of multilingual students in public schools, without attending to the differences in power and privilege between the groups and spaces being compared. Through their inquiry assignment, this student made a false equivalency that can often mask important issues of inequity (Picower, 2021). In the context of developing anti-oppressive pedagogies, overlooking these differences of power and privilege can be significant barriers to being able to counteract and disrupt oppressive practices.

Another example of this disconnect between ideology and practical application is from a student who wrote about the importance of making accommodations to achieve differentiation and individualization, demonstrating strong ideological understandings. However, this same participant makes statements such as, "Throughout the unit, I would also take the time to talk with my multilingual students to make sure they understood the concepts correctly." This kind of interaction with multilingual students is wonderful to commit to and in the course student teachers' experienced and learned about pedagogical practices that would make these kinds of ongoing conversations possible (e.g., Tharp et al., 2000; Teemant & Hausman, 2013). However, in the context of secondary schools in the United States, there are a variety of practical realities that this participant does not to appear to be prepared to grapple with like short class periods, large class sizes, multiple preps, language proficiency levels, and the lack of time that isn't consciously created for these kinds of conversations to occur. Again, this illustrates a difficulty with moving away from abstract idealism and vague proclamations and into the realm of concrete application as they are consistently unable to imagine specific teaching practices that stray too far from their own schooling experiences and familiar

molds—even while they are in a course specifically modeling how to do it. Freire offers insights into this when he discusses hope and optimism as well as the need for critical reflection grounded in disrupting the inequitable status quo (Freire, 1994, 1998).

In addition to this disconnect, there are some tensions that arose as well. Rather than not illustrating an understanding or ability to move ideals into actual practice, we found evidence of some of that movement actually continuing oppressive practices. It appears that some participants promoted anti-oppressive values and principles for teaching but were not able to couple that with challenges to the oppressive nature of the teaching practices that they have experienced throughout their lives.

For example, one participant (P17) writes extensively about the importance of providing all students with the opportunities to feel valued on an individual level, yet all of the activity examples they provide are rooted in traditional power hierarchies and top-down instructional models that leave no room for personal expression or asset-based individualization. Participants demonstrated an awareness of why anti-oppressive pedagogy is important, yet at times they reverted to the oppressive teaching practices they are familiar with from their own schooling as soon as they are asked to put those ideologies into concrete terms. Similarly, another participant wrote about their desire to promote student freedom of expression and provided the following idea for an activity that they felt would accomplish this:

> I could print out a big white map of Europe and have students paint/ draw on the countries of the authors that they read. This would allow me to have a visual representation of student learning/understanding, and it could be something put on display in the room to increase classroom comradery.

Again, we see the tension between wanting to promote freedom of expression and linking it to an activity that potentially is grounded in a Euro-centric curriculum and only minimally provides for student freedom of expression. This participant also overstates what can be accomplished by hanging student work in the classroom suggesting that will lead to classroom comradery. This illustrates a pattern we found of anti-oppressive intentions linked to oppressive execution.

We also noted important absences. Participants wrote nothing about how to make use of students' conceptual reservoirs and experiences in any way that humanized and positioned multilingual learners as equals or as inherently valuable. Despite all of the philosophical growth and expressed commitments to inclusivity and diversity, participants did not illustrate through the work we examined an ability to match those commitments with a liberatory, abolitionist praxis. At times, participants wrote about students as needy, broken, and problems to be solved.

These disconnects and tensions are important to consider for all seeking to build and sustain a Freirean pedagogy/anti-oppressive teaching and learning. We cannot expect student teachers, who have likely spent the bulk of their educational lives in top-down instructional models to be able to reach meaningful levels of meta-analysis and critical consciousness in such short periods of time (e.g., Across a course? A teacher education program?). We can make huge strides toward reshaping the ways in which they process new information and think about education, teaching, and learning, and that trajectory is clear in our findings in this study. However, if we are to see those advanced thought processes translated into practice, we must also provide student teachers with learning experiences that will help them translate anti-oppressive commitments into realistic, meaningful, and liberatory praxis. Having a significant impact on people's thinking is crucial and possible, but it is insufficient if we fail to help them translate newly acquired ideologies into concrete techniques that they can build on.

Conclusion

This study illustrates the possibilities of (re)turning to a Freirean pedagogy as well as the work that still needs to be done. Even in a short amount of time and in the context of substantial disruption, through engaging with a course designed around anti-oppressive principles where student teachers could engage with a liberatory praxis and work to build their own, great strides were made. Yet, our analysis revealed much work that still needs to be done for student teachers to be able to implement Freirean pedagogies themselves. We suggest

that this is both a huge success as well as a strong indicator of the large-scale systemic changes that need to take place. Further research should examine how spreading a (re)turn to Freirean pedagogy can impact student teachers' learning across pre-service course-work as well as into districts and schools. What possibilities are created when Freirean pedagogy acts as a "north star" in equity-oriented abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019)? How can further connections be made between courses, institutions, and various learning sites to grow educators understandings and abilities to implement Freirean pedagogies? While there is more work to do, the clear power of (re)turning to Freirean pedagogies is also quite evident.

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