

Fostering Preservice Teachers' Transformative Learning in a Social Studies

Methods Course: A Reflection on Transformative Pedagogy

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Abstract

Using a qualitative research design, this study examined the impact of a course that utilized transformative pedagogy to foster preservice teachers' transformative learning in a social studies methods course. The study was framed around the construct and practice of transformative education and pedagogy. Transformative pedagogy was defined as an activist pedagogy that combines the elements of constructivist, critical pedagogy, multiculturalism and practices that promote dialogical relations, engage and empower students as critical inquirers, participatory, active, and self-reflective learners who confront their prior beliefs, perspectives, frames of reference and attitudes in order to foster the development of critical consciousness, visions of possibilities, and action. Drawing on multiple sources, the data revealed that participants evidenced transformative learning such as follows: (a) deepened perspectives and new understanding of social studies; (b) shifting dispositions and awareness of a new sense of responsibility; (c) evolving self-examination and redefinition of teaching role, and (d) emerging sense of social critique and conscientization. Finally, the article discusses practices of key elements of transformative pedagogy that foster transformative learning such as a community-based learning context, experiential learning activities and project, reflective journaling, modeling, and scaffolding.

Introduction

For years, research has suggested that beliefs and dispositions have profound effects on teacher decisions and classroom practice (Parajes, 1992; Raymond, 1993; Renzagalia et al., 1997; Richardson, 1996; Thompson, 1992). In addition, research has shown that prospective teacher perspectives and dispositions—beliefs, attitudes, mindset, and thinking—tend to mediate the process of learning to teach (Goodman & Adler, 1985; Hollingsworth, 1989; Parajes, 1992).

Furthermore, research suggests that prospective teachers tend to have predispositions toward specific subject matter—beliefs about the nature of a subject, how it should be taught and learned, the significance of the subject, and the teacher’s role in the subject instruction (Grossman, 1990). In their review of teachers’ thought processes, Clark and Peterson (1986) note the importance of understanding teachers’ and preservice teachers’ implicit theories and beliefs about education, especially teaching and learning. Consequently, researchers have shifted their focus from instructional strategies and teaching behaviors to the beliefs and perspectives of teachers (Goodman, 1988; Richardson, 1996; Tillema, 1997). In teacher education, research shows that preservice teachers view teaching as a skill involving a process of transmitting knowledge and dispensing information (Kincheloe, 2003; Parajes, 1992) and have a tendency to “judge the quality of everything encountered on grounds of perceived practicality... [and] are drawn powerfully to the discrete and utilitarian” (Goodlad, 1990, p. 225). Imperatively, research suggests that these perspectives may impede the development of teachers capable of making substantive changes in their classrooms (Anderson & Piazza, 1996). Consequently, there is a critical need to assist preservice teachers in a process of self-transformation as they learn the art and science of teaching social studies. This paper reports on a qualitative study that investigated the impact of transformative pedagogy on fostering preservice teachers’ transformative learning in a social science methods course.

Literature Review

In recent years, critical and social theorists have challenged the notion of what it means to own a body of knowledge and to be able to put that knowledge into practice. But what does it mean to “learn” and “know?” Research informs us that the purpose of learning is to effect change in the learner, but not all learning results in a change (Dewey, 1966; Jackson, 1986; Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Miller & Seller, 1990). Miller and Seller (1990) distinguish among three types of learning: (a) transmissional—facts and knowledge are transmitted from teacher to student and merely regurgitated; (b) transactional—learning is recognized as a mere exchange between teacher and learner, and (c) transformational—when learning results in a shift in perspective. Similarly, Jackson (1986) identifies two types of learning: mimetic and transformative. Mimetic learning is more or less the “transmission” model of teaching and learning that focuses on transmitting predetermined, discrete information to students which they passively memorize and regurgitate. The transformative focuses on the transformation of the individual, especially his or her beliefs, values, attitudes, and frames of reference. John Dewey (1938) explains transformation in learning when a person sees some aspect of the world in a new way or when a person finds new meaning and values the new meaning. Jack Mezirow, a contemporary leading proponent of transformational learning defined it as a process:

[Whereby]we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, [changeable], and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 5-8)

Mezirow (1991) argues that all learning/education is designed toward change but explains that not all change is transformational. In order to foster transformative learning, students would have to change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds

and understanding (Mezirow, 1997). Other scholars have defined transformative learning as learning that produces a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner's subsequent experiences (Clark, 1993) and characterized by the following: (a) active use of an idea (when the individual acts on an idea and begins to see possibilities); (b) expansion of perception (when the individual begins to perceive the world or phenomenon in a new way); and (c) expansion of value (when the individual becomes deeply moved by this new way and so begins to perceive and view possibilities) (Pugh, 2002). O' Sullivan's definition is also provoking:

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and action. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of who we are and our self-locations; our relationships with other human and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, races, and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (2003, p. 326)

Given these definitions, what is transformative pedagogy? First, it is important to define what pedagogy means. Giroux and Simon (1989) define pedagogy as "the integration in practice of particular curriculum content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, a time and space for the practice of those strategies and techniques, and evaluation purposes and methods" (p. 239). Needham (2003) elaborates and defines it as an ideology of learning that is mediated with perceptions of how learning occurs and how teaching activities are to be organized.

What is transformative pedagogy? I define transformative pedagogy as an activist pedagogy which combines the elements of constructivism and critical pedagogy that seek to question the status quo and the traditional canon; it is also a pedagogy which contends that knowledge is a social construction and emphasizes the value for multiple perspectives (Banks, 2000). In the social studies, this is critically important. In order to prepare students for effective citizenship in a multicultural democracy and an interdependent world, students must acquire knowledge which reflects an accurate understanding of the historical and social reality of the groups that make up the society. According to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1994), the goal of social studies is to help students develop the ability to make informed, reasoned decisions for self and the public good. To accomplish this, students must develop a multicultural and reflective knowledge base, which among other things, is the ability to understand events, issues, and experiences from different cultural and social perspectives (multiple perspectives). This means that the traditional conception of teaching social studies through what Paulo Freire (1970) calls "banking education" will be inadequate. Freire's (1970) metaphorical use of the concept of banking education involves the image of the teacher, who is the all-knowing, depositing knowledge into students, who are empty receptacles and lack the power to produce and analyze knowledge. In contrast, transformative pedagogy promotes a democratic and emancipatory teaching and learning process in which teacher and students engage in a dialogic relationship as co-curriculum developers and learners. More specifically, by transformative pedagogy, I mean practices that promote dialogical relations and engagement and empower students to become critical inquirers—participatory, active, and self-reflective learner—who confront their limiting and constraining beliefs, perspectives, frames of reference,

and attitudes in order to foster the development of critical consciousness, visions of possibilities, and action. The primary aim of transformative pedagogy is to engender critical and reflective thinking, social consciousness, and civic engagement (Dewey, 1936; Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1991).

Given that preservice teachers have been socialized to the concept of banking education, and if they are to develop the ability to promote the kind of curricular experiences their students would need for multicultural literacy and effective democratic citizenship, it becomes vital to challenge and transform their misguided beliefs, perspectives about social studies and its instruction. For example, one preservice teacher's comment, "I just want to know how (tricks and recipes) to teach my students facts about history, geography and civics, famous Americans, etc" (Ukpokodu, 2003). This is inadequate for preparing students to develop the essential knowledge and skills needed for critical national and global citizenship in a complex and changing world. Instead, preservice teachers will need new lenses to conceptualize knowledge and pedagogy. Learning new lenses for conceptualizing curriculum and pedagogy in the social studies is not easy for preservice teachers who are predominantly European Americans, suburban, middle-class, and monolingual and who have been socialized to a traditional, monocultural curriculum that is mostly Eurocentric and uniperspectival. Given their socialization and apprenticeship in banking and monocultural education, preservice teachers often experience cognitive dissonance in a social studies methods course that challenges the traditional conceptions of knowledge and pedagogy. This reality motivated my desire to explore, practice, and study the effects of transformative pedagogy on fostering transformative learning in preservice teachers. Mezirow (1997) explains that transformative learning occurs when individuals change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making plans that bring about new ways of defining their world. The theory of transformative learning is concerned with how learners integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge, beliefs, and experiences and the change in experience. For most proponents, transformative learning is rooted in experience (Dewey, 1963; Vygotsky, 1978), awakening of the conscience (Greene, 1998), and analysis of discourse, dialogue with others, and reflection for deeper understanding and action (Mezirow, 1991; 1997). As the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (1970) also explained, the essential element that is prerequisite for transformational learning is critical thinking with opportunities to systematically dialogue and reflect on an experience. Dewey (1966) defines reflection as "an active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds supporting it and future conclusions to which it tends" (p. 6). Further, he identifies three attributes of reflection: open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. He explains open-mindedness as the desire to listen to more than one side of an issue, to give attention to alternative views, and to recognize that even the firmest beliefs may be questioned; responsibility as the desire to actively search for truth and apply information to problems; and wholeheartedness implying that one can overcome fears and uncertainties to make meaningful change and critically evaluate self, curriculum, school, society, etc.

Context and Background

For fourteen years, I have encountered preservice teachers who display misguided beliefs and attitudes studied in the literature. They enter my social studies methods course with a utilitarian focus—expectation to collect a bag of tricks that they can implement in their own

classrooms. This often becomes obvious in the course goals and issues they list on the first day of class and the questions they ask: “Is this course going to help me learn the strategies and catchy-fun activities to hook my kids?” For instance, after only a couple of weeks of class meetings, Marisa (pseudonym) expresses her impatience in her first reflective journal:

We went over the ten NCSS curriculum standards. We were split up in our groups according to a standard. I was in the global connections group. Basically, the whole time was spent discussing curriculum and goals in our groups. I hope that we do other stuff in this class. Group work is fine, but not everyday. I was hoping to get more out of this class than that. I know we are not very far in the semester, and maybe you have fun stuff planned for us later on. I want to learn fun activities and techniques that will help me in teaching social studies. This is a methods class so I think we should be learning activities to engage our students in interesting ways. (9/16)

For most preservice teachers, the subject of social studies has been one of a negative experience, boredom, dislike, and weak knowledge base. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. First, preservice teachers come from public schools which foster Freire’s (1970) concept of banking education, which emphasizes passive learning, memorization, and regurgitation of discrete and fragmented facts. Second, they come with misguided expectations, beliefs, and experiences (Rummel & Quintero, 1997) about social studies and its instruction. Through what researchers call “apprenticeship of observation” (Grossman, 1991; Lortie, 1975), most preservice teachers have experienced social studies classes (K-12) which consisted of a predictable pattern of passive, lecture-based instruction accompanied by worksheets, seatwork, quizzes, and tests; therefore, they base their social studies perspectives on these experiences and believe they know what and how they will teach the subject (Parajes, 1992). Thus, even before they enter the methods course, they have developed a web of interconnected ideas about social studies, instruction, and student learning, and arrive expecting merely to learn strategies and to receive a bag of tricks for teaching discrete facts to students. Recognizing that their negative disposition toward social studies and weak knowledge base are inadequate for the reality of classroom teaching, they see the methods course as a “save all.” They expect to learn all the techniques for making the subject “fun” for their future students with little to no interest in developing deep and critical inquiry about the subject and its pedagogical implications. Giroux (1988) perceptively captures this point as well:

[Prospective teachers] don’t tend to be seekers of alternative ways of seeing; they often are not especially interested in finding new lenses to conceptualize knowledge and pedagogy. Instead they walk into classes searching for recipes for information delivery and classroom discipline—questions of purpose, context, and power are alien, irrelevant... (p. 14)

However, this is not to discount the importance of course utility and the need for preservice teachers to expect learning specific strategies and activities for teaching. I also recognize and understand that learning to teach is a developmental process that moves from novice to competence (Benner, 1984; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986), which may necessitate the need for preservice teachers to expect and demand the recipes and tricks of the trade. Nevertheless, research suggests that teachers who develop a critical knowledge base and a deeper understanding of the subject and its pedagogical context are more able to use that understanding to make good, informed curricular and instructional choices to make the subject matter

meaningful to their students (Darling-Hammond, 2000; INTASC, 2000; Reagan, 1993; Shulman, 1987).

Given these emerging needs and the shifting focus in the preparation of preservice teachers, I aim for assisting preservice teachers in their understanding of teaching as an art rather than a skill and engaging in a self-transformation as a prerequisite for responsible teaching. To accomplish my goals, I engaged in specific pedagogical practices researched to foster transformative learning. This includes facilitation of an empowering learning context, experiential activities, modeling and scaffolding, rational discourse and critical reflection through journaling, dialogues and sharing of ideas, and exploration of new roles and actions (Mezirow, 2000). In the following, I discuss how these conditions were practiced in the course. I deviate slightly from the standard research reporting method as I discuss and reflect on the conditions of practice before the study methodology.

1) Establishing a Community-Based Learning Context

Transformative scholars have emphasized the importance of the instructor's role in designing a learning environment characterized by trust, caring, and sensitive relationships (Taylor, 1998). One of the lessons learned as a multicultural teacher educator teaching courses and content of high emotionality (diverse and controversial topics) is that the classroom context for teaching and learning is extremely critical. I realized that if my goal of fostering transformative learning is to materialize, I must establish a learning context that creates student autonomy, belonging, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1991) and allows participants to have access to full information, freedom from coercion, equal opportunity to assume various roles, opportunities for critical reflection, relationships with classmates who are cooperating and compassionate, and participants willing to search for a common ground or openness to multiple perspectives (Mezirow, 1997). As Biggs (1999) points out, "the context that we set up is at the core of teaching" (p. 25). Also, I considered Taylor's (1998) caution that too much emphasis is often placed on the teacher and instead thinks that what needs to occur is a co-learning situation in which both teacher and learner share in the responsibility for constructing and creating the environment and collaborating on curricular experiences. Most importantly, I believe in John Dewey's (1963) thinking that "the very process of [learning] together educates; it enlarges and enlightens experience; it stimulates and enriches imagination; it creates responsibilities."

Imperatively, I orchestrated the learning environment to foster a community of "knowers" where instructor and participants functioned "as co-learners united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their learning experience" (Loughlin, 1993, pp. 320-321). I began this process by collaborating with the class on developing community norms that would guide the members' conduct. Through a visualization exercise, participants were led to recreate and recollect classrooms where they either actively participated and learned meaningfully or were passive and minimally successful; they also discussed the conditions that fostered such experiences. In partnership and small groups, the students generated community norms that included respect for each person's dignity and perspectives, individual and collective responsibility for learning, individual participation and sharing, support and caring, and cooperation and collaboration. In addition, the students and I discussed the course syllabus, expectations, and requirements, and I invited their input regarding rigor and workload and negotiating course requirements. Further, I administered a pre-course survey (with no self-identification) in which participants identified their goals, issues, and concerns regarding the

course. I adapted and modified the course based on the elicited information. Also, the class viewed a video about a particular democratic and caring learning community where students exhibited intellectual engagement and maturity, partnership, collaborative and cooperative learning, and democratic attitudes such as respect, caring, civility, kindness, and support. Throughout the course, all learning experiences were either in partnership/paired learning or teams. Students learned to build relationships and a caring community that fostered collegial knowledge. Excerpts from participants' journals attest to the learning context that was characterized by collaboration, respect, warmth, caring, and trust. Consider Katie's comments:

I wanted to comment on the way you organize your class. This class is never boring and goes by so quickly because of the partnership and cooperative learning activities that allow us to work closely together and discuss. I have worked with almost everyone in a few weeks. In each activity you make us work with a different person. I have come to know almost everyone and feel positive about each person. As I work with each person, I learn new things about and from the different class members. This is how I would like my class to work. Thank you!

Another comment:

The fact that you, Dr. . . . , let us state what we would like to leave the classroom with shocked me. I thought this was the coolest thing that I have seen out of any college professor. Most of my teachers explain what I, as a future teacher, should do in my classroom, but I have never actually seen a teacher model what an effective and diverse classroom and a learning community should be. This was very refreshing and respectful.

The peer teaching observation feedback also noted the positive learning community: "This session was delightful and I felt like your relationship with the students was warm and professional. The warm interactions you encouraged with and among the students in the class were respectful and informative."

More importantly, to promote co-teaching and learning, participants were divided into learning teams and designated as *experts* of an aspect of the course. For instance, in order to understand the social studies standards, participants were assigned to become the expert and voice of one of the studies strands/standards. Each team was expected to research, analyze, and critique the standard and was frequently called upon during the teaching and learning process to provide examples related to the application of the standard. The students felt confident in this role and so diligently mastered their content and excitedly shared.

2) *Experiential Learning Activities*

Transformative scholars emphasize that transformative learning does not occur without creating experiences that help facilitate conceptual understanding (Mezirow, 2000). Throughout the course, participants were engaged in experiential activities that focused on specific social studies standards, concepts, perspectives, and strategies which included the following:

1) Explicit facilitation of concepts and perspectives. Because of the need to alter participants' misguided perspectives about social studies, it was necessary to help them understand the critical purpose of social studies. Thus, participants were engaged in examining the National Council for the Social Studies' (NCSS) working definition of social studies and its implication. In partnerships and small groups, participants dissected and discussed the definition and its implications. Similarly, participants were engaged in examining social realities of contemporary society and the global community as well as the implications for social studies instruction and learning. These experiences were eye openers for the participants and provided novel perspectives of social studies that impacted their thinking and understanding.

2) Modeling and scaffolding concepts and processes related to the course.

Gay (2000) defines scaffolding as a process of bridging and contextualizing and using students' prior knowledge base to connect to the new experience. I often began each course module or class session by activating participants' prior knowledge about the content examined. This involved providing opportunities for participants to initially work individually and then in partnerships and small groups and to share their ideas about the content examined. Following their sharing, I presented my own research ideas. Participants were often pleasantly surprised to notice how their ideas were similar to the ones I presented. Angela's observations shed some light on the common reactions from students:

I like the way you make us work on our own first, then in partnership and small groups. It made me think about what we were doing and had something down to share with my partner and small group. I really like this because I did not look stupid when we met in partnership and small group. I like the confidence it gave to me to participate. I also liked that our ideas often matched with yours and that really made us look smart.

Throughout the course, participants were engaged in experiential activities that specifically illustrated concepts, perspectives, themes, processes, strategies, etc. Each activity/strategy was followed by debriefing on the meaningfulness, relevance, learning styles, appropriateness, strengths, challenges, etc.

3) Engagement in structured and threaded discussions that challenge previous perspectives. Research suggests that well-constructed classroom discussions can nurture critical thinking and moral reasoning (Gall & Gall, 1990) and promote students' understanding of topics and concepts explored in class (Dillon, 1994; Miller, 1992). Structured, open-ended discussions were frequently used and provided the class with tremendous freedom to explore ideas, especially controversial issues. Through the discussion sessions, participants challenged each other's beliefs, ideas, questions, and perspectives. As Lori notes in her journal, many participants valued the opportunity to be able to engage in such discussions and for the broadening experience they created and the opportunity to

make a shift in their perspective based on listening to others' ideas:

Discussion gives me the opportunity to learn more and get different views. I like the way you allow us to discuss and share our perspectives on topics. It really helped me to see other point of view, change my thinking and helped me grow.

In addition, opportunities were provided for participants to engage in threaded discussions on critical social studies topics via the Blackboard software management system. Three important topics were posted and discussed, such as the following: (a) the value of the "common good"; (b) the relevance and pragmatics of interdisciplinary/integrated instruction, and (c) appropriateness of controversial issues at the elementary grade level. Before engagement in the threaded discussion, participants viewed a video on effective discussion participation. In this video, sixth-grade students engaged in an open discussion on social injustice and discrimination against children from low socioeconomic backgrounds called "Okies" (Stanley, 1992). The course participants were amazed and impressed with the incredible skills, sophistication and civility with which the sixth graders engaged in the open discussion. The students displayed respect for each other's perspective by using *accountable* (respectable) *talk* style as they responded, agreed, and disagreed with their peers' perspectives. Viewing the video had a powerful impact on the participants and shaped their engagement in responsible discussion. In addition, a statement about proper participation conduct was posted on Blackboard. As Dominic notes, participants appreciated the structured and threaded discussions via the Blackboard:

I have been very interested in our discussion threads. It was awesome to be able to not only share my perspectives but to hear others' thinking and view points. Our discussions have opened my mind and clarified some issues for me.

Finally, bi-weekly journal writing was used to facilitate participants' critical thinking and reflection related to their learning. I provided some structure to the reflective journaling (Dieker & Monda-Amaya, 1997) that focused on (a) content learned; (b) thoughts about the content learned; (c) questions/comments about content learned, and (d) how content might be applied. The journal essays were submitted to the Blackboard. I read each essay for content accuracy (lectures, activities, and readings), reflective thinking, and understanding. Written feedback was provided individually and whole-class. Questions and comments from the essays were typed and used for clarification and further discussion at the next class meeting; Allyson shares her thoughts about the procedures used in class:

The journal writing forced me to go over my notes, which was helpful. It is easy to show up in class and not really take in the subject matter. Having to reflect on the information allowed me to go over the information and see how it connects to what I am expected to do and really think about the choices and decisions I make. It forced me to think

about what I was learning and the implications for my practice. It helped me reconcile the confusion I had while the material was presented. I really liked how you showed everyone's questions and engaged us in discussing them and for clarification at the next class period. It helped us see other people's struggle and thinking.

3) Projects

Learning through projects was one vehicle utilized for promoting individual and collaborative inquiry. Two major projects were required: One team project involved constructing an interdisciplinary/integrated thematic unit, and an individual project with a range of options such as tradebook project, textbook analysis, instructional accommodation, construction of a philosophy of teaching and learning in the social studies using the INTASC principles and problem-based learning project. These practices and activities extremely helped to increase participants learning and perspective gaining.

Methodology

Context and Participants

The study took place in a mid-sized university located in a metropolitan urban community. It involved preservice teachers enrolled in a required social studies methods course in the Fall 2003 semester for elementary and middle school majors in the teacher education program. The course met once a week for three hours. Given the transformative nature of the course, it emphasized interdisciplinary perspective, cultural pluralism and multiple perspectives, and social activism. Participants in the study were 26 preservice teachers who were in their third year of the four-year professional program (PS3) and preparing to student-teach in the following spring semester. Of the sample, 96 percent were females and 4 percent male. Ninety-two percent were Caucasian; 4 percent African American, and 4 percent international. Twelve percent of the participants were non-traditional students ranging between the ages of 27 and 30 years, and 88 percent were under 25 years of age. Twenty percent of the participants were currently teaching and working toward certification.

At the outset of the course, participants were informed that I would be conducting a study on the course while teaching it. I explained the goal for the study as my attempt to engage them in active, reflective learning and in developing a deeper knowledge base of transformative social studies, to become producers of knowledge, to develop critical and reflective consciousness, and to study the effectiveness of my pedagogical approach. I informed them about the Social Science Institutional Research Board (SSIRB), and issues of confidentiality, benefits, risks, and parameters of participation were explained. Participants were assured that participation was voluntary, and that participation or non-participation would not in any way affect their grades in the course. Participants were also told that their work would be held in confidence and that their names would not be used in dissemination of the research materials. Furthermore, I informed them that I would need their written permission to include in the action research in compliance with my university's Social Science Institutional Research Board (SSIRB) guidelines. I told them only the works of those consenting would be used in the study. All but 3 of the 29 students signed the consent forms.

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design. Merriam (1998) describes basic or generic qualitative studies as those that “seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved” (p.11). This was a systematic way for me to examine my intuition, beliefs about transformative pedagogy, its practice, and its effectiveness (Ross, 1990). This research form was selected because, as Maxwell (1996) points out, it best captures the meaning, content, and process by which events and actions take place. The research questions were as follows: (a) To what extent does transformative pedagogy foster preservice teachers’ ability to deconstruct misguided perspectives about social studies and to construct new understandings that influence a shift in perspective (transformative learning)? (b) What transformative experience would be evidenced as a result of the practices of transformative pedagogy utilized in the course?

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from multiple sources: (a) document analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1999): participants’ journal essays, project reflective summaries, threaded discussions, written philosophy on teaching and learning in the social studies; (b) instructor/researcher’s journal and observation/field notes; (c) peer evaluation feedback; (d) end-of-course evaluation, and (e) participant interview. Interview data were gathered from five participants who volunteered following the completion of the course. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. Notes were taken during the interview and read back to the interviewee for verification. The purpose of the interview was to allow participants to reflect on the course experience and to share perspectives about the course. The researcher asked if anyone would volunteer to share perspectives about the course learning. The researcher passed out a sheet of paper for volunteers to write their names. Of the 26 participants in the study, only 5 volunteered. Fortunately, the 5 who volunteered were diverse in race, ethnicity, and gender. There were two female Caucasians (Whites), one international female, one Latino female, and one African male. Although the researcher did not doubt the sincerity of students’ reflective journals, nonetheless, she felt that since the course was completed and participants did not feel the pressure to perform for grade (to write what they thought the instructor/researcher wanted to hear), they would be more critical and honest about their assessment and learning experience in the course. The interview questions included the following: (a) What is your general experience of the course and its pedagogy? (b) How did the course pedagogy impact your thinking, beliefs, and views of social studies? Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. All data from reflective journals, field notes, interviews, structured and threaded discussions, project summaries, peer-observation feedback, and end-of-course student evaluation were analyzed separately during and after the collection phase. I employed an inductive coding technique (Strauss, 1987) for data analysis. I initially read and reread each data set and then systematically identified specific characteristics and codes based on emerging patterns and themes (Glesne, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Next, I reread all sets of data together to cross-check the similar and different codes across the data sets. In addition, I gave the set of data, without my coding, to a colleague to generate her own coding and themes, which were mostly identical to mine.

Findings

My analysis of the data resulted in four critical themes: (a) deepened perspectives and understanding about social studies; (b) shifting dispositions and awareness of new sense of responsibility; (c) evolving self-examination and redefinition of teaching role, and (d) an emerging sense of social critique and conscientization. Because the primary value of qualitative research lies not in the verification and generalization of universal truths but in the rich description and thoughtful explanation of complex processes, relationships, environmental influences, and the actions of particular individuals, the emerging themes are discussed in details.

1) Deepened Perspectives and Understandings about Social Studies

Overwhelming, all 26 participants expressed developing a new view and deepening understanding of social studies, especially its importance for citizenship development. There was profound evidence that participants moved beyond the exclusive preoccupation with the utilitarian value of the course to focusing on deepening their understanding about the field and self as a learner and teacher. Participants expressed that specific activities, such as engagement in examining the NCSS' (1994) working definition and its implication, discussion of social realities of contemporary society and the global community, and other experiential learning such as scenario-response, threaded discussions, and examination of articles positively impacted their thinking and understanding. Through various assignments and activities, all participants expressed experiencing transformative perspectives. This was revealed in the language they used to describe their experience with this *new way*—of social studies. Consider Alex's comments in relation to the participants' attitudes:

This "new way" of looking at social studies has helped me to have a better understanding of the curriculum's purpose. I can see that students have so many things to deal with in a democratic society, needing guidance and direction for becoming contributing citizens. In an article we read, "Citizenship Education for a Pluralistic Democratic Society" by James A Banks, I felt informed and encouraged about teaching to these goals. It is such an important thing to teach students about reality while still helping them to aim for ideals. I think that students will be more likely to care about what they are learning if teachers are honest about the reality of our culture in addition to being encouraging about the ideals of a democratic society.

Because participants learned to view social studies in a new way, they began to reverse their previous conceptions of the subject. Many recognized that social studies was not what they had known it to be—teaching discrete historical facts, names, dates, and capitals—and instead, they discovered a new meaning and understanding of the purpose of social studies for the first time—prepare students to become competent citizens in a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. Michelle's comment illuminates this discovery:

I never looked at social studies as I do now since learning the definition of social studies and its goals. The definition was truly an eye opener for me. I thought of social studies as mere history. After discussing the definition in class and when I think about it, it is

everything. When I was in high school I don't remember being taught how to become a good citizen or how to resolve civic issues.

One participant, a practicing teacher (Margo), explains how the new learning resulted in her reflecting on her own social studies experiences and critiquing her personal practice of teaching social studies:

I've enjoyed reflecting upon the definition of social studies. Although I have always viewed citizenship as both a right and a responsibility, I've never thought about teaching social studies from this perspective to my students. Consequently, I have not been teaching social studies at all. I'm ashamed to admit it but it is the truth. My own memories of social studies from childhood are not enjoyable ones—they all involve either rote memorization or some sort of map finding, and so subconsciously I think I've been avoiding the subject, justifying my actions by telling myself that reading, writing, and arithmetic are more important. But when viewed within the context of citizenship accountability; it is impossible to ignore how essential social studies education is.

Although all participants expressed value for the new understanding of social studies, the culturally different students were more able to appreciate and connect to the exploration of diversity and multiple perspectives. They were excited about the discussion of integrating the histories, voices, perspectives, and issues of diverse groups including those of women and children. Vanessa explains the nature of this enthusiasm:

I am so excited about this approach that brings in different perspective to the subject. I spent most of my schooling learning about White American history and nothing about my own history and culture. I am grateful that, now I have the knowledge to help my students learn about all cultures and their contributions to America.

2) Shifting Dispositions and Awareness of a New Sense of Responsibility

In a visualization activity designed to gauge participants' attitudes toward social studies, many students in the study revealed a profound dislike for the subject. Most participants recalled negative experiences such as boredom, textbook-based instruction, memorization and regurgitation, lots of seatwork, worksheets, and fill-in-the-blank exercises. A few recalled doing some projects and taking field trips. Reversing this negative attitude toward social studies was quite a transformation. Participants expressed that engagement in stimulating, challenging, and novel experiences led them to reverse their negative attitudes and increased their motivation and passion for the subject. Melissa's interesting comment highlights this change:

Many doors have opened for me this semester. I now have a new interest in the subject of social studies, and I no longer cringe at the thought of teaching social studies. I have realized that social studies is not just history and memorizing all of the dead Presidents or geography and spelling all of the states forwards and backwards. I now understand that it is much more. Wow, I never thought that I'd say that! I wish that I had this kind of knowledge when I was in elementary or high school.

Yet others expressed mixed emotions: specifically, one emotion articulated was anger at feeling

cheated and shortchanged by teachers who promoted passive and shallow social studies experiences; however, excitement was also demonstrated for the new experience and the opportunity to feel differently about social studies. Consider Gordon's comment in relation to the emotional element in the study:

I feel like I was ripped off in school. I hated social studies with a passion. We didn't do anything but read about boring, dead guys. I was dreading this class but now I know the purpose of what social studies is about and how to teach what students must know. I am now very interested in the subject and I can't wait for Tuesday of each week. I just kept thinking to myself, why didn't social studies make such sense and interest to me when I was in school?

Interestingly, participants did not only express changing disposition toward social studies but also began to recognize the critical role they play as teachers in promoting democratic citizenship. When individuals begin to see a phenomenon in a new way and become deeply passionate about it to the extent that they are able to see or view themselves in new roles, they have truly experienced transformation in learning. Prior to the course experience, most participants did not make a connection between social studies and citizenship development, let alone recognize their role in promoting it. Most participants initially viewed citizenship as what adults do—voting, paying taxes, and obeying the laws. As participants gained new perspectives and understanding about social studies, they began to develop a critical consciousness about themselves as well as their roles and responsibilities for students' citizenship development. In one of the interview questions, participants were asked to comment on what has really stood out for them in the course as Sharon describes her personal experience:

The greatest revelation I have had is that it is my responsibility to teach civic competence. I now understand that I am responsible for preparing the next generation of citizens. I have the responsibility to instill and model the ideals of a democratic society. Yes, I will teach the knowledge or content that goes along with social studies, but it is also my duty to make my students better citizens. And that's when it hit me; social studies is not so much a subject, but an interdisciplinary subject matter designed to make better informed students.

One evidence of transformative learning can be discerned when learners begin to expand the value of the phenomenon they are experiencing (Pugh, 2002) and become so deeply moved by it that they start to make changes in their own behavior and/or practice. Several participants reevaluated their own experiences of social studies and began to reverse previous practices as Jean explains:

Now I have discovered the real way to teach and learn social studies. It is about critical thinking. Children must learn how to think, analyze and interpret information. I must now provide learning experiences that allow students to think critically about information. For example, as our class looked at each of the social studies themes or standards through the eyes of "experts," I was inspired by the questions that each theme is based on. There were no questions like "What day was the battle of Gettysburg?" but instead questions like "How does what we do affect our world?" "How does the event of the past affect us

today?" This is so powerful for me. I definitely will not engage my students in worksheets and memorization and regurgitation of factual information.

3) Evolving Self-Examination and Redefinition of Self and Teaching Role

Transformative theorists contend that transformative learning occurs as individuals begin to examine themselves and personal frames of reference when exposed to meaningful learning experiences. It was exhilarating to see participants focus on themselves as individuals and their professional responsibilities and roles as teachers in a multicultural democracy and interdependent world. Some participants began to reflect and personalize their own learning and personal development as citizens in a democracy. This was the case for Koyitha who, prior to the course, had felt apathetic about politics, especially regarding the role of government in society:

I learned a lot of great activities and strategies that I can take into my classroom. I think that it is important for students to see how social studies relates to their everyday lives. I have had the attitude that why should I vote or be involved in politics because the government does not really make any decisions that affect me. These weeks in class have really shown me that thinking pattern is wrong. Government makes decisions constantly that affect my daily life. I need to teach my students how important government is and how it is important for them to be informed on government issues.

Although most participants had expressed excitement about their new awareness and knowledge, they also began to be conscious and realistic of the strength of their knowledge base and perceived preparedness for the huge responsibility they now have recognized. In fact, many began to express feelings of apprehension, inadequacy, and fear regarding their ability to rise to the challenge of preparing students for critical national and global citizenship. Angela's concern is expressed in the following comments:

I admit that prior to coming to this course I didn't fully understand the implications of social studies. I admit it is a little overwhelming on how we as teachers can give the children an understanding of all that is involved. I want to give the children a good knowledge base and understanding of all of the information at hand, not just an overview. I learned the most important goal of social studies is to promote civic competence, which is a large responsibility. I am now worried that so much responsibility is placed upon me. Do I feel ready for this? I feel overwhelmed and concerned that I may not live up to this expectation because I still have a lot to learn. Yes, I know now what is expected of me, but am I 100% sure that I can actually live up to this expectation? Even if I could work toward gaining the competency to teach my students all of these, what possibility exists that I will have the opportunity to teach the way I am learning I should teach? The emphasis on test scores causes me to think I may end up like my old teachers who taught in traditional ways. I feel that I may let my students down and my country. I am so worried!

Other participants felt so concerned about their unpreparedness that they considered reeducating themselves. In fact, during some class discussions, several students regretted not learning about

some subjects or paying attention to them when they took them. Interestingly, students like Marian considered retaking some courses to strengthen her knowledge base:

Class discussion raised many questions for me. I did not know a lot of the material that we were going over. This is a huge responsibility that we are taking on by becoming a teacher. I must say that I was pretty naive about what went into teaching social studies. There is a lot of content even to teach a first-grade class. I am beginning to think that if I am to teach social studies the way I now know it should be taught, I may need to retake some courses so that I can teach well. So, I am wondering, what courses should I take to help me learn more about citizenship? I feel that I have a lot to learn.

Although most participants overwhelmingly expressed excitement about their new experience, they also revealed feelings of frustration and painful cognitive disequilibrium, resulting from the contradiction between what they had become to be passionate about and the social studies reality in schools and classrooms they were observing. Because the social studies methods is taken concurrently with a field experience, many participants were placed in classrooms where they observed some contradictions between what they were learning in the methods class and what they were observing in the schools. Most participants observed that social studies was not given the kind of priority as the course had presented and that it was taught as time allowed from a traditional pedagogy. Michelle's comment aptly captures this feeling:

While many of the perspectives and strategies we've talked about are interesting and seem good "on paper," I still feel like I won't be able to teach that way. What I don't understand is why don't school districts (at least the ones I've been in) try to present material in this way? Everything seems to be taught directly from the objectives and the teachers' books that have each lesson already spelled out for them to correlate with the objectives. It seems they leave no room for improvisation. With all of this forward thinking that I'm learning, I feel frustrated in the fact that it will all be lost when I get out into the schools and am forced to fall back into "their way of thinking."

Although many participants raised concerns about their unpreparedness to teach social studies in the way they have come to understand it and disappointment over the low status of social studies in schools, they also began to feel hopeful, resolved, and empowered to make a difference. Kelly, a prospective urban teacher, is convinced that social studies, as he now understands it, is an effective vehicle for empowering his urban students to challenge the social realities that confront them, and feels resolve to teach in the *new way*:

As I reflect on the course experience there are so many things that have impacted my understanding. Foremost is the idea that social studies can and should be transformative. Often, as a prospective urban educator, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and hopeless because there seems no overt way to demonstrate how these kids can break the cycle of poverty and its overall effects. From our course it seems that social studies is the medium by which our students can reflect on their own situation and come up with solutions. To not teach social studies this way would be a disservice to the students and our society. The implications of the power I hold as an educator and eventually the power my students will hold as citizens is absolutely revolutionary, inspiring and yet overwhelming.

As I consider the responsibilities of teaching social studies in a culturally responsible way, I feel pumped up to assist my students to become agents of change. I feel I too must be an agent of change as I have constructed.

Additionally, it was exhilarating to observe the emergent teacher growth among participants who had moved to the point of combining reflection and action (Dewey, 1966). Some participants began to recognize how their curriculum must change and the nature and scope of that change. One participant discussed her recognizing the need to promote students' sense of social responsibility and civic efficacy by planning instruction that would engage them in social action projects as she comments:

After taking this social studies class, I have done a great deal of time reflecting on the way I teach social studies. I realize that I need to place an even greater emphasis on citizenship and cultivating the students who are responsible for their own actions. I also need to incorporate more lessons/themes around social activism. I desire to teach my students how they can impact their communities in positive ways through social activism. I would like to plan projects, such as a school wide letter writing campaign, or a food drive, or help with a neighborhood cleanup or etc.). As a responsible teacher we have the responsibility to provide experiences that are "transformative." Our students CANNOT wait until they are 35 years old to begin to become responsible members of a democratic society. Our students are helpless and we are their advocates. We must educate students to be more reflective and literate, to look around and ask: "How can they make things better?" We must warn them that the world needs their ideas and move them to civic competence and action. Teachers need to make connection so children can see how issues affect their lives. They need to understand the rationale for what they are learning. I feel empowered that I must engage my students in critical experiences where they make a difference in their communities. Social action projects will be integrated into the curriculum I implement.

Interestingly, other participants moved beyond their immediate classroom and curricular plans to recognizing the need to work with the administration and other colleagues to make changes. In fact, some had started to do so as Katie's comment indicates:

I feel very confident to start working with my administration to make changes about the way we teach social studies. I like the theme approach where all of the teachers are working on the same theme but at the same time accomplishing their grade level objectives. I am hoping that I can get a copy of the example that you used in class. It was the Interdependence Curriculum Theme slide. I would like to share this with my principal so our school can move toward teaching in this manner. I have shared many things with my principal about this class, but I think having a copy of that slide would really give him a clear picture of what we are trying to accomplish.

4) Emerging Sense of Social Critic and Conscientization

Critical reflection, which is the careful questioning of practices, issues, and assumptions embedded within a discipline, is an important aspect of transformative learning. When learners begin to raise questions about discourse, practice, pedagogy, society, and policies, it is evident

that they have experienced transformative learning. Transformative theory suggests that learners be engaged in social critique and in the interrogation of meaning in order to foster critical consciousness (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993). The field of social studies is one embedded with complex controversial social issues. A discussion of issues related to knowledge as social construction, multiple perspectives, and morals and values were issues in which participants evidenced a significant shift in perspective and transformation. Throughout the course opportunities were provided to raise participants' consciousness about social issues that are at the core of a democratic society and social education. Topics like the "common good," social and collective responsibility, religion, justice, patriotism, and differentiated lifestyles (gays and lesbians) were examined. Initially, many participants were challenged by discussions of gays and lesbians issues, especially their inclusion in the curriculum and classroom teaching. Often, most preservice teachers enter the social studies methods course with strong conservative ideas about morality and values, viewing themselves as guardians of such values, and so are less inclined to teach about alternative lifestyles and families. But through small group and online discussions, viewing and discussing videos like *It's Elementary* and *My Two Moms' Names Are Judy*, many participants expressed altering their perspectives on gays and lesbian issues. Issues of race, gender, American "culture," and the democratic process were constantly examined in partnerships, small group learning, and through the Blackboard discussions. The anniversary of *September 11* allowed participants to engage in social critique of the concepts and practice of "nationalism," "patriotism," "common good," war, religion, equality, and social justice. Brooke, an Early Childhood Education major who felt she would not have to deal with controversial issues in her early childhood classroom realized otherwise:

I thought that this class period was very informational. The discussion lay to rest a question of mine about teaching controversial issues. I had thought that I will not be dealing with controversial issues in my early childhood classroom, but I now realize, I will be dealing with some controversial issues like gay and lesbian parent/families. Although my Christian upbringing causes me to not support the teaching of gay and lesbian, I may have to deal with quite a bit more controversy than I think! The class discussion about the rights of children to a quality and equitable education now makes me think I need to be open-minded, and model my attitude of acceptance to those around me in hopes of changing such judgmental attitudes.

Another significant development of this finding is that some participants revealed developing skills for teaching about controversial issues and becoming comfortable with them. Through informal survey and classroom discussions, Theresa's comments exhibit what many had expressed about discomfort with controversial issues for reasons including limited knowledge, fear of chaos, and confrontation with families or administration:

This class meeting gave me a chance to learn some strategies for teaching and discussing controversial issues in my future classroom. In the past I have really steered clear of any topics of discussion that may be controversial because I did not feel comfortable with it and thought it may get out of hand. Now with this class meeting and all the ideas I have I can hardly wait to try these types of discussions. I feel more equipped to answer tough questions students may have and more comfortable about structuring the environment for these type of discussions.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore the impact of transformative pedagogy on preservice teachers' perspectives about social studies and its instruction. The importance of this research cannot be underestimated given the urgency to prepare an effective citizenry for a multicultural democracy and a complex, challenging, and interdependent world. Traditionally, social studies has been designed as the core area of the K-12 curriculum for the purpose of promoting civic education, although and much regrettably, it is receiving less time in the elementary school curriculum due to the effects of high-stakes testing and test score accountability. This reality makes the import and urgency to prepare preservice teachers who can function as empowered and transformative intellectuals who would boldly practice and promote a powerful social studies curriculum for critical national and global citizenship. The careful orchestration and structure of the course with a focus on a democratic learning community, co-learning, individual and collective responsibility along with facilitation of experiential learning activities, rational discourse, and opportunities for critical reflection helped to challenge preservice teachers' shallow perspectives of social studies and moved them in ways that they deconstructed them while reconstructing new and more transformative ones.

The obvious questions to ask are as follows: (a) Did the study participants experience transformative learning? (b) Were they able to transform their perspectives about social studies and its instruction? (c) Was there evidence of a shift in their perspective and meaning-making? Given the data analysis, the response is absolutely yes, although the transferability of that transformation to actual classroom practice cannot be determined from this study. Most people would argue that it is difficult, if not impossible, for students to experience transformation in learning, based on a fourteen-week university course. Interestingly, scholars of transformative learning believe that it *is* possible and remind us that transformation can occur in discrete classes because transformation comes in different sizes that may entail "a moment of transition from passivity to naiveté to some animation and critical awareness" (Shor, 1987, p.34). Further, Shor (1987) warns us that in "looking only for big changes, teachers lose touch with the transformative potential in any activity" (p.35). The process of transformation may occur in stages. I believe that university courses can at least provide an avenue for understanding foundational and pedagogical processes. As Freire (1987) suggests, "for transformation, we need first of all to understand the social context of teaching, and then ask how this context distinguishes liberating education from traditional methods" (p.33). That is, the transformative focus may become one of first developing critical knowledge and a lens for reflecting and then making plans for action. Thus, for me, the students' development of a new awareness of social studies, its purpose, and transformative process is a form of learning transformation. When participants' language about an experience takes on a new meaning, a deeper level of understanding has evolved. Based on the "thick" data that were collected from multiple sources and their analysis, it is relatively safe to say that all participants did evidence transformative learning even at the basic level. The findings revealed that participants had changed their frames of reference of social studies and gained new insights and perspectives. This transformation is revealed in the meaning and language participants used to describe their new experience, such as the "new way" of social studies and its instruction, which they became passionate about. In the course, participants began to recognize how and why their beliefs and prior experiences had constrained the way they perceived, understood, and felt about the social studies subject.

More importantly, this study revealed that participants gained a deeper understanding of the connection between social studies and citizenship development, which heightened their awareness of the critical role they must play as teachers in preparing the young for citizenry in multicultural democracy and interdependent world. This new awareness further engendered participants' critical consciousness and plans toward teaching the subject responsibly and advocating for it. Given the current low status of social studies and its relegation in the curriculum, preparing teachers for transformative intellectualism is the only hope for the survival of the subject. We need teachers in the schools who have a better understanding of social studies, especially its purpose for citizenship education, and who can teach it more responsibly and passionately. Today, social studies receives little time in the school curriculum because of the emphasis on literacy and mathematics in addition to the pressure that teachers face in the midst of high-stakes testing and accountability. Also, in this study, contrary to reports suggesting that preservice teachers have difficulty achieving higher levels of reflection (Galvez-Martin, Bowman, & Morrison, 1996), distinguishing between telling and reflecting (Bolin, 1990), moving beyond trivia pursuit activities, and incapable of changing deeply entrenched dispositions (Parajes, 1992), the study revealed otherwise: Participants were able to think deeply about the course experience, which resulted in the alteration of prior perspectives about social studies and were able to move toward critical consciousness and even advocacy.

The findings also suggest that specific pedagogies and activities such as fostering a community-based learning context, modeling, scaffolding, journaling, discussion, experiential activities, and projects were powerful in fostering participants' transformative learning. Some strategies such as cooperative learning, reflective journaling, and discussions, although not necessarily new, but the manner with which they were implemented, made the difference in participants' learning. From this study, I observed that preservice teachers were not overly obsessed with the utilitarian purpose of the course—to collect recipes and activities to hook their students (even though they expressed value for the experiential activities and strategies they gained)—but they also moved beyond it to becoming deeply interested in the subject even to the extent that they began to recognize and redefine themselves in new roles.

I would like to note that, although there is evidence that participants in this study experienced transformative learning, it would be naïve to suggest that the experience actually transformed everyone. The fact that some participants expressed feelings of ambivalence and frustration over the contradiction between their new experience and their observation of the practice of social studies in the schools is problematic. But did the course empower the participants in such a way that they could resist the influence of a traditional pedagogy and disempowering school culture once they transition into practicing teachers? My senses indicate that yes, it was that empowering. For example, in interviewing some of the participants about the impact of the course on their thinking and future practice, they said, "We have learned to be fisherpersons. You and the course have taught us how to fish. We now have the tools to do what is needed."

As previously mentioned, I went into this investigation as a teacher-researcher. I wanted to encourage preservice teachers to move beyond the utilitarian purpose often associated with methods courses, to develop a deeper understanding of the subject and its instruction, and to gain critical consciousness and habits of professional empowerment. From the study, I gained the insight that transformative pedagogy is critical to preparing teachers to become transformative, empowering, and reflective practitioners. Like the participants, I now recognize the possibilities inherent in transformative pedagogy. Although practicing transformative pedagogy is

challenging in terms of the tremendous amount of work involved, such as planning engaging activities, reading and responding to volumes of reflective essays, monitoring discussions in-class and online, especially those related to controversial issues, creating and sustaining a public space for authentic discussion, constructing and assessing time-consuming projects, and having to navigate some challenging student resistance. Teaching and learning premised upon democratic and learner-centered education can be challenging in terms of student resistance and teacher-student power relations. Even though, on the average, the classroom functioned respectfully, there were few instances when I felt challenged by the manipulation of the students. For example, one of the course requirements was a mid-term test. The test was a thinking examination involving scenarios and responses. Participants often gave responses that were incorrect for which they received partial credit but argued to receive full credit on the basis of multiple perspectives, that their responses were as valid as my so-called correct responses. This was challenging and frustrating, but it was just a small part of the course weight that I did not lose sleep over it. Overall, to hear the passion in the participants' voices about the "new way" of social studies and its instruction and to see the shift in perspective makes all the challenge worthwhile. In addition, because most preservice teachers have been conditioned to their roles as passive learners, even in their college classes, and have the view that learning is an individual activity, some participants (few) resisted the communal learning experience because it forced them to attend class regularly and punctually. Because of the focus on process learning and participation, students earned participatory points when they attended and participated in activities. Further, participants were required to evaluate each team member's participation, which reflected on their individual scores and grades. Some students who expected a free ride in group or partnership assignments resisted this aspect of the classroom practice and, of course, complained about having to work constantly in partnerships and group. Again, this involved a few students, so it really had little or no significance on the overall effect of the course outcome.

Finally, it is important to point out that the study is limited in its ability to generalize the results given the context and sample used. For example, were the participants' positive views of the course experience influenced by the desire to perform well on assignments? How sincere were the participants expressed views about the transformation? I realize that grades may motivate and influence what students write in assignments, so it is problematic to determine the authenticity of students' true learning or learning transformation. Thus, it will be necessary to undertake a further study to investigate the nature and transferability of the learning transformation. These limitations, however, should not undermine the findings and contribution of the study. For one, the multiple data sources and their triangulation should help to minimize the validity problem. Moreover, Maxwell (1992) explains that internal generalization is important for most qualitative researchers and that the "value of a qualitative study may depend on its lack of external generalizability" (p. 274).

Conclusions

Results of this study suggest implications specifically for social studies methods instructors and teacher educators in general. Given numerous reports suggesting that social studies instruction in K-12 is in a serious crisis, that students are learning less in the subject area, and that there is an urgency to prepare students for critical national and global citizenship for an increasingly diverse, complex, and interdependent world, preparing teachers to become transformative intellectuals cannot be taken lightly. However, that preparation must move

beyond the mere acquisition of technical skills for planning and implementing decontextualized content and promoting “banking education.” When instructors practice transformative pedagogy, they challenge students’ preconceived and misguided beliefs, mindsets, and perspectives, but more importantly, these teacher educators plant the seeds for engagement in transformative pedagogy. For example, in this study, most preservice teachers expressed value for the practices in which they were engaged and indicated that they would like to organize their future classrooms and practice in like manner. I believe it is possible to foster preservice teachers’ transformative learning, if they are engaged in empowering experiences that deepen their knowledge rather than engaging them in skills-based experiences. The study clearly indicates that transformative pedagogy influences preservice teachers’ perspectives about a subject matter and its pedagogy, encourages engagement in self-assessment and reflect-in-action, and fosters a sense of critical consciousness and redefinition of knowledge base and teaching role. In essence, this study contributes to the small, but growing, research in the area of transformative social studies education and pedagogy. My hope is that preservice teachers are empowered enough to be able to resist the influence of a traditional pedagogy and a disempowering school culture that beginning teachers often experience (Brown & Borko, 1992; Raymond, 1993).

As I conclude this study, I ponder upon several questions: Did all participants experience transformative learning? If not, what were the characteristics of the participants who experienced transformative learning? Will preservice teachers be able to resist the culture of passivity and traditional pedagogy upon entering their teaching classrooms? What aspects of the transformative pedagogy were most successful in engendering participants’ transformative learning? I plan to investigate some of these questions in the future.

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