Teaching in culturally diverse contexts: what knowledge about 'self' and 'others' do teachers need?

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Teaching in culturally diverse contexts: what knowledge about 'self' and 'others' do teachers need?

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This article draws on data from a small-scale qualitative study conducted in Australia that explored how pre-service teachers engaged with students from culturally diverse backgrounds during practicum and how they understood their own ethnic identities. The findings of the study suggest that pre-service teachers have simplistic understandings of their students' cultures and limited understandings of how their own identities are constituted through, and by, ethnicity. Such limited knowledge about the 'ethnic self' and the 'ethnic other' has implications for the development of multicultural pedagogies. The article raises concerns for teacher education including the need to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to understand the 'ethnic self' in relation to the 'ethnic other' through ongoing critical reflection.

Keywords: teacher education; ethnic identity; teaching for diversity; reflective practice; cultural diversity

Introduction

In the last 25 years across many parts of the world, including Europe, the UK, the USA, Canada and Australia, the ethnic and cultural make-up of communities has undergone rapid and radical change. Unprecedented movements of people across national borders due to sustained periods of political upheaval and war in many regions as well as the development of global labour and education markets has resulted in communities, some of which have traditionally been culturally homogenous, becoming increasingly diverse (International Organisation for Migration 2005; Mooten 2006; UNHCR 2004).

Such changing demographics are producing new challenges for many schooling systems. Even in the USA, Australia and Canada where there is a very long history of immigration of people from many cultural groups and diversity is not a new concept in schools, changing demographics present new and different challenges. For example, in Australia, where there are over 200 languages other than English and three main Indigenous languages spoken by approximately 17% of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, 146), pockets of Australian society are overwhelmingly monolingual and Anglo-Australian. Over the past decade, the development of new education markets in the government secondary school sector and rural schools has meant a rapid increase in the number of full fee-paying students from south-east Asia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003). Many schools that have been relatively homogenous are experiencing, for the first time, cultural

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diversity within their student population. Often, teachers in these locations have had little experience in working in multicultural contexts.

The need for all teachers to develop culturally responsive pedagogies has become increasingly urgent. Although such a professional requisite is contained in standards for teaching (e.g. Department of Education and Training 2003; Education Training Committee, Victorian Parliament 2005; Victorian Institute of Teaching 2003), it is inconsistently and often ineffectively addressed in teacher education. Much research suggests that in general, teachers are not well prepared to teach students whose cultural values and beliefs are different from the mainstream (e.g. Achinstein and Athanases 2005; Gay and Howard 2000; Leeman 2006). According to Valli and Rennert-Ariev, many teachers 'feel inadequately prepared and seldom choose to teach in multicultural schools' (in Vavrus 2002, 15). Such schools, commonly regarded as 'hard-to-staff', are often understaffed or staffed with teachers seeking transfers. High levels of teacher turnover in these schools mean that students 'have a high probability of being taught by an under-prepared teacher' (Martinez 2004, 5). Thus, students from some ethnic minority groups continue to achieve outcomes below their peers (Luciak 2006; Teese and Polesel 2003; Windle 2004).

The nature of teacher knowledge required for teaching in multicultural contexts has increasingly been the focus of much research (e.g. Chong 2005; Garcia and Lopez 2005; Solomon et al. 2005). Following a review of such literature, this paper loosely categorises the published material into three broad and interconnected areas; knowledge of pedagogy and practice, knowledge of students and knowledge of self. These knowledges are complex and each contains many interrelated sub-categories of knowledge. This article draws on data from a small-scale qualitative study to highlight the knowledge of pre-service teachers with regard to two specific aspects of these knowledge sets, namely knowledge of students and knowledge of self. Eight pre-service teachers' understandings of how their students' identities and their own identities are constituted through and by ethnicity are highlighted. It is then argued that knowing the 'ethnic self' and the 'ethnic other' are inextricably connected and are crucial to developing multi-cultural pedagogies and effective classroom practice. Finally, the article raises implications for teacher education.

What follows provides a brief overview of the study from which the data discussed in this paper are drawn.

The study

A different quality practicum? Interrogating sameness and difference with pre-service teachers was a small-scale study funded through a Deakin University Quality Learning Research Grant in 2003 and conducted in partnership with my colleague, Andrea Allard. It explored how eight pre-service teachers constructed their own identities in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic class and how they engaged during teaching experience with secondary school students who had different ethnic and socio-economic classed identities from themselves. The pre-service teachers were either in the third year of a four-year degree, or the final year of a post-graduate teaching degree. Like most teachers in Australia, the participants in this study are from the dominant cultural 'mainstream' and attended Anglo-Australian

middle-class schools for their primary and secondary schooling. They are monolingual and have had little experience of either working or living in multicultural contexts. As part of their participation in the study, they volunteered to complete a three-week teaching experience in one of two inner-city government secondary-schools in Melbourne, Australia. The majority of students at each school came from a language background other than English (LBOTE) and were from a range of backgrounds including Horn of Africa, Bosnian, Serbian, Vietnamese, Chinese and Iraqi. Most also received an education maintenance allowance (EMA), a government subsidy paid to families living in poverty.

Data for the study were collected in three stages:

(1) Pre-teaching experience. Before the students undertook their teaching experience they participated in a 2-hour focus group where discussion elicited information about how they constructed their own identities in terms of social class and ethnicity.
(2) Teaching experience. During their three-week teaching rounds, each pre-service teacher kept a reflective journal where they noted their concerns, issues and experiences while working with different groups of learners. Researchers also visited each pre-service teacher and kept field-notes that documented their observations of some of the pre-service teachers in the classroom and their conversations with them about the professional and personal challenges of teaching for diversity.
(3) Post-teaching experience. Following the teaching experience, the pre-service teachers were interviewed individually to follow up pertinent issues that had emerged during stages 1 and 2. A final focus group discussion enabled participants to compare and reflect on their experiences.

Post-structuralist theories of identity have informed the study. Developed from the work of Derrida (1976), Kristeva (1986), Lacan (1977) and Foucault (1978), post-structuralism argues that identity is multiple, negotiated, dynamic, changing and changeable (Davies 2000; Reay 2001; Watson 2006). The notion of a unified self with a set of core characteristics has been rejected in post-modern times in favour of a view of identity as a complex matrix of factors. Identity 'markers' such as ethnicity, gender and social class, for example, come together in complex and sometimes contradictory ways to constitute 'the self'. For example, one is never simply an ethnic Chinese but also a social classed and gendered Chinese. However, how people 'perform' their identities depends on how they position themselves and are positioned (i.e. their positionality) within the range of discourses and discourse communities to which they have membership such as schooling, professionalism and so on. Important also, is how people respond to the power and power relations inherent within such discourse communities and how they take up or resist the ways they are positioned.

In order to examine how pre-service teachers understand their own identities and those of their students, discourse analysis was used. This meant that it was important to focus on the complexities of identity and to highlight the tensions between actual practices and intended classroom practices and deconstruct binary opposites. As Weedon (1999, 105) claims, 'The process of deconstruction reveals how binary oppositions are not expressions of a natural order, but rather discursively produced under specific historical conditions'. The data analysis examined the interview and

focus group data, that is 'texts', for broad themes and recurring discursive practices that shaped how the pre-service teachers position themselves and are positioned within discourses of multicultural teaching. It also attended to the silences, what was not said and the discursive practices that shaped identities in implied but not explicit ways. According to Fairclough (2003, 11), 'What is ''said'' in a text always rests upon ''unsaid'' assumptions, so part of the analysis of texts is trying to identify what is assumed'. According to Luke (1995, 10), discourse analysis is 'a political act itself, an intervention in the apparently natural flow of talk and text in institutional life that attempts to ''interrupt'' everyday common sense'.

This article makes use of the terms 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic identities' in preference to 'race' and 'racial identities'. This preference reflects concern about how 'race' has been historically connected to biological determinism and popularly regarded as 'natural' rather than socially constructed. This does not mean, however, that I do not recognise that skin colour shapes the subject positions that are created for, and taken up by all people. Nor does it mean that I accept, without question, the notion of 'ethnicity'. It too can be reduced to its fundamental elements: in a post-modern and globalised world where national boundaries and social boundaries are constantly changing and being recast, the attribution of cultural traditions and characteristics as fundamental to a particular ethnic group can be highly problematic.

Due to the small-scale nature of the study reported here, the data presented are not intended to represent the perspectives of *all* pre-service teachers and the findings are not generalisable to contexts beyond these cases. Nevertheless, the data provide valuable insights into the knowledge of eight pre-service teachers with regard to the 'ethnic self' and the 'ethnic other'. Furthermore, while I understand the problems of separating ethnic identity from other aspects of identity, for reasons of brevity, I have selected *an* aspect on which to focus in this article, that is, how pre-service teachers understand themselves and their students as constituted through and by ethnicity. I have written elsewhere about the intersections of ethnicity with gender and social class in regards to these data (for example, Santoro 2007; Allard and Santoro 2006).

Knowing the 'ethnic other' and the 'ethnic self'

Classroom practice marks the coming together of complex and interrelated sets of professional teacher knowledges. Knowing *what* and *how* to teach culturally diverse students is dependant upon teachers understanding their students' learning needs and recognising how and when those needs are different from and/or similar to the needs of students from the dominant cultural majority. Delpit (1995), speaking about teaching in multicultural contexts, claims it is necessary 'to really see, to really know the students we must teach' (183). Therefore, in order really to know students of ethnic difference, teachers need to understand the nature of their students' 'ethnic identities', that is, what their cultural practices, values and beliefs are and how these shape them as learners and members of ethnic communities.

The findings of the study reported here suggest that the pre-service teachers had limited knowledge about their students' cultural values, practices and traditions. Kylie, who attributed her lack of knowledge about other cultures to having grown up in an isolated rural and culturally homogenous community reflects upon how she

began to develop knowledge about her students during her teaching experience. She says:

> I was very interested in learning about their different cultures so she [the supervising teacher] just talked and talked and talked on through our lunch hour, and that made me feel a lot better because I walked into class feeling as if I knew them a lot better. Like I didn't know that the Vietnamese girls' parents were so strict and there are arranged marriages and all that… They're not allowed to go out to parties, not allowed to go out with boys, they're very much set in their culture. That's what the girls do, they stay at home and get married.

Here, Vietnamese culture, as understood by Kylie's supervising teacher and now Kylie, is characterised by practices that control, hinder and restrict girls. Such a construction is clearly problematic. It is at best, a generalisation that attributes *some* aspects of Vietnamese culture to *all* Vietnamese–Australian girls. At worst, it is a racist portrayal of Vietnamese culture as oppressive. Kylie has put her trust in her supervising teacher and taken this advice on board as 'the truth'. While this is not surprising, given that Kylie is a novice teacher, it is also troubling that she does not begin to critique the advice but seems to take up readily such a deficit discourse. She goes onto say:

> It [this information] helped me to understand that's why they're so quiet, that's why they don't say anything, that kind of thing, it helped me to understand that… Like, when I went up to the girls [to ask them questions], one of them would say what I'd just basically said and then the rest would just agree and nothing else would be said.

Similarly, on the basis of advice given to her by other teachers at the school, Kylie attributes the rowdy and disruptive behaviour of her male students to their being Muslim. She says:

> …speaking to a couple of other teachers they did tell me that some of the Turkish boys see the females if they haven't got the head set over them as easy, that they're sluts, that kind of thing. That's just from the way they've been brought up… If a new female teacher comes in, that teacher has really got to stand up for herself and tell them that she's in charge and that they are to respect her.

Kylie's response to the boys, as the teacher suggested, was to assert her authority, remind them about the school rules concerning behaviour and the need to respect teachers. In reference to how she dealt with the behaviour of one particular student, she says:

> I went into the class and I said, 'Right you've got one chance'. I gave him one chance. 'Right, move!'… He wasn't used to me doing that. He thought he could get away with it and then in the end I sent him out of the room and then he knew I was for real.

These stereotypical constructions of Vietnamese girls as quiet and Muslim boys as disrespectful and disruptive are troubling for a number of reasons. First, such constructions suggest that culture (and gender) is singular, fixed, generalisable and shapes learners in predictable, consistent and often, negative ways. Students' responses to schooling are regarded as predetermined; all students from a particular ethnic group will behave in the same way and will conform to similar cultural expectations.

Second, it constructs the students, their cultures and 'the way they've been brought up' as *the* problem and places the blame on the students and their families. There are however, a number of explanations for the students' disruptive behaviour or reticence to participate in class, including inappropriate or culturally irrelevant

curriculum, poor teacher–student relationships and so on. By constructing students as 'the problem', there is a risk that teachers may not see the need to interrogate their own practices or the discourses of schooling that work to marginalise some students. The solution lies with the students themselves, as the teachers simply need to find ways to 'manage' them.

Third, Kylie's naming of the students as 'Vietnamese' or 'Turkish' rather than 'Vietnamese–Australian' or 'Turkish–Australian', denies the complexities of hybrid and multifaceted identities. Individuals can identify with a number of ethnic and cultural groups to inhabit an 'in between space' (Bhabha 1994, 38), or to develop what Anthias (2001, 620) refers to as a 'transnational positionality'. Positionality, that is, the intersection of one's social position and one's social positioning, can be constituted across national boundaries and national belongings. What emerges is a newly forged identity rather than an identity that is an amalgam of the distinctive characteristics of a number of cultures. Furthermore, in naming the students as 'Vietnamese' or 'Turkish', even though they are Australian-born, Kylie sets up a binary between 'real' Australians, that is, those of Anglo-Celtic heritage and 'the rest'. According to Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos (2004, 32), 'In Australia, whiteness is historically and socially constructed through processes that position… designated migrant groups as what we might call "perpetual foreigners within the Australian state", quite apart from their legal status or self-understandings'.

In direct contrast to how some of the pre-service teachers explicitly and uncritically attribute their students' behaviours to their ethnicity, others were reluctant to acknowledge that their students' differences actually did shape their responses to schooling and that these were factors to consider in classroom practice. When reflecting on how her students' ethnicities shaped them as learners, Hannah suggested:

> Kids are kids… Everyone has problems and if you are going to start looking at some people, it's really important that everyone receives the same level of attention, I think… It's very important to not make a big deal of cultural difference.

Hannah's response highlights a tension between acknowledging and explicitly naming difference and seeing students as 'the same'. Causey, Thomas and Armento (2000) refer to the tendency to see everyone as the same as 'naïve egalitarianism' (34). It does not acknowledge that students *are* different, that differences *do* matter and some people are treated unequally and have unequal access to resources *because* they are different. Students do not have the *same* problems: to give them 'the same level of attention' can ignore how schooling practices often privilege those students of the dominant cultural group while marginalising others. Perhaps Hannah took up this discourse of egalitarianism because she was concerned about the risk of stereotyping students and being misunderstood as racist. Speaking about a North-American context, Pollock (2004) claims that educators need to name 'race' and to 'lead and participate in race conversations' (121) 'in order to purposely challenge an existing simple race system, in which the distribution of social and tangible resources remains perennially unequal' (43). Practices that attempt to homogenise students, to blur the boundaries between ethnic minority groups and the 'mainstream', can serve to silence debates about the inequalities that do exist *because* of racial and ethnic difference. How does one talk about inequalities, and address them, without naming the differences on which inequalities are based?

Not surprisingly, given their lack of knowledge about their students' cultures and identities, the pre-service teachers struggled to engage their students in learning. In particular, they found it difficult to design lessons that were culturally relevant and accessible. When developing units of work they were unable to see beyond their own localised and taken-for-granted understandings of the world to what was culturally relevant for their students. For example, Susan was surprised to find that her 14-year-old Turkish–Australian students were disruptive during a social education class about the Crusades and the lives of the crusaders. She had spent long periods of time designing and sourcing material for a lesson about the crusaders' shields that she was certain would engage her students. However, she had naïvely assumed that the presentation of the Crusades from a 'western' perspective was an appropriate lesson. When I talked to her about why this might be the case, it became clear that she had little understanding of the socio-political and cultural discourses that may have shaped the students' understandings of, and engagement with this topic.

Similarly, Sally also chose to teach a topic to her 15-year-old students that required them to draw heavily on cultural knowledge they did not have, while ignoring the cultural knowledge they may well have had. She used an issue that had recently been in the Australian newspapers as the basis to teach argumentative writing skills to an English class consisting primarily of second language learners from a range of backgrounds including Vietnamese, Arabic, Serbian and Somali. The issue was that a former Anglican Archbishop and newly appointed Governor General (the Queen's representative in Australia), had been forced to resign because of the public perception that he had, in his former position of Archbishop, mishandled claims against priests accused of child abuse. Sally reported that this lesson did not go as well as she had hoped: the students struggled to understand the newspaper text she had given them because they were not familiar with the religious or political terminology integral to their successful reading of the article. She was surprised to learn that the students, most of whom were not Protestant, 'didn't even know what an Anglican or an Archbishop was!'

In order to develop culturally relevant materials teachers must know *what* is culturally relevant to their students and must recognise when existing curriculum fails to build on or acknowledge the cultural knowledge students bring to their learning. This requires them to have knowledge of their students' cultural traditions and practices and understand how they are different from or similar to those of the 'mainstream'. Teachers need to move beyond their own worldviews in order to develop and understand their students' perspectives.

The pre-service teachers' lack of knowledge about the complexities of ethnicity as it relates to students is clearly of concern. Similarly, some of the supervising teachers' advice to the pre-service teachers was often based on stereotypes. It is not always the case that practising teachers who are working with students of ethnic difference on a daily basis have acquired, simply through experience, the knowledge needed for teaching in multicultural contexts. According to McIntyre (1997), some teachers who are members of the dominant cultural and ethnic mainstream can 'perform the multicultural tricks while never having to critique [their] positionality…' (13). It is the critiquing of their positionality that might enable them to understand how their own ethnicity shapes their relationships with students, their expectations of them and their classroom practices. Such critiques are essential if teachers are to move beyond seeing teaching for diversity as something that focuses only on the 'other'.

The pre-service students had little awareness of their own subject positionings in relation to ethnicity. They understood 'ethnic' as a label for 'others' but not themselves. For example, Jody says in response to a question about how she understands her ethnicity: 'I'd always assumed that I had none – or one that wasn't all that interesting'. Why does Jody assume herself to be 'ethnic-less' or at best, with an ethnicity that is so uninteresting, it barely counts? Her understanding of 'ethnic' is in keeping with the way it is popularly used in Australia as a noun for people of non-British heritage or as an adjective for the cultural practices of the 'ethnic other'. The real 'ethnics' have 'ethnic food', 'ethnic dress' and 'ethnic customs' and so on, while the real 'Australians' in contrast, are without an ethnicity (Tsolidis 2001).

Sally also equates being Australian with being cultureless, or at best, not having a very interesting culture. She says, recounting an interaction with a student who asked her about her ethnicity:

> …when one of the kids asked me if I was Italian, I thought, oh I wish I could say 'yes'. I just wish I could say 'yes'… my family has been here since the First Fleet [first British settlers to Australia in 1788] and it's not quite as interesting or, I don't know… I talked to my family about it a lot, and Dad said to me, 'But on the other hand, don't you think that we're lucky that because we're Australian, we can kind of take on parts of other cultures?' We have tomato day. We're not Italian, but my Dad likes to think that he is… We have tomato day and the amount of food and activities that we do at home are so multicultural… I think it is disappointing that in real life that you are just Australian.

Sally's statement about her family having been in Australia since the beginning of white settlement can be read as an assertion of her status as a 'real' Australian. Claims of belonging embedded in time and history are commonly made by Anglo-Celtic Australians to differentiate 'real' Australians from those with a more recent immigration history. After establishing her belonging, Sally goes on to construct her Australian-ness as bland and uninteresting in comparison to the cultures of the 'exotic other'. However, it is because she is '*just* Australian' with the privileges that membership of the hegemonic 'mainstream' brings, that she and her family can select what aspects of 'ethnic' culture they will allow to shape and enrich their lives. In his work on multicultural Australia, Hage (1998) says:

> In the context of Australian multiculturalism, the point being made is not simply that the discourse of enrichment places the dominant culture in a more important position than other migrant cultures. More importantly this discourse also assigns to migrant cultures a different *mode of existence* to Anglo-Celtic culture. While the dominant white culture merely and unquestionably *exists,* migrant cultures exist *for* the latter. Their value, or the viability of their preservation as far as White Australians are concerned, lies in their function as enriching cultures. (Hage 1998, 121)

The acceptance, and even 'envy', of particular cultures by those of the hegemonic 'mainstream' is popularly believed to be evidence of a successful multicultural Australia where different cultures are valued. However, while *some* aspects of *some* cultures are celebrated in *some* contexts in Australia, at the same time, the same ethnic minorities can struggle to gain equal access to resources or to voice opinions contrary to those of the hegemonic mainstream (Jakubowicz 2002). The acceptance of minority cultures under such circumstances is a process characterised by a complex process of othering. In other words, they are accepted *because* they are 'other'. However, when minority cultures do not enrich the lives of those in the dominant majority, or when their members are reluctant to assimilate and take up

the beliefs and values of the mainstream indiscriminately, they are often constructed as 'problems' rather than as 'interesting'.

Implications for teacher education

It is clear that to engage students effectively in learning, teachers need to know their students and to understand their cultural backgrounds and the values and practices that may underpin their expectations of, and responses to schooling. In teacher education, such knowledge is sometimes developed through units of study that cover the cultural characteristics, histories and traditions of particular ethnic groups. Such an approach is of some value if it stresses that all cultures are multifaceted and changeable, that students can have common experiences associated with their membership of a particular ethnic group, but that within each ethnic group, there are also different experiences. However, because such an approach usually focuses entirely on 'the other', it may simply construct members of the hegemonic 'mainstream' as the 'norm' from which all else is understood as different. Thus, culturally diverse students can be seen as 'problems' that need to be 'managed' so they fit in with the beliefs and values of the dominant ethnic majority. Alternatively, their cultural differences might render them novel, exotic and 'colourful'. In either case, these constructions can simply affirm and reinforce stereotypes.

What is needed in teacher education are opportunities for knowledge about 'the other' to be developed in conjunction with knowledge of self. These knowledges are mutually constitutive, as each builds upon, and is dependant on, the other to make meaning. Palmer, referring to the connection between good teaching, knowledge of students and knowledge of self suggests, 'When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are… and when I cannot see them clearly I cannot teach them well' (Palmer; in Hinchey 2004, 1). Taking Palmer's sentiments a little further, teachers need to come to know themselves as ethnic and encultured if they are to understand their students and engage with the complexities of teaching for diversity. This means understanding how their own ethnic identities shape their teaching identities, their classroom practices and their relationships with students. However, the eight pre-service teachers in the study reported here, lack awareness about their own ethnic positionings. They have never considered that they have an ethnicity, let alone how it shapes their relationships with others and the teaching discourses they privilege and/or silence in their classrooms. Other research suggests similar findings for teachers in general (e.g. Aveling 2006; Milner, 2006). How can teacher education make visible to them what is invisible, make explicit the 'investments that… have been woven into the everyday fabric of what is considered common sense' (Boler and Zembylas 2003, 111) and help them understand the 'ethnic self'?

Critical reflection, a skill long argued by many scholars as vital for teachers in general (Dinkelman 2000; Schön 1983; Zeichner and Liston 1996), must underpin any approach to teacher education seeking to help teachers understand the 'ethnic self'. Wiedeman suggests ongoing critical reflection is integral to the development of teachers' understanding of 'their social identity in relation to the identities of their students and especially as related to differences of privilege, relations of power, and oppression' (Wiedeman 2002, 206). While the 'emotional labour' (Boler and Zembylas 2003, 130) needed for such reflection can be intensive, the issues it raises can compel '…pre-service teachers… to focus on themselves, their own experiences,

life worlds, privileges, struggles, and positions *in relation* to others (their students, their students' parents, their students' communities, and their students' ways of knowing)' (Milner 2006, 371).

Developing pre-service teachers' knowledge about the 'ethnic self' and the 'ethnic other' is difficult and challenging work. It may require teacher educators to unsettle what are students' deeply rooted beliefs about the centrality of their position within the hegemonic 'mainstream'. According to Collins (2004, 232), pre-service teachers, 'Like all of us,… can only think through the lenses provided by the language and ideas to which they have been introduced. The concepts and theories to which they have access quite literally set the limits of their capacity to reflect'. Teacher educators must extend their students' reflective capacities about self and others in sensitive and non-confrontational ways. If pre-service teachers feel sufficiently threatened by having to consider their ethnic identities, including the privileges accrued to them as members of the dominant majority, there is a risk that they will simply find ways to justify, rather than interrogate, their existing beliefs about others and their lack of knowledge about self.

While a detailed discussion of the specific strategies teacher educators might use to develop their students' understandings of self in relation to their students is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that the skills of reflection should be explicitly taught. Pre-service teachers do not automatically know what constitutes meaningful reflection and reflective practice (Russell 2005). Some may see it simply as a process of review and evaluation with an emphasis on the technical aspects of teaching rather than a way to also understand how personal beliefs and values shape one's sense of self as a teacher and one's teaching practices. In the case of teaching for diversity, it is important that teacher education enables pre-service teachers to reflect on how teaching identities are constituted through ethnicity, and how they are played out through classroom practices. What assumptions about their students' cultures underpin pre-service teachers' expectations of them as learners and in what ways are these assumptions socially constructed and shaped by their own positionings? In what ways are such expectations evident in how and what is taught? For example, had Susan understood something of the religious values of her Turkish–Australian students and had she been conscious of how her perspectives on the topic were shaped by her own taken-for-granted cultural values, she may have approached the teaching of the topic differently. She could have drawn on the students' knowledge of the Crusades and engaged them in discussion about how historical events are understood from multiple perspectives and that 'the truth' depends on one's positionality.

However, without opportunities for both reflection and first-hand engagement with culturally diverse student groups, knowledge of self and knowledge of others cannot inform practice in effective and meaningful ways. School experience policies must reflect the importance of preparing all teachers to teach for diversity by ensuring a significant proportion of pre-service teaching experience is spent in schools where there are opportunities to reflect upon and critique the teaching of culturally diverse students in relation to self. Furthermore, the preparation of teachers for culturally diverse contexts should not be confined to elective units for those pre-service teachers who have a particular interest in cultural diversity or think they might be likely to teach in culturally diverse schools. Given the changing demographics of student populations, all teachers should be prepared to

teach culturally diverse student cohorts. Such preparation is integral to the 'core business' of teacher education, and it should be, to varying degrees, the concern of all teacher educators and integrated through all components of a teaching degree.

While there has been an increase in research concerned with teacher ethnicity (e.g. Basit and McNamara 2004; Santoro, 2007; Han and Singh 2007), there has been very little attention paid to teacher educators and how their practices are shaped by their positionality. Given that teacher educators, like most teachers, are drawn from the dominant ethnic majority, like their teacher colleagues, many may not have considered the 'ethnic self' in relation to the 'ethnic other'. They need to understand their own positionings before they can put in place strategies to develop such complex understandings in their students. It might be fair to speculate that learning about and reflecting on the 'ethnic self' in relation to the 'ethnic other' is as important for some teacher educators as it is for pre-service teachers. Potentially, this is an area of important professional development and research.

The challenges facing teacher education seeking to prepare teachers to work productively in culturally diverse contexts are significant. These challenges are further complicated by a looming international teacher shortage. In Australia, there is pressure on teacher education systems to prepare greater numbers of teachers in shorter periods, to streamline teaching degrees and to adopt what Collins (2004, 228) describes as a revival of the 'a craft apprenticeship model of teacher training'. Potentially, this means that pre-service teachers will spend more time in schools learning the craft of teaching and less time in universities engaged with theory. However, learning to teach for diversity requires sophisticated levels of reflective skill, opportunities for practice as well as theoretical understandings of critical race theory, multicultural education and so on. Such knowledge cannot be developed in schools, nor can it be developed in short periods of time. There is a risk that learning about self will prove to be too costly and too time consuming. Teacher education may be forced to take up 'quick fix solutions' to preparing culturally responsive teachers that will simply focus on 'ethnic others'. It is imperative that teacher educators ensure that the knowledge pre-service teachers need for increasingly diverse and global classrooms is prioritised highly, and that it remains firmly 'on the agenda' of teacher education.

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