

Proceedings from the Document Academy

Volume 7
Issue 1 *Proceedings from the 2020 Annual
Meeting of the Document Academy*


Article 16

2020

Technology of Story: Documenting Culturally Sustaining Anti-Racist Teaching

Frances Vitali
University of New Mexico, fvitali@unm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/docam>

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Elementary Education Commons](#), [Humane Education Commons](#), [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Please take a moment to share how this work helps you [through this survey](#). Your feedback will be important as we plan further development of our repository.

Recommended Citation

Vitali, Frances (2020) "Technology of Story: Documenting Culturally Sustaining Anti-Racist Teaching," *Proceedings from the Document Academy*. Vol. 7 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35492/docam/7/1/16>

Available at: <https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/docam/vol7/iss1/16>

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by University of Akron Press Managed at IdeaExchange@Uakron, the institutional repository of The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Proceedings from the Document Academy by an authorized administrator of IdeaExchange@Uakron. For more information, please contact mjon@uakron.edu, uapress@uakron.edu.

Before beginning this narrative, I would like to acknowledge and honor Navajo Nation, Ute Nations and Pueblos of Acoma, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Santo Domingo and Sandia in and near New Mexico, where I am fortunate to live in a community benefiting from the confluence of these sovereign contributions singularly and collectively. I am humbled by the opportunity to present this information as a guest on these lands. This acknowledgment is offered in respectful deference to the original Sovereigns of this Land in Northwest and Central New Mexico. (Land acknowledgement, n.d.)

Unlearning Racism

“Schools represent a relatively stable system of inequality. They contribute to these results by active acceptance and utilization of a dominant set of values, norms, beliefs which, while appearing to offer opportunities to all, actually support the success of a privileged minority and hinder the efforts and visions of a majority.” (Hall, 1997, p. 151)

Insidious forms of racism still exist in less explicit and subtle ways as “plausibly deniable racism” such as: gatekeeping policies that limit inclusive participation; simple passivity in coded language; and meritocracy in taking action to counter racist practices that maintains structural oppression (Katz, 2020 in Conversation on Anti-Blackness, White Privilege, and Allyship, 18:10 minutes). Yaziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2005) provide a definition of colonization as “subjugation and/or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, lands, and resources” institutionally, politically, economically, ideologically while decolonization is focused on “overturning the colonial structure” toward “Indigenous liberation” (p. 3). Reid Gomez (2003-2004) elucidates the United States’ historical subterfuge of Native sovereigns as surviving “British, French, Spanish, American, and Mexican colonization” with this tendency toward erasure transforming “The People” into “We the People.” Ironically “Indigenous peoples of the U.S. were made citizens twice, originally as a result of the General Allotment Act of 1887 and again with the passage of the 1924 Citizenship Act. Both of these “gifts” of citizenship were unwanted by Indians” since their identity, connected to their land and language, became racialized possessions of the government (68-69). Philip Deloria has written extensively about the intertwining of “decolonization of indigenous histories and structural inequities” (Webster & Peterson, 2011, p. 1).

According to Grover, Director of Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.: “We know teachers are teaching about Indians as required elements of their curriculum, but we also know that the textbooks haven’t changed in decades and that the information that is being put forward simply is not

very good. It's, at best, incomplete, and at times, absolutely inaccurate” (Constantin, 2015, para 1).

Assimilationist practices of schooling for Native American children are captured by White-Kaulaity, (2007): The history of Indian education indicates that instruction in the white man's reading and writing came with damaging practices of indoctrination, assimilation, and colonization. ... The entire school experience was painful because of institutionalized racism and the goal of “removing the Indian” from students. They were even punished for speaking their native language (p. 581). According to Adams (1995), “the assault on cultural identity” was a two-step, systematic approach by stripping away tribal identity to be replaced with a civilized one (p. 101).

The University of New Mexico College of Education and Human Sciences Diversity Committee disseminated a response to faculty recently reminding us of the power and privilege we hold as highly educated individuals with responsibility to not only acknowledge but take a stand against racist practices:

The disproportionate deaths of People of Color from COVID-19, extrajudicial killings, migrant children separated from their families, high unemployment and underemployment— reconfirm the lack of respect given to the lives of Communities of Color. Our collective psyche is filled with anger, pain, fear, and trauma. It is in these times that radical healing and critical hope are so desperately needed. The College of Education and Human Sciences has an obligation to uplift and transform this pain into critical social action and change.... How do we lead at this critical moment to transform our college? As the Diversity Committee for the college, we want to see programs that build bridges to tackle critical issues of diversity, inclusion, and global harmony. We need to acknowledge and give voice to faculty, staff, students and community members who have had to endure bigotry, discrimination, racism and anti-blackness at UNM. (personal communication, June 6, 2020).

New Mexico Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart (2020) also responded to the national Black Lives Matter outrage:

Education empowers us to lead the critical dialogue and to organize the collective movement that it will take to dismantle the systems of racism that lead to repeated killings of people of color.... As a Black man in a leadership role in government, I feel the impact of these killings and the litany of similar killings before them viscerally, in both my personal and professional identities. The pain and outrage I feel are alternatively paralyzing and motivating. (paras 3-4).

Unconsciously, our fear of talking about decolonization, structural racism (ethnoracism), sociocultural and economic injustices, dominant power and privilege, cultural erasure and systemic inequity have created a monstrous effect of ignoring the oppression in the room. Lurking from the centers of oppression: marginalized and underrepresented voices are not only clearing their voices, they are speaking up in assertive ways that make these courageous acts a national *wake-up call, taking a stand* kind of moment in our national collective memory.

Additionally, deaths of John Lewis (June 2020) and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (September 2020) are landmark mourning events. How many students learned of Senator John Lewis' legacy from the Civil Rights Movement protests throughout the trajectory of his career committed to social justice and social, cultural, economic equity reform? How many students and teachers have accurate contemporary information to counter erasure of American Indians, Alaskan Natives and First Nations in the curricula they learn and teach? Columbus, Thanksgiving and the Pilgrims, Pocahontas and Sacagawea are just a few of the glaring propaganda that continues to misinform both teacher and student in standard curricula (Constantin, 2015). The whitewashing of slavery is still problematic, not to mention the omission of other people of color, in most social studies textbooks and trade books (Project 1619).

Textbooks through omissions, inaccuracy and whitewashing of details compromise the integrity of what students read in their curricula. Textbook guidelines “downplay” issues such as slavery and Jim Crow Laws in an “attempt in many instances to whitewash our history, as opposed to exposing students to the reality of things and letting them make decisions for themselves” (Isensee, 2015, paras 6-7). Our educational system reflects our society and in this way, perpetuates and sustains these inaccuracies, inequalities and oppression. Schoenbach, Greenleaf and Murphy (2012) describe equity in learning:

Education in the United States reflects a society that does not equitably educate people living in poverty, members of racial and ethnic minorities, those whose first language is not English, and those whose learning differences call for special education services. Problems of equitable opportunities and outcomes do not originate in schools and cannot be addressed through schools alone. However, strong evidence suggests that schools can either reinforce these inequities...or push against them. (p. 3)

Ruha Benjamin (2020) asserts: Schools themselves - what we teach, the books that we choose, the curricula, the languages that are allowed to flourish, the dialects, the forms of order that are created - all of these are also social technologies that reproduce the social order. They reproduce the haves and the have nots. Schools are the engine of

inequality. And so if that is the case, that means this is a ground zero for us to think critically... about: what is a requirement for you to read and what classes are requirements for you to graduate? That is social technology that reproduces a certain way of thinking and operating in the world. (1:13:28)

Benjamin (2020) further elucidates that in some public schools, financial literacy is required but there is no similar class for racial literacy. Racial literacy is a “crucial skill set to have in the 21st century to be able to read your reality with accuracy and precision rather than relying on your own personal experiences, as anecdotal, as the way you move through the world.” (1:14:19)

Our schemas are a summation of our personal experiences representative of our social, cultural, linguistic, economic, gendered, intersectional stories. Ramsey (2004) describes schemas best below:

To teach children to be aware of their world, we, as adults, need to develop a critical consciousness, “an ability to step back from the world as we are accustomed to perceiving it and to see the ways our perception is constructed through linguistic codes, cultural signs, and embedded power...[to] ask penetrating questions” (Kincheloe, 1993, p. 1090). We each have our unique history of experiences, and throughout our lives we construct lenses through which we view the world...They profoundly affect the way we perceive and interpret the world, yet they are truths. Thus the task of “stepping back” and “asking penetrating questions” requires a great deal of emotional and cognitive effort....Many of us were taught to not “see” racial, class and cultural distinctions....However, it is virtually impossible to grow up in this country without absorbing prevalent stereotypes and attitudes. Rather than hiding and denying these feelings behind a veneer of tolerance, we need to recognize and analyze them (Tatum, 1007). We also cannot ignore how profoundly the social and economic environment affects children’s lives. To assume that the life experiences and prospects of children who live in poor urban neighborhoods or isolated rural communities are the same as those children raised in affluent suburbs is to distort reality. We need to recognize the content and sources of our own expectations in order to see clearly how each child is adapting to the limits, possibilities, and priorities of his or her particular social and physical environment. (pp. 19-20)

Learning Cultural Humility and Cultural Responsibility

Critical self-reflection or cultural humility is the understanding that we all have different schemas co-existing in mutually causal ways. “Being a critically reflexive

practitioner means realizing that what we hold as "truths" are not necessarily truths for everyone else" (Haddix, 2010, p. 86). Haddix confirms that self-reflection is the "first step" in understanding this plurality of epistemologies and that ours is only one of many in our classroom (p. 85). Teacher practitioner Shirley Brown reflects on her teaching:

I knew that the curriculum wasn't directly related to their lives at the same time that I knew, in an abstract way, that connections should be made between students' lives and the curriculum. Clearly, bridges were not being built. I could see that assignments that were personal and that allowed students to draw on their experiences were successful, while more abstract ones were tortured. Because I felt responsible for preparing students for academic discourse, I, too, maintained the schism between the lives of students at home and in school. (Brown, 1993, p. 243)

There is a noble acknowledgment of the hard work teachers already do, indubitably. However, becoming culturally responsive and responsible is a mindset, not a lesson plan or inventory checklist. Yet the rewards are not only gratifying but socially, culturally, linguistically responsible pedagogy (Gladson-Billings, 2001). We, as educators, must reimagine, reimagine, how we teach inclusively honoring the multiplicity of stories our students bring to our classrooms each day, as a collective classroom anthology. We honor their ability for successful achievement; draw from their cultural knowledge base as the content and context for teaching and recognize the nature of structural racism and injustices still pervasive in our education school system. Culturally responsive and responsible teaching is taught in preservice education classrooms, yet is not modeled effectively or authentically in most classrooms as a viable approach for it requires a systemic attitudinal perspectival shift. As an educational system, we are not there yet. Reyhner admits (Constantin, 2015) teachers are well-intentioned yet cannot tackle this without administrative leadership and institutional change because it conflicts with most standard curriculum and administrative dictums handed down to teachers who are already overburdened and overwhelmed.

Another demographic force contributes to a national push in assuaging systemic inequities and injustices. Kabagarama (1997) predicted the future trend of diversity represented in our demographics stating by year 2050, our nation will be a "majority-minority" with no one racial or ethnic group predominating (p. 11). Now the projection is a shift in the United States population from majority white to ethnic majority (majority-minority) in 2045 with multiethnic populations projected as the fastest growing (Frey, 2018). "The truth is that, after decades of progress in closing the outcome gaps between white students and students of color, the disparities are just as

profound today as they were in the 1950's when the landmark case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* was decided" (Lee, 2012, para 2).

As a teacher of teachers in UNM's College of Education's Teacher Education program, I continually explore effective ways to engage teacher candidates in comprehending and understanding dominant privilege and historical social, cultural, linguistic and economic inequalities inherent in the fabric of our nation. One of the first tenets I debunk is race: *race* is a verb, not a noun. As UNM Africana Studies professor Jamal Martin states: "The biggest issue I see with racism is that people have been taught to believe there is more than one race...Biologically, that's not true. We have different ethnicities and ancestries, but we are all one human race. We're all part of one human family" (Whitt, 2020, para 3). This fact alone is a game changer and one that will require a steep learning curve since the illusion of multiple races as a social construct still remains a predominant situated common belief.

Racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. (Kendi, 2019, para 1)

Culturally relevant pedagogy was originally coined by Gloria Gladson-Billings (Helm, 2017). By definition, culturally relevant, responsive and responsible teaching honors the funds of knowledge students bring from home into the classroom by acknowledging:

The legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, building bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experience, using a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to diverse learning styles, teaching students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritage, and incorporating multicultural information in all subjects and skills commonly taught in schools. (Gay, 2000, as cited in Anderson, Lubig, and Smith, 2012, p. 5)

Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students" (p. 29).

Math educator and author Vilson (2015) emphasizes that a teacher's priority is students, yet our students often "don't share our background or level of privilege" so cultural competence is synonymous with professional competence (para 1 and 13).

This is especially crucial in situations where we may or may not share similar backgrounds with the students we teach. We've known for decades that building relationships is a central part of our work, but this has even larger implications when we work with disadvantaged students. The teacher-student relationship has so many subtle nuances across race, gender, and class lines that opening our eyes to these nuances would make us better educators. (Vilson, 2015, para 4)

The challenge of our role as educators is how to effectively and meaningfully use the personal and cultural stories of students while at the same time reaching outside their respective cultural boundaries. Reading and writing in the academic work of school become a student's cultural power and intellectual capital as they invest in their education and future (Schoenbach, Greenleaf and Murphy, 2012).

According to Alismail (2016) becoming culturally responsive educators, teacher candidates need "to critically reflect on the power and privileges of dominant culture, their own place within these systems, and to deconstruct them to create social equality through teaching practice" (p. 140). Jenks et al. (2001, as cited in Alismail (2016) identifies three multicultural education perspectives reflective of power and privilege inherent in our dominant society and mirrored in our curricula as: conservative, liberal, and critical multiculturalism (p. 140). Liberal multiculturalism values "cultural diversity and pluralism" and critical multiculturalism advocates for social justice by examining social and cultural injustices (p. 140). For teacher candidates to become culturally responsive and responsible, they must bring into question their own schemas in recognizing that their cultural realities are only one of many coexisting in a classroom of students with diverse language, gender, ethnic/cultural/socioeconomic backgrounds (Alismail, 2016) This requires critical self-reflection on the part of the teacher.

The humanistic and existential challenge is complex to undertake in a teacher education program. Every education program has at least one diversity course as a requirement. Yet consider how long it has taken our nation to acknowledge dominant power, privilege, systemic inequities and racial injustices socially, culturally, and educationally? The recent momentum of New Mexico Yazzie Martinez case and Black Lives Matter movement have held a spotlight on this and other perpetuating oppressions. Student bring their "funds of cultural capital" to the learning environment regardless of 'how dominant society defines it as' (personal communication, Anna Nelson, September 25, 2020).

A consolidation of two court cases involving 147 plaintiffs advocates that all New Mexico students are deserving of a “rich multicultural education that affirms their true histories and identities” in being successful in school (p. 171). In 2018, Supreme Court Chief Justice Singleton ruled that NM Public Education Department was “unconstitutional for not providing a sufficient education to the state’s “at-risk” students: students from economically disadvantaged homes, Native American students, English language learners, and students with disabilities” (Torres-Velásquez, D., Sleeter, C. & Romero, p. 171). Chief Singleton held the public education department responsible for integrating culturally responsive and responsible teaching into curricula and recruiting and retaining diverse teachers to teach to the diverse student population (Martinez and Yazzie Consolidated Lawsuit, 2020).

Children have always been diverse students in schools. Our attitudes about teaching them have changed historically in acknowledging our role and professional responsibility in engaging culturally, linguistically and differently-abled diverse learners (InTASC, 2011).

Our teacher education program supports the InTASC teaching standard below, included in our course syllabi, affirming that:

Teachers need to recognize that all learners bring to their learning varying experiences, abilities, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, and family and community values that are assets that can be used to promote their learning. To do this effectively, teachers must have a deeper understanding of their own frames of reference (e.g., culture, gender, language, abilities, ways of knowing), the potential biases in these frames, and their impact on expectations for and relationships with learners and their families. Finally, teachers need to provide multiple approaches to learning for each student. (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, 2011, p. 3)

Further, our College of Education Vision Statement commits to:

We in the College must prepare and support pre-service and in-service educators alike to be reflective regarding their own positionalities and experiences of schooling and in doing so, to design and enact curriculum and pedagogy within a student-centered, organic, critical, humanistic, anti-oppressive, collective frameworks which are founded in real-life performative assessment, students’ home literacies, community epistemologies, agency, hope, and wellbeing.

Martin emphasizes this attitude of critical multiculturalism: “We need to not only help students understand critical thinking, but also become critical thinkers.... We’ve been privileged to receive a college education, so how do we use our privilege more effectively” (Whitt, 2020, para 8). Engaging with students different from their own experience, teacher candidates are engaged in critical multiculturalism through their authentic encounters, conversations, coaching with their young mentees.

Opposite deficit model of learning, is pedagogy of plenty, teaching at its best advocating for student-centered learning with the following tenets (Cole, 2008, para 22):

- authentic tasks that give students real purposes for schoolwork and real audiences for that work.
- literacy-rich learning environment containing a wide variety of high-quality resources.
- students making connections between their learning and their day-to-day experiences in their homes and communities.
- experiential, problem-based, active learning opportunities.
- students engaged in working collaboratively on issues of deep concern to them.
- students exposed to an inquiry-based approach to instruction that emphasizes making meaning, not just getting the right answer.
- students’ home and community cultures, language heritages, and experiences acknowledged and incorporated into their schooling.

A pedagogy of plenty can happen when students take ownership of their own stories. Pletcher, Gomez and Elizondro (2019) reference Lucy Calkins’ (1994, p. 14) documented practitioner research with children and the process of writing: “We care about writing when we write with, for, and about the people who matter to us, and when we write about or ‘off of’ the issues and experiences that matter to us. *Youngsters aren’t any different. They, too, will care about writing when it is personal*” (p. 226). Further, young authors need an audience to validate that their stories are valued (Graves, 2013).

The natural conversation about the family character between storytelling coach and mentee is anything but informal talk. It is a sophisticated learning interchange of higher order thinking skills of questioning, clarifying, guiding, affirming, confirming as the mentee is scaffolded through the zone of proximal development (Rodgers, 2000, p. 79). Young authors and storytelling coaches engage in human discourse giving voice to their ideas and experiences building on their literacy and writing acumen (Britton, 1987).

Story as Technology

Why do you write? Who do you write for? Because Indians always tell a story. They only way to continue is to tell a story and that's what Coyote says. The only way to continue is to tell a story and there is no other way. Your children will not survive unless you tell something about them -- how they were born, how they came to this certain place, how they continued. (Simon Ortiz, p. 153)

Livo and Rietz (1986, p. 4) explain that “Story is a universal mirror that shows us the ‘truth’ about ourselves – who we are” (p. 2). Their oral family stories revealed to their storytelling coaches who they are. As Donald Norman professes: “The stories we tell not only explain things to others, they explain them to ourselves.” This why it was important for coaches not to approach this just as an assignment to complete in an academic, perfunctory way. These stories are alive and have souls that are delicate and demand respect. According to Schoafsma (1989 as cited in Collins and Cooper, 1997) stories are *selves*, “as temporary representations of our struggle to define ourselves and the world. But in the process of shaping those selves, stories also may become one means of shaping relationships with others in the community” (p. 2).

As humans, we are all genetically predisposed to be natural storytellers (Fisher, 1989; Perry, 2020; Collins & Cooper, 1997). During this writing project, young authors make meaning of their lives for themselves through their family experiences (Collins and Cooper, 1997). Although young authors generated individual stories, there is a community and “sense of belonging to a culture” that is nurtured in the process (Collins and Cooper, 1997, p. 4). During writing peer conferences, this community of tellers, is reinforced and validated.

Stories are aural, oral, literary human expressions; human extensions and human technologies designed to explain who we are, how we *come to know*, how we negotiate meaning, and how we communicate. Language is the earliest human technology and stories are a natural extension of who we are as human beings; giving meaning to and extracting meaning from, our world. Durnin explains elementally, “Story is our DNA. We are myth incarnate” (personal communication, June 3, 2015). Rietz (1988) refers to stories as “a human invention” and “learning ‘story’ and learning to ‘story’ involve learning a way of thinking, a way of organizing events and information, a way of knowing” (p. 164). King (2003) truthfully declares that stories are all we are (p. 2). “We live by stories and we live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves” (Okri, as cited in King, p. 153).

Frank Smith (1990) validates that our “thought flows in terms of stories—stories about events, stories about people, and stories about intentions and achievements. The best teachers are the best storytellers. We learn in the form of stories. We construct stories to make sense of events. Our prevailing propensity is to impose story structures on all experience, real or imagined. . . .The brain is a story-seeking, story creating instrument” (pp. 62-63). Bruce Perry describes us as “storytelling primates” (para 8).

Teachers influenced by *The National Writing Project* (NWP), a 30 year professional development teacher organization, share a philosophy about the integrity of the writing process that “is incompatible with the philosophy behind reading worksheets, tests, Basals, and the fear that any deviation will endanger students’ ability to learn to read. Too many students read fifty worksheets for every book they pick up. Their teachers teach what’s next in the teachers’ guide instead of what the students need next. Too many classrooms revolve around the teacher. But in writing classrooms, children say, “I wrote it. I do the work.” (Wickstrom, Patterson and Arajo, 2010, p. 4). Culturally mediated writing instruction focuses on the cultural identities of students in a socioliterate approach. Cultural identities extend beyond ethnoracial contexts to include gender, athletes, dancers, musicians, etc. There exists a strong connection between students’ cultural and experiential funds of knowledge and successful academic achievement compared to a “mismatch between home and school practices” resulting in unsuccessful academic achievement (p. 7).

Grant and Sleeter (2007) reference a “cultural split” when students’ school life is disconnected from their real world (p. 46). Stories children bring to school represent who they are and where they come from, while also allowing them to interpret and understand their world. Their stories are valuable tools for learning and teaching in the school setting (Vitali, 2016).

Family Storytelling Project-Stories as Content and Context for Learning Rationale

Smith (1990) affirms that “Our stories are the vantage points from which we perceive the world and the people in it” (pp. 64-65). Christensen (2000) explains: “As teachers, we have daily opportunities to affirm that our students’ lives and languages are unique and important. We do that in the selections of literature we read, in the history we choose to teach, and we do it by giving legitimacy to our student’s lives as a content worthy of study” (p. 103). Christensen engages her students in “sweet learnings” (pp. 23-26) to acknowledge that family experiences and family teachers are valuable assets that they bring to school. For Christensen, this is an important message to convey to students: “Because I live in a society that honors the wealthy and tends to hold in greatest esteem ‘high status’ formal knowledge, I must find ways to honor the

intelligence, common sense, and love that beats in the hearts of my students' families" (p. 25).

Our Oral Family Storytelling Project Process

The family oral history writing project evolved from weekly lesson plans that each storytelling coach presented to their elementary grade mentees. Lessons were designed by the instructor as a guiding framework for coaches, which they could customize and adapt to their respective teaching styles. Coaches reflected weekly on an online class blog and/or on their individual web pages. Anecdotal notes were also collected during coaches' debriefing following storytelling sessions each week. Storytelling coaches and the instructor were participant observers during the project. The storytelling project was considered part of students' curricular English Language Arts writing standards. As emergent design, themes surfaced while analyzing coaches' reflections, research narratives, anecdotal notes, and student artifacts (Chautauqua characters, written stories, illustrations, family performances, and author's chair).

The project was aligned with writing and oral delivery standards of the Common Core State Standards (2020), coordinated with the classroom teachers' curriculum. In establishing common vocabulary in which to talk about story throughout the project, the following story elements were introduced and also used as assessment during the project:

- Character Description
- Setting
- Monologue & Dialogue
- Experiences
- Figurative language
- Flashbacks

Writing workshop processes (Zainuddin, Morales-Jones, Yahya, and Ariza, 2011) supported the communicative and language experience approaches, where students' prior knowledge and experience are brought into the classroom through their family stories. Working with their stories provided authentic language opportunities, connecting classroom learning with their lived experiences. The writing workshop includes:

- a. Prewriting (Brainstorming)
- b. Story Drafts
- c. Revising, Editing, Conferencing
- d. Conference with storytelling coach & peers
- e. Written Final story
- f. Culminating Performance - Chautauqua or Author's Chair

Emergent Themes

“The stories we tell not only explain things to others, they explain them to ourselves.” (Donald Norman)

Coaching Role

In our project we were learning alongside each other as peers as well as learning alongside our young authors (Papert, 2001). Storytelling coaches were able to explore beyond the traditional teacher role. Coaches recognized their roles as director, facilitator, motivator, as well as learner, alongside their mentees (Papert, 2001). Building a trusting relationship with students was our primary focus when first introducing the project. Introducing ourselves with *I Am (from)* Poems helped establish this connection. Storytelling coaches introduced themselves with sharing their *I Am* Poems and then assisted their mentees in creating their own *I Am (from)* poems. In this way, storytelling coaches learned about their mentees. Their mentees shared personal events and stories through conversations during each subsequent session. The relationships formed were strong, trusting, and solid.

One of the storytelling coaches, Chelsea Begay, used her own *I Am* Poem as a teaching and learning strategy:

Once the students started their Chautauqua story, I fed them ideas on what they could write and reminded them of my *I Am* poem and the key points they identified. I often used that to help them develop their story as well as using the storytelling elements (character description, dialogue, etc.). Furthermore, I often took their pencil and wrote for them as they fed me their ideas. I jotted everything they said. I thought this little tactic was effective because I took into account how much more ideas they threw out there. I figured if they are writing themselves, they worry too much about spelling and grammar. But that seemed the least of their problems when I took the pen. (December 12, 2014)

Instructor reflection for Storytelling Coaches (Vitali, March 1, 2012):

Thank you for your care and diligence with your mentees. The process of writing their family stories will transcend writing as a mere (*field-independent*) exercise to purposeful, meaningful and relevant writing and reading pertinent to their lives (*field-dependent*). This is why we write and they will write and validate their own stories as worthy of telling, writing and reading. Please begin to conduct your own interviews with your family

member in drafting your own stories. You will have opportunities to share your story drafts with your mentees. My goal is to help you transform your own understanding of how to engage students in writing in meaningful ways and having conversations about their lives. Our practicum project is a project-based learning experience where the process is as significant as the finished product.

Listening Role

Listening to students became an important part of the writing process each week as coaches explored how to make connections and build trust with their new storytellers. Graves (1985) asserts: “The hardest thing for teachers, and administrators, to realize the importance of listening to children. When the teacher listens, the children are finding out what they know, learning how to say it, and discovering that another human being really wants to hear it” (p. 128). As teachers the best way to learn is by practice, as Graves reminds us.

Epstein (2010) asks how do we teach strategies for writing by embedding them in oral language? Moayeri and Smith (2010) suggest: “Familiarizing ourselves and valuing the diverse and multiple literacies that students of different cultures bring with them enhances the learning potential of those students and that of the entire class” (p. 415). Ladson-Billings (2001) describes the responsibility of culturally relevant teachers as those who “learn about the students’ cultures and their communities” by bridging “the divide between the school and the students’ homes... They understand that the interest they show in students’ backgrounds and lives has an important payoff in the classroom” (p. 99).

Zainuddin, Yahya, Morales-Jones and Ariza (2011) explain that the complexities of teaching extend beyond merely understanding learning styles, but more significantly by implementing different learning styles with students that effectively meet their learning needs. Storytelling coaches recognized students’ preferred learning styles by working with them and getting to know them through observations and conversations. There were many coaching conversations that supported scribing for students, if the act of writing interfered with the flow of their thoughts.

Remaining focused on the learning objective of telling a story changed the way storytelling coaches supported their mentees during the process. Ryan (Niehaus, 2010) reflected on specific strategies he used during the project:

Since I have begun the process of the practicum I have been adapting to my students. I have learned some new strategies in dealing with the students. One strategy I learned was to focus on what is wanted from the student and not to muddle it up with irrelevant tasks. I learned this from getting the students to begin their Chautauquas. I would have never thought of having them tell me their stories while I scribed. It is obvious now that the telling of their stories was the objective and to have them write it themselves may have led to students being more concentrated on correct spelling or grammar. (Niehaus, 2010)

Additionally, coaches became aware of how their own cultural values, beliefs, and biases coexist and may sometimes “clash” with the students they mentor (Zainuddin, Yahya, Morales-Jones and Ariza, 2011, p. 45). Accepting multiplicities of cultural, family, and school paradigms are attributes of culturally relevant teaching. Understanding which students are field dependent learners and which are field-independent learners informs us of how we should proceed. Coaches became aware of differentiating for each of their mentees in their coaching sessions. Their stories were more than just fulfilling an assignment; their stories were tied to their identities, language, culture, and academic learning.

One coach shared her discovery through collegial dialogue among her peers and with the instructor during debriefing. “I began to steer him away from choosing his brother because his brother is so young and suggested that maybe he choose someone else on his brainstorm list. Then he kept coming back to his brother and I realized that I was imposing my own ideas on the student.” It was an insightful moment to connect how our own biases will emerge and interfere in our coaching. This storytelling coach was able to put her own biases aside as she continued to let her mentee *own* his family hero story.

Storytelling coach Nathan Holmes reflected about overriding his concerns with one of his mentees:

As they write their Chautauqua stories, the students have been deeply mindful of the perspective of the character. This surprised me a little. I learned in the previous workshop not to underestimate the students’ skills, but perspective is a hard concept to grasp, especially for third graders. I can’t help but admire their attention to detail and their focus on getting it right. One student in particular shocked me with his story. He approached me with the idea of doing his Chautauqua on his dad’s old Mustang convertible. At first I was hesitant to allow this because I thought it may be too difficult for him. I decided to allow it rather than obstruct the storytelling process. I must admit I had my concerns. This particular student has trouble

paying attention and following instructions. I soon had my concerns quieted when he presented me with his story. The way he used figurative language and brought the car to life was masterful. I feel his story could be mistaken for one of a student twice his age. (December 11, 2014)

Learning Alongside Students

Storytelling coach Hanson Begay celebrates opportunities to learn about his students during the project:

When my students would go on what seemed like tangents, those were the times that I seemed to learn the most about their backgrounds, home life, and cultures. Tangents are a form of openness and comfort; and it was during these times that my students demonstrated our trusting relationship. (December 10, 2014)

Patricia Hill (Hill, 2010) reflects about aspects of the mutual learning relationship with her mentees:

Midway through the project, I have grown in my ability to see past the discomfort of growing. I see further - to the benefit. When I am placed in an unfamiliar situation, I can appreciate the fact that I may not know exactly what I will come out with...but I am up for the journey....
My confidence and independence have been bolstered by my involvement with the Chautauqua series. The kids I work with push me and I push back and we get on down the road with spring in our step. This surprises me because, yes, I am asking them to do things they do not necessarily want to do. We respect each other and we work for each other. I believe they trust their instincts even when they are aware of entering uncharted territory. They are trusting me that this IS fun and it WILL work out and it WILL be GREAT! As a teacher in training, that means so much, to see the relationship develop and the learning taking place on so many levels.

Mary Durfey (Durfey, 2010) reflects on connecting with her mentees:

Sharing stories with the children has helped them see connections in stories and give definition to family traditions. It's also helped them experience the art of a good story and the value of details and descriptions that help the reader 'see' what the author sees. Another valuable strategy we've used in the practicum is building webs and pulling out the details of our stories.

Even more importantly is the aspect of connecting and learning from the children, their stories, their experiences as we have discussions.

Another coach talked about her mentee's dad who died in a car accident when he was born. He was asked if he listens to stories about his dad who was a Marine. When he replied *no*, he was encouraged to ask the questions that he was curious to know about his father and list those for his interview questions to ask his mother, uncles, and grandparents. The grandparents of this young author thanked the storytelling coach, after the Author's Chair, for working with their grandson in telling this story.

Storytelling coach Amber Gibson reflected on her overall experience in the project:

Stories helped students to connect with each other and to build relationships with each other and myself. Giving students the chance to share personal ideas and memories helps us as educators to affirm that their experiences and their life has value. Storytelling offers a profound way for us to be connected with each other and it is a valuable asset to my future classroom. (December 9, 2014)

Chelsea Akins reflected on the bond of stories with her three mentees:

After our time together in the classroom, my trio has come to see me as a source of validation. I have listened to the stories they have told me, whether that had anything to do with their Chautauqua characters or not... I absorbed their information, and pinned it to memory. Every time I recite back their own memories, they feel a little more confident than they had before and they inevitably decide to share more. Their stories are about Disneyland, and camping, and how many prairie dogs their dog ate over the summer, and the details themselves are almost less important than the connections they are making when they tell those stories. Just because they are children does not mean they are any less vulnerable than adults: they need the bonds that come from human interaction just as much as we do. These bonds help validate the ideas and opinions that children have been growing within themselves. We have our own Chautauqua stories to share, and we use these to model for our students. Not only is the initial connection important, but so is the delivery...When we tell stories, we not only want the kinship that comes with sharing information, but we want a positive connection. Working with these students, we not only form natural emotional attachment, but we are also teaching with our stories. (November 21, 2014)

Storytelling coach Hanson Begay made connections between his oral traditions and working with his young mentees:

As weeks progressed, I learned that my students learned to appreciate the art of storytelling. My students started to engage with each other as they wrote about their character. This reminded me of how my paternal grandmother spoke to me during my adolescence years. My paternal grandmother was a Navajo woman who had strong beliefs in the oral tradition. Day after day, she would remind me that the worth of what she spoke of could not be found in entertainment or in mere objects such as money, but through her oral message. The beliefs of my grandmother were echoed in the words of Barry Lopez: “Sometimes you need a story more than food to stay alive.” This quote also applied to when I told my students that their stories of their characters mattered and would show their parents and teachers that they can be viewed as students who truly have a story to tell or a treasure to share. Nichiren Daishonin said: “Treasures of the heart are the most valuable of all.” (December 10, 2014)

Hanson Begay further reflected on what he learned from his students:

The students I coached pushed me and questioned me, in turn teaching me more than I instructed them. I never knew that students half my age would inspire me to talk freely without judging me....Even though I began with modeling, sharing my own personal story through my brainstorm and drawings, my students knew exactly who they would choose for their family Chautauqua character. For myself, I was indecisive of the character I wanted to become. My mentees helped me define who I would choose as their inspiration and enthusiasm gave me comfort to express myself beyond this shell of indecisiveness....If the teacher is reluctant to share and tell stories, the students will also display this behavior. Storytelling is very personal and therefore there has to be a level of respect in order to allow for this comfort. (December 10, 2014)

Storytelling coach Rachael Charleston expressed what she learned from her students about respect for story.

My experience with my students has been profound. When they say that storytelling is giving a gift of a story it truly is a gift. These students have learned what it means to put together their thoughts into words and they have learned literary terms about a story... I think that they were the ones that taught me the most. I have learned that all students are different in how

they approach story telling. I have also learned that it takes a lot of thinking and deep introspection in order to see things from someone else's perspective especially when you are trying to tell a story from that point of view.

They were hesitant at first to tell the story as the character but then I shared my character with them and I became my five year old daughter. Well they really got a kick out of that and then they began to think like their character. They continued to think like them and learn to see from another person's perspective. These students trusted us with a very important gift of their story. I think it changed my attitude towards storytelling as well because I figured out how important it can be to students and their writing skills. (December 8, 2014)

Stories Are Who We Are

As teachers, we have daily opportunities to affirm that our students' lives and language are unique and important. We do that in the selections of literature we read, in the history we choose to teach, and we do it by giving legitimacy to our student's lives as a content worthy of study (Christensen, 2000, p. 103).

Students became *actors* (Freire and Macedo, 1987), literally and figuratively, in the Chautauqua storytelling process. They were able to "name their world" as they became empowered in giving voice and agency to their own experiences (p. 159). Their family stories confirmed and validated that their families and experiences are valuable, as they were integrated and connected, as content and context for learning in school (Christensen, 2000; Moayeri and Smith, 2010). Their family stories became counterparts to stories they read in academic books in their classrooms and school library. Copies of bound anthologies of their stories were given to the school librarian for circulation in the school library.

Eventually during the process, these stories become more than completing an assignment. These stories are technological extensions of each student. Learning the art and craft of drafting our stories to include: voice, style, organization, figurative language, punctuation, and peer conferences, is the academic goal. How do teacher coaches build trust and invite, wrestle, knead, coerce, lull, entice, conjure, levitate, ameliorate, and humor the space with their young storytellers and authors in eliciting the best possible stories?

As technological extensions of ourselves, stories are coding systems. However, coding is culturally situated in that “context creates meaning” (O’Connor, 2004, p. 139).

This is an emotional enterprise where teacher candidates learn more about themselves, in the process of coaching linguistically diverse students, because they have grappled with the messiness, the elegance, and the human propensity that grounds us all - our stories. Story becomes essential in learning as we rely on children’s prior knowledge, honor their funds of knowledge, and teach in more culturally relevant ways. Recognizing normalcy that multiple perspectives exist, with the teacher’s perspective being only one of many, invites opportunities of learning alongside our students on a daily basis. Stories are a natural way to enter and sustain the process of teaching and learning in balanced and natural ways.

Storytelling coach Debbie Griffith’s reflection about her students and story:

Between last semester when we did the hero stories and this semester with storytelling, I learned just how much students are capable of. Even if they are shy or think they don't have personal stories, they really do. Once they get started they begin to enjoy it and really get into the process. I learned that storytelling is an effective teaching method for ELA standards and I would like to think that once I am in the classroom I will remember this experience and incorporate storytelling into my teaching. (December 5, 2014)

Storytelling coach Amber Gibson reflected on the power of her mentees’ performance:

It was great hearing students’ hero stories about the family members that they loved and cared so much about but seeing them perform and act out the character of the family member they love is such a bigger gift than just writing a hero story. (December 9, 2014)

Storytelling coach Hanson Begay’s words capture the essence of story in teaching and learning:

As I have worked in the schools through tutoring and practicum experiences this semester, I have seen a pattern of what seems to be that learning needs to be focused on assessments. There doesn’t seem to be time allotted or an appreciation that there should be time made for such things as storytelling. A tradition that at one time was the only way to transfer information and

knowledge, storytelling has now become a novelty and is slowly making its way back into the schools with the realization of how important storytelling is and how it benefits and enriches all subject areas. As stated in *Telling Tales in School in Teaching and Learning* (Koepke, 1990): “Children are motivated to work hard because their stories have personal meaning” (p. 32). A standardized test does not hold personal meaning to them, as many assignments I think that are given do not, and therefore students struggle and have a hard time feeling successful. Allowing students the opportunity to share of themselves, they are able to find their own connections in their learning and it shows in their growth and progress. (December 10, 2014)

Kelley Day’s final reflection of her project experience:

Our practicum was an amazing experience and definitely the highlight of the class... It was such a wonderful thing to be able to walk with my students throughout the entire writing process. They all worked very hard throughout the process. I enjoyed watching them take their initial thoughts and brainstorming ideas and develop them into their wonderful stories. For three of my students, choosing their family members and writing their stories came very easily. The other two students had a more difficult time with deciding on who they wanted to write about. They also had a harder time developing their story. I was very proud of how hard they worked to complete their stories. I loved getting to hear and learn about each one of their families. Their families mean so much to them. I was impressed with our peer conferences. The students really took pride in their work and enjoyed receiving feedback from their peers. They had some great suggestions for one another. In working with my group, I learned that each student was very different and that I had to adjust the way I talked to and worked with each one of them. Their final stories turned out great.

I have so much more to learn about becoming a great teacher. However, I feel that this semester has given me a great start. I hope that I will always remember the experiences I have had in this class and the importance of learning each student's story. (May 2013)

Mamihlapintapai Paralysis or Culturally Sustaining Action?

“I use the term ‘rising up’ because reading and writing should be emancipatory acts. When students are taught to read ‘the word and the world,’ as Brazilian educator Paulo Freire wrote, then their minds become unshackled. Teaching students to read is not enough. We must teach students how to ‘read’ not only

novels and science texts, but cartoons, politicians, schools, workplaces, welfare offices, and Jenny Craig ads. We need students to read the inequitable distribution of funds for schools. This is 'rising up' reading—reading that challenges, that organizes for a better world.” (Christensen, 2000, p. vii)

Culturally responsive teaching will remain institutionalized mamihlapintapai and will never actualize to countering the narratives of existing structural racism and systemic inequality and inequities as a nation, as a school system without sustaining a momentum of action, starting with ourselves first. When teachers accept and own their own biases and schemas; shift the power and privilege differential; include students' funds of knowledge as strength based teaching; use these strengths to connect learning to relevant and authentic experiences, then there is less misclassification and issues of intent versus impact that stymie the efficacy of communication, trust, fairness, social belonging, growth mindset (Furhman, 2020). In teaching with these mindful qualities, we begin to mitigate historical practices of structural racism and systemic inequities that as educators, we do not want to continue to perpetuate in our own pedagogical practices.

Family oral stories, as documents reclaiming student identities, are just one way that teachers can make valuable connections with their students validating their experiences inside and outside the classroom learning environment. By doing so, we acknowledge students' identity and recognize their contributions within the reflexive teaching transaction. If students' stories represent cultural and linguistic documents, these narratives provide countering narratives from which their teachers may learn more about them and how to connect in meaningful learning and teaching relationships. Their stories can change the narrative that they can control so their teacher can better learn about them. Their stories become human technology, as extension of their identities. In doing so these stories become critical multicultural teaching tools in the process and product for teaching and learning as reconceptualists.

In our efforts at changing our inherent biases and schemas toward more antiracist perspectives, we will make miscalculations and communication blunders based on *intent* versus *impact*. My intent was this, *as the speaker*, yet the impact of what I said or did resulted as this, *to the listener*. These are learning opportunities if we value the relationship, the importance of the issue or content in being receptive to the feedback we receive (Brim-Atkins, 1998). Learning is anything that changes us and learning is uncomfortable by human nature. Therefore, we must be committed to this change knowing it is to better ourselves, our communication and professional relationships with the students we teach.

Vulchi and Guo (2017) explain that racial literacy does not stem from just a lack of knowledge, but a feeling of not caring enough. If we do not feel enough to care about historical colonization, systemic racism, and inequities then mamihlapinatapai continues to paralyze our need to question, to want to know more, engage in challenging conversations, to act as professionals and culturally responsive educators who celebrate multiple identities, perspectives and stories our students bring to the classroom as the content and context for their learning. Professional development opportunities supporting anti-bias teaching and anti-racist curriculum are readily available online to take action into our own hands even if school districts do not require teachers to do so. Front and center we will learn in these workshops and webinars is validating students' identities in being able to be themselves in a safe learning environment and supporting students' learning in diverse ways (Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education, 2020).

Teachers can be agents of social change (Christenbury and Lindblom) yet we must be willing to be receptive to learning beyond our own biases, schemas in accepting that there are multiple realities coexisting at the same time and ours is only one of many.

Teacher Todd DeStiger (as cited in Christenbury and Lindblom, 2016) advocates:

Teachers must cultivate an identity not just as instructors of academic content or even as activists dedicated to promoting democracy. Rather, citizen teachers must also think of themselves as social scientists striving to be more attuned to how their students view the world and how their culturally situated values shape the ways they think and live. (p. 383)

Gladson-Billings (2001) referred to the promise of incremental changes for those of us currently in education as she celebrates the future of education: "We are unlikely to see and participate in a "promised land" of teaching and learning. That joy is reserved for those new to the profession. Like the ancient Hebrew leader Moses, we are charged with the responsibility of liberating the field from the enslavement of narrow thinking about curriculum and human capacity." Gladson-Billings places her faith in the leadership of the new generation of teachers that will metaphorically cross over to Canaan" (pp. 141-142).

Where do we find this *promised land of teaching and learning*? Looking within is going in the right direction. Cultural humility is cultural competence advancing an attitude of cultural sustainability. Cultural humility, developed by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia in 1998 initially addressed inequities within healthcare and has extended to education, social work and library science professions (Cultural

Competence and Cultural Humility, 2012). Cultural humility: is life-long learning and critical self-reflection; redressing power imbalances; recognizes and challenges power imbalances in creating respectful partnerships and interactions; acknowledges institutional accountability in mitigating systems of oppression (Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility, 2012).

This is especially crucial in situations where we may or may not share similar backgrounds with the students we teach. We've known for decades that building relationships is a central part of our work, but this has even larger implications when we work with disadvantaged students. The teacher-student relationship has so many subtle nuances across race, gender, and class lines that opening our eyes to these nuances would make us better educators.” (Vilson, 2015, para 4)

Vilson (2015) emphasizes the power of listening, asking more questions about students that inform us of their needs and how they become qualities of cultural and professional responsibility.

Becoming vulnerable and receptive to this learning curve requires courage, practice and skill in facilitating and entering into challenging conversations of white privilege, racism, police violence, historical colonization, structural inequalities, microaggressions, and discrimination inclusive of all (Let's Talk, n.d.; Miller, 2020; Smith, 2020). This is not an option anymore yet a nonnegotiable in keeping ourselves *in check* as professionals to recognize our positionality of power and privilege and cultural, linguistic and implicit biases we bring to the classroom landscape. Reassuringly, our national dialogue shows progress in more inclusivity and in recognizing multiethnic perspectives coexisting in mutually causal dynamics. Yet there is much healing, reimagining and rescripting of authentic narratives *as a nation in therapy* prepared to look introspectively at our history honestly to move forward with more understanding, compassion and caring. *Teaching Tolerance*, *Zinn History Project*, *Rethinking Schools* are some valuable resources available to guide our learning and future conversations with students. See other available resources in the Appendix.

Freire (1993) analyzed traditional teacher-student relationship as the banking concept of education whereby students are depositories and teachers the depositors. Freire advocated for a transformation from this banking approach that codifies oppression, paternalism, social dominance, and systematic control to a “libertization of education”, as “conscientization” (para 5, 13). “The practice of freedom” replaces the practice of domination” (para 35) whereby:

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on "authority" are no longer valid; in order to function authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it. Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are "owned" by the teacher. (para 31)

Building trusting relationships with students becomes a priority in achieving this respectful dynamic. In my course syllabi, students are alerted to potential cognitive dissonance, such as Freire, in the content and discussions during the semester. My cognitive disclaimer is an adaptation from Central New Mexico Community College EDUC 2315: *Educating Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students* syllabus.

Cognitive Disclaimer: Focus on becoming a cultural responsive teacher may cause some cognitive dissonance. This course encourages what Piaget calls *decentering*; Nieto refers to *mutual accommodation*; and Freire's, *conscientization*, whereby students explore beyond the assumptions of their own world view or schemas. Such critical thinking experiences are necessary in any kind of learning, yet pivotal in our role as educators. Such critical thinking may result in discomfort when confronted with new information or co-existing realities that conflict with existing beliefs, cultural attitudes, ideas, or values. While decentering and cognitive dissonance are essential to professional growth, some students may feel resistant, uncomfortable, and even angry toward the instructor or course work. This note is a forewarning and an invitation to engage in courageous thinking and conversations inherent in our course content. If you find yourself frustrated by internal conflicts, natural contradictions, content incongruences, please seek me out.

As a nation, what was learned 234 years ago will take attentive, systematic unlearning through culturally sustainable critical conscientious teaching and self-reflective practice.

The United States is a nation founded on both an ideal and a lie. Our Declaration of Independence, signed on July 4, 1776, proclaims that "all men are created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain

unalienable rights.’’ But the white men who drafted those words did not believe them to be true for the hundreds of thousands of black people in their midst. ‘‘Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness’’ did not apply to fully one-fifth of the country. (Project 1619, p. 16)

According to Kendi (2019):

Racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. (para 1)

Racial liberation is a lifetime journey of unlearning and healing involving our own *therapy* in ‘‘understanding the role history plays in racial/ethnic myths and stereotypes. In so many ways, to heal from racism, you must re-educate yourself and unlearn the processes of racism’’ (Wise and Singh, 2019, para 1).

Yet, healing from historical trauma is manifested psychologically, emotionally and physically. Harris, among others, identifies trauma existing at the cellular level which is passed on generationally (Merrill, 2020). Some students transfer this toxic traumatic stress as adverse childhood experience (ACE) which ultimately affects their learning and behavior (Merrill, 2020). Through more emancipatory education practice, teachers can guide students in classrooms through ‘‘culturally-rooted resistance and resilience’’ which are ‘‘vital in the process of thriving through oppression’’ (personal communication, Anna Nelson, September 25, 2020). In such ways, students are able to be their authentic selves, owning their inherent power in the educational setting. ‘‘We have to create pathways for voice and choice and to actualize their power. Therefore, empowerment is not accurate’’ for it implies that students did not have power to begin with (personal communication, Anna Nelson, September 25, 2020).

In becoming culturally sustaining teachers, curriculum is approached with a healthy skepticism of questioning whose voice is doing the talking; whose perspective does this represent; what hidden messages need to be unpacked? Teachers are reconceptualists who question the existing system and the ‘‘cultural-sociological-political implications of schooling with respect to social justice, citizenship, or the role education is or should play in society at large’’ (American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division B - Curriculum Instruction, 2020, para 3).

Reconceptualists are not only, or even primarily interested in the official curriculum, as curriculum developers are, but seek to examine the hidden curriculum, the subtext that comes with teaching a specific curriculum a certain way to specific groups of students. Reconceptualists, in other words, are interested in much more than subject matter. They are interested in the messages or ideologies (hidden knowledge) that underlay not only subject matter, but also pedagogy, social interactions, and classroom settings, and educational practices as well as institutional contexts that have long come to be taken for granted. Many reconceptualists ultimately ask the question, who benefits from these configurations, and who loses.... in the cultural-sociological-political implications of schooling with respect to social justice, citizenship, or the role education is or should play in society at large. (American Educational Research Association, 2020, para 3)

As teacher candidates, they cannot alter the past, yet they can begin to reframe the stories moving forward through their teaching in more culturally responsive, responsible and sustaining dimensions. As educators, we must care and be conscientious enough to educate ourselves about systematic oppression, white privilege, racial inequalities, historical trauma; be receptive to learning about our students cognizant of our own biases and schemas; change our teaching to learning in dialogue with students in reflexivity. Yet, theory must change to critical action as social justice practiced in classrooms for this transformation and conscientization to take place. Using stories as a technology of liberating student to celebrate their voice, their stories, their identities shines a light in this darkness. If not, the monster still lurks in the shadows like a mighty beast that we are afraid of encountering.

References

- Adams, D. W. (1995). *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the boarding school experience 1875-1928*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- 1619 Project. (2019 August 18). *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://pulitzercenter.org/file/fullissueofthe1619projectpdf>
- Alismail, H. A. (2016). Multicultural Education: Teachers' Perceptions and Preparation. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(11), 139-146). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1099450.pdf>
- American Educational Research Association (AERA) Division B - Curriculum Instruction. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.aera.net/About-AERA/Member-Constituents/Graduate-Student-Council/Graduate-Students-Divisions/GSC-Division-B>
- Anderson, D., Lubig, J. & Smith, M. (2012). Meeting the Needs of All Students: How Student Teachers Identify Individualization. (2012). *Education Research & Perspectives*, 39, 1-23.
- Benjamin, R. (2020 June 16). *Humanities Exposed: Why the Humanities are Vital in Reimagining Technology and Society*. [video]. Retrieved from https://cnm-edu.zoom.us/rec/share/zspFNIvVqWJOcLPNtU_4WqgYM47jT6a81XJM_fNYmUZzvdM7X080I5tjmJ-s4F0A?startTime=1591804623000
- Brim-Atkins, L. (1998 May). Aligning intent and impact. *Cultural Diversity at Work Journal*, 10, pp. 1-2. Retrieved from http://www.diversitycentral.com/art13_0598.pdf
- Britton, J. (1987). *Technical Report No. 8 Writing and Reading in the Classroom*. Retrieved from https://archive.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/151/TR08.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d
- Brown, S. (1993). Lighting Fires. In M. Cochran-Smith & S. Lytle (Eds.), *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge* (pp. 241-249), NY: Teachers College Press.
- Common Core State Standards. (2020). Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf

Christenbury, L. & Lindblom, K. (2016). *Making the journey: Being and becoming a teacher of English language arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Christensen, L. (2000). *Reading, writing and rising up: Teaching about social justice and the power of the written word*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools Publication.

Cole, R.W. (2008). *Educating everybody's children: We know what we need to do*. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107003/chapters/Educating-Everybody%27s-Children@-We-Know-What-We-Need-to-Do.aspx>

Constantin, D. (2015). Rewriting history-for the better. *Teaching Tolerance*, 51, pp. 32-35. Retrieved from <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2015/rewriting-historyfor-the-better>

Conversation on Anti-Blackness, White Privilege, and Allyship. (2020 June). [Panel]. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Retrieved from <https://cfe.unc.edu/team-advance/special-webinar-june-22/>

Cultural competence and cultural humility. (2012). Project Ready: Reimagining equity and access for diverse youth (Module 8). [video excerpt]. Retrieved from <https://ready.web.unc.edu/section-1-foundations/module-8/#:~:text=The%20concept%20of%20cultural%20humility%20was%20developed%20by,1998%20to%20address%20inequities%20in%20the%20healthcare%20field>. Full *Cultural humility: People, principles and practice* video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Mbu8bvKb_U

Critical practices for antiracist education. (2020). *Teaching Tolerance*. Retrieved from at <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/critical-practices-for-antibias-education>

Epstein, P. (2010). *Indian education for all: Grounded in place and culture*. Retrieved from National Writing Project at <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/3147>

Fisher, A. (1989). *Human communication as narration: Toward a philosophy of reason, value, and action*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum Books.
Retrieved from
<http://faculty.webster.edu/corbetre/philosophy/education/freire/freire-2.html>

Freire, P. & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*.
Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Frey, W. H. (2018, March 14). The US will become ‘minority white’ in 2045,
Census projects. *The Avenue*. Retrieved from
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/>

Furhman, R. (2020, September 15). Learning to Recognize and Celebrate
Students’ Cultural Experiences. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/learning-recognize-and-celebrate-students-cultural-experiences>

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice*.
New York: Teachers College Press.

Gladson-Billings, G. (2001). *Crossing over to Canaan: The journey of new
teachers in diverse classrooms*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that’s just good teaching! The case for culturally
relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), pp. 159-165.

Graves, D. H. (2013). Know the children and let them know you. In T. Newkirk
& P. Kittle (Eds.), *Children want to write*, pp. 69–104.

Gómez, R. (2003-2004). They killed the word. *Studies in American Indian
Literatures (SAIL)*, 15(3-4), Series 2 Fall-Winter, pp. 64-81.
Retrieved from
https://www.academia.edu/12137138/The_Killed_The_Word?email_work_card=abstract-read-more

Grant, C. & Sleeter, C. (2007). *Doing multicultural education for achievement
and equity*. New York: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group).

Haddix, M. (2010). “Goin’ for Broke”: Reaping the Rewards of Teaching Toward
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity. *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*, 20, 83-
90. Retrieved from

[https://www.academia.edu/2027219/Unburdening the Understandings of Literacy?email_work_card=title](https://www.academia.edu/2027219/Unburdening_the_Understandings_of_Literacy?email_work_card=title)

Hall, P. (1997). *Changing the Discourse in School in Race, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism: Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Helm, T. (2017 July 31). *Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Originator of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Addresses ACE Teachers and Leaders*. Retrieved from <https://ace.nd.edu/news/dr-gloria-ladson-billings-addresses-ace-teachers-and-leaders>

InTASC (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue. (2011). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED528630.pdf>

Isensee, L. (2015 July 13). How textbooks can teach different versions of history. *NPR Ed All things Considered*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/07/13/421744763/how-textbooks-can-teach-different-versions-of-history>

Kabagarama, D. (1997). *Breaking the ice: A guide to understanding people from other cultures*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to Be an Antiracist*. Random House Publishing Group Retrieved from <https://www.ebooks.com/en-us/book/96186933/how-to-be-an-antiracist/ibram-x-kendi/>

King, T. (2003). *The truth about stories: A native narrative*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Land acknowledgement. (n.d.). UNM Division for Equity and Inclusion. Retrieved from <https://diverse.unm.edu/about/land-acknowledgement.html>

Lee, D. M. (January 2012). Creating an Anti-Racist Classroom: Reflections to level the playing field, *Edutopia*. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/anti-racist-classroom-danielle-moss-lee>

Let's Talk: Discussing race, racism and other difficult topics with students. (n.d.). *Teaching Tolerance*. Retrieved from <http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf>

Livo, N. & Rietz, S. (1986). *Storytelling: Process and practice*. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Martinez and Yazzie consolidated lawsuit. (2020). Retrieved from <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/yazzie-martinez-updates/>

Miller, R. (2020). An Antiracist Roadmap for Discussing Tough Topics in Class. Edutopia. Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/article/antiracist-roadmap-discussing-tough-topics-class?utm_content=linkpos5&utm_campaign=weekly-2020-09-09&utm_source=edu-legacy&utm_medium=email

Merrill, S. (2020 September 11). How trauma is written into our bodies? *Edutopia*. Retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/article/trauma-written-our-bodies-educators-can-help?utm_content=linkpos1&utm_campaign=weekly-2020-09-16&utm_source=edu-legacy&utm_medium=email

Moayeri, M. & Smith, J. (2010). The unfinished stories of two First Nations mothers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53(5), 408-417.
Doi:10.1598/JAAL.53.5.6

O'Connor, B. C. & Wyatt, R. B. (2004). *Photo provocations: Thinking in, with, and about photographs*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.

Ortiz, S. J. (1992). A Good Journey. *Woven Stone, Sun Tracks: An American Indian*. Literary Series 21. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Papert, S. (November 2001). Seymour Papert: Project-based learning. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from <http://www.edutopia.org/seymour-papert-project-based-learning#graph6>

Perry, B. (2020). *How the brain learns best*. Scholastic. Retrieved from <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/how-brain-learns-best/>

Pletcher, B., Gomez, J., and Elizondro, A. (2019). Making Writing Assessment Personal: Implementation of a Revised Writing Inventory in a Reading Diagnosis Course. In A. Babino, N. Cossa, J. Araujo, & R. Johnson (Eds.), *Educating for a Just Society*, 41, pp. 225-252.

- Rietz, S. (1988). Using oral literature in the classroom. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *Teaching the Indian child: A bilingual/multicultural approach*. Billings, MT: Eastern Montana College.
- Rodgers, E. (2000). Language matters: When is a scaffold really a scaffold? *National Reading Conference Yearbook*, 49. (78–90).
- Stewart, R. (2020, June 2). *Statement from New Mexico Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart*. Retrieved from <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/statement-from-new-mexico-public-education-secretary-ryan-stewart/>
- Schwarz, M. T. (2001). *Navajo lifeways: Contemporary issues, ancient knowledge*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Schoenbach, R., Greenleaf, C., & Murphy, L. (2010). Reading for understanding: How reading apprenticeship improves disciplinary learning in secondary and college classrooms. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey Bass.
- Smith, A. Microaggressions. (2020 June 11). What to know about microaggressions. *Medical News Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/microaggressions>
- Torres-Velásquez, D., Sleeter, C. & Romero, A. (2019). Martínez v. State of New Mexico and Multicultural Education: Divide and Conquer? We Don't Think So! *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal (AMAE)*, 13(3), pp. 170-194. Retrieved from <https://amaejournal.utsa.edu/index.php/AMAE/article/view/246/237>
- UNM Land Acknowledgement. (2020). Office of Equity and Inclusion Retrieved from <http://diverse.unm.edu/about/land-acknowledgement.html>
- Vilson, J. (2015 March 9). Empowering Educators Through Cultural Competence *Edutopia*. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/empowering-educators-through-cultural-competence-jose-vilson>
- Vitali, F. (2016). [Teaching with stories as the content and context for learning](#). *Global Education Review*, 3(1), 27-44.

Vulchi, P and Guo, W. (2017). What it takes to be racially literate. *WomenTED Talks 2017*. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/priya_vulchi_and_winona_guo_what_it_takes_to_be_racially_literate/transcript?referrer=playlist-talks_to_help_you_understand_r#t-277490

Webster, A. K. & Peterson, L. C. (2011). *American Indian languages in unexpected places*. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35(2), 1-18.

Wise, T. & Singh, A. (2019). *The Racial Healing Handbook*. New Harbinger publications. Retrieved from <https://www.ebooks.com/en-us/book/209734737/the-racial-healing-handbook/anneliese-a-singh/>

White-Kaulaity, M. (2007). Reflections on Native American Reading: A Seed, a Tool, and a Weapon. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(7), 560-569. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40012340>

Whitt, R. (2020 July 25). *How colleges and universities are the path to an equitable future*. Retrieved from <http://news.unm.edu/news/transformational-education-as-the-key-to-dismantling-racism>

Wickstrom, C. , Patterson, L. & Araujo, J. (2010). *Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction for Adolescent English Language Learners*. North Star of Texas Writing Project. Retrieved from https://archive.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/15415/LSRI_Culturally_Mediated_Writing_Instruction_for_Adolescent_English_Language_Learners.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d

Yaziyatawin & Yellow Bird, M. (eds.). (2005). *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press. Retrieved from http://www.sarweb.org/media/files/sar_press_for_indigenous_minds_only_chapter_1.pdf

Zainuddin, H., Yahya, N., Morales-Jones, C. & Ariza, E. (2011). *Fundamentals of teaching English to speakers of other languages in k-12 mainstream classrooms*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

APPENDIX

Antiracist Pedagogical Resources

1619 Project at <https://pulitzercenter.org/file/fullissueofthe1619projectpdf>

Abolitionist Teaching Network at <https://abolitionistteachingnetwork.org/guide>

American Indians in Children's Literature by Debbie Reese at

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>

Civil Rights Sit-Ins at <https://sites.google.com/site/farmingtoncivilrights/sit-ins>

Edutopia at <https://www.edutopia.org/video/6-ways-be-antiracist-educator>

Implicit Bias Project at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Indigenous Voices at <https://thetinyactivist.com/indigenous-voices/>

Oyate Press at <http://oyate.org/>

Let's Talk: Discussing race, racism and other difficult conversations with students at

<http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf>

Microaggressions at <https://www.microaggressions.com/>

Teaching Tolerance at <https://www.tolerance.org/>

Rethinking Schools by Linda Christensen at <https://rethinkingschools.org/>

Zinn Education Project: Teaching People's History at <https://www.zinnedproject.org/>