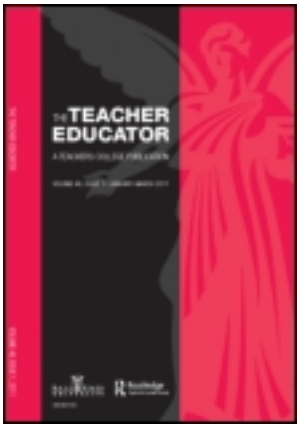

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Instructional, Institutional, and Sociopolitical Challenges of Teaching Multicultural Teacher Education Courses

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INSTRUCTIONAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND SOCIOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES OF TEACHING MULTICULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES

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Despite growing scholarly attention to multicultural teacher education, most scholarship focuses on teacher education students rather than those who are preparing them to teach multiculturally. This study, a grounded theory exploration of data from a survey ($N = 70$) of multicultural teacher educators, represents an attempt to shift some of that focus to the challenges faced by those teaching multicultural teacher education courses. Findings support many of the challenges named, but rarely empirically studied, in the literature, including the prevalence of student resistance. However, the findings revealed challenges to existing presumptions, such as evidence that the primary challenge to the implementation of sound multicultural teacher education is not a lack of multicultural sensibility in multicultural teacher educators, but the myriad challenges impeding their abilities to deliver learning experiences that are consistent with their visions for multicultural education. Implications, including those regarding professional and support opportunities available to multicultural teacher educators, are discussed.

The literature on multicultural education and multicultural teacher education (MTE) in the United States is rich with explorations of, and arguments for, the development of multiculturally minded teachers (Ambe, 2006; Garmon, 2005; Grant & Sleeter, 2006; Ross, 2008;

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Sleeter, 2006). In turn, a growing number of scholars have focused their energies exploring what exactly constitutes the effective preparation of teachers in this regard. Some have attempted to measure or explain the effects of MTE on the attitudes, dispositions, and practices of current and future teachers (Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; Ross, 2008; Vavrus, 2009). Others have studied the process of facilitating multicultural consciousness and competency growth among teacher candidates (Aveling, 2006; de Courcy, 2007; Erden, 2009; Montgomery & McGlynn, 2009; Moss, 2008; Pennington, 2007). These general topics presently constitute the bulk of scholarship on MTE.

Considerably less attention and empirical study has been paid to examining the practices of *multicultural teacher educators* or the intricacies that affect those practices. The relatively slim literature that does exist on these issues contains insightful observations about MTE practice and the sociopolitical context of MTE based on the experiences of individual multicultural teacher educators (see, e.g., Ukpokodu [2007] and Cochran-Smith [2004]). Among the dominant themes of this line of MTE inquiry are the challenges faced by multicultural teacher educators—challenges that range from student resistance (Gayle-Evans & Michael, 2006; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008) to neoliberal influences on teacher education in general (Keiser, 2005; Sleeter, 2008). Although this literature provides important baseline insights into the sorts of challenges faced by those who are charged with helping to prepare multicultural-minded teachers, little effort has gone into mapping these phenomena in any systematic or cross-context way. As a result, we are limited as to what we know about the patterns of these challenges. A more detailed understanding of these patterns could help us better understand the support and professional development needs of individuals who teach multicultural education courses. In addition, familiarity with the challenges faced by those individuals could help us provide important feedback about the extent to which professional organizations and other forums available to multicultural teacher educators adequately consider these needs.

This study expands on insights regarding the challenges faced by multicultural teacher educators in their teaching of MTE courses. It is based on an analysis of data collected through a survey of multicultural teacher educators designed to explore the philosophical frameworks, dispositions, and experiences that inform the way MTE courses are designed and taught in teacher education programs across the United States. In response to an open-ended question, participants described, often in greater detail than anticipated, the challenges they faced teaching MTE courses. These data were analyzed with a primary research question in mind: ''How do multicultural teacher educators charac-

terize the challenges they face teaching MTE classes?'' A secondary question was considered: ''What do multicultural teacher educators' characterizations of these challenges suggest about how they might be more sustainably prepared to teach MTE classes?''

Contextualizing This Study

Existing scholarship tends to characterize challenges faced by multicultural teacher educators in three primary ways: (a) larger sociopolitical forces—namely, growing conservative influences on education; (b) faculty ideology regarding MTE; and (c) resistance to MTE.

Conservative Trends

Sleeter (2008), describing growing pressures on teacher education, warned, ''Under a marriage between neoliberalism and neoconservatism, education is being tightly harnessed to the service of corporate expansion, in the context of downsizing of public services and substantial narrowing of the meaning of democracy'' (p. 1947). Others identified this larger political shift as a driving force in parallel shifts within public education (Giroux, 2008; Grant, 2004; Hursh, 2005; Sleeter, 2008). They identified the shift from local control of schools to state and federal control through the imposition of curriculum standards and tests, culminating, for example, in the enactment of No Child Left Behind. Giroux (2008) placed these conditions in a larger sociopolitical framework, describing the imposition of corporate-friendly policies, such as voucher programs, on public education as evidence of a larger corporate–capitalist U.S. context. An outcome of these shifts in the education milieu, according to Sleeter (2008) and Keiser (2005), is a movement within teacher education away from teacher preparation focused explicitly on educational equity and toward the production of classroom technicians.

An important implication of these larger trends is a more general hegemonization of multiculturalism and MTE (Asher, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gorski, 2008, 2006). Cochran-Smith (2004) explained,

> Educational equity is increasingly being conceptualized as opportunities for all students to be held equally accountable to the same high-stakes tests, despite unequal resources and opportunities to learn. Teacher preparation is increasingly being conceptualized as a training and testing problem to ensure that all teachers have basic subject matter knowledge and the technical skills to work in schools devoted to bringing pupils' test

> scores to certain minimum thresholds. And preparing young people to live in a democratic society is increasingly being conceptualized as efficiently assimilating all schoolchildren into mainstreams values, language, and knowledge perspectives so they can enter the nation's workforce, contribute to the economy, and preserve the place of the United States as the dominant power in a global society. (p. 1)

Many MTE scholars have suggested that teacher educators, socialized, like everybody else, to comply with dominant ideologies, enact these shifts in their practice. One example of this phenomenon was the widespread endorsement within MTE of Ruby Payne's (2005) *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*—a book that enacts neoliberal paradigms such as the ''culture of poverty'' myth and deficit ideology (Juárez, Smith, & Hayes, 2008). In addition, Díaz-Rico (1998) and Vavrus (2002) shared a concern that MTE is being delivered increasingly as cultural programs, such as cultural plunge activities, which reduce it, in Díaz-Rico's words, to little more than a ''stroll down ethnicity lane'' (p. 71).

Faculty Ideologies and Abilities

These ideologies find their way into MTE classes through multicultural teacher educators, reflecting the ideological positions of MTE faculty (Sheets, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). With some exceptions, the ideological positions of those teaching MTE courses devalue social justice concerns or reframe ''social justice'' in ways that fit existing hegemony (Cannella, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Vavrus, 2002). So, as in the case of P–12 teachers, the personal dispositions and biases of teacher educators can be a considerable barrier to MTE practice.

An additional impediment among multicultural teacher educators is a lack of experience with and understanding of multiculturalism (Gordon, 2005; Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008). With an estimated 88% of teacher educators being White (Sheets, 2003), many feel unprepared to incorporate multicultural ideals into their teaching (Morrier, Irving, Dandy, Dmitriyev, & Ukeje, 2007). This lack of connection with multiculturalism results too often in ineffective approaches to MTE, such as pedagogies of guilt and shame or overly simplified ''human relations'' models (Ukpokodu, 2007).

Furthermore, even experienced and respected multicultural teacher educators contend with incessant challenges in their practice (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gordon, 2005). Reflecting on an incident that highlighted her own ongoing struggles to provide authentic MTE, Cochran-Smith (2004), a veteran MTE practitioner, explained, ''I labored with my colleagues to rethink and alter the curriculum and

policies of our program, informed by new awareness of unintended discrepancies between our intentions and what was actually enacted'' (p. 3). This disconnect and a lack of a sense of ownership and efficacy in MTE practice may be indicators of a larger concern for multicultural teacher educators (MacDonald, Coleville-Hall, & Smolen, 2003): one may never be prepared fully to negotiate the complexities inherent in such a politically charged discipline (Nieto, 1998).

Resistance

If proportion of attention within the literature is any indication, the most intense resistance to MTE comes from students (de Courcy, 2007; Gayle-Evans & Michael, 2006; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008) and the institutional power structures in which teacher preparation programs are situated (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Juárez et al., 2008). The vast majority of teacher education students are White, middle-class women who have been socialized within a sociopolitical context (Cochran-Smith, 2004). On average, they enter MTE courses with identities and worldviews that are wrapped in dominant ideologies, such as deficit ideology (Gorski, 2008) and meritocracy (Bruna, 2007; Ukpokodu, 2007). Like students of every discipline, they carry race (Bruna, 2007; Klug, Luckey, Wilkins, & Whitfield, 2006), class (Romo & Chavez, 2006), religion (Cannella, 1998), gender (Erden, 2009), sexual orientation (Asher, 2007), and language (de Courcy, 2007; Romo & Chavez, 2006) biases into MTE experiences. Frequently, they begin the MTE process in denial of their own privileges (Reed & Black, 2006) and the very existence of injustice (Case & Hemmings, 2005). When these worldviews are challenged, responses can be steeped in defensiveness and resentment (Asher, 2007).

Although many teacher education programs identify the preparation of teachers for multiculturalism as a program goal (Gordon, 2005), what they offer in practice tends to look more like monoculturalism than equity and social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Juárez et al., 2008; Ukpokodu, 2007). In fact, Juárez et al. (2008) argued that teacher education ''is set up to privilege Whiteness at the expense of minoritized others'' (p. 21). Teacher educators who advocate for a social justice approach to MTE by raising questions about equity and oppression might be urged to tone down their politics (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2009; Ukpokodu, 2007) and focus instead on ''tolerance'' (Vavrus, 2002). If teacher educators, particularly those from disenfranchised identity groups, push back against this pressure, they are ''likely to be labeled 'hostile,' 'not a team player,' 'mean,' even 'un-Christlike''' (Juárez et al.,

2008, p. 23). As a result of these conditions, according to Gay (2005), multicultural teacher educators can struggle to find their places within academe.

Method

To identify how multicultural teacher educators characterize the challenges they face teaching MTE classes, a qualitative framework was employed to examine data collected through a survey. The survey included several quantitative sections (a total of more than 100 items) as well as three open-ended items. One of these items prompted participants thusly: ''What is the biggest challenge you face in implementing your vision of multicultural teacher education?'' Although this was only one item within a fairly extensive survey, it drew the researcher's attention because most responses were considerably longer than might be anticipated. Many were over 500 words. The intention of this study initially was to examine the data collected in response to this item across a variety of demographic variables (i.e., race, gender, faculty rank, years of experience teaching MTE classes) in order to ascertain the extent to which such variables influenced the sorts of challenges faced by multicultural teacher educators. However, an analysis of the data revealed no discernible trends aligned with these variables. It did, however, reveal a number of complexities and intricacies that complicated existing understandings of these challenges.

Sample

Participants for the survey were identified through an electronic form of snowball sampling ($N = 70$). Prospective participants were contacted via electronic messages distributed to listservs frequented by people who teach MTE courses, including those hosted by Rethinking Schools (a teacher-led organization advocating progressive school reform), EdChange (a coalition of teachers and teacher educators advocating equity in education), and the National Association for Multicultural Education (a U.S.-based professional organization advocating multicultural education). Prospective participants were required to have taught at least one course offered in an education program designed for current or future teachers at a U.S. college or university in which the central topic was multicultural education or a related field. Those interested in participating were invited to respond via electronic mail. When interested participants' eligibility was confirmed, they were given access to the

survey. A majority of the participants were White and female and were full-time tenure track or tenured (see Table 1).

Instrument

The survey, co-designed by Bree Picower of New York University, including the construction of the open-ended item that was the focus of this study, was based on a literature review, an analysis of MTE syllabi (Gorski, 2009), and recommendations by experts. The item from which responses were analyzed (''What is the biggest challenge you face in implementing your vision of multicultural teacher education?'') was written purposefully with the phrase ''your vision of multicultural teacher education'' based on these recommendations in order to encourage participants to consider pressures that might have persuaded them, implicitly or explicitly, to modify their classes in ways that rendered them less consistent with their own MTE philosophies.

Six expert reviewers provided detailed feedback on the entire survey, including this item. The instrument was then revised and pilot-tested with six multicultural teacher educators. Following an additional process of revision, the survey was placed online using the professional version of SurveyMonkey.

Data Analysis

In the spirit of grounded theory, data were analyzed without a preconceived theoretical framework. The data were coded through a three-step coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The first of these was open coding, during which data were organized according to general themes. Three themes, which emerged most consistently from the data, emerged during this process: (a) instructional challenges, (b) institutional challenges, and (c) sociopolitical challenges. The second step was axial coding, in which themes were reexamined for patterns and relationships between theme categories (or subthemes), a process that helped ensure that data were categorized in consistent ways, but also in contoured and specific ways. This process began with a reconsideration of each theme in an attempt to identify subthemes that appeared consistently in what, during axial coding, were seen as three somewhat distinct sets of data. For example, two subthemes emerged from the reconsideration of data supporting the instructional challenges theme: (a) a lack of departmental or institutional commitment and support and (b) a lack of support from faculty colleagues. Relevant data were then reexamined in light of other themes and subthemes to ensure

TABLE 1 Diversity of Participants

Identity	Number of participants
Gender identity	
Female	50
Male	20
Transgender	0
Race	
White or European American	48
Black, African, or African American	11
Latina(o), Chicana(o), or Hispanic, non-White	4
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	3
American Indian or Native American	2
Multiracial	2
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	56
Lesbian	6
Gay Man	4
Queer	2
Questioning	2
Faculty rank	
Full Professor	8
Associate Professor	16
Assistant Professor	28
Instructor	11
Graduate Teaching Assistant	3
Other	4
Employment status	
Full time, Tenured	21
Full time, Tenure Track	24
Full time, Non-Tenure Track	11
Part time or Adjunct	11
Graduate Student	3
Experience teaching at post-secondary level	
1 to 2 Years	7
3 to 5 Years	16
6 to 10 Years	18
More than 10 Years	29

Note. $N = 70$.

consistency in coding. During the third stage, collective coding, data were reconsidered within each theme and subtheme in order to identify deeper intricacies and patterns.

Once themes and subthemes were formulated, quasi-statistics were employed in order to quantify the percentage of respondents who alluded to particular themes, allowing for a final accounting of the regularity with which particular concerns were identified by participants (Maxwell, 1996).

Results

Three themes related to the ways in which multicultural teacher educators characterize the challenges they face teaching MTE classes emerged from the analysis: (a) instructional challenges, (b) institutional challenges, and (c) sociopolitical challenges. Although many of the central findings related to these themes were roughly consistent with conditions described by existing literature, the analysis revealed some conditions not captured by that literature as well as several intricacies related to current understandings.

Perhaps the most interesting finding cut across each of the themes. One might have expected to find that certain types of challenges were more or less prevalent depending on participant demographics, such as race, gender, tenure status, or years of experience teaching in higher education. There is evidence to suggest that faculty of color, for example, may experience harsher forms of resistance and more direct pressure to soften their MTE practice than their White counterparts (Juárez et al., 2008). However, as mentioned, in the case of this study, no such distinctions emerged from the analysis, even when data were examined across demographics. This could reflect the possibility that those teaching MTE courses were more attuned to these sorts of dynamics and, as a result, might name them even if they are not targeted as harshly as some of their colleagues. Alternatively, it might be indicative of the fact that participants were asked to share their challenges without a rating scale or some other way to measure the intensity, breadth, or depth of those challenges.

Instructional Challenges

Of the 70 participants who completed this item, 26 (32.9%) alluded to one of two interrelated instructional challenges: (a) student resistance to concepts related to multicultural education and (b) difficulty

navigating students' privileged identities. Student resistance is well documented in the MTE literature, and the data analyzed in this study supported earlier findings as well as revealed a potentially important distinction left unaddressed by existing scholarship. Several participants described resistance that they interpreted as based on identity or ideological grounds—the type of resistance discussed thoroughly in the literature. One participant mentioned, ''student resistance to notions of whiteness'' and ''student resistance to notions of religion and schools.'' Another lamented, ''Many [students] retreat to the safety of the dominant culture myopia.'' But others referred to a different kind of resistance: that which comes, not from students who are philosophically hostile to multiculturalism, but from those who prefer to frame it in neutral or ''color-blind'' terms. One participant explained, ''My classes are mostly southern white women who want to be effective teachers for all students, but need support to get past their own 'stuff.''' Another mentioned that students tend to translate ''multicultural education'' as ''treating all their students the same.'' Yet another described a different student response that, although not explicitly hostile, poses challenges to her or his teaching: ''Some White students ... often consider 'American culture' as synonymous of 'White/mainstream/majority' culture or perceive themselves as not having a 'culture' since, in their opinion, multicultural education is designed to help them understand culturally and linguistically diverse students.'' This distinction in types of resistance and their varied implications for fostering multicultural consciousness is a compelling topic for future research.

In a finding similarly consistent with existing literature, 12 (15.2%) participants indicated that their greatest challenge was overcoming their students' privileged identities. Many referred to the challenge of teaching ''mostly White students'' or ''white middle class students'' who ''don't realize they oppress people by imposing their views'' or who ''are apathetic about injustice.'' Interestingly, of the 12 participants who named students' privileged identities as their biggest challenge, 11 named White privilege explicitly, 2 named class privilege, and 2 named Christian privilege. None explicitly named heterosexual, ability, or language privilege, which could indicate that participants did not see these as problems or, alternatively, that those teaching MTE-type courses do not associate these identities with multicultural education to the same extent as race, religion, or class.

Institutional Challenges

Twenty-nine (36.7%) respondents identified institutional barriers as

the biggest challenge to implementing their visions of MTE. Two subthemes emerged from the analysis of data related to this theme: (a) a lack of departmental or institutional commitment and support and (b) a lack of support from faculty colleagues. As detailed earlier, much has been written by people who teach MTE courses about underwhelming departmental or institutional commitment to multicultural education (Gordon, 2005; Juárez et al., 2008; Ukpokodu, 2007). This scholarship has tended to focus on inconsistencies between stated program goals and actual program practice, a problem commonly cited by this study's participants. One participant captured the overall sentiment of these responses:

> My department, while officially stating that multicultural education is important, has only a limited understanding of critical multiculturalism, while seeing multiculturalism as the ''liberal'' form of only looking at the similarities between individuals among differing groups and downplaying institutional and systemic mechanisms of domination and subordination.

Several participants were concerned, as well, about a lack of integration of multicultural concerns across their programs. One shared, ''Once students take the one required course, they are done, and no other courses support or connect to what we teach in [multicultural education].'' Others found their departments or institutions hostile to multicultural education. ''One of the biggest challenges,'' explained a participant, ''is adequate support from the ... department, which does not value multicultural education and is outright ethnocentric in its philosophy and practices.''

Among the several ways in which participants described a lack of commitment from their departments or institutions, the most commonly cited concern was time: a concern not addressed explicitly in existing scholarship. Fourteen participants (17.7%) named institutionally imposed time constraints as their biggest challenge. These participants felt that a single course provided inadequate time to facilitate student learning around a subject as complex as multicultural education. Several alluded to a lack of time to achieve ample depth in student understanding, a point which might be related to the popular concern that their students enter MTE classes from positions of race, class, and religion privilege. For example, one participant felt that a single semester did not provide ample time ''to overcome students' prejudices and sense of privilege.'' Similarly, several participants, naming yet another challenge around which existing scholarship on multicultural teacher education is largely silent, suggested that time constraints forced them to choose between breadth and depth or between theory and practice.

In addition to a lack of departmental or institutional support, several participants cited a lack of support, or outright hostility, from colleagues as their biggest challenge, a form of resistance less developed in existing scholarship. Some simply identified their biggest challenge as ''fellow faculty'' or ''faculty resistance.'' Others described hostile work environments due to this resistance. One participant explained that such resistance should come as no surprise, ''because most of the faculty reflects the student body: white, middle class, and not invested in oppression.'' Another participant, self-identifying as a ''Woman of Color,'' described how resistance, and particularly her colleagues' refusal to acknowledge White privilege, had ''exacerbated the problem'' of student resistance. She explained that she had been put in a position, not only to teach against her students' privilege, but also against her colleagues' validation of that privilege. Yet another described more implicit form of resistance, whereas colleagues often stated a shared commitment to educational equity ''while seeing multiculturalism as the 'liberal' form of only looking at the similarities between individuals among differing groups and downplaying the institutional and systemic mechanisms of domination and subordination.''

Sociopolitical Challenges

Eleven participants (13.9%), harkening back to the existing scholarship on neoliberal influences on teacher education (Hursch, 2005; Sleeter, 2008), identified as their biggest challenge the larger sociopolitical context of teacher education. The two major sub-themes among these responses were (a) conservative ideologies in the U.S. and their influence on teacher education and (b) an increasingly conservative multicultural education milieu.

Several participants framed their MTE work within what they experienced as an oppressive society. ''A racist, sexist, homophobic ... society,'' one participant responded. Another cited the challenge of doing MTE in a ''conservative Christian'' sociopolitical context in which ''pluralism [is seen] as a threat.'' Others referred more specifically to how these conditions infected teacher education. For example, many connected this sociopolitical context with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the standards movement, which they felt were tugging the focus of teacher education away from equity concerns (see Keiser, 2005; Sleeter, 2008). Participants mentioned, for example, the ''accountability movement,'' the ''dehumanization of classrooms,'' ''preparing students for PRAXIS exams which do not relate to [multicultural education],'' the

''perceived authority of NCLB and standardized tests,'' and ''barriers created by ... standardization of public education.''

Another condition cited by several participants was a trend toward increasingly conservative conceptions of multicultural education, even from the field itself (Asher, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gorski, 2006, 2008). According to one participant, whose response captured the sentiments of others with similar concerns:

> Multicultural ed[ucation] is a very thin field with terrible leadership in the US. Institutional racism, sexism, and class bias add up to powerful forces that are not addressed by most faculty.... Scholarship in multiculturalism is, for the most part, more self-promotion and opportunism than critical work. And ... most multiculturalism is designed as a veneer for nationalism—which is quite popular. People who teach against that grain face many challenges.

Discussion

The findings in this study were fairly consistent with existing scholarship on challenges faced by those who teach MTE courses. However, the study uncovered some conditions that complicated present understandings as well as several concerns ripe for deeper investigation. On the grandest scale, of the three foci dominating the scholarly discourse on challenges faced by those teaching MTE courses, two were identified by the multicultural teacher educator participants in this study: conservative trends in education and resistance. The data reveal little evidence, on the other hand, to support the prevalent focus in the literature on faculty ideologies and abilities.

The Non-Emergence of "Faculty Ideologies" as a Challenge

At first consideration, one might wonder whether participants' failure to name their own ideologies as a challenge in their MTE practice is a reflection of those very ideologies. If, as many have argued (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Sheets, 2003; Vavrus, 2002), multicultural teacher educators on average lack the dispositions and understandings that would enable them to teach MTE courses effectively, it would stand to reason that these same limitations would hinder their recognition of their own ideologies. However, the data analyzed for this study suggested, if somewhat implicitly, evidence hinting at the possibility that MTE faculty do, on average, have critical understandings of multicultural education,

the sociopolitical significance of their roles as multicultural teacher educators, and the dangers of conservative trends in the education milieu. For example, several participants lamented the lack of systemic efforts to incorporate multicultural education throughout teacher preparation programs. Others demonstrated understandings of the sociopolitical context of student resistance to MTE, pointing out intricacies largely unexplored in the current MTE literature (as discussed in more detail later). Many named the relevance to MTE of systemic conditions such as the high-stakes testing movement and teacher testing or problematized the mainstream multicultural education discourse as too conservative.

Certainly more direct study of this discrepancy is needed, but these data could be seen as raising questions about one of the central assumptions on which much of the MTE literature is grounded: that a majority of those teaching MTE courses are ill-equipped ideologically to do so. Such a clarification could have important practical implications related to how we prepare and support multicultural teacher educators, such as the extent to which preparation and support ought to focus on content or on strategies for better navigating the individual, institutional, and systemic resistance with which many multicultural teacher educators contend.

Complicating "Student Resistance"

Another way in which the findings from this study complicated existing scholarship, and one that supported the notion that multicultural teacher educators on average enter their work with more sophisticated ideologies than assumed in the literature, was found in participants' understandings of student resistance. As mentioned earlier, student resistance has been among the most widely covered topics in the MTE literature. Scholarship on the topic has focused largely on identity politics. Scholars pointed to students' identities across race, class, religion, and other identities and how these related to their overwhelming denials of privilege and oppression (Bruna, 2007; Erden, 2009).

However, rarely has student resistance to MTE been discussed in more complex ways, such as in ways that differentiate the act of resisting on political grounds from the act of resisting due to, say, cognitive dissonance or a well-intentioned desire to focus on color-blindness rather than racial equity. Participants in this study did offer insights into student resistance that spoke to these sorts of distinctions. Such complexities are important because different educational strategies may be required to facilitate through different types of resistance emanating from varying ideological sources (Gorski, 2009).

Institutional and Colleague Resistance

A third way in which the findings complicated existing understandings of the challenges faced by multicultural teacher educators related to the lack of institutional support cited often in the literature (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2009; Ukpokodu, 2007). Although participants in this study helped confirm this type of institutional resistance, they also named a related problem largely left unaddressed in the literature: lack of support, or outright hostility, from faculty *colleagues*. Not only are multicultural teacher educators attempting to manage student and departmental resistance, but often, according to these practitioners, they must navigate hostility from their colleagues, some of whom, in their view, harbor the same denials of privilege as their more privileged students.

Considering MTE Professional Development

The findings from this study provide important bases on which to assess the strengths and limitations of professional development and support opportunities available to multicultural teacher educators. Do these opportunities adequately prepare multicultural teacher educators, not only to deliver particular types of content, but also to navigate varying types of resistance? Do they offer pedagogical tools for managing different varieties of student resistance, from outright hostility to the desire to hold strongly to color-blindness? Do they provide space for discussions about MTE in sociopolitical contexts and how, for example, to assess their pedagogies in relation to neoliberal influences on public education?

Unfortunately, little scholarly attention has been paid to analyzing the conferences, professional organizations, and other forums through which multicultural teacher educators tend to seek professional development and support. However, one empirical study that analyzed the sessions offered at three annual conferences hosted by the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), showed that, although many sessions were specific to MTE, a vast majority of these focused on a particular identity-related issue (i.e., racial identity) while almost none explicitly addressed institutional or sociopolitical challenges faced by multicultural teacher educators (Amosa & Gorski, 2008).

To better serve their constituents, organizations whose members include those who teach MTE classes should consider providing more guidance and support around these challenges. All multicultural teacher educators would benefit, of course, from conference sessions, work-

shops, and literature focusing on best K–12 practices, identities, oppressions, and other topics shown to dominate the NAME conference. Interestingly, none of the participants of this study identified a lack of content knowledge or pedagogical skills as her or his primary challenge. Equally notable was the fact that sessions about the challenges they did identify were largely absent from the NAME conference. Organizations serving teacher educators might consider offering symposia, dialogue opportunities, and other opportunities for these challenges, and strategies for overcoming them, to be discussed among practitioners. I would recommend more consideration of these dynamics, not just in contexts that are specific to MTE, but in any of those in which large numbers of teacher educators participate. This would make such opportunities available to those who have been assigned to teach MTE courses, even if they do not identify such courses as related to their primary area of scholarly or teaching interest.

Considerations for Future Study

This study uncovered intriguing questions regarding MTE to be examined or reexamined through future research. More organizational analyses of NAME and other professional organizations that count as their members multicultural teacher educators would help identify more precisely the gaps between the professional development and support opportunities they offer and the sorts of opportunities needed. This process would be aided by more efforts to collect richer data, perhaps through interviews or focus groups, about the complexities of the challenges faced by multicultural teacher educators. Finally, it would be informative, following an extended effort at studying these challenges, to compare them with what we know about the outcomes of multicultural teacher education for current and future teachers.

Limitations of This Study

The open-ended item on which this analysis is based appeared toward the end of an extensive survey that proved, through pilot-testing, to take upwards of 45 minutes for some participants to complete. As with any data collection process, it is possible that the number, the framing, or the position of items preceding it influenced the results. For this reason, additional, more targeted, study of these challenges will be important. Similarly, as with any survey item, phrasing is important, so that a fuller understanding of the holistic experiences of multicultural teacher educators might be attained with questions, not just about the

challenges they face, but also, for instance, about enriching aspects of teaching MTE courses.

Additionally, one peril of snowball sampling is the risk of not having as diverse a sample as may be possible with a more selective sampling approach. Although the sample for this study was diverse across myriad demographics, it is possible that certain subpopulations of multicultural teacher educators, such as those who do not identify MTE as among their foremost scholarly interests or those who were assigned an MTE course despite not having particular expertise in multicultural education, are underrepresented in the sample. Such practitioners, after all, could be less likely to belong to the e-mail discussion forums (NAME, EdChange, and Rethinking Schools) that initially were used to identify potential participants.

Conclusion

There remains much to be explored regarding the practice of multicultural teacher educators and the challenges they face. Completed in an effort to complicate dominant notions on these fronts, this study supported some such notions, such as the prevalence of student resistance to MTE. But it also challenged or complicated several existing notions by highlighting challenges that previously had received little attention in the literature, such as resistance from colleagues.

Continued work on these conditions is critical, not only to the sustainability of those doing the MTE work, but also to the ideals of multicultural education. After all, when these ideals are lost to teacher education, which is increasingly the case (Keiser, 2005; Sleeter, 2008), we may risk losing them, for all intents and purposes, from the education milieu altogether.

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