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Reflection, Racial Competence, and Critical Pedagogy: how do we prepare pre-service teachers to pose tough questions?

H. RICHARD MILNER

Box 330, GPC, Department of Teaching and Learning, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37203, USA (e-mail: rich.milner@vanderbilt.edu/email)

ABSTRACT *In this article, the author argues that pre-service teachers may need to reflect about race and pursue racial competence as they are prepared to teach in multiracial schools. The question is how do teacher educators prepare pre-service teachers to pose tough questions about issues of race? Several matters are considered in the discussion, such as teacher reflection, race reflection, and some complexities of race in the teaching and learning process. The author concludes the article with an extensive discussion of critical pedagogy. In particular, the author advances two possible teaching methods (critically engaged dialogue, and race reflective journaling) that teacher educators may find useful as they attempt to facilitate reflections on race and assist pre-service teachers in pursuing racial competence through posing tough questions. In the final section, the author shares a chart that he developed and suggests that the chart be used in critically engaged dialogue and race reflective journaling as pre-service teachers pursue racial competence. Finally, the author encourages teacher educators to continue developing instructional methods and tools that allow pre-service teachers to pose tough questions about issues of race.*

I have come to know race as a sealed dwelling with windows but no doors.
One can look out but never leave. (Randall Robinson, 1998)

In this article, I discuss the importance of pre-service teacher reflection regarding race with the goal that pre-service teachers became *pursuant* of racial competence¹. I am not suggesting that one ever really becomes *competent*, as racial awareness and sensitivity are not destinations that pre-service teachers happen to locate through specific activities. Rather, I am suggesting that pre-service teachers enhance their racial awareness and sensitivity when they pursue a level of racial competence—an enhanced level of understanding where race is concerned that may be integral to pre-service teachers' learning in their work. Indeed, teacher learning has been seen as an essential component of teachers' effectiveness in the classroom with students

(Richardson & Placier, 2001; McCutcheon, 2002; Milner, 2003). And teacher educators may need to develop and to implement tools that assist pre-service teachers in the task of reflecting about race in pursuit of racial competence. The question is how do teacher educators prepare pre-service teachers to pose tough questions about issues of race? My goal in this article is to share a chart that I developed to assist teacher educators in facilitating pre-service teacher reflection about race. Clearly, I am not suggesting that this tool will be a 'cure' to remedy poor pedagogical practice, but rather, it is an heuristic² to catalyze honest personal and public reflection about a difficult topic. In addition, I attempt to convey the idea that teacher educators must continue producing tools and methods of instruction that may direct pre-service teachers toward tough questions that may not be contemplated otherwise.

As an African American faculty member in a teacher education program in the USA, I have found that issues of race have not readily been central in many pre-service teachers' thinking about the teaching and learning process. In light of this void, it is my intent in this article to provide a possible tool to assist and to facilitate greater discussions between teacher educators and pre-service teachers on matters of race and education. I have purposely chosen to focus on pre-service teachers in this article. Teacher educators should also engage in similar reflections about race. It is beyond the scope of this article, however, to adequately address the breadth of both groups. I focus primarily on pre-service teachers because they will have direct interactions with students of color in pre-kindergarten–12 classrooms. As I will elaborate, students of color desperately need more racially aware, racially sensitive, and racially 'competent' teachers in classrooms across the USA. It is not my intent to suggest that teacher educators hold a superior body of knowledge over pre-service teachers where race is concerned. I am arguing that pre-service teachers need to pose tough questions in order to pursue racial competence so that they may become more effective teachers with students of color.

This is not to suggest that there is a 'one size fits all' method to address pre-service teacher reflection; attention, however, should be dedicated to racial reflections if we are going to even think about more effectively preparing pre-service teachers to teach in racially diverse contexts (at *a particular* school, during *a particular* time, in *a particular* community, among *particular* students). West (1993) stressed that we (as people with multiple roles and positions) cannot work for freedom on behalf of others until we are free ourselves. Pre-service teachers may need to reflect on their racial identities to work towards liberating themselves from confines (biases, prejudices, shortcomings) that may prevent them from reflecting on these issues otherwise. Pre-service teachers may need to pursue a level of racial competence that addresses their own racial identity issues—matters that may prevent or may stifle their growth or that of their students. Teacher educators seem to play an important role in this process of development. It seems that as we prepare pre-service teachers to teach students from racially diverse groups, pre-service teachers must become aware of their own and others' racial selves and how race influences education-related decisions in the classrooms.

Several issues will be discussed to achieve the goals of this article—to share and to stress the need for a race reflection chart, and to stress the urgency among other

teacher educators to develop tools and methods that allow pre-service teachers to confront issues of race throughout teacher education courses. I begin this discussion with a brief look at reflection in the teaching and learning process. Broadly, I point out some major implications of teacher reflection to provide a foundation for the purposes of this article. I then define race reflection, using the previous section on teacher reflection (generally speaking) as a foundation for teacher reflection surrounding issues of race. In the next two sections, I discuss the complex nature of race in the teaching and learning process. Indeed, the idea of race involves a plethora of issues, some of which I discuss to provide a context for race reflection. I conclude the article with an extensive discussion of critical pedagogy. I advance two possible teaching methods (critically engaged dialogue, and race reflective journaling) that teacher educators may find useful as they attempt to facilitate reflections on race. I also share a chart that I developed in this final section of the article and suggest that the chart be used in critically engaged dialogue, and race reflective journaling. My goal in the final section is to offer a discussion about how teacher educators and pre-service teachers might use these methods of instruction through critical pedagogy to achieve their goals in pursuit of racial competence.

Reflection in Teaching and Learning

There is a growing conceptual and empirical body of literature focusing on teacher reflections in teaching and learning (e.g. McMahon, 1997; Roskos *et al.*, 2001). Schön's (1983, 1987) work is insightful and is arguably classic, as pre-service teachers were challenged to become 'reflective practitioners.' He posited that teachers, like other professionals such as doctors, clergy, architects, engineers, and lawyers, were thinkers and some of their most effective decisions were reflected upon through practical rather than technically or linearly prescribed formulas. One reason Schön's work was so thought-provoking is that prior to it, teachers' decision-making was often conceived of as being guided by intuition or feelings rather than through analytical thought.

Freire (1998) encourages simultaneous reflection on self and the world to uncover inconspicuous phenomena. He contends that:

authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations, consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it. (p. 62)

When race reflection occurs, pre-service teachers begin to reflect authentically on past experiences beyond the walls of the classroom to address the idiosyncrasies that prevail in classrooms. Generality, in this sense, is unacceptable. Thus, because we live in a multiracial world and experience the struggles and triumphs of it, education and emancipation must consider both struggles and triumphs

because pre-service teachers' worldly racial experiences shape who they are and will become in the classroom.

In Freire's (1998) words, 'As women and men [and teachers], simultaneously reflecting on themselves and the world, increase the scope of their perceptions, they begin to [re]direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous phenomena' (p. 63). In short, the world is made up of racial beings—individuals reap the benefits, privileges, as well as hardships of it, often as a consequence of their racial heritage. Race is such a significant dimension of all human beings' experiences, especially racially marginalized individuals' daily activities, that it seems inconceivable that teacher educators even consider preparing pre-service teachers to reflect without explicit dialogue (Gay & Howard, 2000), strategies, and techniques that address race.

Defining Race Reflection

With a discussion of race reflection in teaching and learning established, this section expands and builds on some of the aforementioned ideas to define and to discuss what I am calling race reflections.

Race reflection can be seen as a way to uncover inconspicuous phenomena; it can be a process to understand hidden values, biases, and beliefs about race that were not to the fore in a teacher's thinking prior to conscious attempts to think about race. Race reflection is an inquiry-based process, an intellectual activity that is sometimes a consequence of social dynamics—those experiences in society that shape our thinking and thus our reality. Race reflection can be seen as a process of totality, one where individuals deliberate about racial matters concerning themselves, as well as social practices and behaviors of others. Race reflection does not necessarily involve a destination and neither should it follow linear form; rather, reflection on race concerns conscious, effortful thinking that invites pre-service teachers to continually and persistently (re)fect on themselves with their racial identities at the center in order to better understand and attend to others' racial identities, issues, and experiences. Race reflection in the teaching and learning process entails simultaneous consideration—a form of double thinking that does not neglect the particulars of the larger society in communion with that of the school context. Race reflection may be conceived as a process that naturally occurs, particularly where experienced teachers are concerned. However, many pre-service teachers may not yet have developed the skills and repertoire of knowledge to effectively reflect about race.

In short, race reflection is not a simplistic process; the demographic structure in the USA is complex, and transforming teacher thinking is also complex: addressing issues of race in teacher education programs involves a myriad of strategies and approaches that may consider the complexity of race for pre-service teachers across racial groups. Because of the complexities of race the language used throughout this article may raise some tensions.

Complexities of Race in Teaching and Learning

The USA is a multiracial society; it is projected that by the year 2020, 48% of the nation's school-age children in grades 1–12 will be students of color (Pallas *et al.*, 1989). While the nation's student populations are becoming more diverse, its teachers remain largely White (Banks & Banks, 2000). Gay and Howard (2000) remind us that:

... 86% of all elementary and secondary teachers are [White] European Americans. The number of African American teachers has declined from a high of 12% in 1970 to 7% in 1998. The number of Latino and Asian Pacific Islander American teachers is increasing slightly, but the percentages are still very small (approximately 5% and 1% respectively). Native Americans comprise less than 1% of the national teaching force. (pp. 1–2)

Because the racial orientations of students are more varied today than ever before and teachers are overwhelmingly White, we (as teacher educators) must develop tools to assist pre-service teachers (both White European Americans and teachers of color) in this task of reflecting about race. Some White European American teachers are aware of racial issues in the USA and in teaching and learning. Others of them often are not aware of issues related to race, and attempting to address both groups of teachers (those who are and are not racially aware) is indeed complex. White European American teachers who are not racially aware need to engage in activities such as race reflections. Pre-service teachers of color also should engage in race reflections. Where issues of race consciousness and identity are concerned, I support Tatum's (2001) position:

In a race-conscious society, the development of a positive sense of racial/ethnic identity not based on assumed superiority or inferiority is an important task for *both* white people and people of color. The development of this positive identity is a lifelong process that often requires unlearning the misinformation and stereotypes we have internalized not only about others, but also about ourselves. (p. 53) (emphasis added)

The complexities surrounding race in the USA often leave teachers entering classrooms cross-racially incompetent; that is, they have never had significant experiences with students from different racial backgrounds (Burke-Spero, 1999; Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003). Consequently, these teachers often lack the competencies to address the needs of students from different racial backgrounds. For instance, many teachers have never themselves attended schools with individuals of a different race, or lived in cross-racial neighborhoods, and their understanding of racially diverse students may be vague (Ford, 1996; Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003). In light of this lack of exposure and understanding, teachers may rely on stereotypical conceptions of racially diverse students—perceptions that they may have extracted from television programming, media coverage, or even family biases that still prevail in

teachers' thinking about racially diverse groups (Milner, 2002). Unfortunately, these stereotypical beliefs may force teachers to teach and to think about their racially diverse students through deficit models—whether consciously or unconsciously (Milner, 2002; Milner & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003). Because teachers may rely on stereotypical beliefs or overly simplistic notions of difference about racially diverse students, and because of the complex nature of the demographics in the USA, reflection on race is not an easy, simplistic process but is quite complex. In addition, race in teaching and learning is an important topic. I have come to understand that race is an overwhelming, important issue in education, and I shift the discussion now to address race in the teaching and learning process.

Race in the Teaching and Learning Process

Race is not a new area of inquiry and/or conceptualization in the teaching and learning process (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ford, 1996; Scheurich & Young, 1997). Decades ago, Woodson (1933) wrote about the realities of social inequality and used race as a structural framework to address inequalities prevalent in education. Foundationally, DuBois (1903) used race as a sociological base to assess inequality. He posited that the problem of the twentieth century was that of the color line. Presently, when we think about education generally, and the teaching and learning process specifically, it is difficult to ignore racial factors when academic measures are tabulated or when proficiency scores are quantified—providing evidence of standard deviations and negative correlations among the ratios of Blacks-to-Whites or Hispanics-to-Whites or Latino(a)s-to-Whites (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discuss such variances among students' academic performance in this way:

Although both class and gender can and do intersect race, as stand-alone variables they do not explain all of the educational achievement differences apparent between Whites and students of color. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that even when we hold constant for class, middle-class African-American students do not achieve at the same level as their White counterparts. (p. 51)

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argued that race was the most important variable in these achievement differences. Moreover, Steele (1997) asserted that virtually every academic achievement measure shows African American students trailing their White European American counterparts. These differences are consistent at every level of schooling (pre-kindergarten–12), and the predictors are not merely results of socio-economic status.

Little is known about teachers' racial influences in the teaching and learning process, particularly when we consider curriculum decision-making. Broadly speaking, theorists and researchers have come to conceive of race as an endemic dimension of life—it has been seen as a state of being that is so ingrained in our society and people's thinking that it cannot be ignored (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 1998; Parker, 1998). In fact, through multiple studies that substantiated the importance of race,

researchers and theorists have borrowed methodological and theoretical frameworks from other disciplines to address salient issues of race in education as well as the teaching and learning process (e.g. critical race theory from law). There are multiple perspectives that place race at the core of policy and curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1998), teaching approaches with African American students (Gay, 2000), research epistemology and methodology with Chicano/a students (Pizarro, 1998), and minorities (especially Latino/a students) in special education (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998). We have come to understand that race (really still) matters (West, 1993) in the world and thus in the teaching and learning process.

Race is too complex and significant in teaching and learning to skim the surface of its potency in our work with pre-service teachers. With this in mind, there needs to be a convergence between the manners in which we think about reflection and the ways that we conceptualize race in courses in our teacher education programs. The following section attempts to extend our thinking about race and reflection in a complementary, convergent manner. I discuss critical pedagogy and pre-service teachers with the goal of providing insight into instructional methods teacher educators may employ in their courses.

Critical Pedagogy and Pre-service Teachers

In light of my argument that pre-service teachers should be encouraged and directed to reflect about race, there are likely some inconsistencies embedded in the overall goal of critical pedagogy and what I propose as integral to pre-service teachers' reflections. This section attempts to provide instructional examples, rationales, and methods of how teacher educators might address race reflections with pre-service teachers. Specifically, I am suggesting that through critical pedagogy, teacher educators may develop teaching activities to assist pre-service teachers in addressing issues of race.

Critical pedagogy has been defined as a form of instruction, which rejects oppression, combats injustice, gives voice to marginalized people, fights the maintaining of the status quo; and critical pedagogy encourages instruction that promotes radical action in the classroom and beyond. Critical pedagogy promotes completeness that is achieved through a reflective search for wholeness—one that allows for what bell hooks (1994) links to healing. When teachers make their pedagogy critical, extending good interactive teaching and learning beyond the classroom and into the real world, all involved may pursue liberation in particular facets of their experiences. Until the pursuit of liberation is achieved, individuals are fragmented in pursuit of clarity, understanding, and emancipation. This liberation is not outside of man, and it is not created or accomplished through some external force. Rather, it begins with mental understandings and alterations. Consequently, the pursuit of emancipation is the precursor to holism and completeness and thus to liberatory education and critical pedagogy. When individuals begin to think and to reflect differently, they could live their lives differently, their actions and behaviors may be different—even better—and they may help others do the same. Freire (1998) writes: 'Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea, which becomes

myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion' (p. 29).

Critical pedagogy points out that the pursuit of freedom comes by conquest not by gift. Clearly, Freire (1998) contends that it is not possible for educators or other individuals who understand oppression to somehow pass along emancipation *to* or *for* the oppressed by their authoritative speech, for example. Rejecting what I have come to call an *osmosis approach*, Freire asserts that the pursuit of emancipation might be achieved, instead, by the problem-posing concept of education. Accordingly, hooks (1994) reminds us that 'The engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself' (p. 11). Through critical pedagogy, the teacher helps the oppressed become vigilant towards the eradication of the powers that dictate future oppression. As a result, the teacher is not the only, or the main, arbiter of knowledge, instruction, and intellectual wisdom.

The idea of critical pedagogy in teacher education programs is not novel. In fact, for at least a decade, teacher educators have employed its tenets in the education of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers alike. Its efficiency, however, has been questioned. For instance, Ellsworth (1989) found in her review of the literature on critical pedagogy that theory and research provided 'repressive,' 'abstract,' and 'utopian' ideologies, which were difficult to transfer into classrooms. In essence, Ellsworth criticizes the philosophical orientation of critical pedagogical theory—educational discourse that leaves teacher educators without substantive practical knowledge to implement in the educational experiences of pre-service teachers. In contrast, other teacher educators have found critical pedagogy effective in their work (e.g. hooks, 1994; Dillard, 1996; Wink, 2000).

Authentic Perspectives on Critical Pedagogy

One of the criticisms with critical pedagogy is the lack of authentic, structured, dimensions that guide its origins. Below are several practical strategies that teacher educators may stress in their courses where critical pedagogy is concerned. These strategies could move the philosophical orientation of critical pedagogy in teacher education programs to practical, more authentic strategies in pre-kindergarten–12 classrooms. Pre-service teachers may:

- *authentically reflect*. This reflection should lead to self and social understanding through focusing on self, other human beings (e.g. the oppressed, the affluent), and power structures;
- *keep pedagogy connected to the students*. In this sense, pre-service teachers should learn the life worlds of their students and should help them understand their own racial capital;
- *reflect on practical and pedagogical power structures*. Pre-service teachers should demystify their power by participating in the tasks that they ask of their students and be models, not perpetrators, of power structures;
- *encourage critical thinking among students; thus, they are transforming the world and*

being political. To encourage liberatory experiences, pre-service teachers should create critical questions through the posing of tough questions and allow their students to critically question as well.

Implementing Critical Pedagogy in Teacher Education

I am advancing two activities through critical pedagogy that may promote race reflections in courses: pre-service teachers' *critically engaged dialogue* around race, and pre-service teachers' *race reflective journaling*. Indeed, teacher educators can provide guiding questions around race through these two activities.

Critically Engaged Dialogue

I am expanding what Gay and Howard (2000) refer to as dialogue around race. In addition, I am building on hooks's (1994) notion of engagement to include what I am calling *critically engaged dialogue* among pre-service teachers. Gay and Howard stressed the necessity for dialogue around issues of race, and hooks (1994) extended the notion of critical pedagogy to emphasize what she conceptualized as 'engaged pedagogy'—an approach to teaching and learning that recognizes the politics involved in education, and seeks to enhance instruction by reciprocal and authentic methods of connecting learning communities. Engaged pedagogy allows teachers and students to connect to each other and the lessons by acknowledging their differences, discussing individual life experiences, and ultimately working together towards freedom. Pre-service teachers' class dialogue may be facilitated through this idea of engaged pedagogy. Pre-service teachers become engaged through a type of interactive process that allows both the pre-service teachers and the teacher educators to be involved in dialogue around race, and all involved learn from the process, resulting in critically engaged dialogue.

hooks (1994) stressed that pedagogy as a practice of freedom recognizes the authority of experience and the importance of voice (or what I am calling critically engaged dialogue) as central components in teaching and learning. As a teacher educator, hooks (1994) writes:

As a teacher, I recognize that students ... enter classrooms within institutions where their voices have been neither heard nor welcomed, whether these students discuss facts—those that any of us might know—or personal experience. My pedagogy has been shaped to respond to this reality. If I do not wish to see these students use the 'authority of experience' as a means of asserting voice, I can circumvent this possible misuse of power by bringing to the classroom pedagogical strategies that affirm their presence, their right to speak, in multiple ways on diverse topics. (p. 84)

Critically engaged dialogues about race can be an insightful way to have pre-service teachers consider their perspectives. This race reflection may be best discussed and addressed through what hooks calls the authority of voice wherein teacher educators allow pre-service teachers to use specific personal experiences and examples to

substantiate their points. This means that in order to address issues of race, pre-service teachers are not forced to rely solely on scholarly literature, for instance, in order to make their points and for their points to be valued. Instead, pre-service teachers are allowed to reflect upon their own experiences as 'valid,' and appropriate indicators of race in their dialogue.

Similarly, when discussing the spoken word and reflection, Freire (1998) writes:

Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus to speak a true word is to transform the world ... it becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world, for denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action. (p. 68)

Through critically engaged dialogue, when pre-service teachers reflect, think, and speak, they take positions on often-controversial issues, and they have an opportunity to transform others' thinking simply through that spoken word or what may be perceived as a form of pedagogy. Because dialogue, discourse, and voice are powerful, it is imperative for pre-service teachers to reflect before speaking. This reflection may concern oppressed people who may be neglected or ignored in the discussion—but the main component of this reflection is on the 'self.' When pre-service teachers speak truth, others may be challenged, even offended, and all are being educated by the lack of knowledge people in the world display, allowing for deeper understanding of their experiences in the world. Pre-service teachers need to be equipped for debate and made comfortable with their positions, and teacher educators should set the atmosphere of their classrooms as comfortable and supportive of pre-service teachers' positions. When comfortable environments are established, pre-service teachers' personal and professional practices develop patterns that allow them to do exceptional work with their students because they live and speak in a world similar to that of the classroom.

Clearly, critically engaged dialogue through critical pedagogy (or teaching) does not necessarily have to occur in the classroom. Instead, this dialogue as a form of action may occur in other contexts, such as the teachers' lounge, a faculty meeting, or teacher-parent conferences. These settings might elicit a voice for justice on behalf of those who might not necessarily be able to speak for themselves due to their current situations or the fact that they are simply left out of the conversation. This notion of speaking invokes enactment and activism. The act of speaking has a transformative dimension in which people respond to nonsense and requires a form of radicalism that may be frowned upon by others. In short, teacher educators can provide avenues for discussion around race in their courses that transform pre-service teachers' thinking, and dialogue in other facets of their work (not only in the classroom).

In sum, an instructional method to address race reflection among pre-service teachers is critically engaged dialogue. As hooks (1994) explains, 'Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow

and are empowered by the process' (p. 21). Therefore, critically engaged dialogue is one that is not separate from the reality of the world; it involves discussion that negotiates and balances the power of the teacher educator over the pre-service teacher and provides space for all individuals in the educative process to learn. When using critically engaged discussions, all are constantly reflecting and becoming more cognizant of who they are and why they believe what they do. They are in tune with the reality that race matters in individuals' daily experiences (West, 1993; McCall, 1997) and should thus be a part of their reflections, discussions, as well as their pedagogical approaches, even if they do not have the same experiences as others. As a result, critically engaged dialogue promotes instruction that is racially appropriate and seeks to understand and to address the repercussion of the many 'isms' (e.g. racism, sexism, and classism) that individuals contend with both inside of and beyond the walls of the school.

Race Reflective Journaling

In addition to critically engaged dialogue, a second method of critical pedagogy that may facilitate race reflection is journaling. Dillard (1994; 1996) discusses her role as a teacher educator and her position of authority in the process of learning about both her students and herself through reciprocal journal writing—all individuals—teachers and students alike—are engaged in writing and responding. Through journaling, open dialogues in the form of writing between students and the teacher provide avenues for student and teacher engagement, reflection, and enlightenment. The journaling allows for constant learning among all involved, improving their understanding of themselves and others through reflections that address their positions and rationales in the world.

What I am proposing is that teacher educators use guiding questions concerning race to form *race reflective journaling*. Race reflective journaling may be a more appropriate approach than critically engaged dialogue, as discussed previously. Clearly, pre-service teachers may feel more comfortable attending to issues of race through journaling as opposed to open dialogue among their peers in courses. Race reflective journaling may allow pre-service teachers to attend to issues of race that they have not in the past. Pre-service teachers who have not previously been engaged in thinking about race may find this method more appropriate.

In race reflective journaling, the role of the teacher educator might be asking the right questions or helping students locate answers to questions and areas of interest, resulting in a teacher–student interaction that is dynamic, minimizing the power of the teacher because knowledge and expertise are negotiated. Through what Freire calls 'problem-posing' education, individuals develop their own power to perceive 'critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality of process, in transformation' (p. 64). Stressing self-perception, problem-posing education bases its philosophy on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality.

Similarly, pre-service teachers and teacher educators may need to develop prob-

lem-posing questions around race in their work through personal self-reflections. Problem-posing education allows teachers to decide what is needed in their lives and thus work to make them more complete, filling the voids of fragmentation. As Freire (1998) stresses, pedagogy of the oppressed is a pedagogy that must be forged with (not for) the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the struggle to (re)gain, (re)capture, and (re)flect upon their emancipated place in the classroom and in the society.

While pursuing racial competence through race reflective journaling, pre-service teachers may strive to become complete human beings in combination with the world rather than fragmented, disconnected beings (Macedo, 1993). With this commitment comes the awareness of privilege (see McIntosh, 1990) or the lack thereof (see McCall, 1997) because of realities within and beyond a teacher's control. White European American teachers may become cognizant of the fact that they may have advantages over their students and other human beings in the world simply because of their race. Marginalized groups may become aware that they may believe stereotypes about themselves and others that are consequences of race.

This awareness of privilege or lack thereof is not lingered upon but instead used as a foundation to equip teacher educators and pre-service teachers with the knowledge to deal with the particulars of their situation and to work hard(er) to overcome problems. Once they know and understand oppression and key contributors to it, pre-service teachers may work toward liberation through their expertise and develop tactics to deal with those things that are out of their control (skin color) and change those things that are (for example, their thinking, their pedagogy, biases, misunderstandings, prejudices). Moreover, they may decide that through broader knowledge and new awareness from race reflective journaling they will conduct more racially aware and balanced classrooms. Rather, they may do their work in pursuit of helping others, themselves, and ultimately the world because, in a sense, they are doing the work that makes a difference, and they become content with this.

A Critically Reflective Chart about Race

In light of the criticisms of the utility of critical pedagogy, teacher educators should make race in reflection overt in their classrooms with pre-service teachers. This is especially the case if we believe that critical reflection through critical pedagogy is an appropriate approach to prepare pre-service teachers to reflect on race. In other words, it is no longer sufficient to require, to encourage, and to provide avenues for teacher reflection in a general sense. Rather, teacher educators may need to orchestrate reflection in ways that explicitly stress and encourage pre-service teachers to think about race through reflection. Table I illustrates the type of overt reflections that teacher educators may find useful in preparing pre-service teachers to reflect on race in their courses. The chart can be used in both critically engaged dialogue, and in race reflective journaling.

I developed this chart with the goal of helping my pre-service teachers think about race. While I am yet to implement it in a full class of students, I have encouraged

TABLE I. A critically reflective chart about race

<i>Critical questions</i>	<i>Reflective purposes and significance</i>
How will my race influence my work as a teacher with students of colour?	This question challenges pre-service teachers to reflect on the privileges and/or the lack thereof that have enabled their work and/or hindered it based solely on race. In this way, teachers come to understand past experiences and instances that they are able to directly link to race in pursuit of consciousness and competence.
How will my students of colour's race influence my role and work as the teacher?	This question requires pre-service teachers to reflect on the way students might perceive them as the teacher whose race may or may not be different to theirs. Teachers may start to become more sensitive to the issues that students have (not guessing or speculating per se) but becoming cognizant of the fact that they may need to be sensitive to differences that are consequences of race.
What is the impact of race on my beliefs? (Teacher educators should explore more specific questions relative to this central question.)	This question challenges pre-service teachers to reflect about issues that may have been hidden previously. Consequently, these issues may become more overt through their deliberation, and teachers may be brought to realities that allow them to either deal with them by changing themselves or not (decision-making).
How do I, as a teacher, situate myself in the education of others, and how do I negotiate the power structure in my class to allow students to feel a sense of worth?	With these questions come awareness that guides the manner in which pre-service teachers think about planning lessons and enacting them for students. Pre-service teachers may decide that, considering their personal race and that of their students, a different approach is best suited. In addition, these questions challenge pre-service teachers to negotiate the power structure in the learning environment.
What may be the issues most important to my students and me? What may be the nature of race on these issues?	This question challenges pre-service teachers to think about becoming (re)searchers in their environment with race as a focus.
To what degree is my role as teacher and my experiences superior to the experiences and expertise of students, and is there knowledge to be learned from my constituents?	This critical question allows pre-service teachers to reflect on coming to terms with intellectual negotiations that should exist in the classroom considering race.
How do I situate and negotiate the students' knowledge, experiences, expertise, and race with my own?	This question challenges pre-service teachers to begin deciding if they are willing to negotiate expertise with their students. In addition, it allows teachers to pursue comfortable balances in the learning environments with race as a focus.
Am I willing to speak about race on behalf of those who might not be present in the conversation BOTH inside and outside of school, and am I willing to express the injustices of race in conservative spaces?	This question challenges pre-service teachers to not separate their personal and professional philosophies. If they believe that oppression is wrong and display this belief at school, then they are challenged to think about how they would portray this with their discourse and actions outside of school resulting in a form of social justice.

some of my White European American students and students of color to use this chart as a guide to pursue racial competence. Inevitably, the students find the questions on the chart challenging, yet invigorating. The pre-service teachers often reported that they had never thought about such questions or that they had never thought about race in such a way. Accordingly, I am arguing that this exercise has the potential to help teacher educators, practitioners, and researchers think deeper about these matters. I plan to implement the chart in my courses in the future with more students. The results of it have the potential to be telling as we work to understand issues of resistance, apathy, awareness, and change among pre-service teachers. Readers of this article may in a like manner find the chart useful and essential in helping pre-service teachers reflect about race. In fact, I encourage teacher educators to implement this tool in their courses and to chart the range of responses. The data should be instrumental in how we think about race in the teaching and learning process.

In sum, this chart is designed to support pre-service teachers' reflections on race in an overt, explicit manner. With reflective questions as outlined in Table I, pre-service teachers are challenged to pose the tough questions that may have been dismissed or ignored in pre-service teacher reflection through critical pedagogy in the past. The very core of these questions may contradict what we (who advocate meaning-making, student-centered approaches) hope to accomplish in our classes with pre-service teachers. The very directness of these questions may seem inconsistent with how we think instruction ought to be facilitated in classrooms that employ critical pedagogy. In many ways, the table does not follow the pedagogical scheme that we have come to know and respect regarding critical pedagogy. There is 'directness' (a more teacher-centered approach) to the questions outlined in the chart for pre-service teachers rather than students being allowed to formulate, to develop, and to address questions that they develop themselves. However, the chart provides students the opportunity to critically reflect (which is a dimension of critical pedagogy), and the chart also allows pre-service teachers to ask questions that they may not select and deliberate upon otherwise. The structure of the chart may especially be crucial for White European American pre-service teachers who may find race secondary, not central, or insignificant to their work in classrooms. Moreover, non-White European American pre-service teachers, although more likely inclined to reflect about race in their work, may dismiss the conscious, deliberate depth that is essential to transform and/or affect their teaching. However, the very nature of the chart may propose power issues and may seem to contradict what we have conceived as critical pedagogy. If this were the case, critical pedagogy needs to be expanded to address racial issues.

This chart is not to suggest that teacher educators have not provided structure for reflection using critical pedagogy as a frame in the past. What I propose is that more specific questions are asked (as in this case with reflecting about issues of race). Teacher educators may need to move beyond the general to the more specific areas of reflection if we are serious about improving the quality of education and teaching and learning among racially marginalized students in the USA.

Notes

- [1] I am defining this pursuit of racial competence as teachers' deep deliberative search to understand their own and other individuals' racial backgrounds, racial heritage, and consequences of race that cause oppression and privilege. The pursuit of racial competence involves an amalgamation of racial awareness, racial sensitivity, and racial consciousness that may assist pre-service teachers in uncovering hidden beliefs, biases, prejudices, and values that may cause them to (mis)understand their own and others' racial existences in education and thus the world.
- [2] *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1991) defines heuristic (as an adjective) as 'constituting an educational method in which learning takes place through discoveries that result from investigations made by the student.'

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