

5-2012

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### Recommended Citation

Agbenyega, J. S., & Klibthong, S. (2012). Transforming Selves for Inclusive Practice: Experiences of Early Childhood Preservice Teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(5).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n5.2>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.  
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol37/iss5/2>

## Transforming Selves for Inclusive Practice: Experiences of Early Childhood Preservice Teachers

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*Abstract: In this paper we discussed the impact of 'spaces of difference' on teachers' professional learning to embrace and celebrate diversity, as perceived by early childhood preservice teachers who share their opinions through online group discussions. Spaces of difference is a first year undergraduate course unit designed to support preservice teachers' professional education to embrace and implement inclusive practice in early childhood education. Informed by Critical theoretical ideas of Bourdieu (Capital, Field, Habitus), we investigated early childhood preservice teachers' concept of spaces of difference and their personal transformations. Results of this qualitative study suggested that teachers' understanding of space extended and their attitude to diversity and difference grew more positive than when they initially entered the unit. We concluded that responding to student diversity and difference will no longer be a problem for teachers when they no longer overvalue selves or particular societies and cultures than others. Whether a teacher would accept and practice inclusion, is highly dependent on the social organization of the school as well as the teacher's utilisation of habitus, capital and field.*

### Introduction

Global movements of families from their home countries into foreign countries have necessitated rapid changes in course requirements in teacher education institutions as a way of preparing graduate teachers who possess appropriate skills, attitudes and professional competence to support diverse children's learning needs. In the past two decades, Australia has increased her share of immigrant and refugee populations from non-European countries like Africa and the Middle East. Consequently, children in most early childhood services in contemporary Australian classrooms no longer form a homogenous cultural group, implying a highly complex and demanding role for early childhood teachers (Early & Winton, 2001; Lovat, 2003; Pianta & Hamre, 2009; Wood & Bennet, 2000). The continuous rapidly changing and unpredictable early childhood service situations, due to increasing influx of refugee families into Australia (Cranston, 1999; Sims, 2010), demand inclusive teacher preparation programs for teachers to respond to the developmental and learning needs of all children and families. In the present study, we investigated and analysed the changing concepts of space, values, beliefs and discourses of early childhood preservice teachers enrolled in one diversity course unit, 'Spaces of Difference.' The study was informed by Bourdieu's three ideas on critical theory, capital, habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1985).

In this study we take the stance that theoretically rich understanding of selves and others is important for embracing and practising equity, and social justice in education (Gibson, 1986). Increasing diversity of children in school means that teacher identity formation must be taken seriously when developing preservice teachers for contemporary

classrooms. Riley (2009) argues that “what teachers do comprises the identity of the teacher, their knowledge and their ability to develop strong skills in pedagogy, content and theory in order to plan for the learning of all students” (p. 7). Therefore, teacher quality and teaching quality for inclusion and celebration of diversity are mutually constitutive (Churchil et al., 2011; Sims, 2010). To advance the field of early childhood inclusive education teachers need to understand the concept of ‘Spaces of difference’ in order to personalise teaching within a supportive early childhood education environment.

### **Theorizing the Study**

Bourdieu’s ideas on critical theory provide space for uncovering the most deep-rooted power structures that constitute our educational space, as well as forces that tend to ensure their reproduction or transformation (Bourdieu, 1985). Bourdieu explains ‘habitus’ as “internalised embodied social structures” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 18). It is our internalised master dispositions which lead to individual perceptions and actions that are long-lasting in character (Reay, 2004). For example, before preservice teachers enter university to train as teachers they come with already constructed habitus. These developed or developing dispositions, values, beliefs and attitudes, which are deeply-rooted within them influence the ways they interpret and make sense of their social world and of other people. The goal of teacher education institutions therefore is to modify or transform these dispositions, habits of mind and identities so that graduating teachers can practice effective inclusive pedagogy. Individual teachers act on habitus in different ways depending on their knowledge capital (Jenkins, 1992; Reay, 2004). The kinds of relationships teachers form with students are also determined by their internalised dispositions, and students react to teachers on the basis of how teachers define them as individuals (Bourdieu, 1990a; Swartz, 1997). Therefore, habitus potentially generates a wide repertoire of possible actions, simultaneously enabling the individual to either be transformative or retain the same constraining courses of action (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1990c).

The second aspect of critical theory that relates to this study is field. In theoretical terms, field connotes a network of objective relations between positions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Field is related to our social and institutional settings (Reay, 2004). Every field has rules and norms, which determine the nature of interactions of the agents. Colleges of education and cultural contexts constitute fields, and are characterized by power, capital, positional and cultural differentials among the actors who constitute them. Preservice teachers therefore need in-depth understanding of how different dispositions may constitute power differentials which have influential effect on students of difference. Bourdieu (1990b) argues that the field is a battleground where interests, power and prestige all operate. This implies that teachers’ lack of in-depth understanding of diversity and difference could lead to educational practices that dominate, subordinate, and exclude some children from their school cultures. Children’s background, cognitive, social and physical ability that are not recognised and celebrated may become markers of class differential treatment in education. Indeed, for diversity to be welcomed and celebrated in schools, teachers must acquire the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge to minimise the struggle within the field of education (Hutchings, 2007; Hutchings & Huber, 2008).

Also related to this study is capital. Capital may manifest in terms of economic, cultural, social and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1989). Economic capital refers to wealth defined in monetary terms; cultural capital involves a person’s or institution’s possession of recognized knowledge; social capital is constituted by social ties; and symbolic capital refers to one’s status, honour or prestige (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These assets influence everyday relations in institutional practices, in society and in early childhood settings. Capital gives children and educators agency, enabling them to strategically engage in and manipulate the

rules of their social situations (Bourdieu, 1989; Houston, 2002). Yet, when teachers devalue some children's capital they limit their capacity to strategically participate inclusively in education.

In-depth knowledge of these conceptual tools of habitus, field and capital provides grounds for developing a course unit that engages preservice teachers in talking about themselves and transforming their perspectives on teaching (Loughran, 2002). Teachers' understandings of themselves and spaces of difference affect their relationship with those they teach (Ryan & Goffin, 2008). But the lack of knowledge of oneself and of others makes teachers to be missing in action for some children (Ryan, Ochsner, & Genishi, 2001). Good and quality teachers often know themselves as well as look beyond themselves to consider children in terms of spaces of difference, structuring learning environment, appropriate resources and school cultures that value all children (Carrington, Deppeler, & Moss, 2010). This study is based on this notion of looking beyond oneself as we engaged the preservice teachers to deconstruct themselves through this unit.

## **The Research**

This research involved preservice teachers enrolled in Spaces of Difference course unit in an early childhood program in an Australian university in Melbourne. The purpose of the unit is to introduce students to a range of different theoretical perspectives (critical theory, critical race theory, feminisms, indigenous knowledges, queer theory, and poststructural theory) relating to difference and diversity. Using critical reflective and participatory approaches to examine, their social positionings in relation to their personal and professional experiences of difference and diversity, students worked collaboratively in developing new dispositions (habitus) that recognize and support multiple discourses of difference. The preservice teachers were also expected to develop a theoretical language to identify and support their beliefs about difference and diversity; identify and analyse learning contexts that recognise, engage with and value difference.

## **Method**

In this study we adopted a qualitative approach of focus groups with data collected through weekly online postings for 10 weeks. The weekly focus group postings provided a powerful research tool for gathering preservice teachers' opinions about the concept of space and how this has contributed to potential transformation of their individual identity formation as teachers (Gerring, 2006). Two research questions guided the focus group discussions. What is your understanding of learning space? How have you changed since the beginning of this unit? These questions corresponded directly with the overarching aims of the course unit which aimed at transforming the preservice teachers' selves (Genishi, Ryan, Ochsner, & Yarnall, 2001).

## Participants

Participants were 120 (6 males and 114 females) in the 1st Year of a 4-year Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECE) program in a city university in Melbourne, Australia. Graduating teachers from the program are eligible to teach children from 0-8 years. The 120 students who participated in this study were recruited through convenience and comprehensive sampling techniques after approval for the research was obtained from the University's Ethics Committee on Research involving Humans. Of the participants, 5% were males, and 95% were females with ages ranging from 19-35 years. Of these, the majority (96%) were enrolled in university for the first time and the remaining 4% had had some previous university study experience but wanted to change their professional direction. Also, 19% of the participants were international students from Asia and Europe and the remaining 81% were local students.

## Data Collection and Analysis

We collected data through online postings in 10 weeks. Students were divided into five groups. From weeks one through ten, the groups brainstormed, discussed and reflected on the weekly topics and then posted their comments on E- Blackboard. We used Bourdieu's three lenses of critical theory – capital, habitus and field to analyse the data in terms of insights gained into the concept of space and theoretical descriptions of the preservice teachers' transformative commentaries.

## Theme One: Extending the Insights and Boundaries of Space

The first question we posed to preservice teachers was: What is your understanding of learning space? The participants discussed this question during their face-to-face meetings in groups in relation to theories of diversity and difference. Initial postings of all the participants before they were involved in lectures and tutorials for this unit show their understanding of learning space to imply physical location such as home area, classroom, lecture room, or outdoor area. However, from the second week onwards, preservice teachers demonstrated theoretically rich understandings of space, including how space differential characteristics impact on teaching and learning. Bourdieu (1990b) argues that field, for that matter spaces of difference, is a battleground where interests, power and prestige all operate. We became convinced that teachers' lack of in-depth understanding of learning space diversity could lead to educational practices that dominate, subordinate and exclude some children from equal participation in education. However, as the unit progressed the preservice teachers illuminated us with new and theoretically rich understandings of learning spaces.

*The notion of 'space' as more than a physical place we inhabit had never really occurred to me until going through this unit. The notion that 'space' is also within the mind which forms our battle ground and determine whether we accept or reject diversity is exciting...I love the idea of its mutability and that we can expand, open or close our mind space to different ideas regarding diversity, equality and acceptance... It was fascinating to consider the notion of 'space' relating to our minds, and the fluidity in which it changes based on our experiences (Group Five)*

Similarly, members in Group Two provided further insights into the concept of learning space.

*The concept which has strengthened my understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity is my new understanding of space. Now I come to know that space entails social interaction settings (physical spaces) as well as hidden aspects such as personal thoughts, values, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, experiences, cultural heritage...These affect how we interpret/react to other individuals, society and everyday situations by narrowing/broadening our perceptions...space is multiple and in constant transformation...importantly to me relationships of power and dominant ideologies shape the nature of educational spaces and determine how other individuals or minority cultures respond (Group Two).*

Participants in Group Four also echoed similar and rich conceptual understanding of learning space.

*Beginning this unit I believe that I had a good idea of the importance of accepting difference and diversity in society. However, after going through this unit I now have a greater understanding of the concept of space in relationship to diversity. Space which can be physical, social or intellectual is constantly changing along with the social and political values of the time...Our intellectual space for example can express values/beliefs, attitudes prejudices/stereotypes which may result in wrong emotional responses that destroy spaces of inclusion... Each individual has their own intellectual space which develops according to the values of the time, along with their individual values, beliefs and morals... I have learned that two spaces of difference can lead to conflicts between both minority and majority groups as well as individuals. I can understand how tension can occur, however I believe it is important to accept the many differences amongst groups and individuals and embrace them. Overall, I believe it is important to find an equal space between two sides so that we as a society can co-exist harmoniously (Group Four).*

Some international students also revealed:

*Before entering this class I did not fully understand the term 'space' but by taking this unit I discovered that 'space' can include both the physical and social aspects of a person... I thought that I had a great understanding of both diversity and difference as I lived in Sri Lanka and attended an international school there for two years (being the minority group in this situation), however in this unit I found a greater and deeper understanding in the connection between space, diversity and difference...(Group Three)*

*When I first saw we had a subject called 'Spaces of difference' I wasn't too sure what to expect. This unit is intriguing for me, learning about the dissimilarity of diversity and difference; it broadened my understanding of what space really is all about (Group One).*

It is quite intriguing to find that within 10 weeks of going through spaces of difference unit the early childhood preservice teachers have developed deep conceptualisations of space. A critical aspect of this deep knowledge is the realisation that space is mutable, fluid and shifting. This corroborated Bourdieu's ideas of habitus and field as unstable which we humans continuously construct and deconstruct (Bourdieu, 1989). Also significant, is how the preservice teachers came to the understanding that acceptance or rejection starts from one's mental space, a kind of combination of habitus and field, which is tantamount to closure or

expansion. This self-consciousness, which comes through reflection, is important for transforming one's teaching (Pollard, 2005).

## **Theme Two: Selves in Transition, Forming New Identities**

The results demonstrate evidence of the preservice teachers' selves in transition from self-centred individuals when they first entered college to individuals that are developing new teacher identities to encounter, embrace and celebrate diversity, and difference in their teaching. According to the majority of participants they would like to think of themselves as accepting of others, and supporting them to attain their maximum potentials. In critical theoretical terms, the findings demonstrated a transformation of the preservice teachers' internalised embodied social structures or habitus (Bourdieu, 1989).

*I have lived in a country where I am part of the minority group, where I am the foreigner and the sole English-speaking person and it is challenging. To realise that this is the reality for so many of Australia's people and that they may feel unaccepted and misunderstood is sad, and a societal 'space' which needs greater attention in order to learn and grow as a people united in diversity...The understanding I gain from spaces of difference has changed the way I look at other people and their needs. This is good because it helps me avoid intentionally employing or creating distance or tension for some students (international student in Group Four).*

Further, the discussions on space through a flexible mode afforded the participants a greater sense of autonomy to chat with their colleagues on Blackboard, which contributed to positive learning outcomes and new identity formation.

*I think it was great that we were able to have the chance to speak to our fellow peers around us about some of their own values and beliefs to gain an understanding of another's opinions of diversity, inclusiveness and difference and what it means to them. What we value as an individual may not be important to the person sitting next to me, which may cause tensions because we all have different mental and cultural spaces. We learnt to be tolerant to achieve inclusivity (Group One).*

Other group members reflected on their previous schooling spaces to inform their present and future professional learning and practice.

*I have been inspired by a certain few teachers who made my schooling space so much more enjoyable for me. These teachers are the ones who recognised my individual uniqueness and did not compare me to others. They helped me to where I am today and whom I aspire to be like... Everyone is different and what each individual child brings to the classroom is different. Individuality occurs in the way we perceive the world, others and ourselves, every person is unique in their own way and people have different values and beliefs (Group Two).*

Still, some participants acknowledged the changing nature of space and talked about individual differences and how teachers' personal subjectivities can cause problems for diverse students.

*Time and space changes who we are as individuals and only ourselves know who we truly are as we keep this in our sub conscious mind...I come to realise that children all have different learning styles and it is important that we as preservice teachers acknowledge these. By*

*comparing children we are really comparing our own identity with that of another person which is like oranges and apples. From studying this unit I develop the idea that we need to learn to listen, understand and respect an opinion or idea that may be different to our own... By building a relationship with your students and their families will help expand your our personal information and opinion in a variety of different issues. Our self or subjectivity is constituted within the discourse that are culturally available to us, whom we draw upon in our communication... discourse is almost a way of living, a way of communication, art, symbols and technology which means we need to transform our discourse in order to respect and celebrate difference and diversity (Group Five).*

The group discussions empowered other participants to reflect on their own assumptions and appearances which could serve as barriers to acceptance of diversity and difference. It demonstrates in critical terms, the cultural unconscious or mental habits or internalised master dispositions that are in transition toward the formation of new identities (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973).

*This unit exposed me to the advantages that I am born with, and how some are automatically mine because of the colour of my skin. It put me on the outside looking in, and has made me appreciate even more what I have, that I take for granted everyday which others may not even obtain. ...I come to understand how we create minority of people and disadvantage them in our society, and that as a teacher it is my responsibility to help accommodate all children into a safe and equal learning environment. We need to move beyond the colour of skin, and the company of those that shared the same common interests, attitudes and beliefs with us...power relations could affect and influence personal relations and learning. Being a future teacher it will be important that we develop an awareness of ourselves in relation to others, learn to accept and not be judgmental of others as we minimise our own subjectivities and discourses (Group One).*

There is evidence also to suggest that the preservice teachers have begun self-transformation by forming their own philosophies of teaching that embrace diversity and difference.

*As a future teacher I will inspire, respect, understand individual strengths and focus on them and most of all give children the time to express their thoughts and ideas....The teachers whom I remember during my schooling are the teachers who helped me push myself, and formed a relationship with me, they knew my strengths and weakness and encouraged me to always do well (Group Two).*

Also, further insights into the knowledge gained in this unit and personal transformations became apparent in students' comments.

*From this unit we come to understand that there is always more than one source of knowledge. Reflecting upon how knowledge, discourses, relations of power and conceptualisation (of ourselves respect to others) work I have realized that my own views on certain issues are clearly influenced by my dominant culture as well as by ignorance (a lack of information) thus leading me to unfair judgements and wrong assumptions. For example, my perception of multiculturalism back in my home country (Spain) is far from ideal. Until now I thought in terms of "assimilation" or "integration", that is, other cultures should adapt to the new country they arrive to. I had the idea that the*



*power discourse of the main culture should not be altered in any way. Learning this unit has changed that view and I now believe that concepts such as inclusiveness or “united in diversity” should be the focus of teaching to establish a mutual understanding and respect between cultures...I now feel that we must continue to review our social positioning and ‘open our minds’ to challenge the space in which we may be fearful, ignorant or judgmental (Group Four).*

*I had never really thought deeply of diversity and difference I now realize just how important a good understanding of these issues is when it comes to teaching... My understanding of ‘space’ now does not just mean the surrounding area around you however, but includes hidden aspects of space such as what is in your mind including your personal values, beliefs, morals and views... social contract and dominant ideologies of a person. As a teacher we have a social contract to the students we will teach...we therefore need to build a relationship with our children and support them with warmth along their journey which includes incorporating for different individual and diverse needs (Group Five).*

*In the short time that I have been involved in this unit, I have been trying to better understand who I am as a person and how I have changed as a result of time and experiences... Relating to my future as a teacher, I would like to be careful to not label people in the school community and in society. These labels, such as ‘gifted student’ or ‘naughty student’ are subjective and do not attempt to resolve issues, but instead isolate or constrain the individual. In the short time that I have been involved in this unit, I have been trying to better understand who I am as a person and how I have changed as a result of time and experiences. Relating to my future as a teacher, I would be careful to not label people in the school community and in society. These labels, such as ‘gifted student’ or ‘naughty student’ are subjective and do not attempt to resolve issues, but instead isolate or constrain the individual. We must limit these comparisons and remove unjustified assumptions to assist in emancipating students so they feel valued (Group Three).*

It is apparent from these postings that the unit offered the preservice teachers a critical theoretical tool to interrogate their own subjectivity, discourse and experiences. This exercise is imperative for teachers to understand the effects of their own subjectivities and discourses on the students they would be teaching (Robinson & Diaz, 2005).

*Although there are many differences between individuals, I now understand how crucial it is to respect another’s beliefs and values, and their overall real self...The unit encouraged us to consider how well we knew our self as well as others around us. Although we may have thought we had a fairly good idea of ourselves and others close to us, we each came to realise that it is very difficult to fully know somebody. This is because even though humans are thought to be stable in their nature, they are in fact constantly changing according to the changing time and space. Ultimately, I believe it is very important for an individual to be in touch with their real self and respect the real selves of others...It came to my attention that we as teachers need to understand and accept that every one, such as our future students, can see the world differently and that one form of knowledge cannot independently describe the world around us.*

*Ultimately I feel that it is important for every individual to understand their real selves and respect others (Group Four).*

*We discuss certain statements said by society as 'truths'...we realised everybody in the class had certain morals or beliefs that caused different reactions to the 'truth'...it encouraged us to consider the various ways of knowing, perceiving and framing differences and diversity with relation to ourselves and others. As individuals we are entitled to our own beliefs and values and often possess conflicting world views. When justifying who we are as a person, we often do this by distinguishing ourselves against others' differences. Thus, we may subconsciously become prejudiced or dismissive of others' valuable opinions because they are not 'true' to us. We need to realise that in order to grow within ourselves and broaden our inner 'spaces' it is imperative that we come to respect the 'truths' of others. As a future teacher this is of utmost importance; we cannot judge and project our personal views onto students as this kind of discrimination could potentially marginalise the students of colour their own perception of themselves. Labelling students or making disparaging remarks regarding their culture or family, for example, can be detrimental to a student's self-esteem and learning (Group Three).*

*I had never really thought about us carrying assumptions but now I have thought about this I realise how important it will be to at least acknowledge that we have assumptions before we begin teaching....and my discourse with my students. I need to be aware of the earned and unearned power that I have, relating to being an adult in a classroom of children, and being a Caucasian Australian, where my class may be made up of many different races. I stand true to my beliefs about a culturally diverse classroom but will now not only focus on how the minorities are disadvantaged, but also consider how students or colleagues are in position of power and how this power is used. With this knowledge, I will create awareness of the issue within the classroom. I hope to further empower those in minorities, and to ensure that students who have unearned power do not take advantage of this privilege (Group Four).*

## **Discussions**

The findings of this study indicate that the way we perceive and interpret other people, students, situations and events is based on our beliefs and traditions therefore, future teachers must be inspired to respond to students from diverse backgrounds in their learning by providing numerous and equalising opportunities (Robinson & Diaz, 2005). Pre-service teachers' posted discussions provided great insights into how a well-designed unit that adopts open forum rather than transmission approach can lead to students talking honestly about their experiences, leading to transformative identities. Openness is important for developing strong relationships with preservice teachers so that they can feel accepted and comfortable in their learning environment to talk freely about sensitive and complex issues such as issues of diversity. Taylor (2005) states, "it is impossible to learn if we are not open to the unknown" (p. 1). The practice of teaching diverse students is complex and demanding therefore:

The making of a teacher is not something that can happen in a short time, bounded by the sorts of stages we use to mark out academic life. Like all rigorous practice, the way of teaching demands a long journey that does not have any easily identifiable destination. It does

not end with pre-service or graduation, or after one year, or after all the criteria are met. It is beyond all criteria. It is a journey that I believe must include a backward step into the self, and it is a journey that is its own destination (Tremmel, 1993, p. 456).

The 'spaces of difference' unit has enabled the preservice teachers to take a backward step into themselves (Pollard, 2005), into further detail and a greater understanding of how discourse and subjectivity is constituted within educational spaces. This helped them to be drawn to contextual knowing and that Australia as a multicultural country requires future teachers that are able to meet the educational needs of different cultures. Therefore, they can no longer expect that all students will possess a generalized knowledge.

Also, the perspectives of the participants demonstrated that by them reflecting upon their own schooling and listening to the reflections of others online, they have a greater understanding of the types and effects of discourses in schools. These discourses often come about due to various tensions and contradictions that exist within schools. With this in mind, they appeared to be 'transforming' their own identity (Mezirow, 1997) in order to be able to teach diverse students. This is consistent with the suggestion that teaching diverse students require:

An active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to the facts from whatever sources they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities; and to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us (Dewey as cited in Zeichner, 1981-2, p. 6).

The preservice teachers' notion that the concept of space does not merely refer to the surrounding environment, but encompasses the child's mind and the social interactions they are exposed to, is an interesting find in this study. This connects to the idea that in order to give each individual student irrespective of their culture a positive learning experience, teachers must provide a supportive, honest and a warm caring environment for students to learn. Caring for and teaching all children effectively require flexibility in the teachers' way of thinking and also being aware of the student's 'sore spots' in the learning environment. This requires reflexivity and risk taking. However:

One cannot be truly reflective unless she or he is willing to take risks and act. Wholeheartedness enables pre-service teachers to work through their fears and insecurities and thus provide a basis for action (Dewey as cited in Zeichner, 1981-2, p. 59).

Risk taking and action implies teachers do not consider themselves as the only source of valid information but rather see all children irrespective of their background as possessing many valuable insights and knowledge that can help enrich the classroom experience. Furthermore, a child that feels discriminated or out of place will be less motivated to study and participate inclusively with others.

## Conclusion

Our study results showed that when the practice of diversity is unilateral, when it is experienced only by the Other, diversity is unhealthy (Black, 2007; McIntosh, 1988). However, when the selves and others develop their own abilities to see their individual positions from the perspectives of each other, then the practice of diversity can enable a form of critical intercultural dialogue (Black, 2007). The transition from harmful unilateral selves to critical multicultural inclusive practice requires reflexivity as we have supported our students through Spaces of Difference unit to do. Reflexivity about self and others might lead to new insights into hidden power dynamics and advances toward multicultural struggles against forms of supremacy in education. Importantly, reflexivity:

Emancipates us from merely impulsive and merely routine activity. Put in positive terms, thinking enables us to direct our actions with foresight and to plan according to ends in view or purpose of which we are aware...It enables us to know what we are about when we act (Dewey as cited in Zeichner, 1981-2, p. 8).

Therefore, for all students to share equally in learning, feel adequately included in education and social life, and avoid facing recurring coercion, marginalization, and social exclusion, teachers need to transform their habitus, capital and fields. In this regard teacher educators need new ways to conceptualize the nature of teacher education courses for diversity. A new understanding of human diversity that encompasses self-examination, new modes of teaching that could transform preservice teachers to respond to the needs of all students (Pothier, & Devlin, 2006) is what we need for contemporary teacher education programs. When teachers become transformed in the ways they perceive themselves in relation to others, responding to diversity and difference will no longer be seen as an issue of sensitivity and compassion but rather, a deep conceptualisation in terms of “politics and power(lessness), power over, and power to” (Pothier, & Devlin, 2006, p. 2). Student diversity and difference will no longer be a problem for teachers because they would no longer overvalue selves or particular societies and cultures than others. There would be no longer the manufacture of defective students. We therefore conclude that whether a teacher would accept and practice inclusion is highly dependent on the social organization of the school as well as the teacher’s construction and utilisation of habitus, capital and field.

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