

Using the Pragmatics of Child Development in Teacher Education to Support Cultural Competence and Learning in Diverse U.S. Urban Classrooms

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Abstract

In this article, I explore the vignette interpretations of two early childhood teachers who are white and work with children of color from low-income families. Their interpretations reveal a silence of culture, race and language and the presence of culturally responsive teaching approaches, demonstrating their growing cultural competence (Hammond, 2015; Gay, 2010). This suggests the need for teacher preparation programs to provide a more robust and integrated approach to support teacher candidates' capacity to work effectively across all identity boundaries in culturally-inclusive learning environments with a dynamic use of the pragmatics of child development to support culturally responsive teaching practices (Cardwell, 2016). In this way, teacher candidates can adjust their teaching approaches and academic content to make learning personally meaningful and culturally relevant for every child, leading to increased learning and equity in culturally inclusive urban classrooms (Cardwell, 2016; Young, 2011; Horowitz, Darling-Hammond & Branford, 2005; Harvey, 1999).

Keywords: Culturally Relevant Teaching; Child Development; Urban Education; Cultural Competence

As we try to connect ourselves and our subject with our students, we make ourselves and our subjects, vulnerable to indifference, judgment, ridicule. To reduce our vulnerability, we disconnect from our students, from subjects, and even from ourselves. We build a wall between inner truth and outer performance, and we play-act the teacher's part. ...We distance ourselves from students and subject to minimize the danger – forgetting that distance makes life more dangerous still by isolating the self.

Parker J. Palmer
The Courage to Teach (2007, p.17)

1. Introduction

When we ask teachers to attach meaning to children's behaviors, we are asking them to construct a narrative of why individual children may be behaving in particular ways. For teachers to construct a narrative, they must connect themselves with their students, the learning context and the academic content. In the process, teachers reveal themselves and risk being vulnerable with their students. Teacher candidates enter the classroom feeling vulnerable because their professional knowledge based teaching is untested (Skovholt, 2004). The challenge of interpreting children's behavior may pose a significant challenge. The funds of knowledge teachers often use to interpret children's behavior are a combination of their personal theories or worldviews, their culturally based experiences with children and their working professional teaching knowledge (Cardwell, 2014; Moll, 2000).

Worldviews are personal theories about how the world works, grounded in culturally based, experiential knowledge. For example, where we grow up and how we grow up shapes how we live and what we believe about others, the world and ourselves. This unique cultural context of our individual life experiences and the significance we attach to those experiences contribute to our theories about how the world works, which constitutes our worldviews and shapes perceptions of others like teachers' perceptions of children (Cardwell, 2014).

The messages teachers intend to send may not be the messages children receive because children may have a different cultural frame of reference from their teacher. As the children attending U.S. public schools become increasingly diverse, it is important for teacher preparation programs to prepare teacher candidates to anticipate diversity along with cultural competence to effectively engage children's clear communications across all identity boundaries to promote learning with equal entitlement to academic content (Cardwell, 2016; Sears, 2012; Abrams & Moio, 2009). Further, teacher candidates need consistent support throughout their teacher preparation program curriculum and clinical experiences to confidently and respectfully address cultural and linguistic diversity (Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013).

Developing cultural competence begins with self-examination, self-knowledge and self-awareness. Teacher education programs need to create frequent opportunities for guided reflections that allow teacher candidates to interrogate their culturally-based worldviews to integrate them with their evolving understanding of child development, to expand their worldviews beyond the scope of their own experiences and frames of reference, allowing teacher candidates to build their professional teaching knowledge and cultural competence (Cardwell, 2016; Daiute, 2014; Kenyon & Randall, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978). In this way, teacher candidates can adjust their teaching approaches and academic content to elicit and welcome children's culturally-based worldviews and questions, leading to increased learning and justice in culturally inclusive urban classrooms (Cardwell, 2016; Young, 2011; Horowitz, Darling-Hammond & Branford, 2005; Harvey, 1999).

1.1 Problem: Children living in poverty are exposed to more extreme economic, social, cognitive and environmental hardships than children living in more comfortable circumstances (McLoyd, 1998). There is a great deal of concern about the behavior of children of color inside US urban classrooms but there is little taught in teacher preparation programs about what might give rise to the concerning behavior or how to effectively address the range of children's behaviors with particular attention to race, gender, language and culture. What we do know is that children of color are suspended at higher rates than their white classmates, beginning in preschool, and children of color are sent through the court system for minor in-school offenses than their white classmates (Alexander, 2012; Ferguson, 2001).

1.2 Conceptual Framework: Teaching is an intentional act, designed to increase the learner's knowledge and rests on teachers' beliefs about the nature of the learner's mind, level of knowledge and readiness to learn. Teachers are moved to teach when they notice a lack of knowledge on the learner's part (Ziv & Frye, 2004). This perception is grounded in individual teachers' perceptions of children's capacity to learn and expected knowledge base in relation to their age and sociocultural location (Ziv & Frye, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). What teachers and teacher candidates think, believe and perceive about children is important because these beliefs and perceptions guide teachers' decisions about whether to teach, what to teach and how to teach as well as how teachers attach meaning to children's behavior.

1.2.1 The Pragmatics of Child Development: The pragmatics of child development positions child development theory as a culturally imbedded tool used to decode the language of children's behavior. The pragmatics of child development more closely follows the way development is experienced, imbedded in the sociocultural context of children's lives across race, class, culture and linguistic boundaries (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1968). I borrowed pragmatics from linguistics where meaning is attached to language by the words used and the sociocultural context within which the words are spoken (Bahktin, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978). Using a pragmatic approach to child development, allows teachers and teacher candidates to attach meaning to children's behavior using the child's actions situated within the sociocultural contexts of their lives inside and outside school.

This conception of child development rests on the assumption that human development is a dynamic process, taking place within multiple, layered complex sociocultural contexts of individuals' lived lives (Daiute, 2014; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978). A dynamic process highlights the interaction between development and the sociocultural context within which it takes place. It is impossible to attach meaning to a child's behavior without understanding something about the life they lead outside school (Cardwell, 2014; Daiute, 2014; Bahktin, 1982).

Teachers and children bring their culturally imbedded experiences and knowledge into the classroom and create a dynamic, generative interaction that can promote learning and optimal brain development (Hammond, 2015; Nager & Shapiro, 2000; Erikson, 1950).

With an increasingly diverse student population attending urban schools coupled with a predominantly white teaching force in the US, teacher preparation programs need to strengthen the ways in which they prepare teacher candidates to work with racially, culturally and linguistically diverse groups of students that includes the teacher in the cultural landscape of the classroom (Cardwell, 2016; Nager & Shapiro, 2000). Using a dynamic approach to the pragmatics of child development requires self-awareness in service to increasing cultural competence as an interpretive lens for children's behavior to increase learning.

1.2.2 Teacher Candidates' Worldviews as Resources: The pragmatics of child development depends on teacher preparation programs repositioning teacher candidates' worldviews as resources because teachers teach who they are through their interactions with children, the learning environment they create, the materials they provide and the curriculum content they teach (Palmer, 2007; Foster, 1998; Casey, 1993). Before teachers can facilitate children's healthy identity development, they need to be conscious of themselves, their own identities, along with the possible perceptions of others (Irving, 2014; Palmer, 2007; Cardwell, 2004).

Teacher preparation programs must help teacher candidates learn how to support children across all identity lines (Greene, 2014; Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013). Culture, narrative and relationship provide the opportunity for teacher candidates to surface their 'teacher in the head' (Lortie, 1975) or the teacher within (Palmer, 2007), to examine their own culturally-based worldviews as they integrate a pragmatic understanding of child development with their evolving worldviews to inform the pedagogical choices they make with the children they teach (Cardwell, 2016; Cardwell, 2004; Kenyon & Randall, 1997; Lortie, 1975).

1.2.3 Cultural Competence and Culturally Inclusive Urban Classrooms: Cultural competence is a set of values and principles that allow people to work effectively across cultural boundaries in multicultural contexts and is widely used in medicine and social work (Sears, 2012; Abrams & Moio, 2009). It requires professionals to be aware of themselves and others. Self-awareness means knowing one's own cultural values, beliefs and assumptions. Knowledge of others means learning about their culture, values and beliefs along with an openness and a willingness to learn about differences. It means valuing culture as a way of being in the world and attaching meaning to the people, places and things encountered.

Typically, we use cultural shorthand when addressing people perceived as the same because shared meanings are assumed. However, we tend to speak more explicitly when addressing people who are perceived as different because there is no assumption of shared meanings (Sears, 2012; Abrams & Moio, 2009). It is up to the teacher to reach out to children in ways children experience as reassuring and supportive (Cardwell 2014; Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013; Gay, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). From this stance, teachers can join with the learner and begin learning how to understand the world through children's eyes (Cardwell, 2014; Weber, 1997). Cultural competence allows teachers to respectfully join with the learner as a complex individual, see all of who they are and receive the whole child as they are without defining children by their behavior (Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2003; Noddings, 1992; Weber, 1997).

Culturally inclusive learning environments move beyond the physical integration of learners to the integration of learners' experiences, knowledge and perspectives. These are socially just learning environments that require mutual respect, effective relationships across all identity boundaries where everyone feels connected to one another. There is clear, respectful communication, explicit understandings about expectations and critical self-reflection (Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013; Delpit, 1988). In culturally inclusive learning environments, teachers are culturally competent and people of all backgrounds can interact with equal entitlement. Specifically, they can,

- Freely express who they are, their own opinions and points of view and be received with respect;
- Fully participate in teaching, learning, work and social activities; and
- Feel safe from abuse, harassment or unfair criticism and treatment.

Teacher candidates' worldviews, when positioned as resources, can become powerful allies in supporting a dynamic use of a pragmatic approach to child development theory to understand children's behavior from each child's unique and culturally grounded perspective.

2. Methods

I used a reflexive qualitative interview approach to examine the intersection of the participants' beliefs, practices and interpretations of children's behavior in U.S. urban schools. I asked each participant to interpret the same vignette, allowing me to gain insight on what might inform their classroom practice in diverse urban settings (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

I chose this approach to create a guided reflection experience I could learn from and that the participants might find useful for their own professional development. I theorized that the professional teaching knowledge integrated with teacher candidates' beliefs and experiences could help them construct a theory of mind they could use to decode the language of children's behavior (Cardwell, 2015; Cardwell, 2004; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Polanyi, 1968).

2.1 Data Collection and Analysis: I used qualitative interviewing and the following vignette to gather data (Daiute, 2014; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997),

At the end of the day, Jason's teacher confided to a colleague, "I just can't call his name one more time." Jason attends an academically challenging school. Like a number of his classmates, he has a tutor but isn't in any serious academic trouble. In one-on-one interactions, he is charming and funny. During large group transitions or class line-ups, there are times when he screams, hits, or pushes his classmates.

The vignette depicts an actual exchange I witnessed that is familiar to many teacher candidates from their clinical experiences. Learning to transition children from one activity to another and from one place to another is a real challenge for many teacher candidates and the exchange described is a familiar one. I made a conscious decision to leave out information about the teacher's identity, experience level and intent, providing minimal contextual information to create multiple opportunities for the participants to insert their meanings and experiences into the void. Further, I chose not to provide Jason's age, race, class, culture or linguistic background because I hoped to learn about if and how the participants' perspectives and meanings surfaced in their interpretations (Cardwell, 2015).

I used the same interview protocol with each participant (Weiss, 1995; Seidman, 1991). There were 4 parts to the interview protocol for each participant,

1. Interpret a vignette, prior to answering any interview questions;
2. Answer questions about child development, children and good teaching;
3. An opportunity to revisit and revise initial interpretation after answering interview questions; and
4. Questions about participants' demographic information and descriptions of their path into teaching.

This study was guided by the following research question,

How might teacher candidates attach meaning to and interpret a child's behavior in an urban context?

The research questions and interview protocol were designed to allow each participant to frame their responses in their own ways.

2.2 Population and Sample: I am a teacher educator who teaches child development, supervises student teachers and designed this study to gain insight on how to better support teacher candidates' professional growth and development in coursework and student teaching (Cardwell, 2014; Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Erikson, 1979). The population for this study was graduate students enrolled in a teacher education masters degree program located in the Northeastern United States, leading to state certification. There were approximately 80 teacher candidates eligible to participate in this study that completed a course in child development and student teaching and had a 15% positive response rate with twelve participants (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

2.3 Participants: The twelve participants in this study were teacher candidates who worked in U.S. public, private and charter schools in urban areas. Although the eligible population age range was early 20s to mid 50s, the twelve participants in this study were mostly white, middle-class females between 24 and 35 years old, mirroring the teaching force in the U.S. (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 1990). Historically, teaching has served as a gateway profession where young people from low-income and working class families could gain access to the middle class through hard work and educations, which was the case for some of the participants (Lortie, 1975). This was a self-selected group of teacher candidates who had enough interest and time to participate in the study but they did not constitute a representative sample (Cardwell, 2016; Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Bateson, 1989; Erikson, 1979).

2.4 Data Analysis: My approach to data analysis was designed to surface patterns of responses across participants without losing the nuance and complexity present in each participant's response (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Bateson, 1989). Due to technical difficulties, I transcribed and analyzed 10 complete interviews.

From which, I created analytic charts, enabling me to preserve the participants' unique voices while situating their responses in the context of their own interviews as well as in the context of the other participants' responses (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 2004). I generated findings in this study by tracking the convergent patterns of responses among the participants (Cardwell, 2016; Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Schwarz, 1999; Weiss, 1995; Seidman, 1991).

3. Results and Discussion

Overall, eight of the ten participants placed themselves inside the role of the teacher in the vignette. In this article, I focus on the vignette interpretations of two participants from the larger study described above as exemplars to explore how two white teachers think about their role as teachers in schools serving children of color from low-income families. They were at a ripe moment of transition in developing their professional teaching knowledge and identifying their own tenets of classroom practice. Focusing closely on these two participants provides the opportunity to gain greater insight on how these teacher candidates navigate race, class, culture and language.

3.1 Results: Taking on another's perspective is an important capacity for teachers to develop in order to understand the world through their students' eyes. It means taking a developmental stance in a humanizing, relational, culturally conscious process that can increase learning and justice in the classroom by creating opportunities for children to be seen and understood in an inclusive, academically rigorous, respectful learning environment (Cardwell, 2016; Young, 2011; Harvey, 1999; Kenyon & Randall, 1997).

Heather and Michael are the two exemplars of early childhood education teachers at the end of their teacher preparation program who are the focus of this article. Heather described herself as white and said she is from a lower class/upper class family, having studied medicine in college before deciding to become a teacher. Michael described himself as white and said he is from a middle class family, having studied political science in college before deciding to become a teacher. Although they traveled different paths into teaching, they both chose to work with children of color from low-income families in urban schools. Both Heather and Michael began their interpretations cautiously, perhaps at a distance, and revised their interpretations to consider what was going on from the teacher's and Jason's perspective.

3.1.1 Heather: In her initial interpretations, Heather seems to stay close to the text of the vignette, describing the teacher's feeling and the uneven terrain of Jason's behavior,

...the teacher is obviously frustrated with the student, and the student seems to have positive qualities in the fact that it says in one-on-one interactions he's charming and funny. So it doesn't seem to be his character in general but the fact that during transitions or large group movement, he can't really control himself. So it would seem that the teacher isn't quite sure of how to handle that. (Heather, Public)

At first, Heather attends to both the teacher and Jason distilled of any direct links with her own experiences, personal or professional. She notes that Jason's social and emotional composure is uneven leading Heather to weigh the positive more heavily than the negative. It is a concern for Heather that Jason struggles with self-control during transitions, but during structured times inside the classroom, he is on task but she doesn't attach meaning to it.

She takes a different approach in her revised interpretation after answering questions about children, child development and good teaching,

...maybe Jason's at a school that isn't good for him. ...it may not be bad to be in academically challenging school, and it may not be a negative thing that he has a tutor, but I think in an environment where those things are emphasized, sometimes kids can feel a little lost or feel like they don't measure up, or that they're only valued for their academic abilities. I don't think that's the answer to the problem, 'cause it seems like he problem has other issues going on, but I think that might be part of it... Also the teacher needs to figure out why she's so annoyed with him all the time because usually it's sometimes inside you that can't stand sometimes the student does that makes that student's behavior much more obnoxious to you than it would be to anybody else... Either she feels like what she's been doing isn't good enough, or she blames him for not being able to behave, or she feels a lot of pressure based on school, expectations, whatever; but she needs to sort that out as well because he's in our class and she's got to deal with him. (Heather, Public)

Heather's hypotheses about Jason's school and academic experience suggests that while she values children's academic success, but it can't come at the expense of a child's social and emotional wellbeing. This view is in line with neuroscience research that has established a vital link among calm emotions, learning and academic success (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). Heather goes on to wonder if a high-pressure school environment that may not attend to emotions could be an explanation for Jason's behavior.

Using an approach to develop cultural competence for effective cross-cultural interactions, Heather encouraged the teacher to look within herself to examine why she's getting so upset with Jason (Sears, 2012; Abrams & Moio, 2009). In this, Heather raises the reflexive nature of the interpersonal interactions in the classroom where children's behaviors and teachers' responses can be learning opportunities for teachers as well as students. Although Jason's behavior isn't acceptable, Heather focuses on what the teacher might need to do in order to support rather than scold Jason.

Heather's suggestion for the teacher to look within herself indicates that this might be an approach Heather might use in her own classroom. She goes on to construct a theory of mind for the teacher as to why she is so reactive to Jason. For Heather, Jason isn't to blame but the problem is more of an issue within the teacher that needs to be examined and resolved. She suggests that the teacher's frustration may be grounded in a sense of a lack of competence to meet Jason's needs, which can quickly shift into blaming the child. This can be an unconscious process where teachers use their power and authority to blame children and perhaps families for misbehavior rather than face the limits of their own knowledge and perhaps competence. Heather places herself inside the teacher by assigning the teacher's gender as 'she' and saying that Jason is in 'our' class.

At the same time, Heather seems to recognize the teacher's frustration as one that she may have felt but from her interpretation I suspect that she chose to look within herself rather than to blame her students. She chose to try to understand her own responses and understand what her student might have been feeling as a way to address the root motivation, giving rise to the behavior. Taking this approach is grounded in the pragmatics of child development and culturally responsive teaching practices (Gay, 2010). As a teacher educator, I wonder what supports can be put into place during teacher preparation to develop greater cultural competence and expertise to guide teachers in those moments when they don't feel competent to address their students' needs.

3.1.2 Michael: Michael begins his initial interpretation in a similar way, remaining close to the text and with the teacher's frustration,

The teacher seems frustrated with *his* student, and that frustration could stem from some misunderstandings I think. And then, there is the student and the student having some sort of social issues in class, but those social issues could stem from any number of things. (Michael, Charter)

Michael resists going beyond the text of the vignette with his initial interpretation. At the same time, Michael, in the absence of identity information on the teacher, assigned the teacher's gender as male, like himself. This suggests that he may be placing himself in the situation but might have chosen not to mention the full range of his thinking at this point in the interview. I suspect that Michael continues to be somewhat cautious in his interpretation when he asserts that there could be 'some misunderstandings', which leads me to wonder where Michael located the misunderstandings and what they might be. As he turns to considering Jason's behavior, Michael seems to remain cautious in characterizing Jason's behavior as 'social issues', which 'could stem from any number of things'.

After answering questions about children, child development and good teaching, Michael seemed more willing to go beyond the vignette text and offer inferences about the teacher, Jason and his own conception of teaching,

...his teacher is viewing Jason in light of his weaknesses, and how ideally the teacher would view Jason in light of his strengths and speak to his strengths and realize that Jason has this weakness, but it can be made better. It can be made better because you don't throw your hands up when you're working with a student. It's your job to help that student and to mentor that student and to work on those weaknesses. I mean, that is kind of, for me, like the heart of teaching, is that you help people achieve in light of challenges. And that's your job as a teacher, is to help be that mentor and to be that guide. (Michael, Charter)

In his revised interpretation, Michael notes that the teacher in the vignette is taking a negative view of Jason without considering how to improve the situation. For Michael, the teacher would ideally view Jason in light of his strengths so that the teacher could remind Jason of his capacity to improve.

Beyond that, taking this approach also lets Jason know that his teacher supports him and has faith in him to succeed. This is an important message for children because it helps to improve their academic success and is in line with culturally responsive teaching practices (Hammond, 2015; Gay, 2010).

Michael describes the heart of teaching as being about helping children achieve in the face of their challenges. Where Jason's teacher responds to challenge with frustration, Michael talks about approaching challenging behavior with optimism and openness to figure out how to make things better for the child in the moment and beyond. Michael believes teachers are mentors and guides for children who join with them to celebrate successes and provide support in the face of challenge to promote learning. This approach demonstrates his confidence in children's ability to learn by setting children up to succeed socially and academically so that children can be surprised by the range of their capabilities. Although Michael doesn't mention culture, class, race or language directly, the stance and approach he describes are closely aligned with culturally responsive teaching practices that rest on cultural competence (Hammond, 2015; Sears, 2012; Gay, 2010; Abrams & Moio, 2009). An integrated, substantive approach to identity would establish greater comfort and competence in raising and discussing diversity directly as a part of attaching meaning to and interpreting children's behavior.

3.2 Discussion: Both Heather and Michael projected themselves into the role of the teacher in the vignette, evidenced by the way each assigned their own gender to the teacher. Heather saw the teacher as female and Michael saw the teacher as male. Both Heather and Michael seemed to identify with the teacher's frustration with Jason but not with the teacher's response. Both wanted to figure out what was going on with Jason and seemed to encourage the teacher to look within to examine why there was so much frustration. Heather and Michael's initial interpretations focused largely on the teacher's frustration, remaining close to the vignette text. Perhaps this indicated a sense of caution stemming from feeling unsure about raising the full range of possibilities that occurred to them without a great deal of information. After answering questions about children, child development and good teaching, they raised questions and offered hypotheses, Heather and Michael wondered why Jason was struggling with transitions. Perhaps something was amiss at home or there was a problem at school that wasn't clearly visible. They talked about engaging with Jason and reminding him of his strengths as a way to help him work through the transition struggles.

Focusing on Heather and Michael's vignette interpretations provides an opportunity to explore the possibilities of teacher education practices to explicitly promote cultural competence in culturally inclusive learning environments (Cardwell, 2016; Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013; Gay, 2010). Both Heather and Michael used a bidirectional gaze to figure out what might be going on in the vignette. They looked within the teacher and they looked within Jason. This was significant because it indicates that they are conscious of varying perspectives rather than assuming that the teacher and child are functioning from the same frame of reference. This is an important realization and culturally relevant teaching practice (Gay, 2010). There is a need to diversify the predominantly white U.S. teaching workforce so that children of every age can experience a diversity of thought, interest and culture, learning from teachers who reflect the range of diversity in the country. In the process, it is important for every teacher and teacher candidate to develop cultural competency to confidently and effectively navigate the increasing diversity in U.S. classrooms. The beginning is for teachers to be self-aware and include themselves as part of the cultural landscape of the classroom.

4. Conclusion

None of the participants in the larger study raised questions about race, class, culture or language between Jason and his teacher (Cardwell, 2016). Michael came close in talking about a misunderstanding but didn't offer identity-related hypotheses or questions. I suspect that both Heather and Michael considered identity-based issues linked to the vignette because they used a bidirectional approach in their revised interpretations. I wonder if there had been more substantive supports during coursework, like learning a pragmatic, culturally situated approach to child development that was reinforced in their pedagogical courses to explicitly address race, class, culture and language as a part of the developmental and learning process, would Heather and Michael felt more comfortable raising these issues during the interview.

This surfaces two important findings that can inform teacher education practice to build cultural competence and pedagogical efficacy. First, despite working with children of color, a willingness to look within themselves and having some exposure to the issues of race, class, culture and language diversity in their course work, there was insufficient scaffolding to support Heather and Michael in naming these issues as a lens through which they can attach meaning to Jason's behavior.

Second, that even a brief guided reflection, surfacing the participants' beliefs about children, child development and good teaching provided enough scaffolding for Heather and Michael to locate themselves in the vignette, use a bidirectional perspective and explore the nuances of the situation from the inside out (Shepard, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Rust, 2005).

Taken together, these findings indicate the need for a more integrated approach in teacher education to consider the diverse sociocultural contexts of children's lives outside of school as a consistent thread linking teacher preparation course work with student teaching (Cardwell, 2015). When teacher educators engage in frequent, purposeful guided reflections designed to surface and examine teacher candidates' culturally-based worldviews about children, child development and good teaching, teacher educators can fully engage teacher candidates in a transformative teacher preparation experience (Cardwell, 2014; Palmer, 2007; Cardwell, 2004). To develop teacher candidates' cultural competence in service to learning, teacher educators need to engage teacher candidates from a place of connection. Teacher educators must also enlist teacher candidates' cooperation to help teacher candidates expand their culturally-based worldviews in light of a dynamic use of the pragmatics of child development, building sufficient cultural competence to be able to confidently and effectively raise identity as a lens through which they can attach meaning to children's behavior across all identity boundaries (Cardwell, 2016).

Learning to be a good teacher isn't a magical, hidden process or a mystical calling. It is a purposeful, interactive, relational process expressed in classroom practice anchored in deep understandings of children's identities. These findings suggest that teacher education programs and school-based professional development workshops need to include consistent and substantive attention to race, class, culture and language while creating frequent opportunities for guided reflections that allow teachers and teacher candidates to surface, examine and expand their culturally-based worldviews using a pragmatic understanding of child development and culturally relevant teaching practices (Cardwell, 2016; Kenyon & Randall, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1968). This supports teachers' and teacher candidates' ability to adjust their teaching approaches and academic content to make learning personally meaningful and culturally relevant for every child, leading to increased learning and equity in culturally inclusive urban classrooms (Cardwell, 2016; Young, 2011; Horowitz, Darling-Hammond & Branford, 2005; Harvey, 1999).

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