

Abstract

This study investigated the learning experiences of White pre-service teachers who were dispatched to serve as tutors at an urban Afterschool Program in which all of the enrolled students were Black/African American. The sophomore level pre-service teachers served as tutors to fulfill a required experiential learning component for an introductory multicultural course. This study examined the contents of the reflective journals they kept for twelve weeks. Based on the contents of the journals, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What do White pre-service teachers focus on in the critical reflective process?
2. What are the White pre-service teachers' personal assumptions about teaching, learning and interacting with African American students?
3. How do White pre-service teachers express their understanding of the impact of race on the teaching and learning process?
4. What do White pre-service teachers learn in afterschool tutoring programs in urban settings in which all students are Black/African American?

This qualitative study is a narrative inquiry that used archived data from the written reflections of nine White pre-service teachers. The narrative reflections were crafted in response to a series of prompts based on Brookfield's (1995) approach to assisting teachers in the process of reflection. The findings from this study revealed that the White pre-service teachers had a spectrum of learning experiences. The focus of their reflections were on teaching techniques, behavior/discipline issues and the importance of relationships. While many appeared to learn that their initial deficit model assumptions

about the Black/African American students were unfounded, they did not fully recognize the cultural wealth within the students' community. They learned that creative teaching methods that were culturally responsive fostered better learning experiences for both the White pre-service teachers and the Black/African American students. Also, engagement in meaningful learning activities diminished behavior and discipline problems. While the White pre-service teachers made inroads in the dispelling of their preconceptions, they appeared color-blind by their lack of reflection on race. Also, they appeared to support Critical Race Theory's definition of the master narrative in their failure to recognize and critique schooling as a racial stratification system.