Preparing Teachers for Teaching Immigrant Students Through Service-Learning in Immigrant Communities

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Abstract

Burgeoning immigrant populations fuel discussions about preparing preservice teachers to teach students who have limited English proficiency and diverse cultural backgrounds. This article contributes to the conversation by presenting service-learning in immigrant communities as an effective pedagogy to develop an awareness of students' worlds away from school. This qualitative case study investigates the transformative aspects of a course that places graduate students in service-learning experiences with Spanish-speaking families. The data provide evidence that focused academic study and community experience promote understanding challenges English language learners (SDELs) and their families face, as well as understanding their future roles as teachers of SDELs.

Keywords: Case study, Community-based education, Critical pedagogy, ESL/ELL, Multicultural education, Qualitative research, Service-learning, Teacher education

1. Preparing Teachers to Teach Immigrant Students

To address the need for educating a burgeoning population of immigrant students, teacher education programs seek ways to prepare preservice teachers to teach students developing English language (SDEL), quite often from social groups different from their own. Community immersion through service-learning can serve as an important concept for teacher preparation (Baldwin, Buchanan, Rudisill, 2007; Boyle-Baise & Grant, 2004; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Gallego, 2001; Wade, Boyle-Baise, & O'Grady; 2001). Students beginning university have identified themselves and socialize within their own groups, often unaware of others' lives (Harro, 2000). Given the opportunity to enter the non-university community in relationship with people outside their own groups, students cross the border into social understanding and social change (Verducci & Pope, 2001), in part by becoming aware of cultural experiences that shape their own identity (Ross, 2008). Many white preservice teachers anticipate working with culturally diverse students, but lack cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experience (Dowell, 2009; Sleeter, 2001) to work with children with socioeconomic, ethnic, and linguistic circumstances different from their own (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Freire, 1970; Freire, 1997/2005; Greenberg & Moll, 1990; Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Moll & González, 1994; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Swick & Rowls, 2000). Experiences that foster an understanding of children's lives challenge previously held implied deficit perceptions of K-12 students and their communities (Cooper, 2007; Potts & Triplett, 2008).

Through immersion experiences, preservice teachers enhance their knowledge of K-12 students' development under various conditions and influences, including language, culture, ability, family, and community (Smylie, Bay, & Tozer, 1999). Preparing teachers to teach with cultural sensitivity depends on their developing knowledge of themselves as well as their students, students' parents, and communities so that as teachers they can design curriculum reflective of their students' worlds (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Reichert, Zeichner, LePage, Darling-Hammond, Duffy, McDonald, 2005). Community immersion focused on social justice and equity (Ross, 2008) provides opportunities for students to understand other worlds and to articulate that knowledge through concrete contexts and action grounded in theory (Banks et al., 2005, Cochran-Smith, 1999; Freire, 1997/2005; Griffith, 1999; Smylie, et al., 1999).

However, risks exist in placing students in immigrant communities with results that are diametrically opposed to instructors' goals focused on social justice concerns (Eby, 1998). Therefore, teacher educators must fully integrate their efforts with deep reading and discussion of academic literature that challenges negative aspects of service-learning, such as reinforcing stereotyping (Boyle-Baise, Brown, Hsu, Jones, Prakash, Rausch, Vitols, & Wahlquist, 2006; Eby, 1998;

Morton, 1996). Such an approach can support understanding of diversity, attention to service, concern for social justice, knowledge of subject area, and development of critical thinking skills (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1999). Thus students move past perceiving culture as "food, fun, festivals, and foolishness" (Writer, 2008, p. 1) into understanding social justice teaching through literature that provides insights into issues critical to immigrant communities (Kravetz, 2006).

The literature presents a compelling argument regarding the importance of providing opportunities for preservice teachers to experience diverse communities. However, few studies have addressed the role of service-learning in the context of family partnerships that provide preservice teachers with personal, sustained experiences in immigrant communities. The results of this study address that gap and consider implications of including service-learning in teacher education programs, recognizing that most K-12 teachers, regardless of discipline or specialty area, will teach SDELs during their career. This paper contributes to the larger dialogue regarding ways teacher education programs prepare teachers for cultural diversity and teaching SDELs.

2. Methods

Several years ago, I developed a course, Crossing the Border through Service-Learning (CTB), to partner university students with community Spanish-speaking families. Initially I provided opportunities for students and families to practice languages and understand cultures in authentic settings. Through community experiences, class discussions, weekly journals, and final papers, they synthesized and analyzed course readings to better understand immigrant life in the United States. Over three semesters, through their discussions and journals, I observed changes in students' attitudes toward people outside their own social groups. Subsequently I designed a qualitative research project to systematically investigate the transformed perceptions about the community that the students described through oral and written work. The initial analysis included the 21 students enrolled in the class as participants, 18 of whom were undergraduate Spanish majors and minors, and three who were graduate preservice teachers. The data provided evidence that the students developed reciprocal relationships with community members, and demonstrated advocacy for other groups, blurring of otherness, and awareness of their own privilege in society (Author, 2003, 2007).

The data from the three master's students seeking licensure to teach SDELs revealed evidence they regarded the immersion experience as a means of making sense of their future roles as teachers of SDELs. I reanalyzed their data, focusing on these guiding questions: 1) how do preservice teachers synthesize course readings and community experiences to inform their understanding of immigrant communities? 2) how do they describe their community partners during the course of the semester; and 3) how do they regard teaching immigrant students after immersion experiences? This analysis revealed the influence of the service-learning experience, course readings, and class discussions in transforming attitudes toward immigrant students and their families. The previously named themes remained, but additional themes became salient: 1) understanding the complexity of immigrant communities, and 2) understanding the multifaceted role of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.

2.1 Research Design

Qualitative research design using case study allowed me to explore how three preservice teachers experienced partnerships in immigrant communities. I examined these graduate student preservice teachers as a "bounded system" (Stake, 2005, p. 444) contextualized in a semester-long credit-bearing, required university course with an integral service-learning component.

2.2 Data Collection

I taped and transcribed hour-long interviews with each student at the beginning of the semester and one class discussion at the end of the semester. I maintained field notes as a participant-observer during classes. I conducted document analysis on 13 weekly journal reflections and one final paper per student. To minimize, albeit not eliminate, the impact of my role as class instructor, students earned grades by completing required processes regardless of negative or positive content.

2.3 Analysis

I systematically searched and arranged all data sources. I sought patterns or significance through direct interpretation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). I looked for consistency/inconsistency to understand behavior, issues, and contexts that confirmed or disconfirmed changes in perceptions (Merriam, 1998) about the community and the role of teachers of immigrant students. I organized the data topically before moving to the more abstract level of using concepts to describe phenomena by classifying data into schema consisting of themes or categories. I then generalized the findings into theory that suggests implications for teacher education programs.

To help me see patterns in vast amounts of data, I typed a list of phrases that answered my research questions as a guide for organizing the data: perceptions of community partners, insights about the role of an ESL teacher, and the role of the service-learning class in their developing/changing ideas. I cut the data into strips and organized my typed phrases by themes, such as expectations for the service-learning class, deficit perceptions of the community, changes in perceptions, understanding of societal problems, teaching insights, cultural awakening, power and privilege, blurring of otherness, relationship. Finally, I organized the categories into two main themes that generate theory about service-learning in teacher education: 1) transformed perceptions of immigrant students and their communities occurred and 2) they developed deeper understanding of their roles as future ESL teachers.

2.4 Context

I conducted this study in a Research I university in a medium-sized town located in the southeast, using CTB as the context of the case. Since its genesis occurred as a Spanish course, the majority of the students at the outset were Spanish majors and minors, but three master's students took CTB to fulfill state ESL endorsement requirements for a cross-cultural competency course.

CTB met on campus weekly to discuss readings focused on service-learning, immigration, critical pedagogy, social justice, and other topics related to the community experience, such as education, healthcare, immigration law and history, and identity (Author, 2003, 2007), many focused on Spanish-speaking immigrants. During the semester, students normally spent a minimum of 50 hours with a family in the community, providing services by offering interpretation, translation, cultural negotiation, tutoring for school-age children, and so on. Families shared their culture and language with students in the form of meals, social times, and Spanish conversation practice. Each week, the students synthesized the readings and community experiences through reflective journals to examine the lived experience through an academic lens. Their final papers revisited their reflections and investigated possible changes in perspective throughout the semester.

However, during this semester, one placement was in a school in response to a request from a principal. I have included the data from this student since she was one of the three preservice teachers seeking ESL endorsement. The data provide evidence that family involvement through a school setting can also lead to transformed attitudes.

2.4.1 Participants

The preservice teachers, Betsy, Liz, and Karen, described similar backgrounds during the interviews the first week of class. All three were white, and identified themselves as middle class. They shared the privilege of being master's students in a state university with plans to teach ESL after graduating. Betsy wanted to stay in the local area. Liz planned to return to the metropolitan area where she had been a substitute teacher. Karen wanted to return to her hometown, near the same metropolitan area, to teach elementary SDELs. However, there were differences in the ways they described their socioeconomic situations. These detailed descriptions of the three provide a baseline for investigating changes in perceptions during the semester. Throughout the paper, I include the journal number (J + number), or indicate final paper (F) as reference points regarding when the excerpt was written. Otherwise, the data come from the interview I conducted at the beginning of the semester.

Betsy, 22, was a traditional student who entered the master's program upon receiving an undergraduate English degree. Her single mom worked two jobs to support her family. Betsy worked part time at a local drive-through coffee stand to pay her tuition. She lived at home in an urban area 40 miles from the university in the same city as her community partner. After a positive volunteer tutoring experience with Bosnian refugees, she decided to pursue a master's to teach SDEL, recalling a "fulfilling glimpse of other cultures immersed into mainstream America." Unlike Liz and Karen, she spoke no Spanish and had little experience with Spanish-speaking cultures. She described a desire to "learn more about Latino culture" (J1). Later she wrote, "When I meet with my service-learning family, we spend much of our time in conversation and as my Spanish is at about the level of their English, reciprocal humility is definitely present" (J5).

Liz, 25, described her family as affluent. Her father was a local lawyer. Her mother attended an elite women's college before becoming a stay-at-home mom. Liz was proud of her families' connections. She called herself "upper middle class," adding that she was a "brownie-baking, Halloween-costume-making, soccer-practice-driving kind of gal." An undergraduate Spanish major, she joined the business world until an economic down-turn terminated her job. She substitute taught Spanish for a year then returned to her alma mater for a master's degree and endorsement in ESL. Her Spanish proficiency allowed her to communicate freely with her service-learning partner. She wrote that she hoped "this experience would be similar to other involvement I have had with community outreach" (J1).

Karen, 26, taught elementary school for four years prior to pursuing her master's with a second endorsement in

ESL. Through her church, she spent two years in Venezuela after college graduation, reinforcing her desire to work in the Spanish-speaking community. Her undergraduate degree from a church-sponsored college of 2500 students left her unaccustomed to the size and ambience of a large state university. She cited CTB as "one of the reasons I came [here]." Her father owned his own business and her mother was a teacher. Karen also described her family as "middle class, upper middle class," but the lifestyle she described was modest compared to Liz's. She said she spoke "broken Spanish" but it was adequate for communicating on most levels, mainly due to her time in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Peru where she was involved in service projects for her church.

Marisol, 25, Betsy's community partner, came to the United States with her mother and siblings, joining her father who had immigrated from Jalisco, Mexico, twenty years earlier. Marisol attended university in Guadalajara for a semester to become a teacher, but found working fulltime and attending school impossible. She and her husband lived in a house with their son, and she worked at a fast food restaurant. Marisol spoke more English than the rest of her family, so they relied on her for interpretation, often beyond her comfort level. She welcomed Betsy as her English teacher, pleased that Betsy only spoke English because "se acostumbra el oído [you get used to hearing it]." Betsy took library materials to prepare Marisol for the TOEFL exam since Marisol expressed interest in attending university in the United States.

María, 24, Liz's partner, had recently emigrated from Honduras, pregnant, and suffering from gestational diabetes. She had experienced numerous frustrating encounters with medical personnel who interpreted her nods and smiles indicating politeness and attentiveness incorrectly, not realizing she did not understand English. She and her husband lived with her cousin and her family in a mobile home park, creating a certain intimacy in her time with Liz as they huddled together in María's bedroom, the only quiet place in the home, to study English. María had completed seventh grade in Honduras, stating that she never liked school. She expressed a desire to learn English. The complicated pregnancy and countless trips for medical care occupied much of their time.

Just as the semester began, I had a call from a Title I elementary school principal who said some of their elementary students' families partnered with CTB students. He requested a university student to set up a program to tutor his students and act as liaison with their parents. Karen jumped at the opportunity. Her partnership was with a school rather than in a home, providing a different experience from Betsy's and Liz's. I chose to include Karen's experience because the contributions from the service-learning program and the parallels in the course work informed her experiences at school. In addition, she presents a case for involving preservice teachers in school-based service-learning experiences, stating that she has "grown to recognize that the impact a teacher has should not be bounded by the walls of the classroom but rather extend into the outside world" (F). Her experience consisted of recruiting university students as tutors, and setting up and administering a tutoring/mentoring program for four SDEL students at the elementary school. She had parent contact, but not on a regular basis, and not always with the same parents. She makes insightful comments regarding the differences in her experiences from those of Betsy and Liz: "The advantage my classmates in service learning have is they meet with their families in their homes whereas I primarily interact with my students in the school setting. Nevertheless, through our one-on-one interactions, I have formed strong bonds with each of my students" (F).

3. Significance of the Findings

The data revealed that the preservice teachers gained an understanding of immigrant communities and the implications of teaching outside their own group. Two main themes emerged: (1) understanding the immigrant community in its complexity and richness rather than through the lens of a deficit notion; and (2) understanding the multiple roles of teachers of immigrant students.

3.1 Understanding the Immigrant Community

For the first journal entry, preservice teachers described their reasons for taking CTB and their expectations for the experience. They expressed deficit notions of the community: "giving of my resources and myself to better another person's quality of life" (Betsy), or "imparting life-changing skills to these families" (Liz), or to "help the less fortunate" (Karen). They regarded service-learning as volunteering or community service, which for them involved the haves of society sharing with the have-nots, whether in skills, knowledge, or material resources.

During the semester, they progressively moved away from previously held deficit notions, citing readings (Arries, 1999; Author, 2003, 2007; Eby, 1998; Morton, 1996) that helped them understand service-learning differently. Liz commented that "all parties involved are benefited" (J2). Betsy stated that when "service-learning looks foremost at how the students benefit and at the recipients as a group with a common deficiency, then it becomes egocentric and does more to harm than help" (J2). Their comments demonstrate an initial change from "fixing" a community they had regarded through a deficit lens.

Gradually their comments focused on their partners' strengths. They realized cultural implications that required significant adaptation, resilience, and resourcefulness. They developed appreciation for and understanding of the complexity of immigrant life. Betsy wrote, "I am already learning much about their unity, sacrifice, and celebration. . . ." (J7). . . . "What I am beginning to see is where these people have come from, how strong and rich in culture they are, and the destinies they are moving toward" (J9). . . ."My service-learning partner Marisol demonstrates much ingenuity for herself and family as diverse needs occur. . . . Over the past several months working with Marisol, I have witnessed how she serves as a resource of knowledge and skills for her whole family" (J12).

Liz commented, "María wants the best for her children. She wants to expose them to two worlds and two cultures so that they can have the best future possible, but the best way to achieve this is still elusive to her" (J6). Liz developed understandings of the inherent issues of identity and culture that accompany immigration, referring to Anzaldúa (1999): "The more English she learns, the more she will come into contact with practices and values different from her own and the more she will be forced to face . . . [an] identity crisis" (J12).

By semester's end, the preservice teachers demonstrated an understanding of their partners' lives in a culture different from their own. Karen, who did not experience consistent direct contact with families, expresses similar perceptual transformation: "The children of Latino immigrants will be impacted by the American value system through their immersion into the school setting" (J7). She says:

> Through our class discussions, I was surprised to hear about the extent of unequal treatment our families received in the medical clinics and the workplace. The formation of identity is another issue our Latino friends face. My students live in a dual existence as Spanish-speaking children within a Latino world at home and ESL students within "Gringolandia" [Stavans, 1995] at school (F)

Her academic interactions with literature and class discussion and her contact with the life of immigrants in the United States provided knowledge of lives that hitherto unknown groups face (Verducci & Pope, 2001).

The preservice teachers described shared common interests with their partners in learning about cultural practices. They talked about their families, boyfriends or girlfriends, sports, politics, hairstyles, and other personal information. Betsy referred to her commonality with Marisol: "She and I had many similarities such as our age, large families, and career aspirations . . . . She is an intelligent woman with wisdom and experience beyond her years, which she modestly rejects each time I tell her" (F). Liz said "[We] talked about things that all girlfriends talk about. We went shopping, laughed together, and shared pictures and stories about our lives and families" (F). Liz and María learned that despite their different cultural heritages, shared interests could cross cultures and languages.

Liz said, "We have different types of jobs, live in different parts of town, and travel in different social circles. I am glad that I have had the opportunity to interact with her through service-learning" (J4). Liz spent more than the required time with María due to the immense needs of Marisol's high-risk pregnancy. She wrote, "María and I have become a lot closer lately because of all the extra time I am spending with her on account of the pregnancy. . . . I am the only American friend she has." (J12).

Karen focused on her four elementary school students: "These students and I formed a relationship in which I was their teacher of English, and they were my teachers of Spanish—we were learners together discovering about one another's language and culture" (F). She also developed an appreciation for her community partners, but since she was working with elementary school children, she lacked the opportunity to develop a peer friendship as Betsy and Liz did.

The preservice teachers gained an insider's understanding of immigrant life. Betsy stated, "Latinos have a unique experience and perspective living in the United States because they constantly juggle sometimes three different cultures, that of mainstream America, their traditional culture, and the microcosm of their school, workplace, or neighborhood" (J8). Liz observed: "The more English [María] learns, the more she will come into contact with practices and values different from her own and the more she will be forced to face an identity crisis" (J12). Karen commented, "I am quickly learning firsthand the struggles they face not only in the language barrier but also in class differences and education" (J4). Deepening awareness of Mexican and Honduran cultures underscored their understanding of complexities that occur when two cultures meet in public institutional settings, facing the challenges of diverse cultural practices.

As the preservice teachers reflected on academic readings through their community experiences, their stances moved from a desire to "help the less fortunate" to an aspiration to act as agents of change in solidarity with their community partners, fighting for social justice in a society the preservice teachers deemed unjust (Ward, 1997). Their initial comments expressed perceptions of immigrants as people who "needed fixing," lacking adequate skills and knowledge to be independently successful. After they personally knew their community partners, they ceased to regard them as people who needed help. Their deficit notions morphed into genuine regard for their partners' resilience and

resourcefulness. They articulated awareness of the constant conflict their partners lived in as they tried to adapt to a new culture, perhaps at the risk of compromising their own cultures and identities.

Through academic readings and discussions, the preservice teachers developed appreciation for their partners' funds of knowledge (Greenberg & Moll, 1990), or "those historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household's functioning or well-being" (González, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendón, Gonzales, 2005, p. 91) their partners brought to the relationship. Betsy described "beginning to see the many 'funds of knowledge' and 'social networks' that exist within the González family" (J5). Karen said, "Where immigrant students may lack in academic skills, they are rich in cultural experiences" (J 6). Liz commented: "We don't want to take away any of their cultural traditions or beliefs in the process" (J 6).

In class, they discussed admiration for courage that brought the women to the United States despite the difficulty of border crossing. They admired the women's devotion to their children and their welfare as well as their ability to build a meaningful life against the odds of economic and language challenges.

They developed understanding of systemic problems in society. By spending time in their partners' homes, the preservice teachers could see the world from another perspective; they were able to hear the other side of the story (Apple, 1997; McLaren, 1998). They saw society and its treatment of immigrant community members from the perspective of people experiencing discriminatory behavior from society. They developed vocabulary to engage in discourse against "a practice that favors the haves against the have-nots; a discourse that denies the existence of social classes" (Freire, 1997/2005, p. 27). They developed an understanding that knowledge shapes power and social activity, making them aware of discriminatory behavior by Anglos practicing linguicism (Schniedewind & Davidson, 2000; Sleeter, 2001) in response to their partners' difficulty communicating in English. Betsy said the González family "continues to triumph over economic obstacles, language barriers, and discrimination" (J8). Karen said, "Eby's (1998) article caused me to take a step back and to reflect upon the society as a whole. What systematic [systemic] problems in our society are the source of the needs and issues these individuals are enduring?" (J4).

Liz advocated for María as she experienced social injustice and prejudice at clinics and pharmacies where no interpreter would have been present had Liz not been there. Referring to both work and clinic experiences, Liz said, "[María] feels lonely and isolated at work, says that other people think she is stupid because she can't communicate, and currently has a medical condition (she is seven months pregnant) that could further force her to communicate if an emergency arises" (J4). She determined that medical care is not equitable for all people. These roots fostered and nurtured relationship (Wood, 1998). The preservice teachers gained a deeper understanding of challenges their partners faced, especially in terms of identity issues, cultural adaptation, and discrimination.

The preservice teachers, members of the dominant culture, crossed the border to understand, empathize with, and advocate for their partners, members of the immigrant community. They experienced changes in perspective that resulted in blurring of Otherness (Fine, 1998) as they identified with the commonalities they shared with their partners and gained an understanding of their partners' worlds.

3.2 Understanding the Role of the Teacher in an Immigrant Community

The preservice teachers began the class with varying degrees of understanding regarding the teaching profession. Betsy had no experience beyond her tutoring experience with the Bosnian family, Liz had substitute taught and tutored refugees, and Karen had taught elementary school for four years. Their initial expectations varied considerably. Of the three, Betsy expressed the greatest expectations about learning to teach through service-learning:

> Sensitive and knowledgeable teaching skills are not innate; future educators (including myself) must learn how to create an environment for learning as well as gaining proficient knowledge of the subject that they teach. . . . I hope to learn more about teaching methodologies and TESOL through my experience in service-learning with the González family (J4).

Because her undergraduate degree had not included any education courses, at first Betsy continually expressed stress and anxiety about her pedagogical knowledge. Through reading and discussing pedagogy and social justice (Carger, 1996; Cochran-Smith, 1999; Freire, 1970; Greenberg & Moll, 1990), she moved from her initial vision of the teacher as bearer of all knowledge to the concept of the teacher as learner and teacher:

> However, I can emphatically state that before knowing this remarkable woman [Marisol], my opinion regarding teacher-student relationships was that teachers served only to relate an academic topic of information to his/her students. Now, I see that teachers constantly discover social, cultural, and academic values from their students and that learning happens when both parties know that each have much to learn. . . . I learned more about [the community partner's] values, beliefs, and experiences. From this frame of reference, I could more aptly and

> happily learn as well as teach; in short, I am not funneling information into a person but exchanging knowledge . . . (F).

Liz referred to her experience with María in terms of gaining personal cultural and linguistic knowledge, rather than pedagogical knowledge:

> Before starting my SL [service-learning] experience, I had already had experiences teaching adult ESL learners. I learned the importance of patience and kindness, gained inside opinions, access to personal experiences of current global events, and got inspiration from some very strong people that I applied towards my own life (F).

Karen reflected on her transformation as a practicing teacher:

> [M]y view of myself as a teacher has expanded from simply serving as an educator into playing the role of a social agent. When returning to the school setting, I will seek for ways to help initiate change within society in order to fulfill the individual needs of my students within the classroom (F).

Betsy commented, "Now I see that teachers constantly discover social, cultural, and academic values from their students and that learning happens when both parties know that each has much to learn" (F). Liz referred to Cochran-Smith (1999): "[W]e are also guarding a respect for them and their Latin[o] community" (J6). Karen said, "Furthermore, my experience through service-learning is opening my eyes to not only the language differences but the cultural issues present in schools today" (J4). They expressed appreciation and respect for their partners' knowledge, in contrast with their initial deficit notions of the community. In short, they expressed an understanding that being an ESL teacher includes being flexible, open to learning from K-12 students and community, and sensitive to the bicultural lives their immigrant students and their families live in a sometimes unfamiliar culture.

The preservice teachers agreed that service-learning fostered an understanding of the complex role of the ESL teacher as counselor, cultural navigator and mediator, and advocate. They also said it helped them develop as cultural and linguistic mediators (Wertsch, 1991), a necessary role for the ESL teacher to assume. They referred to the complexity and responsibility they realized through service-learning.

> My time within this Service-Learning course has solidified my vision and passion to become an advocate through education and service for individuals like those I have come to know through this course. Learning is an infinite journey, so also should be human caring and service towards one another (Betsy, F).

My philosophy of teaching has already begun to shift from that of pragmatism and academics to 'response-ability' and service. . . . Through this class and my experience in the community, I am realizing more and more the awesome responsibility of my role as a teacher. It not only impacts the students within my classroom but also the community around me. (Karen, J6).

As they reflected on their partners' experiences and funds of knowledge (González et al., 1995), the preservice teachers examined how their new understandings of the community informed their perceptions of themselves as ESL teachers. They reflected on the sociocultural implications of teaching in an immigrant community, realizing the complexities involved in working with SDELs and their families.

The data revealed reduced negative stereotyping of people from different ethnic, educational, or socioeconomic groups (Giles & Eyler, 1998). They shifted from regarding content knowledge as the sole basis of teaching to thinking that teachers must be involved in community-based efforts as well as appreciate diversity in K-12 students and their communities.

Betsy's expanded understanding involved her realization that the ESL the immigrant students whose English-speaking skills are limited. Betsy described how her experience would enable her to enter the profession with a deeper comprehension of the responsibility she is undertaking. Liz also learned to regard María as a teacher from whom she could learn specific cultural knowledge. Karen addressed the issue of changing the infrastructure of society for social change in schools as she effected change at the elementary school. She recognized that teachers can serve as agents of change in society (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Smylie et al, 1999). Like Betsy, she developed an appreciation for the multifaceted role of the ESL teacher. She continued to reflect on her responsibility as teacher, articulating her belief that teachers can affect the community. Comments about teaching changed from expressions of desire to know more about methodology to aspirations of putting theory into practice through a more culturally aware sense of teaching.

They also described their increased awareness of the importance of making a connection with the community and of fostering community involvement in schools for immigrant children, just as for any other children. They sought ways to address community needs and provided opportunities for families to gain academic knowledge and skills (Anderson, 1999). They described ways CTB provided opportunities for experiential learning, taking the methods class to

community (Dewey, 1929/1997). Their journals demonstrated the importance of teachers getting "to know their students both in and out of school" (Sleeter, 2008, p. 214). They expressed future plans for linking teaching with their students' lives by getting to know them outside school (Sleeter, 2008). They said CTB helped them understand the moral and civic responsibilities of teaching.

> . . . I did not foresee the personal impact that working with these families would have upon my vision for teaching and my attitude towards community responsibility. Service-learning was overwhelmingly beneficial to my education in that it plucked me out of the microcosm of academia and brought me to the faces, the stories, and the needs of those I aspire to prepare (Betsy, F).

Classrooms should not be separate entities isolated from the rest of reality but rather active participants in the community around them. Authentic learning takes place when real life experiences are incorporated into academic instruction (Karen, J 5).

Service-learning took learning outside the walls of the academy to provide shape and meaning, contextualized in real-life and real-world experiences. The preservice teachers described the importance of learning through experience in the community.

4. Implications for Teacher Education

For the first time, preservice teachers witnessed firsthand the treatment immigrants may experience when dealing with those outside their own group. They worried about what would happen if their partner lacked a friend from the dominant culture to serve as their advocate, a noble concern with dangerous implications. By reading Freire (1970) and Behar (1993), they had become aware of the importance of voices from immigrant populations being heard, but the issue was not straightforward, probably due in part to the asymmetrical reciprocity (Camacho, 2004) that is inherently present in a service-learning experience in an immigrant community when preservice teachers represent a position of power and privilege in society.

Additionally partnerships in one family's home could foster stereotypes (Eby, 1998). The depth of knowledge and understanding these preservice teachers described could probably occur only in such an intense individual placement. A conundrum does exist concerning ways to provide opportunities to know people intimately from various countries. Nonetheless, the students develop transferable skills and knowledge regarding communities different from their own. Immigrant students in schools are not limited to any one group. However, understanding one culture deeply has the potential to open the door for ESL teachers to understand other cultures outside their own. Partnerships in groups would provide broader views of how people make sense of immigrant life, but the intimate knowledge situated within families would be absent.

Service-learning situated in immigrant communities can cut across barriers of language, culture, ethnicity, education, and social class, creating experiences for university students and community members that surpass anything that could happen in the traditional classroom. The tie that binds the two groups is mutually beneficial; the roles change according to the circumstance, much as teacher education students will experience in their role as ESL teachers. Questions worthy of further research remain regarding service-learning in immigrant communities. When pre-service teachers who have these experiences leave the university and become practicing teachers, how will the university service-learning experience influence their relationships with immigrant students and families in their schools? Will they continue to practice in a way that embraces diversity? What are the options for developing programs that integrate a family experience such as Betsy's and Liz's with a school experience such as Karen's? How could the service-learning experience be modified to close the gap that still exists with hierarchical reciprocity? How can instructors incorporate service-learning in a way that does not reinforce stereotypes or reduce service-learning to a simplistic "fix-it" as we seek ways to infuse diversity into our teacher education programs? This paper contributes to the ongoing discussion.

This study presents information for teacher educators considering service-learning as an appropriate pedagogy to prepare teachers to teach in immigrant communities. Although these data present the voices of the only three preservice ESL teachers in the class, teacher educators can consider how this model would work in their own circumstances. Service-learning in immigrant communities can create experiences for preservice teachers and community members that surpass anything that could happen in the traditional classroom.

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Notes

Note 1. All names are pseudonyms.

Note 2. Quotes from unedited student writings refer to "Latino," probably since the readings done for class do so. In other situations, I prefer to use "Mexican" or "Honduran," since that is how the women refer to themselves.

Note 3. Test of English as a Foreign Language.

Note 4. In this paper, in accordance with contemporary usage, Anglo refers to non-Spanish-speaking persons with whom the Mexican and Honduran families interact in the larger English-speaking society.

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