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10 “The Education System is Broken:” The Influence of a Sociocultural Foundations Class on the

11 Perspectives and Practices of Physical Education Preservice Teachers

12 Abstract

13 The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of one sociocultural foundations class
14 taught by Florence, a teacher educator, on the perspectives and practices of two physical
15 education (PE) pre-service teachers (PTs), Michael and Bob. Within a narrative inquiry
16 approach, data sources were non-participant observation, intraviews, conversations, exit slips,
17 digital interactions, responses to three fictional PE teaching scenarios, a fictional curriculum
18 outline, three stimulated recall interviews, documents, and various forms of visual data.
19 Theoretical thematic analysis was employed to work with and make sense of the data. Findings
20 indicated both PTs faced frustration and discomfort during class. Nevertheless, the class
21 resonated and raised the PTs' critical awareness of sociocultural issues related to PE. Key
22 reasons for the apparent success of the class were the deinstitutionalizing pedagogical methods
23 employed by Florence and Florence's "problem-posing" education which prompted the PTs to
24 question their perspectives and assumptions about society and culture.

25 *Keywords:* transformative pedagogy, critical consciousness, physical education, physical
26 education teacher education

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28 Perspectives and Practices of Physical Education Preservice Teachers

29 A number of sport pedagogists have argued that neoliberalism can have a detrimental
30 influence on schooling in general and physical education (PE) in particular (Azzarito,
31 Macdonald, Dagkas, & Fisette, 2017; Dowling, Garrett, Lisahunter, & Wrench, 2015; Hill et al.,
32 2018). Specifically, these and other authors argued that this ideology’s extreme focus on
33 economic productivity has led to standardized PE curricula that are decontextualized, elitist,
34 overly competitive, and hierarchical. As a result, PE has helped to perpetuate inequalities in
35 society at a time when school enrollments are becoming more diverse (Harrison & Clark, 2016;
36 Fernández-Balboa, 1993; Simon & Azzarito, 2019; Walton-Fisette et al., 2018). To counter this
37 state of affairs, scholars have argued for a social justice agenda in which teachers of all subjects,
38 including PE, take a critical approach with the objectives of improving society by championing
39 human rights, celebrating diversity, and protecting the environment (Azzarito et al., 2017;
40 Azzarito, Simon, & Marttinen, 2016; Harrison & Clark, 2016; Ovens et al., 2018).

41 To prepare pre-service teachers (PTs) to take a critical approach, scholars have also
42 argued that teacher educators employ *transformative pedagogy* (Tinning, 2017; Ukpokodu, 2009;
43 Walton-Fisette et al., 2018). Central to this form of teacher education, is the requirement of PTs
44 to examine their own beliefs about power, equity, oppression, democracy, and sociocultural
45 issues (Hickey, 2001; Hill et al., 2018), and to emphasize the role that teachers can play in
46 creating social change (Fernández-Balboa, 1993). Methods employed by transformative teacher
47 educators to realize these goals include modeling, discussion, debate, role-playing, reflective
48 journaling, and project-based learning (Ukpokodu, 2007). In addition, sport pedagogists have
49 suggested that the transformative pedagogies employed by physical education teacher education

50 (PETE) faculty should include storytelling; peer teaching; critically-focused field experiences;
51 and the examination of PTs' biographies, critically oriented case studies, film, and readings
52 (Ovens, 2017; Walton-Fisette et al., 2018).

53 The limited amount of research conducted to date indicated that PETE faculty's efforts to
54 employ transformative pedagogy have largely been ineffective in terms of convincing PTs to
55 take a critical approach beyond their PETE (e.g., Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004; Gerdin, Philpot,
56 & Smith, 2018; Hickey, 2001; Philpot, 2015; Philpot & Smith, 2018). In the United States, this
57 may be because PETE faculty lack the training and content knowledge to implement such
58 programs (Ruiz & Fernández-Balboa, 2005; Walton-Fisette et al., 2018) or have adopted
59 neoliberal ideologies (Hill et al., 2018). In addition, some critically oriented American PETE
60 faculty may have been ineffective because they worked in isolation rather than as part of a team
61 with the same focus (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015), or because their perspectives were
62 countered and contradicted by more conservative colleagues (Cliff, 2012; Ukpokodu, 2007) and
63 national teacher education policies (Ovens et al., 2018). Moreover, the messages provided by
64 some critically oriented PETE faculty may have been filtered out by PTs who have been
65 socialized into conservative and competing perspectives prior to beginning PETE that are
66 extremely hard to change (Curtner-Smith, 2017).

67 Another arena in which American PE PTs may be exposed to transformative pedagogy,
68 and through which they may gain a critical perspective, are classes taught within colleges of
69 education focused on power, equity, oppression, democracy, and sociocultural issues
70 (Ukpokodu, 2007; Walton-Fisette et al., 2018). These sociocultural classes are taken by PTs
71 learning to teach all subjects and are usually focused on intellectual development with the goal
72 that they influence practice Cochran-Smith (2004). The small amount of scholarship conducted

73 on the impact of such classes on PE PTs also suggests that they have been largely ineffective
74 (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015). Nevertheless, how these classes are tailored to PE and how they
75 are read by PE PTs is, as yet, unknown. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine
76 the influence of one sociocultural foundation's class on PE PTs' perspectives and practices. The
77 specific research questions we sought to answer were: (a) What were the PTs' perspectives and
78 practices at entry into and exit from the class; (b) What pedagogies did the teacher educator
79 employ in an attempt to transform the PTs' perspectives and practices; and (c) What factors, if
80 any, influenced the PTs' perspectives and practices during the sociocultural foundations class?

81 **Theoretical Framework**

82 Sociocultural foundations classes are encompassed within social justice education;
83 therefore, data collection and analysis within this study was informed by theories of oppression
84 and a commitment to social change for transformation (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). Socially
85 critical pedagogues Freire (1970, 2007, 2013) and hooks (1994) were drawn upon to illustrate
86 how a teacher educator of a sociocultural foundations course attempted to transform PTs'
87 perspectives and practices. Specifically, theoretical constructs including "critical consciousness,"
88 "banking education," and "problem-posing education" were drawn upon.

89 The term critical consciousness or *conscientizacao* has been used to recognize individuals
90 becoming aware of the reality of social contexts (Freire, 1970, 2013). Social settings include PTs
91 being informed of social structures in society that perpetuate forms of domination (e.g., racism,
92 sexism, classism) and structures of oppression (e.g., discriminatory laws, unequal education,
93 societal views). Critically conscious PTs are those who begin to question long-held perspectives,
94 values, and beliefs related to society and are empowered to change their practices based on that
95 awareness (Freire, 1970, 2013). The aim of critical consciousness is freedom. Freedom is seen as

96 an ethical concept whereby individuals have respect and responsibility for one another (hooks,
97 1994). This caring attitude opposes a standardized education, which reinforces individualism and
98 competition against peers.

99 Teacher educators engaged in raising critical consciousness reject neoliberal teaching
100 methods such as traditional direct teaching styles (hooks, 1994) that perpetuate standardization,
101 competition, indoctrination, and normalized practices, e.g., high stakes testing and teacher as
102 authoritarian. Direct teaching includes the “banking method” (Freire, 1970, 2007), a pedagogical
103 style that assumes the teacher has the knowledge, which should be deposited into passive
104 consumers (i.e., PTs) and repeated back.

105 The ongoing process of raising critical consciousness can be frightening or painful for
106 individuals (hooks, 1994). Griffin and Ouellett (2007) have explained four common themes
107 associated with the consciousness journey. First, they noted that PTs may experience *dissonance*
108 when they are disturbed by the perspectives presented by critically oriented faculty. As a result,
109 particularly unsettled PTs may attempt to dominate discussions and perceive both the class and
110 teacher educator to be invalid. Second, they suggested that some PTs from privileged groups
111 may be *angered* because they believe that their rights are available to all individuals. Third, these
112 authors suggested that some PTs are *immobilized* by critical content, feel powerless to make
113 changes or guilty for belonging to a privileged group, and so withdraw from class participation.
114 Finally, Griffin and Ouellett explain that some PTs are *converted* by transformative faculty and
115 the critical perspective they espouse. But, this may lead to them challenging others without
116 reflecting on the influence of their own identities.

117 Teacher educators are encouraged to adopt a "problem-posing" education with an
118 emphasis on theoretical dialogue to help PTs raise their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970).

119 Theoretical dialogue includes conversation-based lessons surrounding scholarship (e.g., journal
120 articles, books, legal documents, etc.) Teacher educators present materials (e.g., articles) to
121 conscious, active PTs for their consideration and interpretation. Educators then facilitate
122 knowledge sharing sessions, where both teacher and PT reflect on the knowledge exchanged
123 (Freire, 2007). Organizationally, this means that classrooms disrupt the norm of standardized
124 education and allow for deinstitutionalizing strategies such as spontaneity, negotiation, change,
125 intervention, and question what it means to be ongoing critical citizens (hooks, 1994).

126 **Method**

127 **Design**

128 Considering stories have transformative potential, during this study we took a narrative
129 inquiry approach (Clandinin, 2007, 2016; Dowling et al. 2015; Pinnegar, & Daynes, 2007). Thus,
130 the methods by which we collected data focused on the study of experiences, evolved with the
131 research participants, and were temporal. As narrative inquiry is a democratic and inclusive form
132 of knowledge production (Dowling et al. 2015) it speaks to the social justice agenda (Azzarito et
133 al., 2017) and, as authors, we recognized the inherent relational process that was involved and
134 our position as critically oriented scholars. Consequently, we realized that the stories retold by
135 the participants in our study were not objective static representations of reality, but should be
136 viewed as stories retold from a mutual and reciprocated relationship of knowledge sharing.
137 While we recognized the power involved in the research process and our position as academics,
138 we attempted to create an egalitarian relationship. Consequently, data were collected through
139 multiple methods that were convenient for the participants and gave them voice.

140 **Participants**

141 Two PE PTs registered for the sociocultural foundations course during the spring of 2018
142 when the study took place. Subsequently, they were the main participants of the study. Michael,
143 the first PT, a 28-year-old **black** American, came from a military family and served in the United
144 States Army as a medic for four years. Before enrolling in the PETE program to become a
145 certified teacher, he completed a non-teaching degree in kinesiology at another institution. At the
146 time the study was conducted, Michael was at the beginning of his PETE and was taking his first
147 methods course. Bob, the second PT, a 35-year-old **white American** and former Navy engineer,
148 was enrolled in the same program. In contrast to Michael, Bob was near to finishing his degree
149 and had completed all three of his methods courses.

150 Another participant in the study was the teacher educator of the sociocultural foundations
151 class. At the time the study took place, Florence, a 40-year old female **white American**, was in
152 her final semester as a doctoral candidate in Instructional Leadership with an emphasis on
153 sociocultural studies. Florence was an elementary school teacher before enrolling in graduate
154 school. Before teaching the class that was the focus of this study, Florence had taught
155 sociocultural foundations to other groups of PTs on ten previous occasions. The first author
156 observed Florence the semester preceding the study and identified as her as a transformative
157 educator. Prior to data collection, Florence and the two PTs signed forms indicating that they
158 consented to take part in the study and selected fictitious names to protect their anonymity.

159 **The PETE Program**

160 The study was carried out at a large public research university situated in the southeastern
161 United States. The university had a two-year undergraduate PETE program in which Michael
162 and Bob were enrolled and that was layered on top of the university's two-year core curriculum.
163 The core of the PETE program was a sequence of three methods courses and early field

164 experiences and the culminating student teaching internship. In addition, the program included a
165 series of content courses (i.e., track and field and net/wall games; swimming; gymnastics and
166 dance; invasion, striking and fielding, and target games; health-related fitness; and adapted PE)
167 all coupled with early field experiences. PTs also took courses in the kinesiological
168 subdisciplines (i.e., introduction to kinesiology, biomechanics, motor development, exercise
169 physiology, measurement and evaluation, sport administration, and ecological aspects of health)
170 and educational foundations (sociocultural foundations, special education, education psychology,
171 and computer applications). The primary focus of the PETE coursework was behavioral and
172 technical in nature with an emphasis on learning how to employ effective instructional
173 (Silverman, 1991) and managerial (Doyle, 1986) behaviors, use Mosston and Ashworth's (2008)
174 spectrum of teaching styles, and deliver PE through a variety of curriculum models (i.e., the skill
175 themes approach, the traditional multi-activity model, sport education, teaching games for
176 understanding, health-related fitness, and teaching personal and social responsibility) (Metzler,
177 2017). The PETE faculty's main goal was to break the cycle of non-teaching PE teachers that
178 existed in their state.

179 **The Sociocultural Foundations Class**

180 The sociocultural foundations class met two days a week for 15 weeks on the university
181 campus. Each class meeting was 75 minutes in duration. The course consisted of 23 female PTs
182 as well as Michael and Bob. These 23 PTs were studying for degrees that enabled them to teach
183 a variety of subjects at the elementary, middle, and high school level. Two of these PTs
184 identified as **black** American and 21 as **white American**. As advertised in the syllabus, the
185 primary purpose of the class was to "explore sociocultural contexts of schooling, examine effects
186 of factors such as race, class, gender, ability, and ethnicity on instruction and learning,

187 develop/exercise personal voice and analyze historical and contemporary social, historical,
188 political, philosophical issues in education.” Content covered in the class included how racism,
189 classism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, and linguisticism are perpetuated through schooling; the
190 competing aims of education such as sociocultural justice, equal educational opportunity,
191 deculturalization, and consumerism; and analyzing the historical and current struggles in the
192 United States concerning educational policy and teaching practices.

193 **Data Collection**

194 Data were collected by employing ten qualitative techniques that were mutually agreed
195 on with the participants. *Non-participant observation* involved the first author observing all 30
196 sessions of the sociocultural foundations class and taking copious field notes on a laptop
197 computer describing their content, the pedagogies used by Florence, and the reactions of Michael
198 and Bob to these pedagogies. Both PTs completed two open-ended *intraviews* (Kuntz and
199 Presnall, 2012). Intraviews were walking style interviews that allowed participants to relax in
200 alternate habitual ways comfortable to them. One of these intraviews took place prior to the class
201 commencing, and one after the class was completed. During these intraviews, both PTs were
202 asked the same overarching questions, but multiple follow-up questions and stories were
203 exchanged. The first PT intraview focused on gathering relevant background biographical data
204 about Michael and Bob and data which described their espoused perspectives and practices
205 regarding PE teaching and the purposes of schooling in society. During the second intraview
206 with the PTs, the focus was on establishing the extent to which the sociocultural foundations
207 class had influenced Michael and Bob’s perspectives and practices and the factors within the
208 class that led to this influence.

209 Florence was also intraviewed prior to the beginning and after the completion of the
210 course. Again, an open-ended format was employed. The focus of the first intraview with
211 Florence was on the pedagogies, strategies, and methods she intended to use during the class.
212 Additionally, Florence was asked about her prior experiences of teaching sociocultural
213 foundations to PTs in general, PE PTs in particular, and her views regarding the purposes of
214 education. The second intraview with Florence focused on her perceptions regarding the
215 influence her class had on Michael and Bob, and the pedagogies she believed were most and
216 least effective. All six intraviews lasted between 37 and 73 minutes and were audio-recorded and
217 transcribed verbatim. They took place in locations convenient to the participants, for example,
218 walking along a river, their houses, and the library.

219 Whenever the opportunity arose before, during, and after class meetings informal
220 *conversations* occurred with Michael, Bob, and Florence. The focus of the conversations was on
221 the pedagogies that Florence employed and the influence it had on the two PTs' perspectives and
222 practices. The content of the conversations was recorded in note form as soon as they had been
223 completed. In congruence with Bob's suggestion following the fourth class meeting, after
224 subsequent class sessions both PTs supplied the first author with written *exit slips*. Other PTs in
225 the class did not complete exit slips. Within the exit slips Michael and Bob described (a) the
226 content covered in the preceding class session, (b) the pedagogies by which this content was
227 delivered, (c) the influence of the content and pedagogies on their perspectives and practices, if
228 any, and (d) any additional reactions to the class session. In total, due to class absences, 43 exit
229 slips were added to the data set.

230 Toward the end of the class during the final intraview, Michael and Bob were asked how
231 they would respond to three short *fictional PE teaching scenarios* if they were the teacher, each

232 of which was read to them. Scenario 1 focused on racism, Scenario 2 focused on sexuality, and
233 Scenario 3 focused on ableism. Michael and Bob were also asked to write a *fictional one-page*
234 *curriculum outline* in which they described their ideal school PE program for the ages they
235 would like to teach concerning goals, content, curriculum models, pedagogies employed, and
236 evaluation. They were asked to explain and expand on their curriculum outline during their final
237 intraview.

238 Additionally, Michael's methods course included an early field experience in a local
239 middle school. Michael taught 8 to 10 students each lesson. The school was racially and
240 culturally diverse, and approximately 32% of the students qualified for free school lunch. *Non-*
241 *participant observations* in this context involved the first author observing and filming Michael
242 in lessons 10 to 14 of a 15-lesson sport education unit. After filming, the first author took copious
243 field notes on a laptop computer describing Michael's content and pedagogies. Michael then took
244 part in three *stimulated recall interviews*. These interviews involved Michael watching filmed
245 episodes of his teaching from the early field experience which the first author deemed to be
246 examples of inequitable teaching. Michael was asked to reflect on these episodes and explain his
247 thoughts when teaching. Stimulated recall interviews were audio recorded and transcribed
248 verbatim. Interview 1 lasted 40 minutes, interview 2 lasted 57 minutes, and interview 3 lasted 71
249 minutes.

250 Throughout the study, relevant *digital interactions* between the first author and the
251 participants were also recorded and added to the data set. These consisted of text messages and
252 emails. Two final sources of data were 66 *documents* and *visual data* created for and within the
253 class by Florence and the two PTs. The former included the PTs' written class assignments (e.g.,
254 teaching philosophy statement, index cards required from weekly readings as PTs answered

255 questions on readings), the course syllabus, and Florence’s evaluation rubrics, class handouts,
256 class website, curriculum vitae, and any articles she required the PTs to read. The latter consisted
257 of artwork, picture drawing, visual metaphors, and digital media.

258 **Data Analysis**

259 Theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed to work with and
260 make sense of the data. This five-stage process involved the first author (a) familiarizing herself
261 with the data and identifying data which pertained to the three research questions we were
262 attempting to answer, (b) assigning initial codes to data chunks, (c) searching for themes related
263 to the constructs from the theoretical framework, (d) reviewing and revising themes, and (e)
264 defining and naming themes. Data were coded and sorted into themes using the QSR NVivo 11
265 software. Throughout the data reduction process, the second author acted as a “critical friend”
266 (Costa & Kallick, 1993) which involved discussing and critiquing developing categories and
267 themes with the first author. During the final phase of the analysis, data snippets which
268 illustrated key themes were identified and selected for use in the manuscript.

269 Trustworthiness of the analysis was ensured by employing several strategies as
270 recommended by Tracey (2010). First, an audit trail was created during data collection. This
271 involved noting which data were collected using each method at specific points in time. Second, by
272 collecting data from multiple avenues we were able to provide a thorough understanding of our
273 findings. Lastly, member reflections were used throughout the data collection process during
274 which Florence and the PTs were asked to affirm, modify, or disregard data collected on earlier
275 occasions.

276 **Findings and Discussion**

277 Unlike previous PETE research (Curtner-Smith & Sofu, 2004; Gerdin et al., 2018;
278 Hickey, 2001; Philpot, 2015; Philpot & Smith, 2018), data gathered during this study indicated
279 that PTs' perspectives and practices were influenced by Florence's teaching within the
280 sociocultural foundations class. These findings were described in Florence's themes:
281 *deinstitutionalization* and *dialogue*. Bob's themes were *social justice illiteracy*, *dissonance*,
282 *anger*, and *immobilization*, and Michael's themes were *consciously aware*, *shock*,
283 *immobilization*, *practice to action struggle*, and *critical transformation*.

284 **Pedagogies Employed by Florence: Deinstitutionalization**

285 To increase the PTs' critical consciousness, Florence wanted to make the PTs aware of
286 the reality of their future social context (Freire, 1970, 2013). In this case, it was the oppressive
287 structure of education as an institution:

288 It [schooling] is an institution, it exists by virtue of habits, the habits live on through that
289 institution. You can shape it [school] and alter it, and that's what I tell my students. You
290 can shape it and alter it to what you are doing. You do not have to turn it into this
291 mechanized dehumanizing space. You can infect your immediate surrounding, and with
292 the help of others, you can start to enforce institutional change. (Intraview 1, Florence)

293 Before the course, Florence stated, "I want them [PTs] to see two things. Life is way more
294 complex than any of us know and have been taught and that human beings just really just wanna
295 be accepted" (Intraview 1, Florence). Florence's deinstitutionalizing strategy was "to create more
296 humane interactions with people. Then they can open up to a communal experience and social
297 change, but you gotta start there. Everything starts with a relationship" (Intraview 1, Florence).

298 Florence aimed to build relationships with the PTs by embodying a transformative
299 approach. She was fun, flexible, outgoing, approachable, and a negotiable course instructor. As
300 Bob illustrated,

301 There were a lot of instances where deadlines or what project would be due first and what
302 or how projects could be done or really left up to us to come up as a collective to what we
303 would prefer, which empowers us a lot to say that we have a more democratic classroom
304 like we are all involved and our voice all gets heard. (Bob, Intraview 2)

305 Considering Florence felt that respect and close human interactions were essential to
306 relationship building, for each class, she rearranged the room from traditional rows: “I begin by
307 arranging the seats in a U shape to facilitate group dialogue and eye contact” (Before Class
308 Email, Florence). Additionally, during each class, Florence sat with the PTs rather than behind a
309 lectern. Considering students are institutionalized to repeat information back to an educator (i.e.,
310 the “banking method”), Florence rejected this traditional mode of teaching. Thus, she provided a
311 space for knowledge exchange between PTs and educator (Freire, 2007).

312 **Dialogue.** Florence’s “problem-posing” pedagogy was based around the notion that the
313 key to unlocking PT’s critical consciousness was to “incite problems that students would take an
314 interest in at a later date . . . You have to feel like something is wrong. Inquiry comes from an
315 emotional impetus” (Intraview 1, Florence). The problems, or course content, were covered in
316 critically focused theoretical homework readings and digital media pedagogies (e.g., blogs,
317 Vimeo, video documentaries, Ted Talks, YouTube clips, online learning modules). The
318 homework “expose[d] them [PTs] to a multitude of narratives from the perspective of individuals
319 who have experienced the forms of oppression that we are talking about” (Intraview 2, Florence).
320 For example, an assigned reading on ableism was from an individual that identified as autistic.

321 As a result, class time was dedicated to student facilitation. Individually or as a pair, PTs
322 facilitated discussions based on the assigned homework and came up with questions for the
323 group to consider. Michael explained, “You do readings, and you come in. . . . it’s open
324 discussed [*sic*] and everybody pretty much talks” (Intraview 2, Michael). This was an attempt by
325 Florence to share control and power of the classroom (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). As she
326 illustrated, “For the most part, we are sharing the space, dialogue.” Michael agreed: “As
327 students, we had a voice; it wasn’t like we couldn’t talk. We were free and open to talk in *very*
328 open discussions.” Ensuring respect for each PT, Florence would begin the facilitation by saying,
329 “Shut down your computers and just listen” (Field Notes, Lesson 18). While sitting with the
330 group, Florence asked questions throughout these discussions to probe into students’ thinking
331 such as “What is a democracy? What does democracy mean in terms of power? Who benefits
332 from a democracy?” (Field Notes, Lesson 28).

333 At times, Florence drew on an array of breakout strategies that allowed PTs the
334 opportunity to reflect critically and increase their knowledge base. These included artwork (e.g.,
335 picture drawing, artistic work, see Figure 1), silent gallery walks, found poetry (e.g., searching
336 for meaningful/targeted words), freewriting, journal entries, teacher read-aloud (poems/book
337 extracts), visual metaphors (e.g., light/the moon being reflected as an image to demonstrate how
338 light is interpreted in many different ways, similar to our societal perspectives, see Figure 2),
339 digital media (e.g., image overlay with quotes, see Figure 3), news articles, and pedagogical
340 action orientated handouts (e.g., a checklist when implementing critical thinking techniques in
341 the classroom). These strategies often came up spontaneously and changed the direction of the
342 conversation to allow PTs to think more deeply about the material or emphasize a theoretical
343 position/point. **When sharing visual images specifically, Florence would question students saying**

344 “What do you see?” and “What does your partner see?” and allowed students time to reflect
345 through freewriting or discussion before provoking thought or addressing misconceptions of the
346 image. Florence also asked one of her past students to come to the class and share ideas about
347 pedagogical strategies for non-heterosexually conforming students in schools. As a gay-
348 identifying male, he was able to speak from experience.

349 *Assessment as dialogue.* Aside from active participation and weekly homework tasks
350 such as readings, PTs were required to complete several reflective essays, a biography, a
351 philosophy statement, and a final assignment as part of their grade. Each week after the
352 homework task, PTs were required to answer self-reflective questions on an index card and
353 submit them to Florence. The purpose of the cards was to “try to keep the conversation going
354 between the students and myself” (Intraview 1, Florence). Once collected, Florence would reply
355 to the PTs’ index cards with further questions/considerations to provoke their thinking or clear
356 up any misunderstandings. Consistently, Florence asked the PTs to peer-comment on index cards
357 and essays:

358 They have to share it with a peer. Their peers provide feedback for them . . . they are
359 getting a multitude of people offering their input, not just a teacher to question their
360 assumptions, to question their clarity about their beliefs. (Intraview 1, Florence)

361 Then PTs would respond to comments before submission.

362 The culminating final project consisted of five options: a thoughtful reflective essay and
363 portfolio, an arts-based research project, a Deweyan inquiry (problem-based), creation of a
364 sociocultural children’s library (narratives from diverse scholars), or a choice personal
365 assessment, where PTs could choose the way they wanted to demonstrate what they had learned.
366 The choice assessment, which rejected traditional forms of assessment, demonstrated to Florence

367 that some PTs preferred traditional assessments: “There is this period of deinstitutionalization
368 that I think they have to go through, and not everybody embraces it” (Intraview 1, Florence).

369 **Bob: “Dude you Live the Same Life, you Just put a Different Skin On”**

370 *Perspectives prior to the class: Social justice illiteracy.* Bob had strongly felt
371 assumptions and beliefs related to oppression, drawing from his own socioeconomic experiences
372 prior to the class beginning: “I was poor . . . poor of mind, poor of money, poor of everything”
373 (Intraview 1, Bob). He found it particularly difficult to answer questions on teaching for a
374 diverse audience: “I don't know. I guess I haven't really thought about it,” stating that “people
375 from the same background have the same perspective and can be educated the same way”
376 (Intraview 1, Bob). When questioning Bob about social justice before the class, he admitted: “I
377 don't know anything about social justice” (Intraview 1, Bob). When discussing oppressors such
378 as sexism, genderism, ableism, Bob was not able to provide a definition or provide an example
379 of each. On the subject of race, he believed

380 It's like dude you live the same life; you just put a different skin on . . . there is really
381 nothing different in you from them [black Americans]. I mean you look at your life, and
382 it is the same; it is a carbon copy; you drive the same car; you live in the same
383 neighborhood. (Intraview 1, Bob)

384 Based on his personal experiences, Bob did not see a difference between his race privilege and
385 black American minorities. By not recognizing a person's race, we ignore people's unique
386 elements. This understanding has been termed “colorblindness.” Colorblindness holds racism in
387 place because we *do* see the race of others and race often has unconscious meanings for us
388 (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Bob's prior knowledge suggested he had multiple gaps in his
389 expertise related to sociocultural issues and social justice. Where there are gaps in a person's

390 understanding of what social justice is, it affects what is required to achieve an equitable society
391 and is considered social justice illiteracy (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

392 *Factors influencing Bob: Dissonance and anger.* Griffin and Ouellett (2007) outlined
393 when PTs begin to learn about the reality of the social context, they can feel dissonance (e.g.,
394 unsettled, class/teacher educator as invalid, dominate class discussion) and anger, as they think
395 their rights are available to others, especially if they are from an advantaged group. Anger was
396 demonstrated through Bob's class experiences. He consistently remarked that he felt:
397 “frustrated/irritated” (Exit Slip, Lesson 24) and that the class “was making him an angrier
398 person” (Exit Slip, Lesson 26). After questioning Bob why he felt so angry, he confessed, “The
399 class causes me to think in ways I hadn’t before, thus instigates a change in my thoughts on some
400 aspects of whatever topic” (Text Message Following Lesson 24, Bob). Florence justified Bob’s
401 reactions to the class:

402 For people who have had various forms of privilege, this class can feel really nihilistic
403 because we keep talking about the various forms of power that somebody in Bob’s
404 position has. So, for a person that has almost all of those forms of privilege with the
405 exception of perhaps social class, it can be very hard for the students to not self-blame
406 and start hating on themselves and feel they can’t do anything right. (Intraview 2,
407 Florence)

408 Bob enjoyed the dialogue aspect of the class: “I really enjoyed the first class. Mostly the
409 informal way it was conducted and the topics of conversation. It definitely kept me interested”
410 (Email Following Lesson 1, Bob). However, Bob tended to voice his opinion in class
411 discussions. Florence recognized this: “Bob definitely did dominate the conversation many days,
412 and there were certain points in time where I would have to nudge him back a bit to make sure

413 that we heard somebody else” (Intraview 2, Florence). In his own words, Bob suggested he
414 benefitted by this exposure and dialogue. . . . sitting in a room with 30 [25] other different
415 individuals from different backgrounds, there were some things I learned. . . . there were
416 some things I *thought* or *assumed* I had a firm grasp on. . . . I had to really sit down and
417 have these *really* open discussions on my own thoughts. (Intraview 2, Bob)

418 However, Bob’s lack of diligence in keeping up with readings affected his ability to use
419 theoretical dialogue in class. In his final assignment, he indicated

420 I do not believe I explored or extended the concepts in our readings very well. I come to
421 this conclusion based on the fact I neglected to do my due diligence in keeping up with
422 the readings and accompanying assignments. (Final Assignment, Bob)

423 Furthermore, Bob had not completed a large number of index cards and submitted his philosophy
424 assignment 10 days late (beyond the class agreed deadline). Florence was aware and supportive
425 of Bob’s needs in the class, allowing him to submit assignments late, and addressed his conflicts
426 as a learning opportunity (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). Despite this, on several occasions Bob
427 retracted from the class

428 Bob is sitting at the back of the room [not in the U shape], and Florence asks him if he
429 wants to join the circle. He said, “Respectfully, I decline.” He sits at the back, eats a
430 Chick-fil-A sandwich and responds to emails on his laptop. (Field Notes, Lesson 16)

431 Furthermore, due to illness or family commitments, he arrived late, left the class early, and was
432 absent on five occasions. Bob’s response to the class was not uncommon. Social justice
433 education courses can often counter long-standing assumptions and perspectives toward society
434 and conflict over what individuals have been taught to achieve equality (Griffin & Ouellett,
435 2007). Therefore, withdrawing from the class can take various forms.

436 *Perspectives after the class: Immobilization and thirsty for more.* Social justice courses
437 overwhelm PTs, and they feel powerlessness, pain, and discomfort (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007;
438 hooks, 1994). Even though Bob felt anger and frustration toward the class, his exit slips also
439 suggested that the content set for the class resonated with him, and the reality of the unequal
440 schooling situation in the United States took hold. Specifically, the topic on racism made Bob
441 realize that “the problem still exists and is far more reaching than I previously believed” (Exit
442 Slip, Lesson 17). Later in the course, Bob expressed the content “made me question if I’ll ever be
443 able to be part of a genuine change” (Exit Slip, Lesson 25).

444 Bob placed a small amount of emphasis on the amount he learned in the class: “There
445 were certainly things I learned. . . . this course has positively changed me as a person, to some
446 extent” (Intraview 2, Bob). Specifically, Bob enjoyed the guest lecture on sexuality; he said,
447 “There is no better way to learn than from those that have truly done or experienced” (Intraview
448 2, Bob). This lecture encouraged Bob to realize the need to separate “church and state, my
449 personal religious views. . . . to help all children and people regardless of gender, race, sexual
450 identity or affiliation, disability, socioeconomic background, or religious or personal beliefs”
451 (Philosophy Assignment, Bob). Despite this positive influence toward a more inclusive
452 perspective and being able to identify a substantial amount of knowledge related to teaching for a
453 diverse audience, definitions related to multiple oppressors, and practical scenario strategies, Bob
454 lacked democratic PE curricula ideas. When discussing his fictional PE curriculum outline, he
455 emphasized the biomedical concepts of health and sport, focusing on models-based practice and
456 teacher-directed instruction (Metzler, 2017; Silverman, 1991). Bob also commented that his PE
457 courses lacked a social justice focus: “I wish I had more classes that aligned with these sorts of
458 concepts . . . [in PE] they were never really touched upon in a well-rounded or thorough way. It’s

459 just not really bought up” (Intraview 2, Bob). Importantly, Bob mentioned that he lacked
460 concrete examples of how to deal with sociocultural issues in the PE classroom: “Like can you
461 identify it [racism], and then what should you do about it or how should you address it?”
462 (Intraview 2, Bob). Bob explained, “By not making any real attempt to analyze [sociocultural
463 issues in class] . . . you are perpetuating it and underserving a lot of your students” (Intraview 2,
464 Bob). This recognition alone highlights the influence of the course on Bob; he no longer saw his
465 role as a physical educator as abstract to the proliferation of social inequality (Fernández-Balboa,
466 1993) and as he became more critically conscious, his awareness toward his education became
467 critical, evidencing the beginning of critically conscious citizen (hooks, 1994).

468 **Michael: “I Can Really Make a Difference”**

469 *Perspectives prior to the class: Consciously aware.* It was evident from Michael's first
470 intraview that he was astutely cognizant of multiple types of oppression and structures within
471 society, even down to his minority status and identifying habits:

472 I don't see myself as black because if I say that I am black, then that is like a color, I am
473 not a color. I am also not African, I have never been to Africa. I am American, but I
474 suppose I have to say African American. (Intraview 1, Michael)

475 Michael was adamant that race was a social construct, hence his reasoning for reluctantly

476 identifying as African American. He also recognized that

477 there is a lack of social justice. Social justice is basically about seeing a problem in the
478 system and basically fixing that problem for a different social background. I think people
479 don't know how to touch social justice topics correctly. So, it's a tough topic 'cause it is
480 so prevalent today. You see people want social justice, but when it comes to that point to
481 reflect, as far as voting, people fall short, especially in the South. (Intraview 1, Michael)

482 Concerning PE, Michael noted,

483 Physical education should be about the physical and mental of being healthy. . . . Kids
484 should be doing physical activity that tests important skills like their range of motion,
485 stamina, and testing different levels of physical fitness, then mentally how to work past
486 certain things. (Intraview 1, Michael)

487 Although not socioculturally focused, Michael was new to his PETE program and came from a
488 coaching background: “I really think I could be a good coach” (Intraview 1, Michael). Michael
489 could have been described as a “coaching orientated” (Curtner-Smith, 2017; Lawson, 1983). As
490 Lawson (1983) explained, three factors influence a person entering PETE with a coaching
491 orientation: an individual's athletic achievements, PE as a career contingency, and having a
492 traditional (custodial) teaching style. Michael acknowledged two of these:

493 I played basketball and track. At first, I wanted to do physical therapy but for all sports,
494 but I didn't focus enough for my grades or aim high enough to get to that ladder . . . So
495 physical education could be a career option for me because kids need it. (Intraview 1,
496 Michael)

497 *Factors influencing Michael: Shock and immobilization.* Within the class, Michael was
498 shocked that Florence, a **white American** educator, “would be the one who is touching on these
499 [social] issues” (Intraview 2, Michael). During class meetings when Florence would talk to the
500 class, Michael would intently lean forward and write notes. After class, he commented, “[Class]
501 got me fired up and mad” (Field Notes, Lesson 13). Michael claimed, “The more I learn, the
502 worse it gets” (Conversation, Lesson 16). In Michael's final intraview, he mentioned how much
503 he enjoyed hearing from others in the class:

504 There were some things that shocked me like a lot of them [other PTs] . . . never knew
505 some of the racial stuff was going on, and they had never seen that and that was kind of
506 surprising being from here [the city] and they don't know what's going on and that they
507 didn't know it was that bad. I could tell for some of them it was like an open light they
508 had never seen that side especially about when we were talking about segregation.

509 (Intraview 2, Michael)

510 At the same time, on the topic of race and the re-segregation of the school system in the local
511 area, Michael recognized, "I didn't know about it either" (Intraview 2, Michael).

512 As the weeks progressed, Michael proffered, "The education system is broken, and I want
513 to fix it, but I don't know how" (Exit Slip, Lesson 19). Michael felt a sense of powerlessness, a
514 common feeling of social justice education (Griffin & Ouellett, 2007). To learn more, Michael
515 would often stay after class and speak with Florence; this occurred after Lesson 6. After Lesson
516 15, Florence said, "Michael and I walked from the class to the parking lot together. He asked a
517 lot of questions about education. We spent a further 15 minutes talking, and I have shared some
518 additional resources with Michael" (Conversation, Florence).

519 ***Factors influencing Michael: Practice to action struggle.*** Michael wanted to teach
520 equitably and "be able to mold the curriculum . . . to blend all cultures together" (Philosophy
521 Assignment, Michael). However, in practice, he found this particularly challenging. Curtner-
522 Smith (1996) noted that PTs early in their PETE are focused on the managerial aspect of
523 teaching (i.e., behavior management and organization). Michael's fictional PE curriculum,
524 scenarios, and methods course observations evidenced his focus on the managerial aspects of
525 teaching and the PE curriculum model he was using (i.e., sport education) was driving his
526 purpose as opposed to a sociocultural purpose toward PE. As stimulated recall interview 1

527 evidenced, Michael was unable to recognize that he had segregated his sport education students
528 by ability and gender, instead of allowing students to decide their team roles.

529 First author: What is going on here?

530 Michael: They are officiating.

531 First author: Do you see any issues?

532 Michael: No.

533 First author: You have given all the boys an officiating role in the class, and all the girls
534 are stood behind you doing nothing, without a role.

535 Michael: noooooooo, no, no, no, no. (Stimulated Recall Interview 1)

536 Michael began to realize that his sport education unit was representative of sporting culture and
537 that sport in society could be racist, sexist, classist, homophobic (Azzarito et al., 2016). There
538 were other instances in Michael's practice that displayed him promoting competition and
539 individualism. For example, he only cheered on those winning within the track and field events,
540 rather than all students, despite performance. When discussing this with Michael in his final
541 intraview, he suggested his PE courses thus far were more focused on the act of sport
542 performance/physical competency, and as a PT it was not about intervening in social inequality:

543 You can see in the schools there are [social injustices], but our job is not to do with social
544 injustice, it is about teaching the curriculum and leaving. It is not about background and
545 what are you going to do to break this up and it is not about that. It is about doing it,
546 coming in and leaving. (Intraview 2, Michael)

547 Similarly to Bob, Michael began to see his role as an educator more holistically. He exclaimed,
548 "I can really make a difference in students' lives" (Intraview 2, Michael).

549 *Perspectives after the class: Critical transformation.* Michael never asked about grades;
550 for him, the process was always about learning and the learning within the class led to a deeper
551 social justice understanding:

552 I learned that I need to be more aware than anything on [*sic*] social issues and gender
553 issues, and I need to worry about making sure my kids are not consumers and making
554 sure they are actually free thinkers and how they can make difference in the world.

555 (Intraview 2, Michael)

556 Michael saw his role as an educator in creating social change (Fernández-Balboa, 1993).

557 Florence speculated that “Michael is seeing a broader social structure. . . . he looks at it now
558 from a community perspective rather than individual interactions” (Intraview 2, Florence). In
559 Michael’s final exit slip, he concurred: “This class has changed me as a student.”

560 Michael evidenced choice, creativity, and action when he opted for an alternative final
561 assignment. Considering critical understanding leads to critical action (Freire, 2013). When PTs
562 raise their critical consciousness, they can take their learning into their content area and intervene
563 in unfair practices. For Michael’s final project, he chose to highlight gender and race segregation
564 in a youth track and field event held for the state. He created a video that included photographs
565 with voice-over. The footage showed athletes racially or gender segregated. One photograph
566 showed a group of **white American** athletes praying together in a circle. Michael explained that
567 while taking the photograph, a coach asked him why he was taking it. Michael clarified, “There
568 are no African Americans in the circle. I am showing how teams are segregated by race.” The
569 coach noticed this issue himself and invited his African American athletes to join the circle.
570 Michael then commented, “They are still not integrated, because the African American athletes
571 are at one end of the circle and joining in after being asked is not integration. We need

572 integration throughout the circle and the community.” Despite Michael’s intervention with a
573 coach at the event and acting on social injustice, he emphasized that he still had more to learn: “I
574 think that [the class] is a step and we need more steps to get prepared especially for physical
575 education. I want more classes that are geared toward physical education that are like this”
576 (Intraview 2, Michael). As Curtner-Smith (1996) and Hill et al. (2018) encouraged, PETE
577 courses should focus on the political, social, moral, and ethical concepts of sport and physical
578 education and PTs should be armed with tools to enact social justice. Subsequently, specific
579 courses related to sociocultural issues and practical strategies are suggested or “you could go
580 through your whole physical education program and not talk about social issues at all” (Intraview
581 2, Michael).

582 **Summary and Conclusions**

583 This paper has demonstrated how a sociocultural class taught by a transformative teacher
584 educator challenged two PTs’ perspectives and practices in PETE. The findings indicated that
585 before the class, neither of the two PTs had thought much about critical issues in PE. During the
586 class, they came to realize how important these issues were. The teacher educator, Florence,
587 enabled critical awareness through “problem-posing education” and theoretical dialogue (Freire,
588 1970, 2007).

589 The first PT, Bob, had little knowledge related to sociocultural foundations before the
590 class and withdrew from the course at times, feeling frustration, anger, and a sense of
591 powerlessness to the content taught. Despite this, Bob found the conversational aspect of the
592 class helpful in understanding the theoretical readings and his personal experiences. After
593 completing the class, Bob was an advocate for sociocultural foundations, suggesting that their

594 implementation is crucial so that teachers do not perpetuate inequalities in their contexts. This
595 finding evidenced Bob's heightened critical awareness of sociocultural issues.

596 Michael, the second PT, had a mature stance on sociocultural foundations before the class
597 commenced. However, Michael was affected by hearing his classmates' perspectives throughout
598 class dialogue. He learned content that shocked him and made him question whether he could
599 make any social change. Furthermore, in his early field experience, Michael focused on the
600 managerial aspects of teaching and evidenced a lack of skills when practicing teaching for
601 equity. Despite this, Michael's critical consciousness was raised, and he intervened in an
602 inequitable social context for social good. His actions and perspectives related to sociocultural
603 foundations evidenced a critical transformation. As a consequence, Michael noted a need for
604 more critically oriented classes throughout his PETE.

605 The findings in this study counter previous studies that have taken place in PETE, stating
606 a critical approach has been mostly ineffective in raising consciousness toward critical action
607 (e.g., Curtner-Smith & Sofu, 2004; Gerdin et al., 2018; Hickey, 2001; Philpot, 2015; Philpot &
608 Smith, 2018). A reason for this, we believe, was Florence's pedagogical style. First, as the
609 educator, she used transformative educational strategies including discussion, debate, journaling,
610 storytelling, case studies, biographies, peer teaching (e.g., student facilitation), and project-based
611 learning (Ovens, 2017; Ukpokodu, 2007; Walton-Fisette et al., 2018). Additionally, Florence
612 drew upon digital media and arts-based pedagogies (e.g., gallery walks). As a result of Florence
613 sharing the classroom space, she encouraged PTs to make assessment choices and negotiate
614 deadlines. Furthermore, Florence created a culture where PTs could learn about democratic
615 practices (Freire, 2013). By providing a space for critical interrogation and constructive
616 confrontation, Florence supported PTs in their journey toward critical consciousness (hooks,

617 1994). Although both PTs mentioned they benefited from the dialogical aspect of the class, we
618 cannot attribute the students' consciousness raising to one pedagogical method. We believe that
619 an accumulation of all of them helped challenge their perspectives and practices. We also
620 acknowledge that current beliefs serve to filter what we learn from new material, and similarly to
621 Philpot and Smith (2018), that transformation could have been attributed to their life-histories
622 and past experiences.

623 A noteworthy finding was the critical consciousness journey, which was met with
624 reluctance, discomfort, and frustration by the PTs. The primary focus of their PETE program was
625 behavioral and technical, and the sociocultural class competed with this view and asked the PTs
626 to avoid standardization, competition, and normalized practices in education. It was unsurprising
627 then to find both PTs focused on the managerial aspects of teaching and unable to provide moral,
628 ethical, political, and social practical examples (Curtner-Smith, 1996). **Despite Florence not
629 being able to provide contextualization to sociocultural issues in PE, both PTs advocated for
630 more critically oriented classes so that they would be adequately prepared for social issues in
631 schools. Therefore, if these findings transfer to other PTs and other foundations courses, then we
632 tentatively suggest that PETE programs seek to adopt a sociocultural vision (Azzarito et al.,
633 2016; Cliff, 2012) and teacher educators of sociocultural courses to be educated on providing
634 subject-specific examples for PTs in all subject areas.** This would involve creating a social
635 justice culture which includes professional development for faculty (see Walton-Fisette et al.,
636 2018) and specific pedagogical methods and skills which faculty could share with their PTs. For
637 PETE faculty specifically, it might also include incorporating instructional models that focus on
638 democracy, equity, and inclusion, and the problematizing of societal norms such sport for peace
639 (Ennis, 1999) and the body curriculum (Azzarito et al., 2016). Moreover, PETE faculty could

640 stress the importance of PE teachers actively exposing their students to and explaining, debating,
641 and discussing sociocultural issues so that the social ills that plague western society are not
642 perpetuated (Walton-Fisette et al., 2018). **More generally, higher education faculty members**
643 **would benefit from interdisciplinary work and sharing of practices so that social issues were**
644 **contextualized in each area of education.**

645 Finally, although the PTs in the current study raised their critical awareness, conducting
646 similar studies with other identifying PTs, **including minority groups using intersectionality**
647 **approaches (Simon & Azzarito, 2019)** would be beneficial. Moreover, researching PTs
648 throughout their PETE program into the culminating internship to see whether PTs do, indeed,
649 integrate a critical thread into their teaching would be helpful. Furthermore, research is needed to
650 see whether or not PTs' critical perspectives are actioned over the course of their careers (Philpot
651 & Smith, 2018). Our experience in this study suggests that narrative inquiry would be helpful in
652 research tasks ahead for socially just and transformative endeavors to occur.

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