CHAPTER 12

DISCOURSE OF ADVOCACY

Student Learners' Critical Reflections on Working with Spanish-Speaking Immigrant Students

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INTRODUCTION

Experts in multicultural education, a field with wide-ranging perspectives concerning reforming the structure of schooling to accommodate the needs of all students equitably, have generally agreed that providing services through college-community partnerships helps to address immigrants' social needs and language barriers (Koulish, 2000; Orban & Thompson, 2007; Rymes, 2002; Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2000). For example, Weah, Simmons, and Hall (2000) contend that providing service-learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students not only helps to promote diversity but also advances educational equity. They comment that “service-learning provides structured opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss their concerns, questions, and confusions regarding the challenges that relate to race culture and other differences” (p. 2). Surveying young Hispanic English language learners' experiences with service-learning, Grassi, Hanley, and Liston (2004) show that service-learning programs greatly improved student academic achievement, attitude toward learning, and self-confidence.
Moreover, providing service to immigrants is a practice of cross-cultural communication in which teachers must learn to respect the home cultures of their students (Bollin, 2007; Hagan, 2004; Koulil, 2000). Boyle-Baise (2002) emphasizes the need for the teacher training process to be imbued with such insights, especially given the overwhelmingly White, middle-class demographic makeup of current pre-service teaching cohorts. She comments, "Community-based learning can afford teachers, from majority and minority groups, opportunities to compare their cultural standards and worldviews with those of groups other than their own. Direct cross-cultural experience can help preservice teachers rethink narrow criteria for "normal" which cause cultural misunderstandings" (p. 8). In other words, it is only through dialogue and respect that the essence of multicultural education can be practiced. As a White, middle-class American reflecting on her tutoring experience with a Korean woman in a service-learning project, Hagan (2004) suggests that any cross-cultural communication be critically examined for the distinction between integration and assimilation in order to make the negotiation more successful. Both sides are bound by their cultural assumptions and need to learn to listen and to talk to one another.

One school of critical multicultural education has focused on service-learning's potential as a means for doing social justice work, grassroots efforts to provide equitable access to services for the groups that have traditionally been oppressed in the U.S. (Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Claus & Ogden, 1999; Martin & Wheeler, 2000; Prentice, 2007). Cipolle (2004), for example, argues that service-learning can be a means of countering the hegemonic structure that privileges the contributions and accomplishments of White, English-speaking students over those of students of color who speak English as a second language, not only by reexamining their prior assumptions but also by offering them an eye-opening experience of other realities. The social justice movement in education has thus been aligned with the goals of multicultural education, which attempts to situate learning in a sociocultural and sociopolitical context (Boyle-Baise, 2002; Butin, 2005; O’Grady, 2000; Wade, Boyle-Baise, & O'Grady, 2001). Indeed, O’Grady (2000) suggests that doing social justice work is an act of implementing multicultural education. He further argues that ideology can be changed through service-learning in a multicultural context: "[M]ulticultural education can provide a vehicle to connect service-learning to an explicitly political stance regarding social justice. It can provide the theory and application of anti-racist, anti-oppression ideology and thus expand the practice of service-learning beyond 'doing good'" (pp. 15-16).

However, the promise of service-learning may be overemphasized, as scholars all too often fail to report any challenges throughout service-learning programs or to comment on their critical reflections on such experiences. This is a significant flaw, as the essence of service-learning for preparing future educators must address the structured inequity that impacts people of color. A key part of this effort requires students to reflect critically on their stereotypes and biases in order to ensure service-learning programs that are based on mutual respect and the desire for social change.

Accordingly, the research project upon which this chapter is based rests on the foundational principles of critical theory, a tradition that has provided a guide to action for educators concerned about equity issues in educational policy and practice. In particular, our approach toward the politics of language in the U.S. is informed by Michel Foucault's (1978) insights regarding the use of language as a means of establishing cultural power. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1986, 2000) delineation of the concept of capital offers our project a means of understanding the multiplicity of resources that inform the complex dynamics of service-learning projects. Finally, we are committed to Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire's (1970) guidance toward "praxis" of research and social action. This tradition of rigorous investigation and critique of existing educational practices and commitment to progressive change toward equity for all students has been the catalyst and a consistent guide for our investigation.

**THE CHANGING FACE OF AMERICA**

Immigrant populations have significantly changed the face of America in the past decade, simultaneously enriching the nation's social fabric and challenging its public institutions. Public schools have been particularly affected by the growing diversity in its classrooms; according to the U.S. Department of Education (2005), more than 40% of public school students came from racial or ethnic minority groups in 2003. Hispanic students have become the largest population among these ethnic minority groups; the nationwide Hispanic student enrollment in public schools has outnumbered that of African-American groups since 2002. Diversity is thus a reality in public schools across the country, and yet the educational leadership has, to date, failed to address adequately the needs of all students (Grant & Sleeper, 2010).

Florida has a specific imperative in this regard, given the large number of native Spanish-speaking students enrolled in public schools, especially in the southern portion of the state. The Florida Department of Education (2007) reports that the upward trend in the population of native Spanish-speaking students in Florida public schools has continued in recent years. Research suggests that Spanish-speaking immigrant families suffer from a great number of economic and linguistic obstacles. Rymes (2002) has commented, "People in the United States who do not speak English are inevitably more vulnerable and more subject to forces they cannot control."
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The benefits of service-learning in higher education are assumed to offer a bridge between colleges and communities as a means for promoting social change (Jacoby & Associates, 1996). However, Jones, Gilbride-Brown, and Gasior (2005) suggest a need to examine student resistance in participating in service-learning projects. They argue that "scant attention is paid to the 'underside' of service-learning" (p. 4):

By "underside," we mean the complexities that emerge when undergraduate students engage with ill-structured, complex social issues present in the community service settings typically associated with service-learning courses. In such settings, previously held assumptions, stereotypes, and privileges are uncovered. When the "underside" is exposed, student resistance often ensues as the service-learning experience makes claims on students for which they are not prepared to process. (p. 4)

However, we believe that student resistance may be both explicit and implicit. An explicit resistance suggests that students refuse to participate, whereas an implicit resistance suggests that their "assumptions, stereotypes, and privileges" remain hidden. In other words, a simple willingness to participate in a service-learning program does not guarantee that students will promote social justice for the disenfranchised group. This suggests that there is a need to examine closely the critical reflections of student learners.

In addition, student learners' reflections reveal future actions and their level of reflections become crucial (Freire, 1970). How do middle-class student learners learn to understand the complex home literacy environments of immigrant children in this service-learning project? Although we focus on student learners' reflections on working with immigrant students, their reflections are not limited to children but also include their interactions with parents. Their reflections are essential for researchers understanding what forms of action they have taken to help immigrant children with the ultimate goal of challenging the current power structure. In addition, the service-learning experiences will reshape these student learners' roles as future educators. Without carefully examining the reflections of student learners about the ways in which they can challenge the power structure, it is likely that service-learning will result in forms of cultural reproduction that reinforce the coercive power structure rather than foster emancipation. Thus, it is necessary to examine the reflections that learners have generated, which we think can yield for researchers opportunities for examining pedagogical implications and potential for reproducing another form of stereotype. Analyzing discourses of learners invites readers to see what they have recognized, struggled with, ignored, or resisted knowing. Student learners should move from the deficit discourse to a more complex...
understanding of how the lack of cultural, social, and economic capital of immigrants may create obstacles when providing services to them.

The research questions that drive this project are:

- What forms of discourse do student learners generate as they reflect on their service-learning experiences?
- How do student learners' reflections indicate awareness of social and cultural problems that immigrants and their children face?
- How critical are student learners' discourses toward the advocacy for immigrants?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Critical Theory

Our investigation of service-learners' ideologies as seen through their discourses is primarily informed by the paradigm of critical theory that developed from the Western Marxist philosophical tradition in the second half of the 20th century. Drawing upon disparate roots from Antonio Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, and Michel Foucault, critical theory employs an interpretative framework that analyzes mass cultural relations (e.g., gender, race, social class) through the prism of power dynamics within an industrial and/or post-industrial society. In the following discussion, we employ Foucault's (1978) seminal concept of "Power/Knowledge" in order to critically examine the ways in which the knowledge generated by the service learner is affected by his or her perceptions of power. Moreover, the analytical tools—in particular, Gee's (2005) Discourse analysis—used to interpret the data collected in the investigation spring from the framework for examining the role of language in relation to social structure and power relations.

Many educators in the past 30 years have found this body of critical literature an invaluable tool in terms of analyzing the power structures that often form the basis of the public education system and may or may not be replicated and reproduced within schools. While critical theory and critical pedagogy share an anti-hegemonic project, there are some important distinctions that must be drawn. McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) note that critical pedagogies, unlike many critical theorists, are not satisfied with theory as a purely academic exercise and encourage a practical application (praxis) in the field. McLaren (2007) comments that "critical pedagogy examines schools both in their historic context and as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterizes the class-driven dominant society" (p. 185). This large volume of criticism within education, in Kanpol's (1999) words, "departs from the notion that schools must be traditional...

sites only and, rather, shows how teachers' roles may vary and may serve either to reinforce race, class, and gender functions or produce alternative meanings for teachers' lives" (p. 27). This literature recommends a thoroughgoing critique of schooling practices as a means of reimagining alternatives in the future. This project is particularly undergirded by Foucault's (1978) critical conception of "power/knowledge." For Foucault, the power of ruling elites is largely based on claiming control of a knowledge base (e.g., an official state language) and exploiting this hegemonic knowledge as a means of curbing dissent.

Freire’s Praxis

This study adopts the critical insights of Paulo Freire, especially when it comes to the concept of praxis, or turning theoretical understandings into social action. As a critical theorist, Freire (1970) assumes that the world is unequal and controlled by a ruling White, colonial elite that exercises its power over working and poor populations. These marginalized and dispossessed groups are those who share the contradictory interest or do not possess the same social and cultural capital as the ruling group. The world of immigrants in the U.S. presents a particular kind of oppression, as it is bound up with notions of legality and illegality. Freire (1970) argues, "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" (pp. 31–32). Identifying accurately the cause of a problem is a demonstration of critical reflection, which, through a new consciousness (or conscientization), leads oppressed groups such as immigrant communities to bring about social justice through action (or praxis). McLaren (2007) describes this concept: "It is not an attachment or emotion isolated from the everyday world; rather, it viscerally emerges from an act of daring, of courage, of critical reflection" (p. 305). In this study, service-learning involves praxis in which student learners combine their critical reflections and actions in an authentic situation. They must learn to identify the cause of a problem in order to help transform the world through their service with immigrant families.

Capital Theory

Bourdieu's (1986) capital theory, drawing upon the interpretive framework of Marxism, provides the final theoretical anchor for unmasking the power structure through the discourse of service-learners. Capital is defined as a resource—for example, the cultural traditions, knowledge, and
skills that one inherits and passes on from one generation to another, both tangibly and intangibly. Bourdieu perceives capital as an indicator of power, and the accumulation of forms of capital influences a student’s academic success. In ontological terms, the reality of service-learning is unequally formed by three forms of capital: social, cultural, and economic capital. Social capital refers to resources or social networks, often intangible, through which one benefits from an exchange with others. The purpose of providing service-learning is reciprocal: For example, student learners learn Spanish and strengthen their professional knowledge while immigrant children learn to read.

Cultural capital includes resources that one has inherited from his or her family. However, as different forms of cultural capital exist within one social world, some forms of cultural capital may not be recognized as valuable by the society. Student learners’ reflections on their service-learning, for instance, are too often a representation of their middle-class values and beliefs about educational success, which working-class immigrant families may not reflect in the same way. As such, it becomes necessary for service-learners to recognize the immigrant family’s cultural capital as a demonstration of empowering the disadvantaged group.

Finally, economic capital refers to financial advantages derived from one’s status within a capitalist society. According to Bourdieu, capitals are convertible and are not distinctive from one to another. Thus, the term “symbolic capital” encompasses these forms of capital. What is under investigation in this study is, then, the kind of capital that each service learner, as a social actor, enacts for immigrant children. It provides us with a means to understand how a service learner “reads the world” of immigrant students.

Language, Discourse, and Power

Researchers argue that the three constructs—language, discourse, and power—are intertwined (Fairclough, 1989, 2003; Gee, 2005; van Dijk, 2003). The underlying basic assumptions about language are twofold: (1) Language is intended to be used in a social context and (2) language is a means to reveal the speaker’s ideological assumptions. Language is perceived as a semiotic system into which one’s identity is embedded, and it is also a critical medium that captures the ways in which the ideology of the speaker is practiced in terms of power relationships (Bourdieu, 2000; Woolard, 1998). Woolard (1998) argues that language, both spoken and written, is never neutral but rather is a sociopolitical construct that relates heavily to power and ideology.

The work of post-structuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan has, in the estimation of Linn (1996), added significantly to the post-positivist epistemology. In the post-structuralist schema, language is an entirely temporal process in which meaning is not static but changes from the beginning to end of each statement. Derrida (1978) consequently argued that each individual is free to interpret each text’s meaning—to “play” with the text, so to speak—in an effort to divine concealed meanings. These insights encourage researchers to explore everyday discourse for the critical meanings embedded within.

Drawing from the concept that language is politics, discourse is a representation of how language is related to the context in which it is used (Fairclough, 1989, 2003; Gee, 2005). Fairclough (2005) contends that discourse not only is determined by social structure but also has a potential to change the predetermined social structure. In this study, examining discourses of student learners is crucial in that it shows the process of transformation. Their critical discourse is indicative of their praxis, which suggests that an individual could counter the coercive power dynamics and create social change.

Discourse analysis is a tool of inquiry that includes deconstructing the elements of language that mediates the power structure. In this study, despite the racial differences, these learners are privileged to go to college and represent the ideology of the middle class. Novice teachers are often encouraged to acquiece to the administrative power structure within school systems. Therefore, student learners’ reflections must be examined by paying close attention to their discourses, whether or not their previous assumptions have been challenged and their dominant ideology has been transformed. In this study, for example, student learners are members of an ESOL methods course that aims to advocate for immigrant children. However, such an identity often conflicts with the student learners’ middle-class identities. Thus, student learners’ discourses are not merely talks of their perceptions; rather, issues that they raise need to be linked to the social construction of their realities. We, as researchers, will only understand the transformation that leads to the possibilities of social justice for these immigrant children by examining the discourses of student learners.

Methods

As the purpose of our study is to see how student learners critically reflect on the social realities of immigrants, we are interested in reading the levels of their reflections. As such, we purposively recruited student learners who had participated in a service-learning program that provides knowledge and training to empower immigrant students. The data that we examined were based on interviews during which student learners’ ideologies were revealed through their discourses of advocacy.
Research Setting: The ESOL Methods Course

This study is based on a service-learning project in an ESOL methods course offered by the College of Education at a university in the southeastern U.S. The course aimed to advocate for multicultural education for language minorities (Nieto, 2004). Issues of immigration, racism, sexism, and classism formed the core of the reading materials and classroom discussions that spurred students' critical consciousness by situating educational challenges that immigrant students encounter within the wider society's macro structure. Students in this ESOL methods course had the opportunity to participate in a service-learning project that was specifically designed to prepare pre-service teachers to develop cross-cultural awareness in a culturally diverse setting. The general objective was to have learners provide bilingual books (English and Spanish) and to engage immigrant children in reading. More than a dozen students volunteered to participate in the service-learning project to meet a course requirement by going to an immigrant family's home to read with children on a weekly basis. Those who chose to do this project were recruited as potential study participants. At the end of the course, they submitted a reflection paper to the instructor. Participating in the service-learning project was voluntary, as there was an alternative assessment to fulfill the course requirements.

Study Participants

The study interviewed 4 students who took an ESOL methods course that was specifically designed to prepare future educators to work with immigrant populations. We used purposeful sampling to recruit our potential participants. Patton (1990) describes the basis of the method as "focusing" on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (p. 230). The criteria we listed for this study were:

1. Subjects are participating in the ESOL methods course, receiving training in multicultural education.
2. Subjects include both female and male participants.
3. Subjects work as student learners visiting immigrants on a weekly basis.
4. Subjects have prior service-learning experience working as student learners, which will help them acclimate to the situation more easily.

We originally recruited five participants; however, we decided not to include data from one of the participants because we found it more deliberate and politically correct and less authentic, as she had prepared notes for her interview. Such an act suggests a covert way to resist collaborating with the researcher (Kvale, 2006). Kvale (2006) has called for attention to the occurrence of participant resistance to the researcher in the interview process as a form of power exertion. We also found that it generated less useful data for this study. As a result, we decided to include only data generated from interviews with Celia, Sandy, Mark, and Kim (all of these names are pseudonyms).

- Celia, a 32-year-old female doctoral student majoring in Special Education, volunteered to participate in this service-learning project so that she could work on the reading skills of English-language learners. Coming from Guatemala, she spoke Spanish, her mother tongue, with the Mexican family. As a Ph. D. student, she was in a privileged position in contrast to the Mexican family with which she worked. She began mentoring the Mexican family as a student volunteer before she took the ESOL methods course.
- Sandy, a 27-year-old White female American master's student, had been an elementary teacher in California for three and a half years, where she had had a great deal of experience interacting with immigrant children. Describing the fact that she had taken four Spanish courses, she considered her skills in the language too "poor" to communicate fluently with parents.
- Mark was a 21-year-old White male American undergraduate student majoring in Spanish. He had shown a great interest in learning Spanish and had taken four years of Spanish language courses in high school. Mark was more experienced than other student learners, as he had been working with Spanish-speaking immigrant children in their home for three years. While taking this ESOL methods course, Mark was the supervisor in charge of the migrant program. The mission of the migrant program was to empower Spanish-speaking immigrant children by bringing books for them to read. Given the opportunities to work with Hispanic immigrants and his expertise with the Spanish language, he was not completely a cultural outsider as compared with other White, middle-class learners. We included Mark in particular since he was the only male student volunteer participating in the service-learning project.
- Kim, a 45-year-old Korean woman, was enrolled in the master's level ESOL/bilingual program as an international graduate student. She was also a mother of two teenage children. She perceived the service-learning experience as an opportunity for teaching English, as she barely spoke Spanish. Before participating in this project, she had had experience working with immigrant children from Vietnam and Korea. However, she was an outsider to Mexican culture, as she had had no prior experiences working with Mexican Americans or other Spanish speakers.

Table 12.1 indicates the background information of each of our participants. We have listed age, gender, ethnicity, native language, and self-reported Spanish proficiency for each.
This service-learning program was based on a team work project in which a Spanish speaker was paired with a non-Spanish speaker. Before going to the family’s home, the instructor, who coordinates the program, provided training for the student learners. Celia and Sandy worked together with a family in which a single mother was raising a five-year-old boy on her own. Kim and Mark worked together with another Mexican family with two boys, one five years old and one six years old.

Qualitative Research Study

The research interests identified above call for a project design based firmly on the foundational principles of qualitative research. As Gergen and Gergen (2000) state, “The domain of qualitative inquiry offers some of the richest and most rewarding explorations available in social science” (p. 1025). Teaching and learning practices that encourage both teachers and students to reflect critically on lessons require a research agenda that fits the goals of qualitative inquiry (Crotty, 1998). Whereas quantitative studies rest upon positivistic assumptions of objectivity that decontextualize the teaching and learning process, qualitative research recontextualizes research in education, acknowledging the complex web of reality existing in every school. In the vast arena of social research, qualitative investigators fundamentally ask questions about the meaning of the activity that is taking place in some field of social interaction. Glennie (1998) describes this process as “a careful and diligent search” (p. 3). In the educational context, qualitative researchers often view the classroom and its participants as texts to be read (i.e., interpreted) based on a number of previously agreed-upon criteria. This framework encourages researchers and participants to reflect upon their roles within the educational community.

Data Collection/Interviews

Kvale (1996) states that “knowledge evolves through dialogue” (p. 125), arguing that knowledge occurs through the form of interview, a dialogue between the researcher and the participant. Assuming that the participants had valuable knowledge, we employed in-depth interviews as our major data source to unfold their service-learning experiences. Moreover, Maykut and Morchouse (1994) describe the interview as “a conversation with a purpose” (p. 79). Our purpose was to examine the reflections student learners generated by relating to the power structure. Thus, we designed a semi-structured interview guide relating to our critical theory framework, with keywords such as challenge and change, in order to solicit participants’ service-learning experiences. With the approval from our university’s Institutional Review Board, we distributed the informed consent form to those who had volunteered via email. Once we had conducted interviews with 5 participants, theoretical saturation began to occur, suggesting that our data would not produce any new concepts, but rather would merely reinforce the literature. The interview data were collected from the middle of March to early April, 2007, after the course was more than two-thirds toward the end of the term. All interviews were transcribed by the researchers.

Discourse Analysis

We employed Gee’s (2005) D/discourse analysis to investigate data and to help deconstruct the linguistic and cultural meanings of each participant’s discourse regarding his or her service-learning experience. According to Gee, discourse, with a lower-case “d,” is the language in use, such as word choices and tone of speech, which simply focuses on the linguistic features of daily conversation. On the other hand, Discourse, with an upper-case “D,” refers to the non-linguistic features of the talk, including “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (p. 21). Gee explains that in investigating the D/discourse,

The distinction between “Discourse” with a “big D” and discourse with a “little d”... is meant to do this we, as “applied linguists” or “sociolinguists,” are interested in how language is used “on site” to enact activities and identities. Such language-in-use I will call “discourse” with a “little d.” But activities and identities are rarely ever acted through language alone. (p. 7)
Gee's (2005) discourse analysis approach involves several steps. First of all, the researcher creates lines and stanzas, the basic meaning units, and identifies the most significant sections that address the research questions. Gee describes this process as creating motifs or themes. Then, in order to address the “little d” discourse, the researcher is expected to pay close attention to the linguistic elements, particularly words and phrases being used, and to determine their situated meanings. Gee suggests seven building tasks by which researchers can think through language in order to examine the “big d” Discourse: significance, activities, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge (pp. 11–15). The quality of discourse analysis can be judged by how linguistic details are used to support the motifs that a researcher has created. However, in order to enhance the overall validity of doing discourse analysis, Gee argues that the researcher should look beyond the description and seek to interpret “how and why language works the way it does when it is put into action” (p. 8). Moreover, the researcher must seek an understanding of how the language reflects the social issues or problems; in our case, for example, the difficulties faced by immigrant children.

Thus, given the linguistic elements one produces, the essence of doing D/discourse allows researchers to capture the values and beliefs a person has never explicitly articulated. Such implicit messages in a participant's discourse are influenced by the hybrid communities in which she or he is embeded. By analyzing the linguistic features, or discourse, of a person, his/her Discourse, or view of the world, can be seen as socially and culturally constructed. For example, in describing her views of the immigrant parent, Sandy, one of the participants, remarked, “because I can very easily go into the home with my training and say, ‘Well, this mother has been doing this wrong, and this wrong, and there aren’t books here…’.” In this sentence, the word “books” has a situated meaning referring to educational resources for a child. The adversial phrase “very easily” is used to stress how the majority of professional educators (note that she states, “my training”) would judge the parent a bad mother, a judgment with which the mother would doubtless disagree. These linguistic elements are powerful in presenting the implicit thinking that Sandy holds; that is, her Discourse suggests that she purposely separates herself from other educators who tend to blame the mother regarding educating her children.

To investigate the socially situated identities of working-class teenagers, Gee (2005) uses an example of deconstructing their identities through the I-statement. He categorizes five kinds of I-statements: (a) cognitive statements (e.g., I think; I know; I guess); b) affective statements (e.g., I want; I like); c) state and action statements (e.g., I am mature; I hit him back); d) ability and constraint statements (e.g., I can't say anything to them); and e) achievement statements (e.g., I challenge myself)” (pp. 141–142).

In a similar fashion, we applied such categories to deconstruct the socially situated identities of student learners. In this study, we included five similar categories: a) assumptions that show what student learners value or not (e.g., I think, I don't think, I know); b) affective statements that describe their feelings (e.g., I like, I love, I enjoy, I was shocked, I am frustrated, etc.); c) action statements that illuminate the things that they have been doing (e.g., I bring, I read, I teach, etc.); d) ability and constraint statements that indicate a student volunteer's capability in helping the family (e.g., I try, I can, I could, etc.); and e) achievement statements that show what they have learned from this experience (e.g., I learn, I can see, I found).

This project's data analysis procedure included five steps. First, we read carefully through all the transcripts. Next, we developed stanzas, a set of minimal meaning units, with a theme. Third, we created motifs based on the stanzas we created; these motifs became the subheadings of our discussion. Fourth, we looked through the linguistic structures, such as content words and function words. We found that the participants used many I-statements and third-person statements, which followed Gee's aforementioned five categories. We studied the I-statements as our primary data; these illustrated the situated identities of each participant. On the other hand, studying the third-person statements was an invaluable tool that allowed us to capture each participant’s situated identity in relation to others. We used it as our secondary data in order to study the relational identities of each student volunteer and to see how these affected their praxis.

Finally, we shifted to Gee's (2005) Discourse, the macro analysis, and chose two out of the seven building tasks: identity and activities. Our choices were based on our research questions—that is, the task of identity helped us to capture the role that each student volunteer played, and the task of activities helped us to identify the actions of the learners. These two categories were the most significant for us in considering the sociopolitical contexts of the participants' visits to the families. To provide an in-depth analysis, Gee’s 26 questions were reduced to the questions that related to these two building tasks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, we present examples of critical and uncritical reflections of four student learners on their service-learning experiences. Although four of them attended the same course at the same period, their Discourses—the sociopolitical talk—suggest that some reflections were more critical than others in ways that illuminated the transformation of the learners.
Critical Reflection

Critical reflection indicates an awareness of the ways in which participants take issues of power into consideration. A critical student volunteer, for example, considers how immigrants’ social realities constrain their life experiences and associates those life experiences with the structural inequities of society (Weah et al., 2000). He or she is highly committed to empowering the child in a way that best provides assistance to the family. At the same time, he or she is skeptical of the role of the school because of its part in social reproduction. In this session, two learners see how the family is treated unequally. Through their discourses, Celia and Sandy build empathy toward the single-parent family.

Celia

Celia, a 32-year-old graduate student, volunteered to tutor a child in a single-parent family. At the time that the first author approached her for an interview, she had been tutoring the family for more than one semester. Celia’s discourse presents patterns of critical reflection, three examples of which we will present here. The first excerpt describes her perceptions of advocacy with her concrete actions.

Stanza: Being an Advocate

339. If you wanna volunteer
340. you need to know that you are gonna be an advocate for the child.
341. You have to be.
342. Sometimes you see they have to go to the doctor
343. and they don’t have the money to go.
344. Maybe you can call somebody to try to help them.
345. Like one time I went to the school.
346. I have accompanied with the mom
347. because they are having a parent workshop for reading.
348. They are gonna teach the parents
349. how to help the children at home to improve their reading skill.
350. So I told her
351. that I would go with her
352. and when we got there,
353. everything was in English,
354. of course,
355. and she won’t be able to understand anything,
356. so I tried to translate for her. (0.3)
357. So things like that, you know.
358. You cannot just go and read
359. and that’s it.

Celia’s Discourse indicates that she acknowledged how the family she visited lacked several forms of capital. For example, she refers to “money,” “English,” and she uses the negative “not” (343, 358). To her, what makes a good student volunteer is that he or she seeks to provide forms of capital that the family has never had, as she uses the modal verbs “need to” and “have to.” The word “advocate” seems to be too abstract for many people, but Celia has moved to configure what she means by “advocate.” From line 342 to line 346, the content words indicate the actions that she took in order to configure to the meaning of “advocate”: “call somebody to try to help them,” “went to school,” and “accompanied the mom” at a parent meeting. To Celia, immigrants need more assistance in their daily lives than merely reading assistance.

Another critical point is that Celia’s discourse indicates her doubts about the role of schooling, which tends to reinforce the cultural reproduction of imbalances within society. On the surface, the schools appear to have good intentions in that they provide literacy workshops for parents to learn to read with their children. However, Celia notes that these meetings are conducted in English, indicating that the non-English-speaking parent may not be the school’s priority. The phrase “everything was in English” may indicate that she is struck by seeing that the school was not considerate in providing any translation for parents. The hidden agenda she discovered may be that any parent who has difficulties understanding English would be discouraged from attending the parent workshop. Throughout her Discourse, Celia did not blame the family for not being able to speak English but was skeptical of the school’s intention in not providing translation for families who speak languages other than English at home.

The following excerpt indicates that Celia attempted to invite the parent to develop reading habits for her children. However, she unexpectedly learned how a parent’s critical economic situation could eliminate her child’s reading opportunities. As we highlighted, the negative word “not” and the modal verb “has to” are consistently employed in Celia’s discourse, which provokes our interest to see how she addressed the family’s constraints.

Stanza: Knowing the Economic Condition Affects the Education

122. One book.
123. It has only five pages
124. and each page has only one sentence.
125. So I am sure she can do it.
126. It was in Spanish.
127. Very basic vocabulary.
128. And when I came back,
129. she didn’t do it.
130. And you need to understand why... you know... what’s going on.
As an example of function words, the present continuous tense phrases "be V-ing" were used to indicate the boy's ongoing progress. The words "before" (162) and "now" (164) are additional evidence of the changes in the child's personality. Celia's comparison appears to emphasize that she has transformed the child, as indicated in the school notes he received. She is pleased to see that her tutoring has not only improved the academic performance of the child but has also made the child more confident.

On the other hand, Celia is also honest about the difficulties she encountered and that challenged her professionalism: "You think you know everything and then you are there and things come up and you are like, 'What do I do with this?'" Situating herself in an authentic context seems to optimize learning opportunities for her more than if she were merely in a classroom setting. She has a greater capability to "learn" a number of things, including "the culture of the immigrant families," the manner in which they have been treated by the school system as opposed to the manner in which they should be treated, and "her limitations as a tutor or as a teacher."

To summarize, throughout Celia's Discourse, service-learning experiences sparked her critical consciousness about how power relations played out in this family. She was eager to transform the family with her commitment. Moreover, stepping out of the classroom allowed her to see her limitations as a future educator.

Sandy

As a White woman, Sandy is critical in her reflections as she acknowledges that the lack of cultural capital creates educational challenges for the immigrant family. In a similar manner to Celia's, Sandy's Discourse demonstrated her process of critical reflection. However, in a fashion different from that of Celia, who acknowledged the lack of capital, Sandy's Discourse invites us to see that she does not view the "deficit" of the status of the single mother. We present two excerpts from her testimony to indicate that she has transformed herself by seeing the dedication that the mother has shown to her child. The first excerpt, which we named "In Their Shoes," indicates how she tried to contrast her critical consciousness with the dominant discourses of "blame-the-victim."

Stanza: "In Their Shoes"

215. I think it takes a little open mind and some compassion
216. because I can very easily go into the home with my training
217. and say, "Well, this mother has been doing this wrong, and this
218. wrong, and there aren't books here, and...
219. but you have to be willing to put yourself into their shoes and say,
220. "Goodness,
221. 219. she is doing the best she can."
Spanish translation. She acknowledges how difficult the situation is for a parent who cannot read it. Her reflection shows that she recognizes how the oppressive institution (the school) operates against the oppressed (the immigrant family) through the means of English language. She identifies the cause of this problem: It may not be because the parent is incapable of reading communication in English but rather because the school failed to provide a translated version to the family.

Uncritical Reflection

Not all of the learners were as critical as Celia and Sandy, who affirmed their commitment to the families with which they worked and saw transformative change they made for the family structure. Some learners appeared to be more resistant to transforming the structure than did others, as their Discourses suggested a grand narrative ideology. Mark and Kim were two learners who appeared to struggle to build on their critical consciousness by resisting the dominant ideology. In a similar manner to that of Celia and Sandy, they both were struck by seeing the challenges of immigrant families who lack capital in both English proficiency and educational resources. However, their reflections seem to stay at the level of seeing the deficit, rather than moving toward a transformative form of teaching. We start by describing Mark’s discourse, which demonstrates that he may be resistant to challenging the system.

Mark

As Mark worked as the supervisor in charge of the migrant program, we see that his role may be somewhat powerful. However, his Discourse suggests that he may not see his role as significant. The following excerpt represents Mark’s reflections as he viewed his impact on the future academic success of the elementary student with whom he worked. He posed several questions to himself as he questioned “whether [his] assistance would be enough... to create a successful outcome.”

Stanza: Low Expectation on the Child’s Academic Success

271. whether my assistance would be enough to... to... to provide... would be enough to create a successful outcome,
272. whether being graduated from high school
273. and be able to go to vocational school
274. or be able to get an education
275. or to empower each individual rather than him be given up in education.
276. I guess... I guess that is the most important thing,
277. but now,
278. do I expect him to become... to go to college [laughs] and have that kind of
educational success?
279. I wouldn't expect that.

[...]
298. Yeah... it makes service easy in that...
299. in that the only thing I'm offering...
300. I am sacrificing two hours of my time on a weekly basis.
301. As far as I am concerned, it is the very minimal sacrifice to make.

This stanza represents Mark's reflections through a set of questions he
used (“whether... or...”). In particular, he avoids offering finite answers
to the questions he poses. Such repetitious questioning indicates his constant
concerns about his ability to transform the family. While the meaning
of “educational success” differs from one to another, Mark situates “educa-
tional success” (278) to mean that the child he tutored could go to college.
The interrogative form (278) suggests his self-reflection on the child's future
academic success by posing a question to himself and giving a negative
answer immediately (279). This suggests that the answer to this question is
very certain to him and that he seems to assume that such a young child is
more likely to “be given up in education” (275).

As Foucault (1978) reminds us, “Where there is power, there is resist-
ance” (p. 95). Mark's resistance seems to suggest that he has seen his role
as too minimal to transform the coercive power. Student resistance to
transforming immigrant students in their service-learning becomes an
oppressive force. Moreover, Sperling (2007) argues that the resistance of
White male learners can “prevent multicultural service-learning from being
an ethically defensible and transformative pedagogy” (p. 309). Although
Mark does not claim this, his Discourse suggests that his grand narrative
remained unchallenged, as he believes that a child coming from a minority
group with low socioeconomic status has fewer opportunities to go to
college. Mark's service to this immigrant family may not be an act of liberating
the child, even though he “is sacrificing two hours of his time on a weekly
basis.” He appears to be resistant to transforming the child, as is shown
in his set of questions, indicating that he is not seeing his role as crucial
enough to counter the hegemonic social structure.

Mark's Discourse remained at the grand narrative level as he generated
his reflection by reporting the lack of capital, by which he meant “academic
materials.”

Stanza: No Access to Print Materials
120. because these people's homes are very basic.
121. Oftentimes just the trailers in a... land,
prevent a child from his/her academic success, and the solution for him is therefore to “bring them books.”

While his Discourse suggests that he may be resistant to reflect critically on his experiences, Mark indicated in subtle ways that he had been transformed by his participation in the service-learning program: “[It] really kind of makes you understand what the situation is rather than how it is portrayed by the media.” This comment offered a glimpse of the value of participation in service-learning programs in terms of beginning to create critical consciousness within the minds of a resistant participant.

As a result, Mark’s competing discourses of describing the immigrant family implies that he develops his critical consciousness by identifying how media creates stereotypes. At the same time, his grand narrative remains as he fails to see any possibility for a kindergarten child to go to college, as a way of interpreting academic success.

**Kim**

As she was in her forties and raising two children, Kim decided to bring the immigrant children some snacks every time she visited. However, she felt that her kindness was not appreciated by them. The following stanza indicates a cultural conflict in Kim’s praxis process, as she reveals that the children with whom she worked asked her for money.

**Stanza: Asking for Money**

215. This family [refers to the Mexican family she is currently visiting].
216. *I think they think we are rich* [laughs],
217. [they think] we can give them,
218. provide them some *money*.
219. Because we prepared for some *brownies* for them, brownies,
220. because they felt very sad
221. so we wanted to bring some *food* for them.
222. They ate very very well [a sound of grabbing the food, implying they liked it very much].
223. They feel [felt] very.
224. And after that, finishing our work,
225. one of the... two students,
226. two children asked us for money.
227. “Do you have money? Do you have dollars?” [laughs]
228. “Tomorrow is my birthday, would you give me a *birthday cake*, a *birthday present*?” [One of the children] asks [asked] something
   from us,
229. so we are [were] so surprised, so surprised,
230. we don’t [didn’t] know how to say.
231. “OK, OK.”

232. But yesterday we just met them, one of the students asked one of my group members again,
233. “Did you bring my birthday present?” [laughs]
234. So he said, “I am sorry. No.”
235. “So we decide[d] not to bring anything for them,
236. because if I bring something very often
237. then it’s gonna be too much expectation for them,
238. so we didn’t [laughs]. . . .
239. We decided not to bring anything . . . not very often.
240. Next week I am going to bring some *food*.
241. Yesterday, I bring [brought] only one cheese [laughs], so we share.
242. Each student can [could] have only one small *cheese*.
243. so I wanted to teach them with a small *cheese*... little *things*.
244. Yeah, because last time we brought too many ... too much *food*
   [smiles] for them,
245. they asked for other things for themselves.
246. It was surprising*. Yeah.

In this stanza, the content words “brownies” (219) and “cheese” (241, 242) seem to function as symbols for Kim to foster rapport or reciprocal relationships with the family’s children. For these immigrant children, both “brownies” and “cheese” may represent symbols of capital that they do not own, as they may be symbols of American culture. Her use of “because” (220) suggests her motivation in providing them with food, without which she thought they were “sad,” and she thought that preparing this food could make them less sad. However, the other “because” (119, 224) shows that she believes that the result of preparing food yields a symbolic meaning of being “rich.” The adjective “surprised” suggests that she was challenged by being asked for money by the child. Kim’s Discourse indicates that the child has seen the power of money but may not respond to it appropriately in accordance with her culture. Her judgment is culturally shaped, as it is not aligned with the child’s culture. Kim was “shocked” and appeared not to talk about her concern with the child (250). She stressed the word “again” (232) in her tone, indicating that she equated requesting “a birthday present” with the act of asking for money and that both acts seemed culturally inappropriate to her. Although she describes the other student as apologizing for not bringing any presents, she was not truly sorry for not bringing presents for them since their next action was not to decrease the frequency and quantity of food brought to the family. From line 239 to 243, with the words “only” and “small,” Kim emphasized that she did not stop bringing food but limited it to a small amount. To her, food is an act of fostering relationships with the family as well as of promoting multicultural education with the children.
As this scenario illustrates, Kim considers providing food for an immigrant child as a vital action in establishing a relationship with the family. However, this relationship was disconnected when she found that they asked for more food than she was willing to offer. She appears to acknowledge that the family’s poverty is the cause of this inappropriate behavior. Her failure to continue the dialogue with the child may suggest that she is not critical enough to identify the exact problem. She seems to exemplify the challenge of this service-learning experience, as she responds to the child’s conduct of asking for money rather than understanding how exactly poverty may shape the child’s behavior.

From Bourdieu’s (1986) perspective, regardless of her awareness of the immigrant family’s cultural capital, Kim appears to be transformative as she provides various forms of cultural capital: reading to children, providing access to books, and preparing food for them. However, when it comes to money, another form of economic capital, she thinks she cannot provide it for them. Her decision not to bring as much food after the children requested money may suggest that she has become hesitant to share capital. Thus, Kim’s discourse attempts to sustain their economic capital and is a form of social reproduction of immigrant families.

Given the situation of being asked for money, how would a student volunteer respond in a manner reflecting Freire’s (1970) praxis? Apparently, this seems to be a difficult situation for any learner. For Kim, she has perceived this as a matter of their asking for more than she can offer. She kept her distance from them to avoid being asked for too much. Thinking in this way, the communication was disconnected between Kim and the child. However, Freire (1970) would argue that such situations become great opportunities for learners to engage in an ongoing critical dialogue with the child. Freire argues that we, as educators, must take into account their behavior, their view of the world, and their ethics (p. 40). Pedagogically speaking, Kim may lose a great opportunity to practice a problem-posing approach with the child regarding his behavior by asking whether it is appropriate to ask for money so that a child’s voice can be heard. Avoiding this dialogue may suggest that a volunteer forecloses an opportunity to listen to the oppressed, that is, the child, and to deny a liberating pedagogy.

However, as an alternative way to interpret her ideology, Kim also displays empathy when she is shocked by the request of money for a birthday present. While she is unable to divorce herself fully from her own cultural understandings, this exchange provokes an intriguing response from Kim, which suggests that she may eventually accomplish a sense of empathy for immigrant families through more critical engagement: “They are poor...because nobody helps their education...We are very, very helpful...for them.” It is clear from this remark that Kim’s participation in the service-learning program provoked a sense of empathy toward the community with which she worked. The cathartic experience of working with children within disenfranchised communities opened up Kim’s mind to the possibilities of transformative educational programs.

**CONCLUSIONS**

As members of the middle class, these four participants—Celia, Sandy, Kim, and Mark—generated various levels of reflection in their experiences of being student learners. The value of service-learning can be seen as each of them witnessed the social problems or difficulties that played out, both explicitly and implicitly, in the home literacy environments of these immigrant children. The explicit challenge for literacy education can be found through the deficit view of the home literacy environment, such as the lack of educational resources and parents’ limited proficiency in English, which is the purpose for their participation. The implicit challenge, however, requires student learners to focus not only on the children but also on the members of the family, particularly the parents. Celia and Sandy, for example, have initiated a relationship with the parents, appreciating what the parents have done for the children.

By contrast, the reflections created by Kim and Mark may suggest that student learners perceive themselves as charity-donors who may not be critical enough to promote social justice for these English language learners (Boyle-Baise, 2002). Nieto’s (2004) levels of what is meant by multicultural education are useful regarding this issue. Parts of Kim’s and Mark’s reflections seem to remain at a superficial level of multicultural education, as they appear to lean toward the end of tolerance. Given that the context of the family they serve is different, we do not expect Mark and Kim to establish the kind of rapport that Celia and Sandy have created with the family they serve. However, the kind of dialogue that Kim could have engaged in with immigrant children might create possibilities for educators to promote critical pedagogy. It cannot be found through lectures, but rather through everyday life conversations (Freire, 1970).

The Discourses of these four student learners suggest that their participation in service-learning projects has led them to understand the ways in which power affects these immigrant children’s educations. Their Discourses reveal the various forms of capital that they have taken for granted but that the immigrant families with whom they have worked have lacked. While all of the participants displayed elements of critical understanding, their Discourses indicate that they may be at different levels of reflection and are generating competing discourses. It is worth noting that the dominant ideology of some student learners, such as Kim and Mark, remained unchallenged and may be covered by what they have learned from the
course. As such, we wonder whether or not the service-learning opportunity reinforces their stereotypes toward immigrants. Descriptions of the family's poverty constantly appeared in the constraint statements of these student learners, implying that the challenges that the families encountered are due to each family's lack of economic, cultural, and social capital. However, the ability to identify the causes of these challenges seemed to vary from one volunteer to another.

The findings from this study of four service-learning providers have several important implications for service-learning and teacher-training programs. First, empowering immigrants through service-learning programs requires student learners to develop a deep understanding of the social realities of immigrant families that are shaped by the dominant power structure. As Celia suggests, a critical volunteer “cannot just go and read”; engaging in a critical dialogue with any members of a family is vital to the service-learning project. Critical reflection demands that teachers accurately locate the cause of a problem so that a possible solution can be determined. Critical service-learners, such as Celia and Sandy, understand the social and cultural influences that play out in an immigrant child's learning experience and avoid generating blame-the-victim discourse toward disenfranchised groups.

Second, the attributes and skills that a critical volunteer possesses emerge not from a process of pseudo-participation, but rather from one of committed involvement. To empower immigrants through service-learning, prospective teachers cannot just programmatically read to the children or merely sacrifice a few hours at the family site, as Mark had assumed. Celia further demonstrated the ability to question the importance of a purely theoretical understanding of issues when working in the field: "You think you know everything and then you are there and things come up and you are like, 'What do I do with this?'" Service-learning is therefore an act of love and compassion and not merely a demonstration of a volunteer's professionalism and work ethic.

Third, these critical understandings begin in the teacher-training process with a variety of courses that explore both the social and cultural foundations of American education as well as those that delve into critical contemporary issues. Developing empathy for immigrant families continues during volunteer and/or practicum experiences, during which pre-service teachers engage in the everyday activities of these families as active participants. Each of the four student learners offered a glimpse of the value of participation in service-learning programs in terms of beginning to create critical consciousness within the minds of even resistant participants, such as Kim and Mark.

Last, teacher education must allow pre-service teachers to transform themselves into believers in and not as resisters of social change. Uncritical reflections, as a form of student resistance found in some of the student learners' discourses, indicate that not only are their stereotypes or biases toward immigrant students perpetuated or even reinforced, but also critical dialogue with immigrant children is reduced. An ideal service-learning program should aim to eliminate stereotypes among student learners by encouraging them to learn from immigrants and to engage them in critical dialogue as a form of liberating pedagogy. A profound emotional disturbance, in which the participants understand the inequities of the present society and the advantages that they have derived from them, suggests an opportunity for transformation.

In the end, teacher-training programs that include service-learning components must prepare future educators to resist the dominant discourse by developing critical awareness of how forms of oppression shape an immigrant's social realities. While these programs must be built upon a solid foundation of theoretical understandings, there is no substitute for the practical implementation of these ideas within the field. It is clear that the realities the four participants in this study witnessed while volunteering in the service-learning program disturbed their predominantly middle-class understandings of the world. The insights gained from practical application of theory can be reinforced by critical dialogue within the course work of teacher-training programs. The curricula of these programs should be infused with opportunities for critical reflection, including journaling, blogging, and class dialogue, which might allow students to respond differently to the situation that Kim faced, in which she felt uncomfortable about a student's request for money. Transformation might have also occurred for Kim if she had had the opportunity within the methods course to share this experience and gain some suggestions from instructors and fellow students. Reflecting on her experiences with multicultural education, Sleeter (1996) comments,

Ultimately, we should be working toward the emancipation of all oppressed people, but this cannot be done without directly confronting power differences among oppressed groups. For white economically privileged women, participating in multicultural emancipatory discourse will mean learning to recognize our racial and social class privileges and work in coalitions in which we are in the minority. This means facing fears of what we might lose in order to recognize we gain in the process. (p. 215)

Only through this courageous process of critical reflection will service-learning programs and those working within them truly act as agents for real social change.
REFERENCES


