

Introduction

Pedagogy: A Powerful Tool in Teacher Training

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Equipping educators to effectively serve students from varied cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, while also tackling systemic inequities in education, is a complex and challenging task. The studies selected for this issue bring evidence that pedagogy is a mighty tool in combating systemic inequities in education. These works address racial, cultural, and linguistic biases in addressing structural and institutional barriers in education by encouraging inclusive, culturally sustaining pedagogy to achieve equity and justice in both curriculum and practice during teacher preparation training. Equity, distinct from equality, requires educators to recognize and address the systemic barriers that contribute to differential educational outcomes. Pre- and in-service teacher trainings play a critical role in developing candidates' awareness of inequities embedded in curriculum design, assessment practices, and institutional structures, along with meaningful field-based experiences within diverse K–12 settings. Teacher preparation programs must consider incorporating student activism and voice through curricula (Dr. Ahmed), promoting student and teacher voices by centering educators and students in reshaping narratives (Dr. Onyango), disrupting dominant narratives by prepar-

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ing teachers of color to advocate for themselves and their curriculum choices (Dr. Macías), and changing perceptions and fostering inclusivity through coursework (Drs. Michalski & Cook).

Dr. Ahmed's study, "Investigating changes in literacy methods courses to prepare preservice teachers to create culturally sustaining curriculum", examined how changes in literacy methods courses over three years helped preservice teachers (PSTs) design more culturally sustaining and equity-focused literacy curricula. By shifting course texts, assignments, and pedagogy, PSTs moved from creating units with superficial connections to students' lives to those deeply rooted in students' communities and promoting student activism and voice. These changes highlight the importance of explicit scaffolding in preparing PSTs to design responsive, equity-based literacy instruction.

Dr. Onyango's article "Revisiting perceptions of African images in and outside the classroom" explores how long-standing stereotypes and misrepresentations have shaped negative and simplistic views of Africa in media and education, impacting both local and global perceptions. These portrayals, rooted in colonial history, often ignore Africa's rich diversity and complexity. Dr. Onyango advocates for using diverse, accurate sources and culturally responsive teaching to challenge these stereotypes, emphasizing the role of African students and educators in reshaping narratives and promoting a fuller understanding of the continent. New media narratives are challenging these views and promote a more accurate understanding of the continent.

In "Preparing Teachers of Color for Contentious Conversations: A Mixed Reality Simulation Study in Ethnic Studies Teacher Education", Dr. Macías presents an innovative approach to sustaining diversity in education by equipping teachers of color with communication strategies to engage parents and foster long-term support for future ethnic studies educators. This study analyzed reflections from 16 secondary preservice teachers of Color who participated in a Mixed Reality Simulation (MRS) during an ethnic studies pedagogy course. The simulation involved confronting a parent accusing them of promoting a "liberal agenda" and teaching Critical Race Theory. Thematic analysis revealed that participants moved from initial nervousness to confidence, learned to respond professionally by referencing curriculum standards, and found the simulation valuable during teacher training.

Drs. Michalski and Cook conducted a pilot study, "Measuring the effects of teacher candidate preparation: A novel assessment of attitudes toward non-standard features of English", that explored teacher candidates' attitudes toward non-standard English using the Matched-Guise technique. Results showed that candidates' evaluations were in-

fluenced by linguistic features and speaker voice. After a semester-long course on linguistic diversity, teacher candidates rated non-standard English more positively, particularly in written tasks. Thus, findings suggest coursework can impact how teacher candidates perceive and engage with linguistic diversity in educational settings.

These studies urge for transformative educational practices that confront and correct biases and misrepresentations; encourage inclusive, culturally sustaining pedagogy; prepare teachers to navigate diverse and often contentious educational settings; and promote equity and justice in both curriculum and practice.