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Using modelling to make culturally responsive teaching explicit in teacher education

Preparing teachers for cultural diversity is now a usual feature in initial teacher education, yet teachers still feel insecurities in relating course contents to developing practices. This fact might be due to several issues around how preservice teachers are taught. In this article, modelling culturally responsive teaching is demonstrated as a promising strategy in shaping preservice teachers' learning experiences and in facilitating finding pedagogical responses in their future work. This article examined preservice teachers' awareness of modelling as a teaching strategy in a multicultural education course, and the ways they connected the modelled strategy to their own learning and intentions for future teaching. Two hundred and forty-six reflective journals were analysed qualitatively using constant comparison approach. Results indicate that preservice teachers recognised and reflected on modelling culturally responsive teaching. They highlighted several aspects of the culturally responsive activities, environment, and teacher educator behaviours that was modelled to them. For some preservice teachers this recognition stayed on the level of personal awareness on own learning in the course, but for others, these revelations were springboards to start forming ideas about future teaching practice. Preservice teachers articulated their intentions about the kind of teachers they would like to become, their principles in teaching, as well as specific teaching-learning activities. It is presented how that modelling culturally responsive teaching strategies allowed preservice teachers to self-reflect, critique and connect

their own learning experiences to future practice. Therefore, modelling culturally responsive teaching is argued to be a fruitful strategy in teacher education.

Keywords: Modelling in teacher education, culturally responsive teaching; preservice teachers, teacher education, instructional strategies

Introduction

Developing competencies to address multicultural issues in the classroom is becoming more and more introduced to initial teacher education, and teachers are becoming more appreciative of cultural diversity (Author, submitted). However, teachers still feel unprepared in practice (Author, 2015; Keddie & Niesche, 2012; Mansikka & Holm, 2011). In fact, as Seidl (2007) points out, even experienced teachers who have participated in in-service courses on the topic struggle to apply what they have learnt in developing teaching pedagogies. Theorists attribute this discrepancy not only to the little or short duration of multicultural education courses, but to problems inherent in how these courses are taught (Conklin, 2008; Gorski, 2009). Instead of modelling pedagogy that teachers can employ in their future work (Lunenberg, Korthagen & Swennen, 2007), most courses prepare teachers with personal awareness and tokenizing diversity approaches (Gorski, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Prospective teachers often leave with a “foods-and-festivals” understanding of culture (Ladson-Billings, 2009). In order to produce new generations of teachers who would feel prepared to teach in multicultural contexts, teacher educators must improve the way they teach multicultural education courses. They must attempt to create authentic learning experiences, inclusive classrooms and be responsive to students on both an individual and cultural level (Author, submitted, 2017; Conklin, 2008). Creating such authentic learning environment transcends merely giving information of the curriculum; it involves enacting responsive behaviour and teaching strategies (Author, submitted). This article examines modelling culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and its potential for a better way of doing multicultural education courses that might indirectly lead to better teaching. The findings, supported by

data analysis with grounded theory, raise awareness for introducing cultural responsiveness to teacher education.

Preservice Teacher Learning in Multicultural Education Courses

Multicultural education modules are now generally introduced to preservice teacher education, and a wide variety of teaching and learning methods have been adopted in order to enhance preservice teacher learning. The philosophical paradigms underlying multicultural education usually draw on the social construction of the world, culture and identity (Berger & Luckmann, 1991); therefore, learning is also seen through the means of participation and meaning making in interaction, situated in social environments (Wenger, 2009). On the other hand, multicultural education fundamentally aims at social change, and therefore it is crucial to cross socio-constructivism with transformative aspects of learning (Rodriguez, 2005). Transformation can be defined as ‘learning that transforms problematic frames of reference – sets of fixed assumptions and expectations’ (Mezirow, 2003, p. 58) including a ‘re-evaluation of identity, self-image, values, and opinions’ through critical reflection and analysis of one’s own learning and schema (Illeris, 2004, p. 59). On the field of multicultural education, transformation moves beyond solely seeing changes in cognitive schemes, and is coupled with the purpose of bringing about social justice in education. Correspondingly, it is a growing and debated research issue, what kinds of teaching and learning methods and course environments support preservice teacher learning for diversity and social justice (Castro, 2010). Previous studies have shown the importance of not only the content material of such modules, but also the teaching-learning methods applied (Author, 2017; Brown, 2004; Okopkodu, 2011), in order to develop preservice teachers’ knowledge, skills and

dispositions to teach in diverse contexts. These studies suggest active, experiential learning that translates theory to practice, provides first-hand cultural interactions, and allow preservice teachers time for critical self-analysis. Specified strategies include group discussions, critical reflection, field experiences, writing autobiographies and dialogic conversations (see e.g. Author, 2015, 2017; Elkader, 2016; Lees, 2016; Rodriguez, 2005).

Preservice teachers also seem to enhance their learning when in a safe, open course environment (Castro, 2010). Previous studies emphasised the role of empathy and compassion (Conklin, 2008); building strong, positive relationships (Ladson-Billings, 2009); reciprocity; teacher educators' affirming attitudes (Hollie, 2017); and explicit teaching involving self-reflection (Darling-Hammond, 2006). This should be accomplished simultaneously with engaging activities requiring critical thinking (Author, 2015); constructivist teaching strategies (Villegas & Lucas, 2013); diverse teaching styles; opportunities for constant self-reflection and examining own sociocultural identities (Author, 2017; Villegas & Lucas, 2013); and relevant content.

The role of the teacher educator in the actual delivery of such a curriculum is crucial. Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (2006, p. 1030) explain that teaching a curriculum with the aforementioned components is different from simply providing information about the curriculum but it is "embedding student teachers' learning in ways that enable them to experience the "doing" of the curriculum". However, teacher educators still observe resistance both in terms of changing mindsets and changing pedagogical practices (Gay, 2013; Rodriguez, 2005), and consequently there is a need for multicultural education modules to create teaching-learning environments that enable both a personal and a pedagogical transformation. Although much has been investigated

about preservice teachers' learning in terms of changing attitudes, conceptions and opinions; less has been discussed regarding change in their pedagogical intentions. Therefore, in order to foster preservice teachers' transformation to pursue culturally responsive pedagogies, teacher educators' explicit modelling is suggested. Yet such a strategy in multicultural education is underexplored.

Explicit modelling in teacher education

There are two types of modelling: implicit and explicit. Implicit modelling is when teacher educators model certain teaching strategies and methods preservice teachers can use, but do not draw attention to these pedagogical choices, hence limiting the effectiveness of modelling (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2007). On the other hand, explicit modelling is defined as intentionally displaying teaching strategies and the underlying thought processes (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2007) by explicitly stating the strategies and choices made through 'thinking aloud' (Loughran & Berry, 2005, p. 194). Through effective modelling, preservice teachers can observe the thinking behind the methodology, as well as analyse what their own students will experience in the classroom. Explicit modelling can put teacher educators in a state of vulnerability because it exposes their thinking, their own self-doubt, as well as opens the floor for criticism. However, Loughran and Berry (2005) explain that

...if we did not explicitly model this process of explaining and exploring perspectives through our practice, we would be in danger of simply offering our conceptual knowledge, albeit in perhaps more confronting and demanding ways, but it would really only be another form of delivery; telling as opposed to teaching. (p. 201)

In addition, by opening themselves up to vulnerability, teacher educators are creating a more open classroom environment where imperfection is utilised as a learning opportunity. This in turn allows preservice teachers to critically self-reflect and experience transformative learning.

While many studies explore specific components of teaching-learning strategies in multicultural teacher education, explicit modelling is often an underexplored research issue. Lunenberg *et al.* (2007) found explicit modelling was not common within their sample of teacher educators and there is little evidence in literature that recognises modelling as a teaching method in teacher education. This study aims at demonstrating the potential of modelling culturally responsive teaching as a link to shaping preservice teachers' learning experiences in the course, and pedagogical aspirations for future work. The modelling process described in this article may provide an opportunity to encourage both personal and pedagogical transformation of preservice teachers.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

This research draws on culturally responsive teaching theory as a means of improving multicultural teacher education in order to prepare teachers who would bring an appreciation of their students' cultures and differences as assets to their work. Multiple definitions and conceptions of culturally responsive teaching exist with differing focus points. For example, Ladson-Billings' 1995 formulation proposed a pedagogy that would promote students in achieving academically, demonstrating cultural competence and understanding and critiquing the existing social order. She termed this pedagogy culturally relevant pedagogy, which she defined as empowering students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge,

skills and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This approach to teaching involves teachers building a bridge from students' experience at home to their experience in the classroom, bringing elements into their daily learning at school, which validate their culture (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Gay (2000) conceptualized it as culturally responsive teaching, which she defined as 'using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them.' (p. 31). It teaches to and through the strengths of students and is culturally validating and affirming. Recently, Paris and Alim (2014) introduced the term culturally sustaining pedagogy which seeks to perpetuate and foster – *to sustain* – linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and social change. They explain that 'culturally sustaining pedagogy, then, links a focus on sustaining pluralism through education to challenges of social justice and change in ways that previous iterations of asset pedagogies did not' (p.88). It has as its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers (Paris & Alim, 2014). Underlying these different theorizations is researching practical ways to improve teacher education and teaching practice in culturally diverse classrooms.

The broad conception of culturally responsive teaching invokes a need to situate what was modelled in this class. The goals and content of the course aligned with Gay's (2010) conception of culturally responsive teaching as defined above. Gay (2010) profiles culturally responsive teaching in five definitive ways: developing a cultural diversity knowledge base; cross cultural communication; developing culturally relevant curricula; culturally responsive caring; and cultural congruity in classroom instruction. In this

course, Gay's notion of developing culturally relevant curriculum, cultural caring and building a learning community and responsive instruction had the biggest relevance. The modelling that was done therefore focused on this early-stage framing of culturally responsive teaching. Gay's conception was used as it seemed more fitting because one of the major aim was to stir pedagogical ideas on a foundational level, and Gay's framework is oriented to equipping teachers with principles for classroom pedagogies.

This study offers an encouraging model to teacher educators, and demonstrates what can be achieved by modelling an authentic learning environment in teacher education. Such a model transcends merely giving information of the curriculum, it involves teacher educators and students working together to create and sustain a classroom environment in which everyone feels safe, supported, and heard. It involves using a variety of teaching methods to facilitate the learning of all students and presents content in a manner that helps students understand that individuals' experiences, values, and perspectives influence how they construct knowledge. Such learning environments have the potential to foster an appreciation of diversity and provide tools for teaching diverse student populations. When teacher educators are successful in creating responsive classrooms, this makes great strides towards helping preservice teachers draw connections between their experiences in the course and their future work (Author, submitted; Conklin, 2008).

Research questions

This study examined teacher candidates' awareness of modelling culturally responsive teaching in a multicultural education course. Specifically, it investigated whether preservice teachers recognised and reflected on modelling within a multicultural

education class. It also examined if preservice teachers connected the explicit modelling they observed to their intentions about future pedagogical practice. The following research questions were asked:

1. Did preservice teachers in a multicultural education class recognise and reflect on modelling as a teaching method?
2. What aspects of CRT in a multicultural education class did preservice teachers recognise and link to their future pedagogical practice?
3. How did preservice teachers connect these observations of modelling to their future pedagogical practices?

Method

Research context

In the autumn of 2013 and 2015, one of the researchers co-taught a course in multicultural education to Finnish and international students (master's degree students and Erasmus exchange students) at a medium-sized university in Southwest Finland. The course was an elective course taught in English. The goals of the course were to help teacher candidates: (1) understand themselves and others as cultural beings; (2) understand the dimensions of diversity, and how power, privilege, and social status affect educational outcomes; and (3) apply these understandings to enhance teaching and learning for children and adults. The 12-week course covered a wide range of topics including defining culture: who are we? Who are our students? Dimensions of diversity: power, privilege, and difference; Multicultural education; and developing culturally proficient classrooms.

Students in this class came from a variety of backgrounds, which provided a context for the teacher educators to model culturally responsive teaching. The teachers engaged students in a range of learning opportunities and assignments such as line-up games, group discussions, privilege walk, cultural market, critical reflection, case study analysis, writing autobiographies, and structured field experiences combined with post experience reflection. Students were required to critically reflect on all course components both orally and written in order to avoid overly simplified and superficial ways of enacting these CRT activities. Figure 1 provides detailed description of the teaching methods employed, pedagogical purposes and how these activities connect to modelling.

The teacher educators strived to achieve what Korthagen *et al.* (2006) expressed by ‘embedding student teachers’ learning in ways that enable[d] them to experience the “doing” of the curriculum more than the information of the curriculum’ (p. 1030). They constantly exposed their choices, reflections, and self-critique through ‘thinking aloud’ (Loughran & Berry, 2005, p.194) in order to make the strategies used explicit. Throughout the lessons, they opened themselves up for criticism, enabling students to connect their teaching to their future practice, and reflect on their own learning in the class.

<Insert Figure 1 here>

Participants

The participants included two sets of preservice teachers who enrolled in a multicultural education course in either autumn 2013 or 2015. Forty-five students

enrolled in the course in 2013 and 37 in 2015. The students represented a range of nationalities and were predominately female. Moreover, they followed three different academic pathways: Finnish MA programme, international MA programme, and Erasmus BA exchange programme. Of the 45 students enrolled in 2013, twelve were degree students (10 = international master's degree students, 2 Finnish degree students) and 33 exchange students from the ERASMUS students network. The 2015 cohort included 13 degree students (12 = international master's degree students, 1 Finnish degree student) and 24 exchange students. Participation in the research was voluntary and participants agreed that passages from their coursework could be used as data for analysis. Participants were promised anonymity and confidentiality.

Data source

This study utilised students' written work from their learning journal entries. To provide a holistic experience regarding culturally responsive teaching, the students were asked to keep learning journals detailing their reflections on the readings, lectures, activities and observations they participated in. In order to reach deep reflection, students were required to write structured journals guided by the following questions:

- What are two important things you have learned from the reading and case study?
- In what ways does the reading/case, study/observations/class activities connect to your own experience?
- What are their implications for your teaching?

Reflections were collected three times during the course. The first and second reflections were collected in week 4 and week 8 of the course and a final reflection at the end of the course. During the first class, students were told that although several of the assignments

and activities were requirements for the course, they were not going to be graded. This was to ensure that students could write what they really feel. In this study, 246 reflective journals collected from the 2013 and 2015 participants in the course were analysed. Each journal was about 3 – 5 pages long. With students' permission, we collected and examined all students' journals.

Data Analysis

The learning journals were analysed qualitatively using Constant Comparison Approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researchers searched for evidence of students' recognition of modelling in the multicultural education course through questioning the data and making comparisons. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), constant comparison and theoretical comparisons helps analysts obtain a grasp on the meaning of events that might otherwise seem obscure and facilitates the linking and densification of categories (pp. 77-78). This process offers insight and understanding of phenomenon and allows for examination of findings, which bolster the validity of results.

Data were analysed on three levels using an inductive approach. First, the written assignments were read in a comprehensive manner in order to identify data that showed awareness of modelling. Next, the selected texts were further dissected by evidence revealing different levels of awareness of modelling. Third, complementary notes were taken in order to identify the elements of CRT that the students connected to the observed modelling in this class. Through this process, the researchers differentiated one category from the other and identified dimensions unique to categories. Finally, the data were refined and organised into three main themes used to answer research question one and two: (1) Recognising modelling CRT without linking it to intentions about future

practice, (2) connecting modelling to future teaching intentions through reflecting on the course environment, (3) Linking course activities directly to intended future practice.

The second author conducted the analysis of the journals. Throughout the entire process, the first author questioned various aspects of the analysis and tried to rationalize ideas together. In the end, the first and third authors independently completed an audit of the final report to verify the rigour and maximise the accuracy of the final report thus minimising researcher bias. As the first author was also a teacher of this class, he strived to maintain reflexivity. He constantly reflected on his role in constructing meaning, and the research relationships.

Results

The qualitative analysis found 63.4% of the journals recognised and reflected on modelling multiple times, a striking number given the fact that students were not directed to specifically reflect on modelling in their journals. The participants were aware that modelling CRT happened during the multicultural course, and recognised several aspects of it. The analysis found three levels of recognising modelling CRT (1) Recognising modelling CRT without linking it to intentions about future practice, (2) connecting modelling to future teaching intentions through reflecting on the course environment, (3) Linking course activities directly to intended future practice. Some participants addressed more than one type of evidence mentioned above; therefore, multiple themes were at times extracted from one individual's learning journals. The research questions are answered by organising the findings around these themes and the aspects of CRT are discussed within each description.

Evidence of recognizing and reflecting on modelling CRT

Participants mostly referred to the enhancement of their conceptual understanding on the multicultural subject content while taking their cultural frames, prior knowledge and thinking patterns into account. They appreciated active participation in the course and the demonstration of abstract concepts through their own examples. They indicated that their invisible cultural frames were made explicit during the exercises; furthermore, were challenged by critical examination and by being merged in a multicultural environment. These students experienced the interconnected dynamics of culture, identity, behaviour and privilege during their own knowledge contribution to the course and by interacting with their classmates leading to both a cultural and a personal self-discovery, situated in a social context. A male, exchange student wrote:

(About nine dots exercise) In the second lesson, I got the chance to.... take a step out of the frame.... First, it was difficult for me.... However, after thinking and trying again I got the right solution. It is the same with culture. To recognize culture, to learn culture and to live culture is not easy, because culture is influenced by many aspects, such as political, historical or economic conditions. In addition, culture is constantly changing. In my opinion, it is very important to recognize that many lines ... can help to make culture. One should not give up hope to go out of the frame.

Another male, MA student noted:

(About the cultural market) First, it was difficult to think about what I would like to present to others and I tried to think of something that was not too obvious... In addition, I wanted it to be something that was important to me... I guess this task showed that even cultural traditions might be hard to clarify because they are also

very individual... It was obvious how excited people were to talk about their own culture. It is a very good activity for... increasing the understanding of different cultures.

These examples show that the course taught complex concepts using cultural scaffolding: the participants explicitly reflected on their prior thinking and cultural background while learning new content or changing perspective. These activities allowed students to analyse culture from new perspectives and redefine culture for themselves. Cultural scaffolding helped these preservice teachers to acquire subject matter, and in parallel, facilitated a whole person development, shaping thinking and beliefs. As research suggests that many teacher candidates believe they do not have culture – culture is what others have (Okokpodu, 2011); the importance of this cannot be overemphasised.

Modelling cultural responsiveness was recognised through an awareness of participating in building a community of learners. The majority of the students were conscious of the interactive activities modelling intergroup relations, collaboration and increased cross-cultural communication in a multicultural context. These students appreciated the opportunity to become acquainted with their classmates: they built shared knowledge by exchanging ideas and sharing experiences; they compared perspectives and reflected on the dynamics between culture and personal identity. The interactive activities in and of themselves demonstrated how to create a supportive environment and group identity in the classroom. A female, MA student reflected:

(About the post-it activity) Doing this kind of activities to improve the relations at class I think that are incredible because they let you know the point of view of the others and know about them.

Another female exchange student reflected:

The group activities were important for the atmosphere in the group. This way everybody could talk to other mates that helped them to feel more confident in this group of people... I think one of their purposes is to create a relaxed atmosphere. In addition, I had to admit, that I would not have felt the same confident as I did after this games.

Furthermore, some students were also aware that these interactions helped them in examining and moving beyond cultural stereotypes, which is important in building relations and partnerships with students, anchored in respect and dignity for each other.

The course atmosphere, the varied platforms of self-expression and affirming teacher educator behaviours encouraged students to deeply engage with their own self and their classmates, and critically examine culture and personal identity as exemplified in a reflection by a female, MA student:

Throughout this course, we got “naked” in front of each other, through those group conversations about our personal life-experiences and elemental values (personal inventory). The group conversations made us show who we really are as a person and not we are “as a cultural creature”, even though this exercise also made us realize what a great effect our socio-cultural environment have in forming our personality.

Some students focused on the teacher educators’ responsive behaviours and attitudes when recognising modelling. They highlighted cultural responsiveness in the teacher educators’ relation to the students as partners: the students felt actively involved in the knowledge-creating process as equals; they were provided the opportunities to contribute

to the classes with their own knowledge; express their identities, feelings and ideas. Many students felt they were treated respectfully and as unique personalities, and that their opinions were heard when improving the course. A female, exchange student noted:

It is also great to see teachers trying hard to remember our names or asking for our opinion: it makes you feel an individual; it makes you feel you are there for a reason, to grow, not just to pass the final exam.

Similarly, a male, MA student wrote:

It seems as if the lecturers are very open to change and appreciate when the course is different... so that they can learn new things (e.g. point of views), too.

The ways preservice teachers connected modelling to intended teaching practice

The second type of evidence showed that preservice teachers not only recognized modelling, but they also connected this experience to their envisioned future pedagogy. The preservice teachers linked the modelling to intended teaching practice in two different ways: (1) connecting modelling to teaching through reflecting on the course environment; (2) linking course activities directly to future teaching practice.

The preservice teachers often observed and reflected on modelling because of participating in a stimulating culturally responsive learning environment. The participants noted that the course created opportunities for observing CRT first-hand through the interactive activities and other assignments such as readings, case studies, discussions and movies. Modelling here occurred by providing varied platforms of encountering CRT including adapting teaching style to students' cultures/background; affirming students' identities; equity in practice; developing positive teacher-student relationships; and

constantly reflecting on teacher identity; through which many preservice teachers started to shape their ideas, values, principles and intended behaviors for their teaching practice, indicating cultural responsiveness. The preservice teachers here mostly stated future goals in teaching such as striving for equity, adapting teaching instruction to learners' cultural background, affirming learners' cultural and personal identity, establishing caring teacher-student relationships and the importance of continuous examination of the self, beliefs and attitudes. Many of the participants started to adopt a non-judgmental, reflective teaching attitude, a cornerstone of culturally responsive teaching. For instance, a male, MA student reflected on the course:

Educational equity on the other hand, means treating student in class with fairness and equity. I can now relate more to this aforementioned terms because this course made me realize how important they are in the learning process. Being judgmental towards a student just because of their social status, race or family background should be highly avoided as a teacher. Treating student with equality and without any prejudice will definitely be one of my major teaching goals. Student should be able to confide in me and trust me as a teacher.

Reflecting on equity also occurred during the privilege walk activity, as articulated by a female, exchange student:

During the activity of the Privilege Walk I felt advantages and disadvantages towards my classmates. I realized that privilege or oppression is something you cannot choose. However, I thought that the activity was an interesting dynamic to make pupils (of all ages) realize about their own situation and differences with

the others. It is important to share with the pupils the message that we are all equal but also unique.

Similarly, a female, student wrote in relation to a reading assignment:

The text also mentioned again that we should not only learn about the cultural aspects and values of others, but that it is also important to be aware of your own values and beliefs. This mind-set hits me over and over again during this class and now also in the readings. I really think that this is something not only every teacher should do during his or her education, but that it is also something they should give to their students.

These examples show that the variety of learning platforms through which the preservice teachers encountered cultural responsiveness supported them in establishing culturally responsive teaching values, principles and philosophies such as insisting on educational equity, non-discriminatory behaviour and teachers` self-examination.

Other preservice teachers reflected on the importance of responsiveness in teaching instruction; they realized that knowing their students` family backgrounds, languages and cultures is necessary to understand and connect to pupils; consequently, they indicated willingness to transform their teaching. These preservice teachers mostly emphasized familiarity with the students` cultural, linguistic and family background, but they also pointed to affirm students` voices in the teaching-learning process. Moreover, a few students intended to teach content from multiple perspectives. A female, exchange student reflected on the case studies:

On the other hand, I realized that even I did not want, I judged students only because of their backgrounds. Now I know that knowing more about them

(family, culture, language...) would help me because the more I would know, the easier would be to understand the students. So the diversity in a class will affect also the way that I would teach.

Another female, exchange student reflected on the lesson planning activity:

Planning a lesson about History for a multicultural classroom of fifth graders made me reflect and think with my partner about how to teach contents attending the differences that are inside the classroom. I realized that one of the most important things is not only to teach one point of view... but to provide different points of view and perspectives that respond to another countries and cultures.

Consequently, preservice teachers profoundly transformed the way they thought about knowledge in the classroom. Because of modelling a culturally responsive environment, the preservice teachers started to regard teaching as an interactive process between teacher and student. Enjoyable, joined knowledge building together with students seemed to become the new understanding on how to teach, rather than solely transmitting contents.

Furthermore, modelling a culturally responsive environment supported the preservice teachers in building a vision on their future classroom environment. The preservice teachers shed light on the importance of encouraging self-expression, positive relations between pupils, respectful teacher – student relationships, varied learning platforms and students` freedom in the learning process. For example, a female, MA participant said about the Post-It-Activity:

I liked the idea of giving respect to each other. It is important to teach the students to respect each other regardless of their cultural differences. Another point, which

attracted me, was the impact of student teacher relationship on teaching learning process. The main focus of this activity was to broaden the horizon for students by sharing their learning experiences.

Another female, MA student reflected on a reading assignment:

In the future, I should encourage students from different cultural background express themselves and show their culture to other students in class, I will create more cultural exchange opportunities through variable activities. Meanwhile, I am willing to spend more time encourage mainstream students help them to adjust to new environment and get more knowledge of diverse culture.

A female, exchange student also elaborated on the course:

Moreover, it is very essential that teachers embrace the possibility to learn with their students instead of merely teaching them... Interaction, among either students or teacher and students, is often a sign for caring and interest...education and transfer of knowledge should be connected to something pleasant and good. I personally never experienced a course, which allowed me to think so freely, express my thoughts so self-evident and adopt a huge amount of knowledge so unconsciously.

These examples show that teacher candidates recognized that they were merged in a culturally responsive environment; and gained positive experiences that might have facilitated translating the idea of a culturally responsive environment to their own future practice.

A number of preservice teachers connected the observed modelling directly to their future work as educators. Here they articulated a clear awareness of the applicability

of the observed CRT in teaching practice, mostly referring to the interactive activities, such as the Cultural Market or the Line-up activity. The participants also indicated reasons for this transfer such as encouraging students' interaction and cultural learning, engaging and affirming culturally diverse students in the learning process, creating a supportive environment, building a community and developing thinking skills. The majority would use the activities exactly as they were observed, however, some participants would modify them depending on their teaching context.

Reflecting on the Cultural Market, a female, student identified it as a powerful way of affirming students' identities and cultural learning:

I really liked this activity because I became more conscious about other's cultures and countries. I felt understood and proud to tell about myself and make the others know how important things are for me. As a teacher, I think it is a good idea to do it in a multicultural classroom because they will feel as I did in the class: happy, proud and socialized with others. Children will also learn a lot about the world through their peers and have a general view of the world. This will make them become more respectful.

Another female, exchange student also wrote about the Cultural Market:

The Cultural Market has been a great idea, and the way of doing the groups was fantastic to "break the ice" and be with new people... Consequently, the Cultural Market can be an original way to work cultures with pupils at class. I think it helps, as it has helped to me, to eliminate stereotypes and clichés about people because you speak with somebody who is a person like you without taking into account it's race or culture, you just see somebody in front of you, who is like

you; perhaps with another skin colour, but a human like you... So it's important to create situations where children can interact with each other.

The teacher candidates here gained a first-hand experience when interacting in a multicultural group, observed the dynamics of the activity, and reflected on their feelings and contributions to the teaching-learning process. A critical reflection on these activities enhanced eliminating existing stereotypes of cultures, as well as motivated the preservice teachers to express their ideas the way they felt comfortable with. These positive experiences served as bridges in linking preservice teachers' recognition of modelling to their future practice.

In terms of transferring the Line-Up game, a male, exchange student observed:

Another thing that I found most interesting during this course was the dynamic within the class... The different line-ups made it quite easy to at least talk to each other participant at least once, a phenomenon that I have not experienced in other courses... I think I will apply this method in my own class as well, as it seems to be a good idea to create a feeling of mutuality.

Another female, MA preservice teacher found the Line-Up exemplary for familiarizing students with each other in the classroom:

(The line-up activity) ... was so creative and prototype, too...it was a great experience that I would have as a "backpack" in my future professional career and personally in my life. As a teacher, it definitely motivated me to implement similar type of activity in the future... this activity, I think, constitutes a good idea for taking the first step in knowing new people from different part of the world.

Modelling such cultural responsive activities like the ones described above equipped preservice teachers with teaching strategies they might be able to apply in their future classroom. They have started building a base for teaching activities, derived from the observed modelling that occurred in the course.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine preservice teachers' awareness of modelling as a teaching strategy in a multicultural education course, and to gain insight into the CRT elements that preservice teachers' connect to their envisioned future teaching. In order to assess this, 246 reflective journals were analysed allowing the researchers to observe the ways preservice teachers connected modelling CRT that occurred to their own learning to their intentions in future teaching.

The results suggest that the modelling of CRT was recognised and reflected on by over half of the participants. Interestingly, they came to this realization through their own reflection, without being directly asked, which might imply the effectiveness of explicit modelling. Through this strategy, the teacher educators allowed the preservice teachers to be actively engaged with the curriculum, not just be consumers of information, so that the preservice teachers could critically reflect on their own learning experience and its connection to pedagogy (Korthagen *et al.*, 2006). It seemed that modelling CRT helped preservice teachers reach the transformative learning stage (Illeris, 2004) since many expressed re-evaluation of their identify, self-image, values, and opinions.

The most salient component of this study was the ways in which participants connected the modelling CRT to their intended future practice. The participants discussed the openness of the learning environment created by the teacher educators and how they

wished to create a similar atmosphere in their own future classrooms; some discussed activities like the Line-Up Game and Cultural Market as tools to engage with their future students and build mutual understanding in their classroom. Others discussed the importance of interaction in classrooms so students can learn from one another. This study confirms suggestions from previous research, namely that teacher educators should build strong relationships with students, have affirming attitudes, provide exciting and diverse learning activities, and allow for reflection (Author, 2016; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The importance of first-hand cultural interactions, building self-awareness, and utilizing a constructivist approach were exemplified in this investigation too (Author, 2016; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). A CRT environment does not only provide information to preservice teachers, but allows students to observe CRT strategies being modelled. In this study, participants reflected on different learning tasks multiple times that allowed them to interact with each other and discuss their own cultural backgrounds; gain self-awareness; and feel empowered to combat stereotypes and inequality.

These CRT learning opportunities seemed to be effective due to the explicit modelling. Throughout the course, the teacher educators made participants aware of their thinking; they revealed their own critical reflection and vocalised their decision-making processes. In their journal entries, many participants discussed their sense of safety in the class, and how they also felt seen, heard, and accepted. Because of their own positive experiences in the class, they were then finding ways to connect the strategies to their future practice. They discussed specific activities they would like to transfer to their own classroom, and the type of classroom environment they wished to create: open, equitable, and a community based on mutual understanding and awareness. Many also revealed a

change they underwent, discussing their previous beliefs, the impact of a specific CRT moment, and how they would utilise this new knowledge and awareness in the future. Loughran and Berry (2005) explain that simply providing information will not lead to this type of transformation, but explicit modelling is necessary for teacher educators to create a more interactive, critical, and safe learning environment.

The evidence provided in this study supports explicit modelling of CRT in order to move beyond the ‘foods-and-festivals’ approach and properly prepare preservice teachers for increasingly culturally diverse classes (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Not only were the preservice teachers able to examine their own attitudes and think critically about complex aspects of culture, as suggested by Ladson-Billings (2009), but they drew connections between their new understandings and their future intentions to use these methods in their own classrooms. However, we cannot claim that the activities used in this study will be successfully replicated everywhere, and it is possible that they could in fact present a ‘foods-and-festivals’ understanding. What seems to be most salient in avoiding this is the opportunity for critical thinking and interactions between students. By giving students the freedom to discuss and question, they can think critically about how the information is delivered to them and what it means to them. The reflections also provide the instructors with assessment on their instruction, and this allows the instructors to adjust based on the preservice teachers’ understandings. The actual activities used are less important than the meaning preservice teachers develop from them, and thus we cannot suggest a prescriptive set of methods, but rather advise teacher educators to consider these methods and adapt them based on their own students.

Several limitations should also be considered when interpreting the results of the present study. Despite these findings, there were participants who did not touch upon the modelling aspect in their journal entries. The preservice teachers had been given initial guiding questions focusing on new insights, connections to prior experience and implications for future teaching. Therefore, it is possible that more preservice teachers were aware of the modelling, they just may not have thought to divulge this when following the journal entry guidelines. In addition, even with the evidence of teachers' reflections on CRT and their desire to utilise CRT in their own future classrooms, no set claims can be made about the effectiveness of these strategies in the actual transfer into the classroom setting. Therefore, future research that follows preservice teachers from this type of CRT environment into their actual classrooms is recommended. Furthermore, we suggest teacher educators to test these strategies within their own learning environment, making adaptations if necessary. Each teacher education class is different, and as previously mentioned, CRT is based on the students. Therefore, the concepts that underlie modelling CRT should be understood, but the actual strategies must be modified for each learning environment.

Conclusions and implications for teacher education

Twenty-first century schools require teachers to be prepared to face diverse classrooms. Therefore, it is essential for teacher education programs to instil in preservice teachers an understanding of CRT. To do this, it is recommended that teacher educators explicitly model CRT, allowing preservice teachers to experience the CRT environment themselves. By utilizing the aforementioned CRT strategies, and adapting them to the specific learning environment, preservice teachers can then critique and reflect on what

they find to be most effective. By bringing preservice teachers to the accommodative or transformative learning stage, they can re-evaluate previous stereotypes, misconceptions, and even beliefs about themselves. From observing the explicit modelling of the teacher educator, they hopefully will gain an understanding of the importance of reflection and self-critique as a quality needed by teachers in order to adapt to each classroom. The teacher educator should also model an affirming attitude, compassion, empathy, and interest in his or her students, so that preservice teachers can transfer those characteristics into their own teaching.

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