



Playing with power and privilege: Theatre games in teacher education

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ABSTRACT

In preparing White teachers to educate a diverse society, teacher educators must help them see the veil which colors their views of the world and privileges them. This study explores the need for playing with power and privilege to deconstruct the concept of meritocracy and challenge the idea of one-ness, thereby fostering more conscious locations of White pre-service teachers. It proposes that Boalian theatre games can serve as powerful yet playful and innovative approaches for accessing values and beliefs shaping pre-service teachers' views of the(ir) world, influencing their roles as teachers and the pedagogies in which they plan to engage.

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1. Preparing teachers for a diverse society

It's been more than 50 years since schools were racially integrated in the United States. Yet, its public schools are still not successfully educating a diverse society. While American public schools have a diverse body of students, those succeeding academically are mostly White, from economically advantaged backgrounds (Goodwin, 2002; Hyun, 1996; Ryan & Lobman, 2008; Sleeter, 2001). This is primarily because the American teaching force is still mostly White middle class and because there is a false pretense that knowledge is culture-free (Grant & Sleeter, 1996). By deeming knowledge culture-free, a norm is established based on the dominant culture and discourse. Thus, the values teachers most commonly associate with success and hard work are those colored through a White supremacy perspective (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006).

While this is a phenomenon affecting schools in the United States, racial privileging affects educational access and quality throughout the world. Over 40 years ago, UNESCO (1968) presented its "UNESCO Statement on Race and Racial Prejudice," co-signed by experts from many countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North, and South America:

The school and other instruments for social and economic progress can be one of the most effective agents for the achievement of broadened understanding and the fulfilment of the potentialities of man [sic]. They can equally...be used for the perpetuation of discrimination and inequality...In view of the importance of teachers in any educational programme, special attention should be given to their training. Teachers should be made conscious of the degree to which they reflect the prejudices which may be current in their society. They should be encouraged to avoid these prejudices. (p. 271)

Racial privileging continues to affect educational experiences in terms of access and quality throughout the world today. In countries that were signatories of the UNESCO (1968) Statement, racialized schooling and White privilege in education are alive and well—e.g., the United States (c.f. Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006; Haddix, 2008). In countries located on continents that were not signatories of the UNESCO (1968) Statement, racialized schooling practices have existed and continue to exist (c.f. Hook, 2007; Hughes, 1988). For example, there is pervasive inequality of access and quality of education for Aborigines in Australia (Hughes, 1988) and Maori in New Zealand (Hook, 2007). Thus, throughout the world, there is a White-ification process of rich cultural legacies—a process of (disguised) educational and societal colonization (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

The power of changing what counts and embracing multicultural teaching approaches in schools throughout the world is in the hands of teachers who often succeeded in status quo pedagogies

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and have positive memories of their own schooling (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006; Goodwin, Cheruvu, & Genishi, 2008). Many teachers entered the profession because they did well as students in schools, thus thinking that they already knew exactly how to teach before entering teacher education programs (Haddix, 2008). The reality is that they do know how to teach—just like they learned—in unjust systems that continue to perpetuate inequities and segregate academic success (Delpit, 1988; Ritchie & Rau, 2006). If left unchallenged, such beliefs will continue to enact savage inequalities (Barman, 1995; Kozol, 2001; Walton, 1993) in our schools. This is especially true in a so-called “post-racial era.”

While seeking to recruit more teachers of color and male teachers, teacher educators must also work to prepare mostly White middle class female teachers to teach multiculturally (Darling-Hammond, 2002, 2006; Figueroa, 2004; Galman, Pica-Smith, & Rosenberger, 2010; Haddix, 2008; Hill & Allan, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Moodley, 2004; Sleeter, 2008). In doing so, Genishi and Goodwin (2008) underlined the extreme importance of teacher educators in inviting teachers to (re)conceptualize diversities in terms of strengths (Goodwin & Genor, 2008; Long, Anderson, Clark, & McCraw, 2008). Carter and Goodwin (2004) documented the low expectations of many White middle class teachers towards children of color—framing them as biologically and/or culturally inferior. While well meaning, such teachers still perceive cultural and linguistic diversities as deviant, as needing to be fixed, or alternatively they believe that certain students cannot be fixed and take a “helping the disadvantaged” teaching approach (Freire, 1970; Tatum, 1997). Teachers’ limited understandings of anti-bias approaches to teaching and lack of recognition of their own privileges are detrimental to educating diverse students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2000; Lawrence, 1997; Salomon & Levine-Rasky, 1996). According to Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006), “the underlying intent of anti-bias education is to foster the development of children and adults who have the personal strength, critical-thinking ability, and activist skills to work with others to build caring, just, diverse communities and societies for all” (p. 5).

To truly appreciate diversities and eradicate color-blind attitudes perpetuated by institutional discourses (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) that have traditionally and historically failed students of color, pre-service teachers need to understand how their racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and identities have privileged and continue to privilege many of them (Banks, 2001; Haddix, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Teacher educators can play an integral role in this process. According to Galman et al. (2010), “The cost of not providing this preparation could be disastrous: New teachers have been shown to use race as a major factor in determining academic and behavioral expectations and treatment of students of color in their classrooms” (p. 1). I posit that the cost of letting teachers merely perform as if they intellectually recognize their own privileges is revealed in the many inequities present in schools today.

1.1. White racial identity development

To understand one’s racial identity and development is not a simple process.

In general, racial identity development theory refers to the belief systems that evolve in response to the racial group categorizations given meaning by the larger society. In societies like the U.S., where racial-group membership is an important determinant of social status, it is assumed that the development of a racial identity will occur, to some degree, in everyone. For Whites, the process involves becoming aware of one’s “Whiteness,” accepting this aspect of one’s identity as socially

meaningful and personally salient, and ultimately internalizing a realistically positive view of whiteness which is not based on assumed superiority. (Lawrence & Tatum, 1999, p. 45)

My work with White teachers has been guided by my understandings of Helms’ model of White racial identity development (Helms, 1990, 1995). Helms (1990, 1995) proposed a theory of White racial identity development, explaining that all individuals undergo a process of racial identity development characterized by different statuses (which had been previously called stages) extending from those least developmentally mature to most developmentally mature. These statuses characterize the patterns employed by White individuals in responding to racial situations. This process involves six statuses (which are not well-defined or exclusive): contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. While these phases are not rigid or exclusive; one phase may be more dominant during any period of time while others may also be present, albeit not as strongly (Helms, 1990, 1995; Lawrence, 1997).

White students exhibiting dominant *contact status* characteristics are typically unaware of racism...claim[ing] to view all people through a color-blind lens...[A] state of *disintegration* signals a breakdown of their old ways of believing...[and] may rely on stereotypes...[and/or] blame persons of color...for the inequities...When White students...abandon their prior beliefs in White superiority, they begin moving away from a racist belief system toward a more nonracist identity...a *pseudoindependent status*. Further development of their White identities, labeled *immersion/emersion*, is signaled by an exploration of Whiteness...by taking responsibility for interrupting racism. The sixth status, *autonomy*, is characterized by students’ internalization of their new racial selves. (Lawrence, 1997, p. 109)

Thus, it is important to understand that while the process of racial identification and recognition of racial privileging is complex (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006), it can be addressed in teacher education programs in meaningful and significant ways. Here, I propose that the initial recognition and naming of the phenomenon and its situated representations are not enough as they may lead to what Helms referred to as a process of disintegration whereby after initial recognition of racial inequities, the individual blames the victim for such inequities (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006; Helms, 1990, 1995). Thus, teacher education has the potential to create spaces of possibility where individuals not only acknowledge racial inequities, but also explore their racial identities (e.g., Whiteness) and come to envision their roles in positive transformations.

1.2. Playing with power and privilege in teacher education

“Unfortunately, for most whites, neither their education nor their life experiences provide the knowledge, analysis, and critical thinking skills about racism and other “isms” to create a solid foundation for doing AB/MC [anti-bias/multicultural] work” (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p. 12). According to Lawrence and Tatum (1999), while “White teachers have more positive feelings about people of color after participating in multicultural courses...it seems that few of these programs have had the ability to influence either prospective or current teachers’ views about themselves as racial beings or to alter existing teaching practices” (p. 45). While this is a serious matter, in this article I propose that to best assist teachers in recognizing their privileges and power, we teacher educators can use play as a tool for promoting change within our classrooms.

Play can disarm the predictable aspect of analyzing one’s own history and bring pre-service teachers to look closely at the

privileges afforded to them by the ways they were (and are) positioned in society. After all, according to Vygotsky (1978), “As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all the developmental tendencies in a condensed form; in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his normal behavior” (p. 70). Play, thus, serves as a “zone of proximal development.” I propose that the same holds true for pre-service teachers being apprenticed in the process of becoming teachers. We can engage in democratic pedagogical practices in teacher education by engaging in “[w]ork which remains permeated with the play attitude [a]s art—in quality if not in conventional designation” (Dewey, 1916, p. 242).

In this article, I explore the use of theatre games to play with power and privilege in teacher education while serving as tools for envisioning, negotiating, and rehearsing positive change. This article reports a study seeking to address the following questions:

- (1) In what ways do White middle class pre-service teachers perceive Boalian theatre games as tools to help them recognize how their positionalities in society privileged them?; and
- (2) What is the impact of Boalian theatre games on White pre-service teachers’ racial attitudes and identities?

To answer these questions, I engaged in critically studying Boalian games as an innovative practice to play with power and privileging in three pre-service teacher education classes.

2. Theoretical framework: critical (and) performative pedagogy

McLaren (1989) wrote that a “critical perspective allows us to scrutinize schooling more insistently in terms of race, class, power, and gender” (p. 163). Aligned with the very aim of this article, I employ a critical theoretical perspective to examine ways in which education may be transformed by teachers who come to recognize themselves as privileged cultural beings. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) proposed that the first step towards changing something is identifying and naming it, becoming aware of its existence, developing what he called *conscientização*. Critical pedagogy “signals how questions of audience, voice, power, and evaluation actively work to construct particular relations between teachers and students, institutions and society, and classrooms and communities...Pedagogy in the critical sense illuminates the relationship among knowledge, authority, and power” (Giroux, 1994, p. 30).

According to Darder (1991), “critical pedagogy views all education theory as intimately linked to ideologies shaped by power, politics, history and culture. Given this view, schooling functions as a terrain of ongoing struggle over what will be accepted as legitimate knowledge and culture” (p. 77). If we are to transform what goes on in schools, teacher educators need to create spaces for genuinely and critically addressing the concept of cultural politics (Darder, 1991) by creating spaces for our students (future and current teachers) to engage in the complex work of recognizing, legitimizing, and challenging the very cultural experiences which make up the social realities and histories of their lives. Furthermore, beyond recognizing their realities and histories, it is necessary to critically address the ways in which such experiences positioned them in society—e.g., as privileged, as minoritized, as intelligent, as deficient. Thus, after the initial denial or rage (which often signify many conflicting feelings), we may be able to challenge structures and boundaries derivative of such realities and histories.

From a critical perspective, it is important for most teachers (current and future) to understand that their educational success did not occur based solely on their hard work, but was coupled with the privileged positions which they may have occupied and/or still

occupy. Thus, students of color and/or students who come from lower SES backgrounds are socially and culturally constructed in ways that are problematic and/or may lead to problematic experiences in schools and society. This is exemplified by the overrepresentation of African American boys in special education and their underrepresentation in gifted programs (Harry & Anderson, 1994).

Yet, merely reflecting on these issues (and even coming to an understanding of their devastating effects in society) may not move students to take action. In autobiographies and journal writings, many White students make sense of their experiences individually and may feel isolated and solely “guilty.” They may name an issue but pretend it is not there, thus ignoring it. Hence, the importance of naming issues publically so that they can no longer be ignored.

Delpit (1988) wrote that teachers “must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness” (p. 297). Collectively performing and going public with their privileges, with the ways they are positioned in society, may be a more powerful and dynamic process as it allows teachers to realize how they are part of a culturally-constructed category of privilege which needs to be recognized and challenged—becoming collectively vulnerable. Theatre can serve as a site of vulnerability, a site to make the invisible visible in a public way, in a way that cannot be disregarded. Theatre can serve as a tool for envisioning, negotiating, rehearsing, and enacting change. Theatre can serve as a rehearsal for revolution (Boal, 1979).

“Theatre games are meant to work on both literal and metaphorical levels” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 30). Such games provide actors (and non-actors) opportunities “[t]o develop body awareness and solidarity through creative, physical activity within a group” (p. 30). This level of solidarity allows pre-service teachers to publically unveil privilege and power in the process of coming to see themselves as cultural beings. Furthermore, they come to recognize ways in which the positions they occupy in society—which can be exemplified by the spaces they occupy culturally, socially, racially, sexually, economically, linguistically—privilege them. Yet, instead of remaining silent and paralyzed, the playful context of games serves as a stage for them to bond, form communities, and collectively begin to negotiate change.

Games serve as tools to make privileges, positionings, and points of view visible; to bring about dynamics of power often absent from teacher education classrooms. While Boalian theatre has been used by teacher educators for the last decade (e.g., Belliveau, 2007; Bettez, 2008; Gadanidis, 2006; Gale, 2001; Gutiérrez, 2010; Kaye & Ragusa, 1998; Mulholland, 2009), the games Boal (2002) proposed do not comprise a widely used approach to engaging in critical multicultural teacher education. Thus, this article uniquely positions Boalian theatre games as tools for engaging in close examination and problematization of racial perspectives and privileges by White pre-service teachers. Findings show that Boalian games can serve as tools to unveil, unsettle, and start to question White privilege while presenting the potential to immediately affect pre-service teachers’ racial development and identities (Helms, 1990, 1995). The specific Boalian Theatre games I employed over the course of three semesters were *Columbian Hypnosis* and *Power Shuffle* (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). Below, I present brief synopses.

2.1. *Columbian Hypnosis*

This game can be conceptualized as a variation on “Follow The Leader.” It plays with physical, social, and political awareness of self

and others and explores issues of positionality and point of view—both essential to teaching multiculturally. Players are paired up; one becomes the hypnotist and the other the hypnotized. The hypnotist uses one hand, placed a few inches away from the hypnotized person's face, to control movements and choices of the hypnotized. Overall, according to Cahnmann-Taylor and Souto-Manning (2010):

Through leader/follower role-play, the idiom “Lead as you would like to be led” becomes vivified, and players raise questions about power in teachers' relationships with others, including students, parents, administrators, district leaders, and politicians. Because of the length of this exercise, it's easy to notice how stressful it can be to follow the leader, whoever that leader may be, over time. Although it is okay to pretend to play along for a short period of time, it can become very stressful over more extended periods of time. (p. 73)

2.2. Power Shuffle

Power Shuffle is a variation of “The Line Up” (Sternberg & Garcia, 2000, p. 242)—a sociodramatic technique. In “The Line Up,” “group members arrange themselves in a continuum based on various categories such as height, date of birth, length of time in the United States, and so forth” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 53). Power Shuffle makes such differences more visible and considers multiple dimensions of power. In it, within the atmosphere of a game, participants are asked to openly recognize (name, in the Freirean sense) their identities and privileges and voluntarily walk across the room with anyone who shares a specific socially privileged positioning, leaving others behind. As groups of students cross the room and openly embody their coded privileges—racial, linguistic, etc.—they look at who is with them, who is left behind, and how they feel. In doing so, participants expose levels of power and privilege in the group.

This game challenges the good intentions many teachers have to see all students as the same, regardless of differences in race, class, gender, parents' educational background, etc. This color blind and difference-blind orientation overlooks important historical and social differences that place unfair obstacles and burdens on some more than others. (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 53)

2.3. The issues: privilege, positionality, and point of view

The games I employed challenged common obstacles to multicultural approaches to teaching, as described above, and tackled issues of privilege while contesting the view captured by a short dialogue in one of my pre-service classes:

Caitlin: For me, all kids are the same, I don't see Black, White, you know, I think we need to stop dividing and starting conquering.

Keisha: Now, there's a problem here. Are you saying you don't see White and Black?

Caitlin: Yes.

Keisha: So, you see gray? Cuz if you don't see White or Black.

Caitlin: No, [that's] not what I said. I just don't think of color.

Keisha: I guess you don't have to. You already conquered.

Caitlin (a White middle class pre-service student) and Keisha (an African American working class pre-service student) were discussing issues of racial privilege and positionality in society—being White and not having to think about race compared to being

Black and unable to ignore race. Such issues—recurrent across semesters—needed to be addressed if we were to engage in and envision ways of teaching multiculturally. The games served as entry points—as ways in which students could take risks without stonewalling in the face of a difficult issue that divided the class—and raised many socioculturally- and historically-located issues.

In addition, from a critical perspective, the games reminded me just how diverse the pre-service teachers in these classes were. In a Freirean way, the games named diversities in our class. Pre-service teachers and I could not be conceived as simply different or the same—we were both, simultaneously navigating cultural identity borderlands and occupying positions of privilege and oppression. Thus, individual members of this learning community were not essentialized, but rather encouraged to recognize and problematize their privileges.

The games served as a visual reminder of the danger of essentializing human beings, pre-service teachers at any age, in any setting. As students engaged in games, they in turn invited me to challenge my own assumptions. Critically, I reflected on the process and on my role as a teacher educator as I reflected on my own self as a cultural being occupying positions of privilege and of oppression syncretically (Duranti & Ochs, 1997)—e.g., an immigrant with a Ph.D., a person of color living in socioeconomic comfort. In doing so, I could unveil the complexities of human beings who are individuals and also members of cultural groups. Together, we realized that we were different in many ways—as individual human beings we had unique experiences. Yet, we were similar—in immediately visible and apparently invisible ways.

3. The study

This study focused on students' performances in and perspectives on two theatre games that examined power and privilege—Columbian Hypnosis and Power Shuffle (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). I collected data through field notes, student write-ups, journal entries, surveys, and follow up debriefing interviews. Each semester, with students' permissions, I collected their autobiographies, reflective journals (with a minimum of ten entries reflecting on readings and classes in light of their own experiences), oral and written debriefings. In addition, I documented theatre activities (six total) through the use of field notes (according to: a. the action—what students did, b. my interpretations—my constructions of their inter/actions, and c. the behavior of particular students) in a three-column format (Whitin, Mills, & O'Keefe, 1990).

Over three semesters, I engaged classes of 23–27 pre-service teachers (75 total) in playing the two games introduced above within constrained physical spaces—a situation which served as a metaphor to the difficulty and obstacles faced when embarking on the journey of naming power and privilege. In addition to embedding the games in the pre-service teacher education classroom with the purpose of fostering critical multicultural teacher education practices and processes, I collected data across semesters, having not only a qualitative measure of how the games influenced the pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices, but quantitative measures of the possibilities which lie ahead.

Seeking a better understanding of pre-service teachers' actions, voices, beliefs, and perspectives, I engaged in debriefing informal interviews, as needed, with students (there were ten such interviews, each lasting 20–40 min) documented via note taking. Interviews took place after each semester concluded and grades had been posted. Students had the option to withdraw from the study at anytime without any risks or consequences. Course grades were not linked to participation in the study. To ensure fairness, the

specific collected assignments were subject to self-grading by all students taking the course.

3.1. Data collection

I collected data over three semesters with three distinct groups to assure reliability across semesters in terms of findings; consequently, findings are not particular to one group. The units of analysis were two theatre games (Columbian Hypnosis and Power Shuffle—Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010) in which power and privilege were examined as well as debriefings and reflections that ensued collectively and individually, orally and in writing.

Each class took place at one of two large research institutions of higher education in urban areas of the eastern United States. Classes met once or twice a week for at least 75 min each time over periods of 15 weeks. Classrooms were small for the number of students and in both settings had too much furniture for the available physical space. The classrooms were either set up for a sit-down seminar or for lectures, without room to move or to work in groups. Both institutions had initial certification programs at the early childhood level and the classes I taught were mandatory in the initial certification program. The broader communities where the universities were located presented a higher level of poverty than was present in my classes.

Overall, there were 75 students, with the following class distribution across semesters: 27 + 25 + 23. Students were mostly women—72 (two of the three classes were 100% female), 80% White (60/75), and at least 90% self-identified as having grown up in an economically comfortable household. Nine students self-identified as Latina/os or African Americans. Students' ages ranged from 19 to 54. At least seven nationalities (Korean, Japanese, Kenyan, Jamaican, Mexican, Lebanese, American—including Puerto Rico) were represented, yet the majority of students (a little over 2/3) were Americans and identified English as their first and (commonly) only language. Of the 60 White students, 50 completed the surveys (three semesters combined). All surveys presented here were completed by White students.

3.2. Role of researcher

My role was that of researcher and Latina immigrant teacher educator teaching mostly White pre-service teachers. While I was teaching these classes and wanted my students to engage in approaches to teaching multiculturally—with a specific focus on language and literacy practices—I was also seeking to better understand how Boalian games could be used as an innovative practice in the pre-service teacher education class constrained by delineated content, goals, objectives, and assessment measures linked to national professional accreditation-granting organizations. While I was facilitating the games and debriefing, I was also collecting data, thus taking the role of a participant observer and action researcher.

My stance as a teacher educator was reframed as roles were blurred—teacher and learner, learner and teacher. I also made myself vulnerable by sharing some of my experiences with racism and sharing information about myself as a person, as a mother, as a human being. As I learned about pre-service teachers as cultural beings, I further uncovered the ways in which cultural influences had shaped and continue to shape who I am, what I believe in, and the pedagogical practices I promote as a teacher educator. I engaged in teaching vulnerably (Delpit, 1988). Teaching “vulnerably takes...much skill, nuance, and willingness to follow through on all the ramifications of a complicated idea” (Behar, 1996, p. 13).

I strove to create personal connections with my students so that they felt respected as unique human beings and became comfortable enough making themselves vulnerable. These positionings, according to students' interviews, were instrumental to them as they shared their perceptions. Finally, I made all activities invitational so that pre-service teachers could excuse themselves if they did not want to participate.

3.3. Data analysis

I analyzed the data using mixed methods—combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to better understand the phenomena being documented and their situated representations. Most of the analysis conducted was qualitative, starting with the documentation of the text and context of theatre games in pre-service teacher education. Part of the study employed quantitative measures with data collected via a survey. The survey sought to obtain attitudinal information regarding race and awareness of the pre-service teachers with regards to their own cultural identities. Through purposive sampling, I sought to identify changing perceptions of White pre-service teachers across time (three semesters) and space (two universities) with regards to Boalian theatre games. Respondents were asked a set of structured questions and their responses were tabulated (as reported here). There was little variance across semesters and geographical locations.

3.4. Data sources

Primarily, I documented specific events—taking field notes and coding them across semesters for similar structures and occurrences. Then I conducted inductive document analysis as I read and reread students' assignments, journal entries, and notes regarding debriefing sessions. I conducted debriefing interviews seeking to better understand the impact of the games on students' understandings about multicultural education and multicultural approaches to teaching young children. Further, I employed quantitative tools to seek further information on students' racial attitudes and understandings of ethnic identities pre- and post-games. In employing survey as a method, I wanted to describe the present situation and to account for changes occurring over time (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In using quantitative tools, the aim was “to describe a social phenomenon and to measure its incidence in a population” (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004, p. 13).

I employed *The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) and two subscales of the *Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale* (CoBRAS; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000) regarding pre- and post-games attitudes and identities. The MEIM and CoBRAS subscales were employed twice with regards to pre- and post-games attitudes and understandings of ethnic identities. Fourteen author-designed questions were added. Below I provide information regarding the CoBRAS and MEIM.

The *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* is a 12-item scale to measure ethnic identity awareness. It is typically scored on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Total scores of MEIM range and higher scores indicate greater identity awareness and commitment. According to Phinney (1992), the MEIM has a reliability of .90 among college students. The *Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale* (CoBRAS) assesses “cognitive dimensions of color-blind racial attitudes.” It consists of 20 items and presents a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Higher scores show greater levels of blindness or unawareness. The CoBRAS includes blindness to three areas: Racial Privileges, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues. I employed the Racial Privilege subscale which measures blindness to White privileges and the Blatant Racial Issues subscale which measures unawareness

of general and pervasive racial discrimination. I did not employ the Institutional Discrimination subscale. The coefficient alpha for the total scale is .91 (Neville et al., 2000).

The section below reports findings from the study using qualitative and quantitative data to strengthen understandings of the ways in which White middle class pre-service teachers came to recognize how their positions in society privileged them. Data also revealed the role of theatre games in teacher education helping unveil privilege and power and serving as a process for investigating one's own self as cultural being.

4. Playing with power and privilege: games as tools

The reason for selecting the Columbian Hypnosis and Power Shuffle games was that I had experienced resistance to pre-service teachers' identification of privileged positionings in previous semesters. I knew that unless teachers looked at themselves as cultural beings, they would not value the cultural richness their students brought to their classrooms. Initially, when I engaged in the games, I tried to abide by Boal's recommendations of paying close attention to the body. I quickly found that while that was important, I also needed to engage in debriefing as the games were not doing it all by themselves but served as tools to initially uncover unrecognized privilege and prejudice.

In reading the reflections students wrote immediately after the games, I consistently saw that White students were upset with the fact that I was "dividing the class" and fostering a "threatening learning environment" in which "no learning happened." Initially, many students did not appreciate that the activities were designed to be playful games. One wrote "she doesn't care about all kids. Here we go. Another class on teaching kids who are not like me." While such comments were not spoken by students and were anonymously written on color-coded index cards according to race, they portrayed some of the pre-service teachers' resistance to making privileges visible. Despite previous cultural memoir assignments, students still did not fully understand the need for uncovering privilege and talking about power.

While I initially felt upset about such comments, I decided to foster such connections and extend what I was doing as opposed to doing away with investigations of self as cultural beings, which I believe are foundational to teaching multiculturally. My perception was that such comments should be framed within the development of White racial identity proposed by Helms (1990, 1995) as introduced earlier in this article. While pre-service teachers had experienced Whiteness as normative and recognized many of the "taken for granted" aspects of their identities that privileged them, they engaged in disintegration that included feelings of guilt, anger, and denial. Thus, they felt that I was trying to "convert" them. Putting aside my initial reactions to their responses and situating them within Helms' (1990, 1995) White racial identity development model was important in order to move forward and delve deeper into issues of racial privileging.

Before I proceed to the post-games dialogue and explore the need not to stop at merely naming the issues (as it can lead to flammable feelings and attitudes), I want to explain what the events being analyzed looked like and how they happened. As mentioned previously, the two games were inspired by Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (2002). Because I knew the importance of discussing issues of power, privilege, point of view, and positionality while also knowing that many students refused to fully engage in such issues, I resorted to critical transformative games. Both Power Shuffle and Columbian Hypnosis were embedded in the pedagogical structure of the methods course on teaching young children and were two varieties of curricular

structures in which we engaged throughout the course (others being dialogue, jigsaw, critical review of curricula, interviews, presentations, case studies, etc.). They were each listed in our "Daily Forecast," the prediction of our class agenda.

Due to limited space in classrooms, these activities were conducted in the beginning of class. Tables were pushed against the periphery of the room and chairs faced walls. This different room set-up generated a great deal of anxiety as students commonly asked if we were going to have a test or a pop quiz (neither common in my classes). There was a great sense of relief when I explained that we would play a game and invited them to stand up.

For Power Shuffle, students were asked to line up against one of the classroom walls and invited to cross the room according to categories I (the teacher educator) called out. Categories purposely reflected socioculturally- and historically-defined privileges (e.g., American Born, Mainstream American English Speaker, Able Bodied, Heterosexual; White; Man; Grew Up in an Economically Comfortable Household). I told students that they should cross to the other side of the room if they personally felt they fit the category being called. I explained up-front that they were to define the categories and to use their own judgments regarding where to stand. Once a crossing happened, I asked students to look at who was with them and who was left behind. I also asked each of them to think about how that stance made them feel—what privileges they occupied and how that positioned them in the group. I asked students for other categories and invited them to call out categories—and they did, including "cross the room if you are a professor" which exposed one of my own privileged positionings within that setting. At the game's conclusion, I asked students to sit down and write their feelings and reactions to the game on a color-coded index card. After doing so, we took a break.

For Columbian Hypnosis, I asked for a volunteer to play a variation of "Follow The Leader" with me. After "hypnotizing" a student and being "hypnotized" by her, I invited students to hypnotize each other—the leader would place his/her palm four to eight inches away from the face of the follower and his/her fingertips aligned with the forehead of the follower. The only rules were that they could not talk and that they had to pair up with someone they did not know well so that some of the tensions of figuring out the process of leading and being led would become apparent. Students were invited to move in new and unexpected ways and lead-follow in real time. This lead-follow activity lasted 3–5 min. I asked them to pay particular attention to how it felt (as well as the difficulties and pleasures of) leading and being led. Then I asked them to switch pairs and to "lead compassionately" and "lead oppressively," each for 3–5 min while paying particular attention to how it felt to lead and be led. After 6–10 min of leading and being led, I asked them to "release the spell." At this time, I asked them both to lead and follow, which generally resulted in less risk taking. Finally, I asked them to reflect on the game by writing their thoughts on color-coded index cards.

We then took another short break (so that I could codify their comments) and engaged in dialogic deconstructing of their voices (both written and oral). These were tense times for me, as I had to quickly reflect on the pre-service teachers' actions and written comments and make sense of them in a short amount of time. In debriefing, I asked them: How did it feel to lead? To follow? How different did it feel to lead and follow at the same time? Did you tend to play one role more than the other? Did you prefer one role over another? In what ways did this exercise evoke issues related to status and/or power? Invariably across semesters, students were much more honest in their anonymous responses and preferred to lead, although during the dialogue they publicly positioned themselves as struggling with the leader role.

In this process, it was important to provide an anonymous forum for students to write down their feelings and reactions, which were by and large initially not very positive. Their comments served—along with their reactions to the game itself—as the foundation for the development of generative themes and stories. During the breaks, I read and codified their comments (many of which were thematically recurring) into one or more situations to be problematized dialogically by the pre-service teachers. Such coded narratives provided a space for us to move beyond awareness and delve deeper into issues of privilege while getting beyond the guilt and discomfort provoked by the games.

We engaged in dialogue that problematized the story/stories representing many of the issues portrayed in their written comments (Souto-Manning, 2010). Problematizing such comments as generative themes allowed me to invite pre-service teachers to consider how their initial reactions were influenced by larger socially- and historically-normalized discourses that privileged Whiteness. Dialogically, we sought to move towards taking responsibility for interrupting racism and disrupting privileges. During this time—immediately after the game and dialogue—I sought to name and forefront the ever-present cognitive dissonance, creating collective spaces for transformation.

Positioning their own written debriefings as central to our critical dialogue (albeit in a codified manner), I asked pre-service teachers to reflect on the impact their social roles (e.g., race, gender, and so forth) and cultural practices had on how they engaged in the activity. Unflinchingly, participating pre-service teachers could clearly articulate the value of this activity in understanding the complexities involved in interpersonal relationships with administrators, students, and/or colleagues. They could also associate this activity with the many issues involved in communicating across and within cultural groups.

Throughout the study, I collected a variety of data—e.g., write-ups and journal writings following the games, debriefing interviews and survey (described earlier). The findings below are supported by multiple sources, resulting in more robust claims.

5. Findings

Findings indicate the need to question students' previous responses and racial identity conceptualizations (e.g., autobiography, cultural memoir) as their understandings of their cultural locations and privileges shifted. Quantitatively, their scores on the two CoBRAS subscales employed were much lower (less than half on average) when referring to post-games attitudes. I don't compare the range of the pre-service teachers' summed scores to typical summed CoBRAS ranges (20–120 typically; 13–78 for the two subscales employed in this study) due to the absence of a subscale; yet, it is important to note that scores went from a mean of 58.5 (pre-games) to a mean of 19.5 (post-games), suggesting greater awareness of race issues and less color-blindness. In addition to becoming more aware of race issues, pre-service teachers also became more aware of ethnic identity and more committed to issues of ethnicity after playing with power and privilege through Boalian games. This was indicated by higher scores in the MEIM referring to post-games responses and lower scores referring to pre-games responses. Thus, quantitative and qualitative measures corroborate in indicating the need to dig further as students challenged their own cultural locations and reflected on the complexity of privileged positionings as well as the importance of points of view in teaching multiculturally.

As Tatum (1992) proposed, the adult anti-racist journey begins when the silence about Whiteness is broken. Consequently, participating pre-service teachers needed to step aside from locating their identities as White Americans and tease apart

through play the double location they occupied, developing a double-consciousness which is often associated with those who do not fit the so-called norm, who have a consciousness fettered by a "second-sight," obscured by a "veil" (Du Bois, 1897). The concept of double-consciousness can be brought to light in multicultural teaching to unveil and investigate issues of racial power and privilege in education—especially as ethnic studies served as foundation to multicultural education (Banks, 1995).

Overall, playing with power and privilege helped unveil the privileges of White pre-service teachers and deconstruct the idea of meritocracy (indicated qualitatively and quantitatively) while at the same time introducing a veil as they read the world in which they lived from conscious locations and positionings. Pre-service teachers could no longer play the "blame game" claiming that children were not ready for schools because their families did not care or were culturally deprived—as evidenced by initial surveys—and no longer believed in the notion of meritocracy. When referring to post-games racial understandings, CoBRAS scores suggested greater awareness of racial privileges among participants. MEIM scores suggested greater awareness of self as ethnic being and commitment to understanding the role of ethnic identities.

Author-designed items collected over three semesters indicate that 86% of White students had performed an understanding of their privileges to do well in previous university courses on multiculturalism (marking agree or strongly agree). Yet, 80% felt revolted that the Power Shuffle activity was dividing the class. As one student wrote immediately following the Power Shuffle exercise: "I think that this just served to divide the class. There's no way that this will be any different from an apartheid." But after the debriefing, students wrote that they were shocked they were unable to see how prejudiced society is and privileges are so normatized such that as Du Bois (1897) proposed; unlike Blacks, Whites only see themselves as the world. Thus, White consciousness becomes a one-ness—as there is no other world but "my world."

Findings point towards the power and possibility of engaging in games as sites for double take, for moving away from the sense of one-ness to which Du Bois (1897) referred. Boalian games provided a place to safely play with and uncover the White supremacy veil that colors what is referred to as normal. While in more serious sites such topics are avoided and challenged, games as metaphors and sites of possibility can serve as spaces to play with and consider such important issues. Playing with power and privilege through Boalian games allows for personal identities and reference-group orientations (Cross, 1991) to be recognized in the journey of locating oneself as a cultural being and as a teacher who believes in and is committed to socially just educational practices. Finally, play can be coupled with dialogue so that there is a collective deconstructing and tackling of issues. Findings indicate that combining play and dialogue—using *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal, 1979) games as codifications of and sites for problematizing status quo perspectives in combination with the dialogic practices promoted in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970)—can provide sites in which issues of double-consciousness are not only discussed but embodied by White teachers who are bound to educate children of color.

5.1. Playing with power and privilege: games as sites for double take

Quantitatively, according to lowered scores on two subscales of the CoBRAS referring to post-games attitudes of racial awareness and color-blindness, White students' surveys strongly suggested that Power Shuffle and Columbian Hypnosis were sites for questioning absolute knowledges. Despite indicating a high level of

discomfort with the games, White participants also indicated that Power Shuffle helped them see their privileges. Furthermore, they all either agreed or strongly agreed that the debriefing following the Power Shuffle game was necessary and/or essential. With regards to the Columbian Hypnosis, while over half of White students indicated that the Columbian Hypnosis game was silly and over three-fourths classified the game as uncomfortable, they were unanimous in saying that the Columbian Hypnosis helped them recognize their privileged positionings, points of view, and perspectives.

Qualitatively, in inductively analyzing the students' follow-up dialogues, index cards, and course assignments (especially weekly reflective journals), there was overwhelming representation of their understandings which correlated games and playing with power and privilege to their development of a "meta-awareness," "deeper awareness," "consciousness," and "deep uncovering" of their privileges and cultural locations. During the students' debriefing interviews, all spoke to the power of theatre games as sites to play with power and privilege and negotiate double takes (which were identified as "hot points" in the data—Cahnmann-Taylor, Souto-Manning, Wooten, & Dice, 2009). Jackie (a White pre-service student teacher) voiced: "I never took a course that forced me to look at what I didn't want to. I never thought playing would push me to consider these issues I always avoided." Jackie also articulated how the games were not high-stakes environments and allowed her to take risks that she would not have taken otherwise.

Students voluntarily crossed the room and positioned themselves in privileged positions. Students (especially White students) moved away from a sense and belief of one-ness as they walked across the classroom and realized that in most cases there were several positions and privileges. The complexity of the multiple sites they occupied was acknowledged in dialogue. In doing so, judgments about parents' practices and priorities with regard to their children's education were questioned. Recognizing the double-consciousness—these students are White and they are Americans, but being American does not make them White and White is not synonymous with American—was a struggle for students who always thought they saw the "truth" as opposed to a White-veiled perspective.

One of the important happenings was that the responsibility for discussing racial privileging was not on the back of students of color. Immediately after the games White pre-service teachers expressed discomfort and initially indicated (overwhelmingly, over the course of three semesters) that games and activities divided the class. Students of color overwhelmingly and consistently indicated (in the post-activity write-ups) that the games (especially the Power Shuffle) accentuated and made visible what was already there. Thus, such games served to point out the White supremacy veil filtering so many pre-service teachers' views of the world. In interviews, two pre-service teachers expanded on the issues. Jamilla (an African American pre-service student in her early 20s seeking early childhood certification) said:

Jamilla: You know, every class, cuz I'm one of the only African Americans, I'd always have to represent. Sometimes I felt like this is about me getting an education too, you know, not about me having to educate other people about Black children, about being Black.

Author: So, how was this in [this specific class]?

Jamilla: For the first time I felt like—yeah, I'm not the one to teach them. They are learning about other people and they are learning about themselves too. It's hard to believe. Some people never questioned things like most of the Black people in their high school coming from housing projects. It's shocking how ignorant people are.

Author: But some people were upset about the Power Shuffle.

Jamilla: Yeah, yeah, I know, but only if they were privileged. They never had to think. I couldn't not think. If I tried to forget someone reminded me—when I entered a store, like everyday stuff.

Author: So, you weren't upset?

Jamilla: No. I was really like shocked that so many people didn't see the obvious before. Games got them to do that. It took some of the threat away but still was about the difficult stuff.

Reflecting on the Power Shuffle, Catie, a White student in her early 20s, said:

Catie: Weren't we supposed to be playing? How did we get this serious? Then, when we started walking across the room I felt guilty. I could not look at the face of the people who were left behind. I was upset. I thought, what is this lady doing? She's creating a war zone in the classroom. I thought about dropping the course. But then when we started talking afterward, I saw the point. I was ashamed I never thought about all the advantages I had. I just thought I worked hard—and anyone could do it too. I'm so glad that I had the opportunity to open my eyes. I thought I saw the truth. Now while I may not know exactly what to do—I don't have a recipe for teaching diverse children, I feel like I can learn.

In reflecting on her experience, Catie directly linked the game with her ability to learn to teach children from multiple backgrounds.

5.2. *Personal identities and reference-group orientation: shuffling and playing power identities*

Cross (1991) distinguished concepts of personal identity (PI) and reference-group orientation (RGO). PI represents and involves one's thinking and feelings about their personal abilities and self-worth. RGO has to do with one's awareness, feelings, and understandings about positioning in society (e.g., racial/ethnic group). Immediate experiences shape the PI and societal values and behaviors influence the formation of RGOs. Because at large RGO is grounded on White, (mono)cultural values and paradigms (Goodwin et al., 2008), Whites experience racial superiority and benefit from RGO reinforcements of their PI.

Initially, across groups, students in this study were more concerned with reference-group orientation (RGO) than with their personal identity (PI) as indicated by lower scores on the MEIM indicating lower identity awareness and commitment (pre-games) and by what they voiced and wrote in class and in debriefing interviews. This was especially true given the shift in RGO within the context of the classroom. While White students had experienced a sense of White superiority and knowledge of racial power codes in society, they were unaware of their color-blind attitudes (according to two subscales of the CoBRAS referring to attitudes prior to the games). Thus, our community was playing with the very concept of a societally-sanctioned RGO and playing to flip the script and deconstruct the very idea of an RGO. For example, in the Power Shuffle, students found that one was not 100% privileged or lacking privileges. Privileged identities and positionings are not simple—they are rather complex. Thus, by and large White students became very conflicted as they wanted to position themselves in ways that aligned with the reference-group orientation even if it went against some of their personal identities. Initially many students saw the game complicating their identities and disrupting the neat categories (which I here call RGO) to which

they (their PI) belonged. Yet, students were free to walk across the room identifying themselves with any given description or stay with the unidentified group—without being questioned. According to their scores on the CoBRAS and MEIM, playing the game served as a tool to uncover such complexities and to develop racial awareness.

In their surveys, 2/3 of the participating pre-service teachers reported looking at each other in the “privileged” group (determined according to socially-prevalent categories of privilege) and avoided looking at those who were left behind. While White students overwhelmingly indicated that they felt more comfortable crossing than being left behind as indicated by their survey responses, during the group discussion they felt ashamed to say so, although it appears that such shame was positioned more in terms of procedural display. As one student wrote immediately following the exercise—a representative comment of a common sentiment: “It felt a little uncomfortable to be so privileged in front of all my peers.” So, together we moved to problem posing and dialogue—collectively asking why and how we could move forward while acknowledging and tackling this inconsistency between PI and RGO.

In these three classes, it became important to recognize that Whiteness was identified as a sociocultural and historically constructed norm. White supremacy was not marked as an extremist movement, but rather the establishment of Whiteness as the norm by which all others are measured—thus constructing differences in terms of deficits. White students recognized that they were playing their cards right in previous academic settings—writing and saying what their teachers wanted of them—but not necessarily positioning themselves according to their beliefs. It took stepping away from traditional academic structures (e.g., writing papers, engaging in discussions of readings) via theatre games for students to realize how conflicting their view of the worlds they inhabited had become.

As indicated in debriefing interviews, focus students came to see the ways in which their cultural backgrounds had privileged them in society coming to recognize PI and/versus RGO not only in the teacher education classroom, but in society as a whole. Furthermore, they recognized how their PI allowed them to choose to fit in RGOs because of their less visible privileged/unprivileged positionings. For example, being White allowed them positioning choice in RGO because RGO was based on privileged Whiteness.

5.3. *Columbian Hypnosis as a turning point: playing and talking, talking and playing*

In the survey, over 85% of White students indicated that before the Columbian Hypnosis they saw their point of view as the truth but subsequently came to see how their positions in society framed the way they saw things and understood issues. This was a major turning point for students in each class collectively and individually—because we were able to approach knowledge as a cultural construct and embrace humility, seeing that we needed to position ourselves as both teachers and learners while recognizing that “No one knows it all; no one is ignorant of everything” (Freire, 1998, p. 39). This was also indicated in their changing responses (pre- and post-games) to the Racial Privilege subscale of the CoBRAS.

White students saw knowledge as culture- and positionality-free, yet came to understand how positionality and point of view are socioculturally and historically located as a result of the Columbian Hypnosis game. Playing with such complex (and commonly avoided) issues allowed us to engage in dialogue that tackled issues of White supremacy without being threatening, yet was built on students’ newly found understandings. All White participants indicated that the Columbian Hypnosis game helped them recognize their privileged positionings.

After the Columbian Hypnosis—when students experienced how intentionality and impact are not always matched—students became better able to understand the validity of multiple points of view. As one of the White students wrote on a color-coded index card following the game, “So, sometimes I just wanted to say this is not what I meant. You are going the wrong way, but I was the one leading, so there was obvious miscommunication. I think that our different positions of leader and follower led to this. I can only imagine how this plays and has played out in schools. I never stopped to think about it.”

Students also indicated that they were ashamed to openly lead others. Another White student wrote: “I kept trying to place my face behind my hand so that I didn’t have to look at the face of the person being hypnotized. I know that I led other people before, but never this obvious. The openness of leading made me question what I had done before, made me ashamed to use my position to pretend that I was collaborating and learning. Now I see I was really manipulating and trying to stand my ground.” It was essential to engage in debriefing dialogue following the game because many of the students indicated feelings of shame and guilt. And as Helms (1995) proposed, it is important to reach disequilibrium—when people feel guilty and overwhelmed and “discover” that racism is real and pervasive—in the White identity development. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006) proposed that it is important to “keep in mind that the anti-racist identity journey is fluid and more spiral than a ladder” (p. 21) yet many may need to “direct their guilt and discomfort toward a positive outcome, rather than simply being paralyzed by them” (p. 23).

The aim of the problem posing and dialogue that followed our games was to avoid students’ retreat “into their oblivion about race and refusing to participate in any discussion about racial issues” (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p. 23). I wanted to question the very issues that led many White pre-service teachers to rationalize race-related issues as being the fault of people of color. In the CoBRAS, students changed perceptions of racial privileges before and after the game, presenting a much lower score on racial attitudes following the Boalian game activities. In debriefing interviews, students reflected on the need for open dialogue, for tackling issues which had been in their minds but had not come out of their mouths—e.g., “some people of color are just lazy, so why should I go out of my way to remedy their laziness?” Thus while the games served as metaphors to play with and tackle difficult issues, to move beyond reintegration (Helms, 1990; 1995), we collectively problematized assumptions, moving towards action steps (even if small—e.g., choosing books that represented the demographics of society at large; having posters in early childhood classrooms that represented a variety of racial backgrounds). This move from more abstract understandings of White privilege to actions that counter such positionings and normative references in society were pervasive in the students’ weekly journals (being mentioned by over 80% of the students in their reflections).

As indicated by qualitative and quantitative data, in this study, White middle class pre-service teachers perceived Boalian theatre games as tools to help them recognize how their positionalities in society privileged them, even if they initially saw the games as threatening and/or dividing the class. Pre-service teachers articulated that they perceived Boalian theatre games in teacher education as helping to unveil racial privilege and power. This was also indicated by significant shifts in pre- and post-games MEIM and CoBRAS scores. Thus, the impact of Boalian theatre games on White pre-service teachers’ racial attitudes and identities was meaningful as MEIM scores were much greater post-games and CoBRAS subscales scores were much lower (less than half) post-games. Thus, Boalian theatre games seriously impacted pre-service teachers’ attitudes and racial identities according to both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Strengths of this study point towards the possibility of unveiling privileged raced identities through non-threatening (Boalian) games, albeit at a deep and structural level. This study unfalteringly points towards the need to address White racial identity in teacher education courses in ways that not only foster awareness, but meta-awareness (what Freire called *conscientização*), fostering naming the issue (racial privilegings), problematizing (asking “why?”), and moving towards transformative action (considering “what if?” and “what can be done?”). Limitations of this study point towards the need to follow up and take a closer look at how the process of developing White racial identity may impact these pre-service teachers’ pedagogical practices and relationships with their students. Finally, implications point towards the need for delving deeper into issues of racial identity in teacher education using innovative approaches syncretically combined with non-threatening tools (e.g., games), resulting in deeper understandings and more serious problematizations than what had been commonly portrayed in assigned autobiographical assignments.

6. Conclusion

Through playing theatre games, White middle class pre-service teachers in this study came to recognize and begin to understand ways in which their positions in society privileged them. According to the participants’ survey responses, when combined with problem posing dialogue (with meaningful and accountable talk), theatre games in teacher education helped unveil privilege and power and served as a process for investigating one’s own self as a cultural being. Pre- and post-games CoBRAS and MEIM scores changed (CoBRAS being lower and MEIM being higher), indicating greater identity awareness and commitment in addition to greater awareness of racial privilegings at the individual and societal levels. The ways in which this started to happen are explored through the three themes that organized the findings section—*Playing with Power and Privilege*, *Personal Identities and Reference-Group Orientation*, *Columbian Hypnosis as a Turning Point*.

While playing games with power and privilege are not the only solutions to addressing issues of racial privileging (common throughout the world) available to teacher educators, I have found that they provided much needed entryways into discussions that are rarely tackled in depth. In analyzing the content of students’ journals, there was a clear indication that while students had pretended to look at their cultural identities in the past and to locate themselves as cultural beings, they were never truly able to really see how privileged they were until people in the room were physically, visibly, and voluntarily divided during the Power Shuffle. As one of them wrote: “It was a slap on my face. I could no longer ignore it.” Making the invisible visible through play was essential.

Freire (1970) proposed that to engage in transformation, it is important to start by naming the issue. Teacher educators can create spaces of change and possibility by paying close attention to the nuances of naming an issue. Concepts of authorship and ownership are key. Many of the pre-service teachers in this study had strategically subordinated themselves and pretended to play along with the agenda established by the teacher education curriculum, performing an identity and enduring for the time being. They had written papers that indicated their understanding of a double-consciousness while remaining loyal to their one-ness view of the world (Du Bois, 1897). Throughout the world teacher educators can prepare teachers to educate diverse societies by challenging status quos and creating opportunities for pre-service teachers to recognize and acknowledge the veil which colors their views of the world and privileges their positionings.

Across contexts, play can be positioned as an integral part of the teacher education curriculum and pedagogy as it provides a space of

possibility, to collectively recognize social realities, to name issues, and to negotiate (even rehearse) change. Games are a powerful way to get started—allocating time and space to demechanize the body and rethink ways of being in the world as individual human beings and as teachers who will influence and impact the social realities and futures of many children. Thus it is imperative to create spaces to name context-specific privilegings—whatever they might be.

“Games allow us to start understanding social realit[ies] and our roles in [them]. In doing so, we can start thinking about, rehearsing, and enacting different ways of acting, reacting, and being” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 61). Games such as Power Shuffle and Columbian Hypnosis may serve as tools for accessing values, beliefs, and realities shaping pre-service teachers’ views of the world, and influence the ways in which they envision their roles as teachers and the pedagogies in which they plan to engage. These games not only demechanize the body, they also serve to demechanize (and to make meta-aware) our habitual mental actions. Such information accessed through games is essential to initiate critical dialogue and collectively-envisioned transformative actions.

According to this study, engaging in and wrestling with concepts of privilege and power are meaningful processes when authored, owned, and understood by pre-service teachers themselves and not merely professed by teacher educators. In playing with power and privilege, pre-service teachers can start owning and authoring their own understandings while recognizing the(ir) privileges in society. In doing so, pre-service teachers are in an agentive position to promote change, to replay, to react, and to rewrite education in more equitable ways.

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