

This volume is solidly grounded in the observational protocols of Marie Clay and the kid-watching perspective championed by Yetta Goodman, epistemologically centered in social pragmatism of Dewey, and cognizant of Hillary Janks' big P and little p politics of assessment in modern education systems. Editors Simpson, Pomerantz, Kaufman and Ellis have assembled a team of authors who are able to illustrate, with an uncanny mix of conceptual integrity and hands-on practicality, how both pre-service and practicing teachers can become apprentices in learning how to notice what, how, and why their students are learning. Most important, the purpose of the noticing is always fixed on pedagogy – creating exactly that set of learning practices that will allow each child in their classroom care to take that next step on their pathway to becoming a confident, collaborative, and critical user of oral and written language. Without naming it as such, they have given us a model of what formative assessment can do when it is done right! Kudos to all!

David Pearson, Evelyn Lois Corey Emeritus Professor of Instructional Science and Professor of the Graduate School, Graduate School of Education, University of California, United States

I really like this book. It picks up on the essence of professional teaching practice – the relational capacity to notice, and respond appropriately to, the needs of individual learners. Across a wide range of teaching contexts, this volume provides a comprehensive theoretical frame and practical guide to teacher educators and school leaders. What is unique is the consistency of focus on the relational dimensions of teaching – supporting teachers to attend to individual learners from a position of deep theoretical and practical knowledge so that, having taken notice, they can then take action, in the spirit of practitioner inquiry.

Jo-Anne Reid, Adjunct Professor of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education, Charles Sturt University, Australia

This edited volume is the first of its kind to explore research on teacher noticing in the context of literacy. The chapters not only bring to life teacher noticing in the practice of literacy and language instruction, they also extend the meaning of teacher noticing in ways that are both theoretically and practically important as they examine the relationship between teacher noticing, teacher agency and teacher identity. This book is a worthwhile read for those with interests in the concept of teacher noticing!

Miriam Gamoran Sherin, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, Alice Gabrielle Twight Professor of Learning Sciences, Northwestern University, United States

DEVELOPING HABITS OF NOTICING IN LITERACY AND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

Research and Practice across Professional Cultures

Edited by Alyson Simpson, Francesca Pomerantz, Douglas Kaufman and Sue Ellis

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2020
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-0-367-33607-3 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-33614-1 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-32082-8 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

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5

CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF NOTICING IN A NEW CULTURE

Pre-service teachers teach in South Africa to learn to teach in the United States

Douglas Kaufman with Laura Barzottini, Jaquana Bell, Carly Burriesci, Delilah DiCioccio, Kelsey, Iwanicki, Anika Koerfer, Sierra Markelon, Nichole Pitruzzello, Ryan Simler, Shannon Tierney and Alyssa Venora

Introduction

Noticing research highlights the aspects of teaching and learning most salient to practitioners so that they may better reflect upon, and respond to, what they notice (Sherin, Jacobs, & Philipp, 2011). It prompts questions about how we can support them to notice differently. Developing the focused, receptive habits of a ‘noticer’ can pose challenges. In some regards, the conceptions of professional noticing discussed in this book rub against the way that some teachers are traditionally trained. Stereotypes that celebrate teaching as an engaging act of performance (Timpson & Burgoyne, 2014) contradict noticing practices that may sometimes appear passive as teachers observe, interpret and perhaps quietly respond to their students’ situations and needs (Jacobs, Lamb, & Philipp, 2010). Further, it takes tremendous cognitive energy to process what is going on to construct educationally powerful responses. Logistical complexities of the classroom, the need to address immediate behaviour issues and unanticipated interruptions can also interfere with noticing.

Now, add to these challenges the circumstances of a new teacher teaching abroad, operating in a new culture and trying to navigate a combination of unfamiliar languages and dialects, unfamiliar social values and different educational practices and philosophies. Political pressures may also be different, and educators may lack familiar support systems (Miller & Zhou, 2007). This was the case for 11 graduate pre-service teachers from a U.S. university teaching across literacy contexts as interns in Cape Town, South Africa. There, they worked in historically underserved township schools with the long-term goal of learning how to better teach

in U.S. schools with diverse populations. This chapter examines their challenges to notice and respond to students’ needs while simultaneously navigating new geographical, political, linguistic, social and cultural landscapes. The answers reveal an initial period of cultural dissonance that inhibited noticing and response practices and sometimes promoted deficit thinking. However, post-experience periods of reflection and discussion led to understandings and an appreciation of different educational practices, greater awareness of how institutional inequity impacts students and a desire to promote more equity in U.S. schools.

Teaching abroad and its connections to noticing and reflection as catalysts for pre-service teacher learning

A growing body of research shows that well-crafted teaching-abroad programs can help participants expand their definitions of culture, reduce stereotypes, increase agency and efficacy, become self-reflective, define education as a community-based endeavour and address cognitive and cultural dissonance (Ateskan, 2016; Marcus & Moss, 2015; Marx & Moss, 2011; Walters, Garii, & Walters, 2009). In response, the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut created teaching abroad experiences for students enrolled in its five-year Integrated Bachelors’/Masters’ (IB/M) Program, with the intent of helping them develop “intercultural competence”, which Cushner (2011) defines as “the critical knowledge and skills that enable people to be successful within a wide range of culturally diverse contexts” (p. 606). With increased intercultural competence, teachers travel more easily within unfamiliar cultural territories, communicate more articulately and with greater understanding, and collaborate with others (Marcus & Moss, 2015).

Critical to these conceptions is that these ‘unfamiliar cultural territories’ are also located in manifestations within the U.S. schools that our teachers serve. The program’s ultimate goal is to promote change in thinking and action that leads to more equitable educational experiences for culturally diverse populations of students in U.S. schools, which are currently dominated by a disproportionately white and middle-class teaching force. Ample evidence exists that children of colour or from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds often experience ‘opportunity gaps’ in public U.S. schools which propagate, in part, when teachers fail to recognise the cultural capital that students bring with them, resulting in deficit thinking and responses that privilege students who look and behave more like them (Gorski, 2018; Milner, 2012). Privilege can also limit pre-service teachers’ understandings of the systems in which they are learning to teach by diffusing their recognition of cultural, racial and language biases that do not negatively affect them in personal ways (Tatum, 2017). Because “teachers’ noticing is intimately tied to their orientations (including beliefs) and resources (including knowledge)” (Schoenfeld, 2011, p. 231) – and because their beliefs about and knowledge of the complex sociocultural dynamics at play in a diverse community or classroom may be narrowed by privilege – they may fail to notice how the system advantages some and disadvantages others. They may think the system is fair simply because it

was fair to them. Intercultural competence, then, can help teachers notice previous unrecognised funds of knowledge that diverse children bring into their classrooms and expand their understandings of the cultural systems that privilege some and disenfranchise others.

Much of the research on intercultural competence notes the essentiality of listening. Deardorff (2006), for instance, describes goals of developing abilities to adapt to different communication styles and behaviours, become flexible in thinking and communication, develop ethnorelative viewpoints and increase empathy within new cultural environments. A prerequisite to attaining these outcomes is the development and use of particular skills while being aware of the cultural arena in which one resides. Deardorff lists these skills as “[t]o listen, observe, and interpret. To analyse, evaluate, and relate” (p. 254). This terminology corresponds closely with that used in the literature on professional noticing produced by math education researchers (Star & Strickland, 2008; Sun & van Es, 2015). Jacobs et al. (2010), for instance, define professional noticing as the practice of “attending to children’s strategies, interpreting children’s understandings, and deciding how to respond on the basis of children’s understanding” (p. 172). A common element across these constructs is a deep attention to the child – a receptivity that allows the teacher to target and individualize instruction to students’ individual strengths, needs and interests, each of which are embedded within children’s sometimes vastly different sociocultural experiences and understandings.

This work also has a theoretical provenance in Schön’s classic construct of reflective practice (1983, 1987) in that both require systematic reflection on that which has been noticed to guide subsequent response and promote continuous learning growth. Criswell and Krall (2017) identify these connections and highlight Schön’s distinction between “reflection-on-action” and “reflection-in-action”

where the former indicated the capacity to reflect in retrospect and the latter the capacity to reflect in the immediacy of the moment. This suggests that reflection and noticing could be conceived as a dialectic pair of processes that could be mutually reinforcing, indicating that professional noticing might help teachers better identify what to reflect on (attending) and assist them in determining how to act upon the outcomes of the reflective process (deciding). Conversely, reflection could push teachers to more critically analyze their sense making within professional noticing (interpreting) to recognize when their biases and beliefs are impinging on those interpretations.

(pp. 23–24)

Criswell and Krall note that most of the literature on noticing focuses on in-the-moment reflection-in-action and suggest that further examination of the symbiotic potential of engaging in both modes is worthwhile. This is an important theoretical lens for this study as reflection-on-action revealed itself as a crucial component in the evolution of interns’ perceptions.

Context for learning to notice: the Cape Town program

In the IB/M program, students complete two years of general education and pre-teaching requirements then engage in education-specific coursework and field experiences across the next three years. Student teaching takes place in the fourth year. During the fifth (graduate) year, they take a full complement of courses and participate in school-based internships with the opportunity to intern abroad in cities including Cape Town. The Cape Town program comprises three fundamental phases: *pre-departure*, *immersion* and *post-return*. Emphasised across phases is the charge to engage with students, colleagues and co-citizens from a state of deep attention – an orientation that allows them to notice the characteristics and needs of others to respond to them with more educational effectiveness, compassion and respect and to create more equitable and socially just environments.

Pre-departure

Before departing for Cape Town, interns took a summer seminar that introduced them to schooling in Cape Town. They examined similarities and differences in cultural norms and educational practices and discussed the need to avoid both deficit thinking when entering areas of poverty and assuming ‘saviour identities’ – trying to ‘fix’ perceived problems. To challenge these tendencies, they explored the historical context of life in townships, highlighting the tremendous political struggles of Black and Coloured people during apartheid and how the vestiges of apartheid remain, with large populations still subject to segregation, beset with extreme poverty and deprived of opportunities from which white people benefit. To prevent fomenting an educational equivalent of ‘poverty tourism’ in which people of privilege observe regions of poverty without engaging in any meaningful interaction or collaboration with their inhabitants (Whyte, Selinger, & Outterson, 2011), the instructor, Doug, emphasised the program’s objective to *engage with, listen to and learn* from community members who have found ways to thrive within political systems that still largely work against them, discovering their effective social and political practices. In schools, the interns’ charge was to 1 notice the social, cultural and political contexts within which children resided and 2 notice children’s individual talents, tastes and needs to respond more effectively.

Immersion

In August, the cohort arrived in Cape Town to begin a three-and-a-half-month experience. They engaged in the types of situated learning experiences that Ellis and Simpson (Chapter 1) recognise as foundational to the study and practice of professional noticing. During a two-week orientation they received safety briefings, explored residential neighbourhoods, learned the cultural provenances of local foods and visited museums and cultural sites that focused on human rights and apartheid history. They also visited several townships, learning about their development, use as

a means of racial segregation, evolving social structures and their inhabitants' current work to achieve equity and social justice.

Post-orientation, the interns' typical weekly schedule consisted of the following:

- three days of teaching in township schools,
- one day of coursework, and
- one day participating in community engagement projects in townships.

The interns took courses on South African history and politics, pre- and post-apartheid educational thought and practice, and challenges facing local civil society organisations, all taught by South African educational experts. In an online seminar with Doug, they reflected upon their experiences and crafted their enquiry projects.

Post-return

Upon return to the United States, in January, the participants assumed new internship positions in Connecticut schools and took graduate courses on leadership, diversity and content instruction. They also met for a weekly seminar devoted to their work in Cape Town. Here, intensive, systematic reflection on their evolving intercultural understandings and issues of race, privilege, equity and civil rights in relation to learning and teaching in schools took place. Weekly, the interns engaged in discussion, attended presentations, read articles and examined artifacts that compelled them to revisit their Cape Town experiences from different perspectives, confronting both successes and struggles and articulating their learning through more conscious sense-making procedures. Concurrently, the seminar introduced topics and activities that connected their abroad experiences with issues of race, culture, equity and social justice in the United States. They learned the concept of 'opportunity gaps', which Milner (2012) notes occur, in part, when teachers in culturally and racially privileged positions severely narrow the focus of their noticing by ignoring race and operating only within their own cultural ways of knowing. They also read a report (Southern Policy Law Center, 2018) highlighting how these phenomena lead U.S. schools to teach difficult topics involving race and culture in only the most superficial terms, thus perpetuating traditional inequities in education. This prompted discussions about how their difficult experiences learning about race and the lives of marginalized students in Cape Town might help them broach domestic issues in more effective ways.

Finally, the reading and discussion of the book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations about Race* (Tatum, 2017) turned out to be a significant activity. It compelled them, a largely white, middle-class group, to confront personal power, privilege and implicit biases that led to unintentionally racist thinking and behaviour. Before reading, Doug made it clear that discussions would involve discomfort that was inevitable for any group challenging personal prejudices. During reading, interns composed weekly reflective 'one-pagers' through which they described their emotional and intellectual responses.

Methodology

Given this context, we asked, how do pre-service teachers develop intercultural competence when situated within a new culture? What and how do they notice and fail to notice? What factors promote or inhibit their noticing? How do they change as noticers through time?

Constructing this investigation as a part of a larger program review, we employed ethnographic and self-study methodologies employing classic inductive practices to derive themes about interns' perceptions within the Cape Town context and beyond.

Data collection

Data sources included the following:

- Reflective journal entries written by interns while abroad, which focused on successes, difficulties, and learning while teaching
- A series of four corresponding surveys tracking interns' perceptions of their noticing practices through time – core questions targeted 1 what they identified themselves noticing and 2 what experiences influenced what they noticed (or didn't) while in school (These were completed shortly after their arrival in Cape Town, in the middle of their teaching experience, at the beginning of their post-return semester and at the end of the academic year.)
- Semi-structured interviews conducted in Cape Town, which focused on interns' noticing habits, what they noticed and what factors impacted how they noticed
- A series of five written reflections completed during the pre-departure and post-return seminars, which responded to readings and discussions that connected to issues of noticing and response
- Observational notes of interns' school interactions, which Doug took during a two-week period in October to contextualise the environments in which the interns were working

Data analysis

Analysis entailed an inductive approach employing constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kolb, 2012), which required reiterative readings and code mapping (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002) of all data set items individually. We used a step process of open and focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) to reveal themes of interns' perceptions of their noticing and response activities. For instance, a data item like an answer to a survey question was scrutinized at the meaning unit level (word or sentence) to produce comprehensive lists of open code items (some of them *in vivo*). Focused coding identified relationships among these codes, revealing pattern themes in the interns' perceptions. Concurrently, to limit bias in analysis, we systematically searched for evidence that contradicted emerging patterns. Once themes emerged,

memoing was also employed to offer a comprehensive articulation of interpretations. This process was repeated in reviewing each item of each data set. (see Table 5.1)

Triangulation (Creswell, 2002) was achieved by comparing themes across data sets, which highlighted corroborating patterns. These comparisons, when scrutinized chronologically, also revealed changes in interns' perceptions of noticing and foci of attention over time.

TABLE 5.1 Example of theme-building sequence

Research question:	What promotes or inhibits interns' noticing and response?
Survey 2, question 4:	How do you think your experiences have influenced what you have and haven't noticed in your classroom and school?
Initial Open Coding:	Exs: <i>Different relationships with time/teacher's & administrators' cooler interactions /past experiences at home/accents & dialects/vocabulary/observing, 'without much context'</i>
Focused Coding: (Note: several themes could arise from the focused analysis of initial codes)	Ex: <i>Being a product of U.S. culture narrows noticing due to cognitive and cultural dissonance</i>
Memoing to Define, Describe and Explain Theme(s)	Ex: <i>All interns in some way speak to how their identities as Americans are blinding them to many things they know are there but that they don't know how to take in because of a lack of context and a sense of dissonance that they are trying to overcome. They're making hard comparisons and claim it's hard to observe from a 'neutral' POV. They tell me that it's hard to see similarities when they're wrapped up in differences.</i>
Search for Evidence that Contradicts Emerging Themes	↑↓
Comparison and Triangulation of Theme(s) with Themes Arising from Other Data Set Items	

In presenting findings, we adopted a narrative form using the interns' own words as much as possible to provide a less-filtered account of their substantial growth beyond their initial perspectives, which other students engaged in new cultural experiences also often hold (Gay, 2000). Doug thanks his writing colleagues for their desire to portray honestly a sometimes difficult journey towards new understandings.

Findings and reflections

Analysis revealed clear patterns in the interns' perceptions, documenting an evolution in thinking that increased after re-entering their home culture and engaging in the seminar. Their perceptions through time showed a growing awareness of complex issues of race and culture and their relationships to the act of noticing.

Immersion: juxtaposition and dissonance

Upon arrival in Cape Town, the interns felt immediate disorientation. Ryan commented on their plane's descent:

I recognized this city as a world of polarities and contradictions. Beautiful mountain vistas towered high in the distance while shanty towns made of old lumber, tin roofing and various other scrapped materials ringed the airport on our descent. From there the trend continued as we drove from the airport to our house. . . . On my right would be houses similar in size and appearance to those found in my hometown, while the left held more makeshift housing. The only physical separation between these two neighbourhoods being the highway we were currently traveling on. This clear division in wealth and appearance continued throughout the remainder of our orientation.

The interns marvelled at the scenery, weather, new foods, modern malls, hiking and the tourist sites. Kelsey called Cape Town the most beautiful city she had ever seen. Several commented on a church service where they had been greeted with smiles and hugs. They talked about the warmth of people who had openly welcomed them into their communities.

However, visits to several townships surrounding the city centre reminded them of the poverty that rubbed shoulders with affluence. They described their visits in deeply emotional terms. Laura wrote,

It was a humbling and eye-opening experience to see miles of informal housing and communities that were literally relocated to swamp land. . . . [A]lmost all of my students live in these communities. I can't wrap my head around six + people living in a single shipping container. The hardest part of the tour for me was [hearing] about the outhouses in the townships and how they are unsafe for girls to use at night. . . . I get upset every time I think about it. . . . If I had not been on the tour, I would have never guessed the conditions that my students live in.

Jaquana, a Black woman, wrote:

I cried. I kept seeing these Black and Brown kids that looked so much like me. They made me think about the kids I hope to have one day, and I couldn't imagine raising my own kids in such horrible conditions. I thought about some of the "ghettos" that I was raised in, and they were nothing compared to the townships. I had running water and a bathroom. A lot of kids living in the townships did not. I feel like it's very hard looking through the eyes of a Black woman in Cape Town.

Seemingly small cultural differences and local customs affected their perceptions.

People seemed *laid back and slower paced*. Carly said, "I've noticed that I want answers right away and want to be moving at a fast pace all the time, making sure that my time is being used *efficiently*". They sometimes felt frustrated with 'Cape Town Time', which

referred to the locals' seeming propensity to be late. They were bemused to hear Capetonians tell them that they would arrive at a place "just now", only to learn that the phrase meant "sometime later, or maybe not at all".

Entering their schools, a sense of cultural dissonance caused by the discrepancies between downtown and township, rich and poor, and Black and white had set in. Early in the semester, the interns frequently described what they noticed in terms of binaries: unambiguous differences between life in Cape Town and life back home, which they recognised led to classic deficit thinking. Several perceived conditions dominated their ability to notice and respond effectively:

Language barriers

The language barriers surprised many of the interns who had learned in the pre-departure course that most of their students would speak English. However, South Africa has 11 official languages, and many of the children spoke Xhosa or Afrikaans as first languages. Children's local accents, dialects, pronunciations, idioms and word definitions challenged them. The children spoke quickly and softly. It took energy to parse seemingly simple phrases. Delilah noted how her different accent affected her literacy teaching when approaching phonics:

[T]eaching the short 'a' sound to first graders is a challenge. The teacher taught them that the sound is more of an 'awe' whereas I say it more of an 'ah' (i.e., banana: 'bu-naw-naw' vs. 'ban-ann-uh'). I am nervous that I will be hurting more than helping.

Not understanding many of the words or their local contexts made it difficult for interns to form strong relationships with students and teachers. Nichole said that language "made it difficult to be an effective listener, especially at first. I was so embarrassed about how I couldn't understand the students' accents, for example, that I didn't always want to talk to them".

Anika recognised a cultural connection in her difficulty understanding teacher-student discussions:

Without understanding an interaction, I wasn't able to get a full grasp of what student-teacher relationships looked like in Cape Town. Language also came into play when I was to respond to other people or students in appropriate ways. If an argument happened between two students and they came to me to solve it, I wouldn't be able to know what actually happened because all I would get is the 'He said, She said'. Therefore, I wasn't able to react in satisfying ways, ways I would in a school in America.

Most of the teaching that Shannon observed was in Afrikaans. Empathically, she noted:

I wish I had been able to understand these lessons so I could learn from [the teacher]. Although, this did teach me what it would be like to be an EL student in a school at

home. It helped me realize how difficult it is to learn in a classroom not in your native language and made me really want to make sure I do everything possible to help my future EL students.

Differences in school culture

The interns admitted to feeling overwhelmed much of the time. They noted that they had been warmly welcomed into their schools. They described teachers who worked hard to meet students' needs and students who were enthusiastic, engaged and keenly interested in life in the United States. Students were unusually open and honest with one another and remarkably independent. Laura watched them take attendance, sweep floors and write literacy assignments on the board without a teacher present. She said, "I've yet to hear a student ask a teacher to repeat what the homework was, which is mind-boggling in comparison to students in the U.S. who ask five times even when the assignment is written on the board". However, the seemingly different cultural values and educational approaches caused angst, confusion and difficulty noticing. Alyssa noted, "I think my past experiences have caused me to notice a lot through a comparison-driven lens . . . because it is so difficult to separate the past and the present".

Teacher-student relationships

Interns perceived an unfamiliar hierarchy – a greater recognition of power differentials between teacher and student than they had experienced in the United States. They felt that this made it difficult for them to form the more personal, informal relationships that they hoped would promote more effective noticing and response. Teachers didn't explain themselves to children the way they did back home, and their tones felt more abrupt than the interns were used to. Some perceived teachers as receiving unquestioned respect. Ryan noticed how students rose to greet a teacher entering class and never talked back. He noted that it was "a habit I've never seen in any of the schools I've worked in back home". Carly said, "Their respect was nice and definitely appreciated, but it was almost too robotic to the point where it was difficult knowing how to break past that surface and actually form a legitimate relationship with them".

Relatedly, they felt that some discipline practices, such as public rebukes and suspensions for partying at home, might inhibit teachers-student relationships. Interns didn't want to act in ways that might be hurtful, but they also didn't want to offend their hosts, especially because they acknowledged that they did not yet understand the full context of what they were observing. Jaquana said, "This has been really hard for me to listen to. I want to voice my opinion, but I do not want to step on anyone's toes".

Instructional approaches

In most classes, lessons were more lecture based. Regular standardised testing took time away from getting to know students. Schools also publicly ranked students'

performance. Some practices seemed to conflict with interns' training in the United States. Laura wrote:

I think I wanted to move away from the lecture style of teaching so much that I didn't fully respond to the wants of the students and teacher as well as I could have. The students and teachers stuck to the book and wanted to practice exam questions. I found them so dry that I sometimes taught things that would not explicitly be on the test. My non-traditional methods may have confused some teachers and students. Or they may have thought I was wasting their time.

Routines, schedules and relationships with time

Used to the tightly regimented schedules of U.S. schools, the interns perceived Cape Town schedules as somewhat arbitrary. Carly analysed the effect of her 'Americanized' view of time:

I think the fact that I've noticed 'Cape Town time' is a product of American culture in general. We move very fast and pack our schedules to the brim. . . . [Y]our classes will always start and end on time and every minute of the class is being spent learning content and applying what is being learned. The teacher will never just teach for half the time and then let the students do whatever they want for the rest of the block. Time is perceived as precious and I realize how much we value it. Even though it can be good to learn from Cape Town by trying to have a more flexible, 'go with the flow' attitude towards life, it still drives me crazy sometimes – even for someone who is usually late to everything.

Students often also seemed to come and go as they pleased from class, which differed from the typical requirement in U.S. schools to receive permission to move independently.

The first few weeks of school both excited and frustrated interns. They often drew inward to find their places within a new cultural landscape and learn to communicate rudimentary messages in rudimentary ways. Resultantly, the things that they noticed seemed to them superficial to the more complex acts of teaching that they had begun to master back home. When describing their noticing, they commented infrequently about students – their struggles to find their place in an unfamiliar world often superseded the focused attention they would have given their students back home. Noticing new things about one's self made it more difficult to notice new things about others. And, while they had left the United States to learn more about culture, culture also made it more difficult to learn. Analysis revealed the internal states that inhibited effective noticing:

Cultural and cognitive dissonance

Preoccupation with cultural differences appeared to make it difficult to notice with critical comparison. Resultantly, interns initially appeared to miss many of the

similarities between home and abroad experiences. Cultural dissonance contributed to their struggles to search for complexities. Looking through the world with an 'American' lens often obscured the full picture. Anika reflected on how her experiences back home influenced her noticing:

The new, unusual, different aspects of the school stand out very apparently because of their uniqueness. I think this also hinders our ability to see similarities sometimes because we get so wrapped up in the differences of a certain place that we forget to take a step back and think, "Oh, this isn't that unusual. This isn't that uncomfortable; I've been in a situation like this before".

Lack of contextual knowledge of school systems and the cultural influences that shaped them also inhibited their understanding. One teacher told Laura not to judge what she saw in schools before she learned more about students' backgrounds and the history of South African education. The teacher pointed out several effective interactions between teachers and students and the reasoning behind them. Laura said,

As she was talking I realized that I had not noticed any of the things she was talking about. Maybe it is because I am an outsider in this country and did not grow up in the school system here. I have not seen how things have shifted for the better or worse. All my comparisons of South African schools are to schools I have been placed at in Connecticut, so it makes sense that I am picking up on different things than that teacher.

Nichole said she noticed "a lot about a few topics. If I was uncomfortable, then I noticed it a lot". Her comment here is telling: The interns were acutely attuned to unfamiliar cultural experiences that caused discomfort and also required them to expend tremendous cognitive and emotional energy simply to respond in the most basic ways – in a kind of survival response – leaving less time and energy to explore the nuances of the educational system or interact using sophisticated moves.

Feelings of isolation and helplessness

Language and culture barriers often led to a sense of isolation that impacted noticing. Laura felt isolated "in the teacher's lounge when all the teachers were talking in their home language". For Nichole, forming relationships was "always inhibited by the fact that we couldn't understand each other". Sierra felt like "an 'outsider' looking in on a classroom, never from the inside looking out".

Some noted a trade-off between the time available to notice and the importance of what they noticed. When Anika had little to do at school, she was able to explore her surroundings. "However", she said, "at the same time, because I was on the sidelines, I wasn't an active participant in the school culture and wasn't able to take in and notice more than just surface-level things".

All, at some point, described feeling helpless or unprepared. Carly sometimes felt “useless”, worrying that she wasn’t being helpful to the other teachers. Interns felt they had had little time to prepare between classes and fewer materials with which to teach. Some felt that they had been placed in environments that didn’t match their skills and backgrounds. Sierra and Anika, elementary teachers, worked in a school for children with special needs, and they felt unprepared.

Feelings of helplessness also arose from their inability to mitigate larger social factors such as poverty. Delilah worried tremendously about the well-being of her students and found it hard to focus on teaching subject matter. “*How could I focus on the material when there was a larger issue at hand?*” she said, noting students who suffered from malnutrition and disease. “*I felt helpless. What do you do? What can you do?*”

Time, distance and reflection promote more complex understandings

Given these findings, a marked shift in the focus of all interns’ commentary once they returned to the United States – as evidenced through a comparison of the data produced in Cape Town and the data produced soon after return – was significant. Upon return, they noted that they now felt more adept at analysing their Cape Town experiences because time and distance allowed them to reflect outside of a state of regular anxiety.

They indicated that as school weeks went by, they stopped noticing institutional generalities and started noticing individuals. Post-return commentary now focused on children much more than it had in Cape Town. Kelsey wrote that she eventually learned to relate to her children as more than sources of confusion:

I felt a switch to observing more so the way that my teacher taught kindergarten, including academic instruction and classroom and behaviour management. I focused on what I was seeing but then also included sections about how I would teach kindergarten if I led my own classroom.

They noted that they had eventually learned to observe their teachers, students and schools from asset-based perspectives. Delilah articulated a shift reflected in the commentary of the entire cohort:

The first day I came in I was overwhelmed with the culture shock and was lost as to what my place was. I found it easier to note what they were ‘lacking’ instead of being vulnerable and humble. Yet as I got to know the kids, staff, and layout of the school better, I was able to step back and take any new learning that came my way.

It is hard to walk in and immediately think, “I will let go of everything that I know and am comfortable with”. At the end of the semester I came to enjoy the fact that they let teachers have the breaks they deserve, and that every teacher has a different teaching style that works for them. I also remember one of the last days at [my school] I was sitting in an assembly watching students sing cultural songs and accept

awards for different skills they had achieved, and it took my breath away. I was able to sit back and think that this whole journey was not about me, or what I thought about little things like ‘classroom management’, but rather it was always about the students and their way of life. This school has built a culture and a system that works for them, and the students turn out happy and with more knowledge. This part of my experience was very humbling and needed.

Delilah also expressed a new recognition of how privilege had coloured their initial perspectives. Noting her acute initial awareness of difference, she said,

However, this got me thinking; why was it different and why were all of these little differences bothering me? Ultimately I decided that I was focusing too much on American culture and what these schools had or didn’t have in comparison. I noticed that I was judging this classroom and analyzing it from a very American and western point of view. It is so difficult to completely let go of every model and influence you have seen, in terms of education and educational facilities, and absorb a new culture wholeheartedly. My American privilege caused me to have almost a superiority complex that I wasn’t aware I even had. What if I had started my education in South Africa and then came to America later on? Would I have thought that the American system was better or worse? Would I have been picking on every detail of the day like I was while I was here? Maybe I would have thought that the way schools rush through the day was unethical, or the fact that they their school year started in September was an odd concept.

Laura wrote,

At first, I noticed the strict discipline in classrooms and how responses to teachers’ questions seemed almost robotic. I wasn’t able to see any of their individual personalities. As time went on and as I got to know the students better, I was able to notice their personalities more. I was able to teach classes without another teacher in the room and those are the times when I actually was able to see students acting like students. Or at least acting like teenagers with their own personalities and passions they were excited to tell me about like soccer and singing. I finally was able to see them freely laugh and smile. I was able to focus on the students’ interests and curiosities about me and the United States by the end of the semester.

The effect of time and distance appeared profound, offering space to examine their experiences in more nuanced and complex ways, challenging deficit perspectives and identities informed by privilege. Their commentary revealed wider understandings of teaching and learning: acceptance of other viable classroom management approaches, the logistical functioning of institutional systems and how a heightened awareness of students’ lives led to better relationships and teaching.

However, the intensive reflection that occurred over the next few months appeared to be the catalyst for even more radical transformations, which suggest

that conceptions of professional noticing can successfully include greater attention to race and culture and their relationships to social justice and equity in schools.

Post-return: discussion, reflection, introspection and transformation

Evidence indicates that the post-return work in the spring seminar contributed to an even deeper transformation of thinking. Weekly formal reflection-on-action appeared to forge more complex connections between their experiences through which they assumed new identities as social and educational activists. At the end of the semester, the interns described how readings, written reflection and discussions had influenced their perceptions of themselves as noticers, how their perceptions had changed since Cape Town and how they anticipated noticing students differently. This commentary revealed a heightened awareness of the larger social issues facing public schools, particularly those pertaining to race, class and privilege. Moreover, they clearly described the influence that their experiences in Cape Town had on what they were noticing in U.S. schools and communities.

The abroad experience now appeared to have taken on new meanings. They now described it as only a preliminary step. Kelsey called it “a jumping point to where I am now. . . . Experiencing everything firsthand, including the extreme poverty, was only the starting point to this process”. Ryan referred to it as “a research phase” and said, “Now that we’re back, the texts, discussions, and viewings have shifted focus”. Shannon said that it was only “the beginning of my awakening”. They discussed at length how the seminar had influenced their thinking about their abroad experiences. Alyssa wrote,

[G]iven the nature of our class readings and discussions, I have found myself noticing and analyzing the political climate from a teacher lens this year. In Cape Town, it was impossible to exist without noticing the state of the nation and internalizing what I was seeing. Perhaps this is because I was a White, American outsider – had I been a White Capetonian, I may have been as oblivious to injustice as many Americans are today. However, this habit developed into something I brought back to the United States and my time [in my school]. I noticed more of my focus going into students – their home lives, their cultures, etc. – what makes them unique and influences the way they act in school. I’ve simply seen my awareness skyrocket. I plan to continue developing this listening and observing side as an educator, because I believe it’s a vital skill to have in this society.

Two major themes of transformation emerged from the analysis of these commentaries. These were 1 the interns’ heightened awareness of their own local issues of race and privilege and their impact on children and communities in the United States and 2 their development of identities as social justice activists.

Awareness of U.S. issues of race and privilege and the impact on children and communities

The interns’ end-of-semester commentary revealed a much more complex awareness of critical social issues and how socially institutionalised responses to race and privilege profoundly affect the education of different children. Further, they documented an acute consciousness of a multiracial world. They also noticed social injustices occurring all around them, including in their immediate social circles. Shannon wrote,

Race comes up a lot more than I’d originally thought, but most of what I notice are ignorant comments or insensitive jokes made by family and friends. It wasn’t something that I’d paid much attention to before, but since we talk about it so much in our classes this semester, I’m more aware.

Nichole now noticed issues of race “everywhere”. She recounted a recent drive to her internship, during which she passed a work crew in the rain. All appeared to be people of Colour:

Before, I might have noticed them working. But my thoughts would have been something along the lines of, “I hope they’re ok working in this rain”! Now, however, I noticed their race – and thought about the implications as well. Privilege was at play in this scenario. Though it was not explicit, it was present nonetheless. The group was doing hard labor in harsh conditions, and not a single member was white. Statistically speaking, in this rural area . . . the person who they were working for was most likely white. There was an imbalance of power, and the people of Colour were at the bottom.

This awareness translated to school spaces, where they now recognised clear inequities in how children were treated. Reflecting on one diverse school that she observed, Carly said,

I noticed that most kids who end up [getting suspended] are students of Colour. Most of the students I find getting yelled at by a teacher and/or administrator in the hallway as they are being physically dragged into the school psychologist’s office are also children of Colour. There are always security guards . . . who ‘crack down’ on the ‘problem children’ or remove them from the class entirely. These kids are, generally, not White. Before this year, I probably would have thought, “Geez, these are bad kids. They always get in trouble. What’s wrong with them”? I usually placed blame on the student and would not have connected it to my own subconscious, racist preference for White kids. But now my mind wonders . . . “What happened to them? There has to be a reason for why they act a certain way. Why doesn’t the school better accommodate their needs”? There is almost always a back story behind a child’s behaviour.

Laura said that the relationship between her experiences in Cape Town and the spring seminar had helped her see deep inequities of opportunity back home. She described a before-school enrichment class offered to students. “*However*”, she said, “*they are only allowed to attend if they are recommended and then are able to get a ride into school before the buses come*”. Those who had fewer transportation options were shut out. Laura recognised inequitable divides in the school’s tracking system and said, “*This program seems to deepen those divides. My experience abroad and this semester have made more critical about both advantages and disadvantages that students have in school*”.

Jaquana pondered the closing of a school that served a predominantly Latinx community but was being converted to a charter school for a largely white population:

I think about all the kids that are left voiceless and what they look like. The conclusion that I have come to is that oftentimes, it is our Black and Brown children. The children living in townships in Cape Town and the students living in racially segregated neighborhoods. . . . The lives that these students are born into are filled with systematic microaggressions that they have to learn to understand.

The development of identities as social justice activists

As the interns articulated their new awareness of race, privilege and social inequity, they also talked about translating awareness into action. Kelsey said,

This process is becoming not only a noticer of social injustices, but also an activist and accomplice. (A few weeks ago I would have used the word ally, but after reading a [blog thread in class], I was persuaded to think that an ally is a passive term and I would rather be an active accomplice.)

Reading Tatum’s book and studying current events such as the youth march on Washington, in response to the Parkland, Florida, school shooting, inspired Kelsey to join the local #MarchForOurLives movement. Sierra discussed her attempt “to be more active in the political sphere”. Carly planned to teach activism through documentaries and books like Tatum’s. Contemplating the nation’s history of racial oppression, she did not want to “shy away from the truth of what *actually* happened”. Later, she wrote:

I want to be an ally to those continuously affected by institutionalized racism and be a teacher that not only listens well, but takes action to provoke change. Without the experiences of Cape Town, I do not think that I would care so much about human rights and social justice in the United States. I want to take our history into account and break the cycle of White normalization and partiality.

Conclusion

For teacher educators, the lessons from this small-scale study suggest the importance of several programmatic features. Allowing multiple opportunities and time for students to notice and time for their noticing skills to develop appeared essential. The

year-long examination of listening and learning across the three phases of the program, and the interns’ opportunity to reflect after leaving the navigational challenges of the immersion phase, heightened awareness. Explicitly and directly attending to noticing – both of children’s learning during teaching and of the sometimes hidden systems, values, cultural influences and socially constructed assumptions that shape how learning and instruction happen in the classroom – was also critical. The interns’ final commentaries spoke to the value of our explicit attention to noticing and response to changes in mindset. Relatedly, encouraging formal reflection, before during and after an experience, using a variety of prompts and activities, offered multiple lenses through which the interns revisited and re-thought their experience.

These lessons support those of others in this volume and serve to illustrate how formal, explicit, reflective practices can sharpen teacher candidates’ noticing of students’ needs and improve their ability to adapt instruction. Gonzalez, Pomerantz & Rice (Chapter 2), for instance, designed effective protocols for students to reflect on their instruction in conferences after teaching lessons.

However, they also suggest a need to look deeply at the processes of learning as events influenced by cultural contexts and states of mind. The reflection-in-action that the interns attempted in Cape Town was constrained by immediate concerns about adequately negotiating new cultural spaces with unfamiliar rules. Post-return reflection-on-action in more culturally familiar territory that did not tax cognitive and emotional resources promoted much deeper conceptions of the social spaces of schools and the interactions within them.

When this reflection focuses more broadly on one’s membership in school communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) that are culturally situated, it may facilitate successful participation in those communities and lead to the noticing of inequities that negatively impact children’s educational opportunities and growth. In particular, post-experience reflection-on-action, in which participants interpret and reimagine the unfamiliar cultural experiences, may be essential to the development and sustenance of intercultural competence that supports diverse students in schools (Marx & Moss, 2015, 2017; Wilson, 1988). Further, the enhanced noticing skills that accompany intercultural competence may not fully develop during the relatively short-term experience of a semester-abroad program. Experiences that remove teachers from cultural comfort zones may, in fact, initially slow the development of professional noticing skills. However, a careful examination of the experience after it is completed may greatly expand noticing skills and the scope of what is being noticed, including vistas of class, race, language and culture, and lead to instruction that is more equitable and socially just.

This may be critical to conceptual growth in the field of noticing. In Chapter 1 of this volume, Ellis and Simpson describe Shulman’s (2015) self-criticism of his theory of pedagogical content knowledge as inadequately attending to “the moral, emotional, social and cultural aspects that . . . govern how teachers act” (p. 7). This chapter suggests one means of address as teachers develop stronger moral identities while learning to notice and challenge encultured institutional inequities in the pursuit of more equitable and just education.

At the end of the semester, Ryan encapsulated the growth of these identities in the interns:

[N]ow it's all about unpacking that experience and deciphering the meaning and gravity of what we actually observed. As a result I can now look back on moments from Cape Town and, both mentally and orally, unpack them with my colleagues. In the moment I was just observing; I lacked the skills necessary to effectively analyze what was going on around me or properly acknowledge the unspoken structures of privilege.

Going through this process I am now left with a set of skills I believe many other teachers may lack through no fault of their own. All three years of my college career it was said that "teachers must truly listen to students" and until recently I thought I knew exactly what that meant. Now, I understand that I had no idea the depth of what truly listening and noticing your students meant. Not only can I notice, but also I believe I can begin to unpack and analyze what's happening with students rather than assuming they're simply having a bad day or they're just not great at spelling.

"Looking deeper and listening to my students' needs", Ryan said, would help them "fulfill their greatest potential".

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