"I had no idea": Developing dispositional awareness and sensitivity through a cross-professional pedagogy

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This research scrutinized the diffusion of a medical education pedagogy to the context of teacher education. Specifically, it focused on the use of standardized parents as an emerging pedagogy in teacher education. Preservice teachers taking part in a six case, fifteen-week intervention showed advances in multicultural awareness and ethical sensitivity as they engaged in multiple simulated parent–teacher conferences. Implications center on the use of this pedagogy within teacher education contexts to further advance the professional dispositions of teachers as they prepare to teach in diverse scholastic environments schools. © 2009 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The increasing ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic diversity within schools offers potential for more integrated and inclusive communities (NCES, 2007; Villegas, 2007). While school leaders are responsible for fostering scholarly cultures that welcome diverse populations, teachers enact such culture through professional, invitational, and inclusive dialogue with students and their families. Professional dialogue begins with teachers' awareness of, and sensitivity to, the diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and disability demographics of students and their families. Based on this foundation of awareness and sensitivity, teachers are limited only by the degree to which they possess the skill sets to engage in productive dialogue with parents and caregivers, their primary allies in the support of student success.

The research base on parent involvement clearly demonstrates positive scholastic improvements for students (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002; Epstein, 2001; Finn, 1998; Garcia, 2000; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Keyes, 2004; Pape, 1999; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007; Witmer, 2005). While scholars associated with this established research base are actively scrutinizing and promoting the connections between schools and families, such connections are often only tacitly addressed by teacher preparation institutions (Epstein, 1995; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Simply

stated, teacher preparation institutions fall short of helping teachers acquire and develop the necessary interpersonal skill sets to engage and communicate with families (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; MacLure & Walker, 2000; McBride, 1991; McMurray-Schwarz & Baum, 2000; Nathan & Radcliff, 1994; Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997; Tichenor, 1998). Failure to prepare future teachers to communicate with families through verbal and written mediums is compounded by the fact that familial demographics are increasingly different than those of novice teachers. While the population of students continues to diversify across socio-cultural contexts (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, marital status, dis/ability, religion, etc.), those who are preparing to teach them have not experienced the same diversification. Despite increased efforts at recruitment, teachers preparing to enter the profession continue to reflect the majority culture (Van Hook, 2002; Villegas, 1991, 2007).

The increasing cultural diversification, the continued importance of parent involvement, and the paucity of teacher preparation in school–family communications, constitute a complex intersection for teacher preparation institutions. As Epstein (2001) notes, these factors point to the question of how teacher preparation institutions can best support interactions between teachers and diverse groups of parents/caregivers. In consideration of these three factors and Epstein's seminal question, the reporting researcher designed a teacher education pedagogy that provides preservice teachers – individuals who are still in teacher preparation programs and are not yet licensed – with multiple opportunities to practice, reflect upon, and further develop interpersonal skill sets to communicate with

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the simulation (Dotger et al., 2008). It is important to note that while the SP's verbal triggers are scripted, it is impossible to anticipate and prepare for all that the unscripted teachers will say. Thus, SPs are given extensive background context on their character and are provided and trained on additional contingency responses that they may or may not employ in conversation, depending of the verbalizations of the teacher.

The simulated parent–teacher conferences occur within Central Medical University's (CMU) twenty-two room Clinical Skills Center, a facility designed specifically for staging and recording medical standardized patient simulations. Immediately prior to a simulated parent–teacher conference, each participating teacher responds to three pre-conference questions that target the teacher's goals, anticipations, and concerns/questions. Computer-based completion and electronic submission of these questions automatically turns on recording microphones and cameras in a designated conference room. The teacher enters the room and is given a few moments to prepare for the simulation before a designated SP is cued to enter the conference room from a second door. When the SP enters, the simulated conference unfolds and the resulting captured audio/video data is stored on CMU servers for later reflection on the part of the teacher. Following the simulated conferences, each teacher immediately engages in a semi-structured debriefing with the reporting researcher or an advanced graduate student. This debriefing focuses on the teacher's responses to the pre-conference questions and also poses additional questions to prompt teacher reflection on his/her conferencing strengths and areas for improvement. Like the simulations, these debriefings occur in a designated conference room and are recorded for later analysis by both the teacher and researcher.

Participating teachers exit the simulation–reflection process with digital access to their recorded data, along with written formative feedback from their respective SPs. Upon leaving, they have one week to carefully review their recorded simulations and to construct written reflections on what they said and how they said it, carefully scrutinizing their verbalizations, non-verbal mannerisms, and professional decisions and policies shared with the SP. One week later, their reflections are analyzed through video excerpts of their simulations during a large group session. At the conclusion of this large group reflection period, the next PCM case's interaction protocols are distributed to the teachers, setting the stage for another simulation–reflection sequence.

As noted earlier, this manuscript focuses on the potential development of preservice teacher dispositions through the PCM pedagogy. What follows is the methodology supporting the research questions, including the sample, measures, procedures, and analyses associated with data collection.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

Each teacher participant was a preservice teacher at a private, urban university in the northeastern United States at the time of data collection. There were 11 females and two males, ranging in age from 19 to 22, with a mean age of 20 years and 5 months. One participant identified himself as African American, with the other participants identified themselves as European American. All teacher participants ($n = 13$) voluntarily enrolled in the semester-long PCM intervention – the PCM was not a part of their prescribed teacher preparation curriculum, but was made available as an official elective course. Upon completion of the PCM, each participant received one credit hour toward completion of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Masters of Education (M.Ed.) degree and corresponding teaching certification. The participants' pseudonyms,

gender, levels of education, and professional concentrations are identified in Table 2.

2.2. Measures

This study employs both quantitative and qualitative measures to examine the research questions focused on multicultural awareness, ethical sensitivity, and ethical judgment. The researcher approached these questions using Creswell's (2003) Concurrent Nested Model, where one predominant method of data collection is supported by a contrasting embedded – or nested – method of data collection. The investigator approached the questions related to multicultural awareness, ethical sensitivity, and ethical judgment through the predominant use of instruments designed and validated to measure these specific constructs in a pre/post-intervention format. Importantly, these instruments have been used frequently within the field of teacher education and beyond, scrutinizing constructs such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and socioeconomic status. In support of these quantitative measures, the researcher collected a large amount of qualitative data across the fifteen-week PCM. Originally, the qualitative measures were employed to inform self-reflection and guide development of the teacher participants as they reflected upon each PCM case verbally and in written form. However, as the PCM intervention unfolded, the qualitative measures provided the reporting researcher with a comprehensive research lens into the teachers' understandings and misinterpretations of the different socio-cultural contexts presented across the six PCM cases. In consideration of their explanatory power of the PCM experience and in recognition of the research questions related to awareness, sensitivity, and judgment, the qualitative data serve as the nested set of data that further illuminate the quantitative data.

What follows is a detailed description of both the quantitative and qualitative measures.

2.2.1. Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS)

The Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) focuses on how teachers advance in their awareness and understanding of ethnic diversity and the degree to which they work to foster supportive multicultural classroom processes and climate that are sensitive to race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic interactions. The TMAS is a 20-item instrument designed specifically to measure teachers' degrees of multicultural awareness and sensitivity {internal consistency alpha of .86 and test–retest of .80}. Data are often reported in pre/post-intervention fashion, with appropriately applied statistical measures (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998).

2.2.2. Racial/Ethical Sensitivity Test (REST)

The Neo-Kohlbergian Four Component model (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999) posits that ethical sensitivity is the first of

Table 2
Teacher participant pseudonyms and professional demographics.

Teacher participant	Gender/level of education	Professional concentration
Susan	Female/Junior	Mathematics Education
Will	Male/Junior	Social Studies Education
Lisa	Female/Junior	Social Studies Education
Leslie	Female/Junior	Mathematics Education
Mandy	Female/Senior	Mathematics Education
Anna	Female/Junior	English Education
Mitchell	Male/Junior	English Education
Alice	Female/Senior	Social Studies Education
Peter	Male/Junior	Social Studies Education
Denise	Female/Senior	Social Studies Education
Christy	Female/Masters Student	Mathematics Education
Janice	Female/Senior	Mathematics Education
Casey	Female/Sophomore	Elementary Education (K-6)

four psychological processes that gives rise to observable moral/ethical behavior. The Racial Ethical Sensitivity Test is a five-scenario instrument designed to measure the degree to which an individual is able to recognize moral/ethical situations related to race or ethnicity, centering specifically on a person's degree of awareness and sensitivity to such contexts (Sirin, Brabeck, Satiani, & Rogers-Sirin, 2003). Extensive work with the REST (Bebeau, 1994; Sirin et al., 2003) demonstrates a Cronbach alpha of .82 and outlines distinct differences between the REST measurement of ethical sensitivity and the DIT-2 measurement of subsequent ethical judgment. Like the DIT-2, the REST has been used within the professions of dentistry, counseling, medicine, nursing, and education (Maher, 2005).

2.2.3. Defining Issues Test (DIT-2)

Moral/ethical judgment represents the second of the four Neo-Kohlbergian components toward professional and moral behavior (Rest et al., 1999). Based on Kohlberg's early postulates on moral development, Rest et al. (1979) designed the Defining Issues Test (DIT) to measure shifts in moral schema as adults mature toward complex, integrated socio-centric perspectives focused on the tenets of fairness, democratic values, and social justice (Elm & Webber, 1994; Narvaez & Bock, 2002). The DIT is a six-dilemma assessment that asks respondents to rate and rank the importance of twelve items in determining a course of action. Thousands of studies employing the DIT across the professions of medicine, dentistry, law, and education (Bebeau, 2002; Reiman & Peace, 2002; Rest & Narvaez, 1994) result in reliability coefficients ranging from .70 to .80 (Elm & Webber, 1994). Data are often interpreted by a weighted "P-score," reflecting the degree to which post-conventional items are selected over other items during the respondent's reasoning processes (Rest et al., 1999).

2.2.4. Qualitative measures

QuickTime video recordings resulted from each teacher's interaction with each of the six PCM standardized parents across the fifteen-week intervention. In addition, each simulation was supported by three additional reflections sessions – dyad debriefings, whole-group debriefings, and individual written reflections. Dyad and whole-group debriefing sessions were also recorded via QuickTime technologies. Individual teacher reflections were constructed in traditional written form and submitted to the researcher. The qualitative data examined in this study encompasses eighteen hours of recorded dyad and whole-group debriefings, and fifty-two pages of written reflections. Note that the recordings of the actual simulated interactions have been and continue to be under scrutiny through other related research questions, but the nature of this study's research questions necessitate close examination of the post-simulation videos and written reflections.

2.3. Procedures

To begin, PCM participants first engaged in two one-hour forums with the primary researcher. During the first forum, the simulation process and standardized individual pedagogy were explained verbally and in written form. Following this explanation, the REST pre-intervention assessment was given. In an effort to avoid test fatigue, the TMAS and DIT-2 assessments were given during the second one-hour forum that occurred one day later. At the time of this second forum, the PCM participants were provided with the interaction protocol for their first PCM case to take place six days later. General orientation questions were answered. Participants questioning how to approach this first simulated interaction were encouraged to do so "…from your professional judgment and experiences to date." Six days after this pre-intervention orientation and assessment,

the participants began the PCM experience. Table 1 outlines the six distinct PCM simulations in which all participants engaged.

Immediately following teachers' simulated interactions with a given standardized parent, the teachers' verbal dyad debriefings unfold in a semi-structured format, including questions from the researcher regarding teachers' goals prior to the conference, exemplar lines of discourse from the simulated interaction, teachers' perceptions of success, and teachers' awareness of socio-cultural variables (race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status). One week later – after the teachers have had the opportunity to review their individual recordings of their simulated interactions – they also engage with the reporting researcher to reflect on and constructively critique their past verbalizations with a given standardized parent. These whole-group debriefings are unstructured; the resulting conversation stems unfold in accordance to teachers' questions, dilemmas, deliberations, and successes and are intentionally not shaped by the researcher. Finally, after each simulated interaction and the follow-up whole-group debriefing, participants constructed and submitted to the researcher a written reflection that outlined strengths, areas for improvement, and primary learnings. One week following the completion of the sixth and final PCM simulation, two final one-hour debriefing forums were facilitated by the primary researcher. At the beginning of each of these two concluding forums, the REST, TMAS, and DIT-2 post-assessments were given, following the data collection pattern instituted at the beginning of the PCM.

2.4. Analysis

Analysis of the TMAS data was conducted by the reporting researcher in conjunction with the procedures outlined by Ponteroto et al. (1998), resulting in pre/post-intervention data on participants' multicultural attitudes and awareness. Analysis of the DIT-2 data was conducted by the Center for the Study of Ethical Development at the University of Minnesota, resulting in pre/post-intervention data that delineate participants' degrees of post-conventional moral/ethical judgment. Analysis on the REST data was conducted at its development site (Boston College), resulting in pre/post-intervention data that indicate participants' degrees of ethical sensitivity. Due to the small sample size ($n = 13$), a Cohen's d measurement was calculated for each data strand, followed by two-tailed t-tests of statistical significance.

Although both quantitative data and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, Creswell's (2003) Concurrent Nested Model positions one method above another in accordance with the research questions. In this work, the qualitative data are nested within the broader quantitative framework of multicultural awareness, ethical sensitivity, and ethical judgment. Thus, analysis of the qualitative data began with the influence of the three quantitative constructs as primary codes.

Operating from the transcripts of the debriefings and from the teachers' written reflections, the researcher initially broadly coded for examples of multicultural awareness, ethical sensitivity (to race, class, gender) and ethical judgment (i.e. decisions made where a moral dilemma is perceived to be present). This initial coding of the post-simulation qualitative data resulted in a very clear trend. Essentially, the quantitative distinction between multicultural awareness and ethical sensitivity was blurred when these quantitative constructs were initially applied to the qualitative data. Teachers' used language like "…being more aware of…" and "…need to be more sensitive to…" interchangeably, suggesting a collective increase in attention and sensitivity to the socio-cultural contexts of race, SES, gender, religion, peer inclusion, familial structure, dis/ability, etc. At times, the teachers clearly noted the macro-context, specifically writing or stating that the simulation addressed issues

of race, gender, SES, religion, etc. More typical, though, was the verbal and/or written allusion to the macro-context through micro-contextual language, where the teachers might identify the broader context (race, class, gender, family structure) by reflecting on a single tenet, an approach to, or a unique understanding of a micro-context. For example, Leslie reflected on her conversation with Donald Bolden as they worked together to address Leslie's emotional struggles related to body image and peer exclusion; "But when he asked me what he should in order to monitor Leslie's behavior, I was at a loss for words…there was a point during the conference where I told him that sometimes there was nothing they (counselors and therapists) could do. I should have let him make that decision for himself." Note that Leslie never specifically names the macro-contexts of *gender* and *inclusion* in this specific statement, but instead focuses on a single tenet related to these contexts – finding professional mechanisms to monitor this student – while also self-critiquing her verbal approach to such mechanisms.

Presented with the dual representation of macro-contexts identified by teachers and micro-contextual understandings on the part of the teachers, the researcher returned to the collective awareness and sensitivity data to more closely examine them for both commonalities and distinctions related to both the identification of macro-contexts (i.e. awareness of race, class, gender, etc.) within the simulations, but also the potential for more specific micro-contextual trends in the data. Three very distinct themes emerged from this additional examination of the data on multicultural awareness and ethical sensitivity – *awareness of issue*, *approach to issue*, and *new sensitivity/understanding*.

In considering the analysis of data related to ethical judgment, it is important to note that ethical judgment – one's ability to make the socially-just, democratic, morally-defensible choice in a complex decision – hinges first on one's sensitivity and awareness of such a moral dilemma (Rest et al., 1999). Consequently, the initial broad coding for ethical judgment resulted in a very defined set of data, where the teachers' verbalizations and written reflection focused very distinctly on the application of multicultural awareness and ethical sensitivity to making decisions within – or reflections on – the simulated parent–teacher interactions.

3. Results

Data from the REST, TMAS, and DIT-2 are reported below in Table 3. The mean scores for all three instruments are provided, followed by their respective pooled standard deviations, calculated Cohen's *d* effect sizes, and *t*-tests of statistical significance.

Reporting of these data is based on the range of effect sizes delineated by Cohen (1988) (i.e. small effect size as $d = .2$, medium as $d = .5$, and large as $d = .8$). These data show large and moderate effect sizes for ethical sensitivity (REST) and multicultural awareness (TMAS), respectively, suggesting increases on the part of the PCM participants in their awareness of and sensitivity to the socio-cultural components embedded within the PCM cases. That is, as the PCM cases unfolded and participants encountered parents who presented varied socio-cultural contexts (race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, marital status, disability, etc.), they became more attuned to these contexts. The measurement of moral/ethical

judgment (DIT-2) shows a small effect size, indicating a very slight increase beyond sensitivity to the PCM contexts to the subsequent crafting of moral/ethical judgments within those contexts.

The value of Creswell's (2003) Concurrent Nested Model lies in its ability to expand upon – in support of or contrast to – the primary method of data collection. In this work, the post-simulation reflections and debriefings serve as the nested qualitative structure that illuminates the TMAS, REST, and DIT-2 data. We turn to examine qualitative exemplars that represent the themes of *awareness of issue*, *approach to issue*, *new sensitivity/understanding*, and *ethical judgment*.

Awareness of the issue: "I don't think I was prepared"

Teachers very commonly noted their lack of awareness to how issues of race, class, gender, familial structure, dis/ability, inclusion, and religion are manifest within common classroom contexts. Denise's words best capture this sentiment:

"I don't think I was prepared to have a man cry in front of me the way he did. The seriousness of his emotion was surprising and it really made me think about my role as an educator. This case (Donald Bolden) showed me that many issues going on in the student's personal life will have a very real impact on their behaviors in school as well as their general well-being…it made me realize that a teacher's job is much more than just teaching someone a concept or skill"

Denise's use of "surprising" and "realize" reflect a lack of awareness to how seemingly-distant socio-cultural issues unfold through very personal interactions with parents and students. Following her interactions with Angela Summers – a physically abused mother who is concerned about her son's emerging verbal violence – Janice uses similar language in reflecting, "What I realized in this conference is that I can often be naïve. Seeing a bruise on someone's face would not normally make me assume that they had been intentionally harmed. From now on, I need to recognize these signs." As these new realizations emerged, teachers also noted increased awareness to the variety of interwoven issues found in the PCM cases. For example, the case of Jim Smithers addresses alternative assignments and text censorship through the lens of a religious-minded parent. While Leslie quickly identified the religion and gender macro-contexts – "Religion was clearly a huge underlying issue of this conference, but I felt that gender played a large role as well" – other teachers focused in on the interwoven micro-contextual issue of censorship. Susan states, "This conference tested how I will address censorship in my classroom, especially with regard to religion and to some degree how I would challenge the beliefs of a patriarchal household with the patriarch himself." In similar fashion, Peter's reflection on the Angela Summers case highlights the macro-context (inclusion) through the interwoven micro-contexts of bullying and peer groups. He noted, "This case brought out quite a few issues. One of those issues is bullying… ★ Bullying no longer requires a physical act, it is very much now a psychological thing, especially when it deals with classroom cliques and who is included and not included…it is important for me to keep an eye out for those students."

Approach to the issue: "…I acted like I knew…"

As teachers reflected on the different socio-cultural contexts emerging from their simulated interactions, they also noted awareness to how they approached these contexts. Janice reflects on speaking with Lori Danson regarding the inclusion of her son with autism in the general education classroom. "One thing I clearly struggled with was how to say things correctly. At one point, I made a comment like 'students like him.' After I said that, I realized that I was singling her son out and made it seem like he was different from

Table 3
Pre/post-PCM intervention effect sizes and tests of significance.

Test	Pre/post-mean	sd (pooled)	Cohen's *d*	Significance (2-tailed)
REST	3.60/4.48	.28	3.14	.000*** ($T = -11.22$)
TMAS	79.63/83.90	6.04	.71	.058 ($T = -2.141$)
DIT-2	44.66/46.12	10.49	.14	.614 ($T = -.518$)

***$p < .001$.

everyone else." Reflecting on her approach to Jenny Burton – an impoverished single mother working three jobs – Lisa plainly stated, "I acted like I knew what I was talking about in that I started giving Jenny advice about divorce that I had no grounds to give…I was very final in my diction. I told her that it (the divorce) was probably what was causing his distress." Christy critiqued her approach to Donald Bolden's concerns for his daughter, noting, "I did not take Laura's emotional distress seriously enough. I may not be a psychologist but when someone is upset for weeks, I should know that there is an iceberg of feelings hidden beneath the surface." Leslie notes her striking assumption and defensive approach *prior to* conferencing with Jennifer Turner over concerns about classroom practices. "I remember that when I read this case and saw that she was an African American, it made me think that no matter what, race was going to come up in this conference guaranteed. To my surprise, nothing was brought up about this subject whatsoever."

New understanding and sensitivity: "I'm aware now…"

The teachers' post-conference debriefings and written reflections consistently reflected emerging sensitivities and understandings about professional practice as it relates to working with both parents and students. Several teachers stressed the importance of and sensitivity to compromise, the danger of assumptions, the complexities of parent–student relationships, and the subtleties of teacher–parent conversations. Janice's words best capture these understandings; "Just because a parent may appear uninterested, there may be something else that is wrong. I was frustrated throughout the conference because I thought that Angela (Summers) did not care. However, she was uncomfortable because there were things going on (at home) that I did not know about." Janice's tacit references to boundaries is more explicitly outlined through Leslie's reflection following her conversation with the same parent; "I started asking questions about her personal life…I'm aware now that this is crossing a line…I noticed her becoming very quiet and defensive and then I realized I had hit another soft spot." Looking closely at the structure of Leslie's response, one can see an emerging understanding/sensitivity preceded by her critique of what she said to that mother. As an additional example of this type of response pattern, Lisa admitted her (religious) bias with a renewed sensitivity to student needs; "…but it was easy for me to test Mr. Smithers, as I personally don't support (his religion), which shows me I need to approach these controversies more equally. My personal preferences and ideas should not get in the way of a fair assessment of student needs and accommodations." Denise's meta-analytic comment best captures this trend of new understandings and sensitivities to parent–teacher interactions and complex socio-cultural issues:

"People with very strong cultural, political, or religious beliefs may be very challenging, but I realized that succeeding in interactions with them does not always mean that they will walk away agreeing with you. Sometimes success simply means coming to an amicable agreement on tough issues and staying clear of negative attacks and challenges."

Ethical Judgment: "…I struggled with that decision."

Data coded as ethical judgment demonstrated an important bridge from socio-cultural awareness/sensitivity to ethical decision-making informed by such awareness and sensitivity. In conference with Jennifer Turner, teachers faced a mother who requested amended assignments and extended deadlines for her daughter. Lisa noted the complexities of such a request; "I kept the rest of the class in mind in giving her (Amber Turner) an extension and not subjecting other students to an unfair change of academic rigor and expectation." Importantly, Lisa follows this statement by expanding on the ethical ramifications of differentiating assignments for students, noting "I

need to work on making sure my treatment toward one (student) would be fair for all. Even if accommodations are unique to the individual, the question is whether or not it's fair." Other teachers struggled with whether or not to grant Mrs. Turner's request. Susan noted, "Although I was proud that I did not 'cave' under Mrs. Turner's pressure for an extension of assignments…I do not necessarily believe that my lack of compromise was the best decision." Similarly, Christy and Janice wrestled with this decision in their respective comments, "There is a slippery slope I approached by allowing Amber to hand in the assignment late. It's necessary to be explicit with the student and parent on my policies…" and "I ended up giving her daughter (Amber) a few extra days, but I struggled with coming up with that decision." Reflecting back on their responses to Jim Smithers' request for removing a text, several teachers wrestled with the broader dilemma of access to curricula in light of family structures and belief systems. Leslie specifically commented on how she verbally distinguished between an alternative assignment for Smithers' daughter verses limiting all students access to the text. "I was happy that for a few minutes I was able to stand my ground and not give in to changing around the book for the entire class." Similarly, Janice reflected on how her decision was predicated on being sensitive to Allison Smithers' right to access curricula and the right to speak for herself (as a student); "I did not want to automatically give her (Allison) another book without speaking to her." Similarly, Denise's decision to provide an alternative assignment was predicated on sensitivity to the Smithers family's religious beliefs; "Given their strong religious convictions, it would have been inappropriate for me to force her (Allison) to read the book." Peter emerged from his conference with Angela Summers – where he faced an abused mother who was concerned about her son's emerging verbal violence – citing the tension between his original promise of confidentiality juxtaposed with his decision to ultimately protect the student in question:

"This case opened up an entirely complex issue for me. This was a very tough case because it dealt with issues such as the protection of life verses trust, and abuse in the home…I am all about keeping my word (of confidentiality) and when I tell someone I will not do something, I feel they are holding me to those words. I would not like to betray the trust that someone placed in me. I would feel very uncomfortable after I reported to the authorities what was going on. I would find it hard to look that person (that parent) in the face after that. I am not saying I would not report abuse if I suspected it. I am just saying that I would have a hard time dealing with all the guilt I feel for giving out information that I promised I would keep confidential."

4. Discussion

This manuscript focuses on preservice teachers' potential growth in multicultural awareness, ethical sensitivity, and ethical judgment. We turn first to scrutinize the development of teachers' awareness and sensitivity to socio-cultural contexts within the PCM.

The moderate positive effect size shown in the TMAS results (.71), coupled with the very large effect size shown in the REST results (3.14) suggest that the PCM did raise awareness and increase sensitivity to socio-cultural contexts. That said, it is important to more closely examine how this heightened awareness and sensitivity were developed. Referring back to the cases outlined in Table 1, the PCM does *not* simulate teacher–parent interactions that focus solely on classroom-based dialogue. Instead, each PCM case is crafted from the real-life complexities of active school teachers, whose interactions with students and parents are often socially, emotionally, ethically, and culturally complex. The PCM cases present teachers with various socio-cultural contexts that are interwoven with a particular scholastic question, issue, or concern.

Participating teachers are confronted with the socioeconomic reality of a worried single mother who must work multiple jobs to support her child, thus relying heavily on the teacher for guidance and input. Teachers interact with a parent who not only challenges a curriculum selection, but also the teacher's moral and religious values. PCM simulations offer teachers the opportunity to discuss with parents how to best serve students with disabilities, working to include them in the classroom and support them beyond the classroom. Ultimately, the PCM cases present participating teachers the challenge of addressing scholastic issues (i.e. school inclusion, curriculum choice, proper pedagogy, student services), with the additional consideration of socio-cultural contexts typical of any society (i.e. poverty, race, ethnicity, religious preference, disability, etc.). In recognition of the quantitative data, the challenges of the PCM do foster some increases in multicultural awareness and ethical sensitivity by integrating and grounding scholastic decision-making within real-life contexts.

However, focusing solely on the quantitative data negates the richer expressions of teacher development as seen through the qualitative data. To illustrate this, consider that many schools of education rightly ask preservice teachers to reflect on the importance of, and procedures for, including students of all different abilities within a classroom setting. In traditional forms, this assignment challenges preservice teachers to consider a number of scholastic contexts (team-teaching, inclusive vs. exclusive school services, least restrictive environments, etc.). In contrast, the inter-personal interactions between teachers and Lori Danson – a mother whose son is autistic – transforms this traditional assignment on inclusion to a much more immediate, weighty, and encompassing professional consideration. That is, when the mother of a student with autism is sitting directly across the conference room table, she captures the attention of the preservice teacher with whom she is speaking. This mother seeks answers as to why her son is often excluded in other classrooms, she shows worry and hope for her son in a (scholastic) world she is largely removed from, and she asks direct questions about how the teacher will balance protecting and involving her son in the classroom. Heightened professional awareness and sensitivity to the issue of inclusion are strongly reinforced in such an interactive forum, where the parent is looking to the teacher for solutions, suggestions, explanations, and decisions. Consequently, PCM teachers emerge from simulations with notable levels of excitement and inquiry, often exclaiming, "I had no idea…," "I hadn't thought about it that way before…," and inquiring "What should I do when…?" The teachers admit feeling an internal drive, a push from within, to reflect on the simulations and determine the right and appropriate actions for later use as licensed classroom teachers. We see this in the structure of their reflections, where they often identified the socio-cultural context(s), constructively critiqued their approaches to the simulated contexts, and empha-sized how they would (in future interactions) approach the contexts with new knowledge, understandings, and sensitivities. Newfound awareness quickly transformed to a search for the most profes-sionally astute, just, and sensitive approaches to scholastic contexts that had not been previously considered.

In addition to multicultural awareness and ethical sensitivity, the researcher also examined the degree to which the PCM teachers developed in moral/ethical judgment. Based on Kohlberg's early work in moral judgment, the later work by the Neo-Kohlbergians (Rest et al., 1999) emphasized the concept of ethical sensitivity, proposing that individuals must first be attuned to and aware of ethical situations before they can judge the most morally-justifiable course of action. In essence, moral/ethical judgment serves as an extension of moral/ethical sensitivity. While data from this study indicate the advancement of ethical sensitivity, the small moral judgment effect size of .14 (DIT-2) does not suggest any significant

development in ethical judgment. Rest et al. (1999) note that the type of intervention with the greatest pre/post-effect size is the dilemma discussion (Cohen's *d* of .41), where participants must judge between two seemingly viable choices as to which one is more just and democratic. At first glance, the PCM simulations appear to contain ethical dilemmas. Teachers emerge from simulations pondering whether or not to honor a parent's request to remove a particular book from the school's curricula because of perceived differences in moral values. Teachers are presented with the dilemma of breaking parent–teacher confidentiality to report potential child abuse. While both cases appear to present moral dilemmas, these examples represent real-life situations that are not professional dilemmas at all. In fact, both situations are beyond the purview of a single teacher. Teachers typically do not make individual decisions on challenged curricula, independent of governing bodies, school leaders, and curriculum review boards. Additionally, teachers have no choice but to report suspected child abuse or neglect. In essence, these supposed dilemmas are not dilemmas at all, as the ethical decision is made for the teacher by quorum or by law.

5. Conclusions

It is important to continue examining the PCM pedagogy for potential in the development of teacher dispositions.

The simulations do provide teachers with *some* opportunities to engage in ethical decision-making (i.e. ethical judgment). In the case of Jennifer Turner, teachers are challenged by her requests for curriculum differentiation, positioning them to judge what is fair for one (student) and all that they serve. This is an ethical decision that includes sensitivity to student ability, access to curricula, familial context, and inclusive classroom environments. In their current form and scaffolded structure, the PCM simulations serve to best develop awareness and sensitivity to socio-cultural contexts within schools. Future research might examine the potential of the PCM to meaningfully develop ethical judgment to a significant degree, possibly through the use of simulations that present true scholastic/moral dilemmas. Also, future research might examine the age demographic in relation to the development of awareness, sensitivity, and judgment. Extensive multi-disciplinary research has documented the differing impacts of age and education level on moral/ethical dispositional constructs (Rest, 1999), but researchers have not yet examined preservice teachers who may differ signif-icantly in age, how they approach and operate within the PCM simulations, and their potential developments in moral/ethical sensitivity and judgment.

Teachers in this study grew aware of the macro socio-cultural contexts (race, religion, class, gender, SES), while also recognizing how such broad and seemingly-distant contexts are often inter-woven within everyday scholastic practice. Teachers grew more aware of their approaches to parents (and students), recognizing the positive attributes and assumptive biases embedded within these approaches. They expressed new understandings to working with parents in support of students, recognizing that professionals must be aware of complex socio-cultural contexts *and* approach such contexts in a just and sensitive manner. Encouragingly, their aware-ness and sensitivity began to inform their decision-making processes associated with ethical dilemmas. The development of awareness and sensitivity is well grounded in the situated cognition and social role-taking theoretical frameworks. The PCM allows teachers to engage in the meaning-making process through their individual experiences in professional situations. As scholars, teacher educators, and mentors continue studying how to develop the dispositions of preservice teachers (Diez, 2007; Johnson & Reiman, 2007; Villegas, 2007), the researcher proposes the PCM as a potential pedagogy for

fostering such development and enhancing diverse school–family partnerships.

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