Chapter 1
Story Shaping Ideology:
Majoritarian Stories of English Learners

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ABSTRACT

Using interviews, artifacts, email correspondences, and lesson plans collected from six white, female, preservice teachers during their student teaching, this chapter focuses on the stories that shaped their ideologies of the emergent bilingual children in their classrooms. The findings indicate the preservice teachers, while having diverse lived experiences, held some common majoritarian stories concerning English learners. In addition to those majoritarian stories already established in the field, there were three additional stories uncovered in this study that significantly influenced the ideologies of emergent bilingual students. The chapter concludes by encouraging teacher educators to unpack story and use it as a vehicle for addressing teacher ideology of emergent bilingual students.

INTRODUCTION

We are shaped by story. Stories told to us during our childhood, stories reinforced or ignored in our own education and stories we hold in our professional lives as educators impact us. Not only do these stories shape us, they are also fundamental in how we make sense of the world and our 'Others' (Bell, 2010). These collective stories, often subconsciously, make and influence our teaching ideology (Marx, 2009). As teachers, the power of our stories affects students in our classrooms. The purpose of this study is to understand the stories six White, female, preservice teachers held

in reference to emergent bilingual children in their student teaching placements. The findings indicate the preservice teachers were influenced by their stories. In addition to eight stories already established in the research, there were three additional stories uncovered that significantly impacted the ideologies of emergent bilingual students. This is of importance as the racial, linguistic and potential ideological disconnect between teachers and their multicultural, multilingual, diverse students may remain masked and unexamined.

Story and Power

Language and storytelling is not simply a means of expressing an idea or a tool to communicate; language is an instrument of power (Bourdieu, 1977; Motha, 2014). The power behind story can support and reinforce the status quo, or can challenge it. When considering stories that have contributed to the ideologies of teachers, we need to examine two types of story; majoritarian and counterstories. Majoritarian stories are multilayered stories that "privilege Whites, men, the middle and/or upper class, and heterosexuals by naming these social locations as natural or normative points of reference" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). It is widely documented that preservice teachers enter classrooms with mainstream, majoritarian stories that contribute to deficit thinking about their students of color. Eight common majoritarian stories documented in the literature (Bell, 2010; Herrera & Morales, 2009; Howard, 2006; Love, 2004; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Marx, 2000; Mitchell, 2012; Mitchell, 2013) include:

(a) colorblindness/post-racial society reflects the idea that race does not impact society, (Atwater, 2007; Gordon, 2005; Nieto, 2000);

(b) difference is deficit suggests the perceived difference between individuals create deficits, (Mitchell, 2013; Shapiro, 2014; Valencia, 2010);

(c) English is ALL that matters is a belief that a teacher's highest responsibility is to teach English, (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Mitchel, 2013);

(d) equal opportunities in schooling reflects the idea that everyone is given an equal chance and opportunity to succeed in school, (Delgado, Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Love, 2004);

(e) fairness in the classroom takes into account the idea that assignments, assessments and instruction are inherently fair for all student, (Valencia, 2010; Viesca, Torres, Barnatt & Piazza, 2013);

(f) meritocracy and the American dream notes individuals can rely on hard work along to become successful, (Viesca, Torres, Barnatt & Piazza, 2013; Love, 2004);

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