'More than an Educator but a Political Figure': Leveraging the Overlapping Intersections of Disability Studies and Critical Pedagogy in Teacher Education

Phillip Boda

What a request we make to teachers! To think and act critically, and to be metacognitive of that process based on the context in which they enact it. As I ponder this idea, and reflect on the past two years of educating new, pre-service teachers to embark on such a journey, I am left taken aback by some of the assumptions we have as teacher educators. For example, in teacher education there are two fundamental 'camps' that we might think about in terms of how to approach the process of educating teachers within their student teaching learning experiences, and beyond: One being 'learning the practice' first, the other being 'learning the theory' first – the theory or practice divide incarnate, as it were. Wherever you sit on this continuum, suffice it to say that this theory–practice debate has been long-winded and argued *ad nauseum*, to say the least.

Rather than preoccupy the limited space I have in this chapter with 'what-ifs' and philosophical arguments of 'idealized post-whatever' to try and account for which approach may be better suited to increase the efficacy-models of teacher education more broadly, I choose to instead address the realities that over 150 new teachers faced when trying to make sense of this thing called education from the 15-plus sections of courses I've taught over the past two years across disciplinary, state, and political foci. In doing so, I present to the reader a narrative, a story, about how my pre-service teachers learned to navigate teaching and learning *critically*, particularly as it relates to the intersection of Disability Studies and critical pedagogy.

In this chapter I focus on the realities that my pre-service teachers have articulated when attempting to make sense of teaching and learning given the tools that they draw on from their personal experiences, as well as those resources I provided them as the teacher educator in their courses – their bricolage in-the-making developed as a function of the conscientization process (Freire, 1970), specifically aligned with the scaffolds

I enacted (Sleeter et al., 2004). As I make this argument, I hope that readers come with me on this journey with open eyes and hearts, particularly because some of the things I may say they may not like, nor may they agree with at all.

With that said, the realities that face teachers are just that, realities; therefore, in order for us as critical pedagogues, critical teacher educators, and critical researchers to engage with those realities we must first and foremost focus on how we have framed our visions of education, as well as how some narratives have been excluded within that process – toward an embrace of the unknown such that our desire to pursue a more equitable world is grounded in the realities of those who have been, or are currently being, excluded from educational experiences that imbue a critical eye toward the world. In my experience, these unquestioned assumptions can drive uncritical practices as teacher educators and lead to the inhibition of new teachers' capabilities to develop a creative and critical bricolage if not taken seriously, as well as embody the banking system of learning in our classrooms if we are not careful of our own understandings of teacher education pedagogy. To this end, I weave a narrative about teacher education that has been minimal in teacher education praxis by critical teacher educators – more specifically, the overlapping intersections and engaging praxis of integrating Disability Studies and critical pedagogy in teacher education.

SEPARATE BUT EQUAL PART TWO: DISABILITY AND DIFFERENCE

The reality of teacher education is such that we must fight on all fronts to emphasize that the world exists in multiplicities that are of particular importance to teachers, as well as stakeholders fighting for social justice more broadly (Sandoval, 2000). In making a stand such as the one proposed in this chapter, this fight then becomes a metaphorical act of war – not a physical war, per se, but rather a political one similar to those articulated by critical scholars over the past decades (Boda, 2017a; Emdin, 2016; Giroux and McLaren, 1986; Peters and Chimedza, 2000). However, in this chapter I stake the claim that to encourage criticality in our new teachers without addressing both the *arguments we construct* and the *actualized realities* that will mediate their choices in K-12 classrooms in relation to (dis)ability is to fall short of any claim to criticality at all.

To elaborate on a specific ideological commitment that embodies my point, disability as a socio-cultural construct of deficiency is focused on in this chapter as a complex intersectional concept that spans and interacts with 'Othering' markers of difference (i.e., race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, etc.). More emphatically, disability as one of many *realities* necessitates more nuanced articulations than have been used in the nature of critical pedagogy as both a philosophical and pragmatic goal. Through this intersecting narrative of disability studies and critical pedagogy, critical teacher education aligns itself once again to its promise to work toward a transdisciplinary equity for all that is emerging as a function of both applied theory and critical practice (Gutiérrez and Penuel, 2014; Kincheloe, 2001; Waitoller and King Thorius, 2016).

(Dis)ability, and the Marking of Difference

The ideology of ability is embodied though normative expectations and assumptions that define who should be valued as citizens, and what constitutes personhood more broadly in relation to the construct of a nation-state citizen (Nielsen, 2012; Siebers, 2008). This set of beliefs about ability constructs 'normal' by validating any thought or action that frames a person, or set of persons, as capable of efficaciously interacting with the socio-political and economic environment – more specifically

bodies and minds that reify a myopic view of identity and behavior (Siebers, 2008). This normalizing and assimilationist model of classifying citizenship is similar to how whiteness operates as a socially normative construct in ways that engender white racial mores as capital (Harris, 1993).

The normativity of ability, thus, ties directly into the social marker of difference embodied in disability, particularly in that they have been used in juxtaposition to emphasize the need for exclusion and inequity across multiple markers of difference such as race, class, and gender in historical and present day American society (Nielsen, 2012). Moreover, disability has also been shown to be interwoven with this idea of whiteness as property vis-à-vis use of 'smartness' (Leonardo and Broderick, 2011), subsequently playing out in our school systems as young as elementary students (Hatt, 2012).

In response, this chapter tells a story of how the inclusion of disability as a socio-cultural marker of difference can be used to mediate new teachers' approach to, and understandings of, criticality in education – its beliefs and practices leading to an understanding of, and action taken toward, critical goals of equity in education. To organize this proverbial call to arms, three ideologies rampant in the American neo-colonial educational imaginary are analyzed (ignorance, paternalism, and selfishness), with three re-imagined ideologies being used to replace these justifications for exclusion and foster more equitable actions teachers can take (curiosity, inquiry, and care, respectively). Herein, this chapter challenges its readers, as well as critical theorists more broadly, to think and act in ways that (in my experience) challenge ableist systems of logic – i.e., the neo-colonial ethics of power (Dussel, 2013) that, when not deconstructed, inherently produce anti-critical teachers under the guise of what I call 'Separate but Equal Part Two'. But, for now, please let me elaborate on my coming-of-age story that demanded a need to think about disability studies and critical pedagogy in teacher education in the pursuit of criticality.

Narrative and Bricolage

Throughout the past two years, I have worked as an adjunct across three different universities in two different states that span many different ideological commitments to over 150 teacher-students. My primary goal for any course I teach, no matter if the course is disciplinary-specific, philosophical, or general, is always to help teachers develop their own sense-making processes that relate to the nature of a bricoleur, of developing a sense of the world through the cognitive, socio-emotional, and epistemic tools at hand when making any decision (Steinberg and Kincheloe, 2010). By emphasizing the nature of embodying a bricoleur, I am bringing into pragmatic practice a methodological quality of analyzing social contexts with these 'tools that you have at your disposal'.

In essence, this is what we ask teachers to do every day, and which has been reported for decades as fundamentally what 'teacher work' looks like in practice (Freathy et al., 2017; Parker and McDaniel, 1992; Scribner, 2005). Therefore, with teaching and learning fundamentally tied to the nature of what resources teachers draw on to make decisions, our work as critical pedagogues remains to become more familiar with the realities that our students may face in their classroom contexts in order to stay relevant to the nature of exclusion as an ever-evolving push toward homogeneity of personhood, as well as engage our students with those realities in relation to their own experiences. The esteemed Joe Kincheloe eloquently elaborated on this position:

> As bricoleurs recognize the limitations of a single method, the discursive strictures of one disciplinary approach, what is missed by traditional practices of validation, the historicity of certified modes of knowledge production, the inseparability of knower and known, and the complexity and heterogeneity of all human experience, they understand the necessity of new forms of rigor in the research process. To account for their cognizance of such complexity bricoleurs seek a rigor that alerts them to new ontological insights. In this ontological context, they can no longer accept the status of an object of inquiry as a thing-in-itself. (2001: 681–2)

In this articulation of a bricoleur, and also the nature of bricolage (i.e., the product of the bricoleur's work), I want to make evident that my courses required something more than critical pedagogy to ground my teacher-students' pragmatic understandings of 'the word and the world' – they needed an ideological conduit, of sorts, to bridge these new and foreign critical concepts to their future practice. With my own personal experiences also connected to the nature of (dis)ability and exclusion in schools from an overlapping intersectional framework (Boda, 2017a, 2018), I view my own Self drawn toward how teacher-students could make sense of difference as an intersectional concept that includes rather than excludes, which required me to incorporate disability into the conversations about how difference plays out in classrooms.

In these discursive and curricular moves to emphasize the importance of disability in order to more critically understand the way exclusion plays out in schools, I found myself brushing up against a large disciplinary focus – special education – that, at its base, derives from the premise that disability is inherently biological, and inevitably leads to a sociological deficiency to be meditated vis-à-vis something changing *only* in relation to the student and not the context of instruction (Reid and Knight, 2006). As I pushed further (just as I believe all critical pedagogues should do), what I found was a capitalist preoccupation with the production of a particular form of capital (whiteness) and efficiency models of education grounded in high-stakes assessments – those same models that critical theorists and pedagogues have been pushing back against for over a hundred years. It is here where I found a place where my own bricolage was made, particularly one that emphasized the need to look more closely at the overlapping intersections of disability studies and critical pedagogy in teacher education to carve out a space where the logics of exclusion are interrogated for their influence on the rhetoric of anti-critical teaching and the pragmatic goals therein.

DISABILITY AND DIFFERENCE: A BACKGROUND ON EXCLUSION

Disability, and difference more broadly, embolden the fundamental nature of diversity as juxtapositions to (more often than not) invisible norms; that is, whiteness, ableism, masculinity, hetero-normativity, and Christianity, to name a few. With my population of students – no matter the university context, mind you – coming from these predominantly invisible normative demographics (i.e., white, middle-class, hetero-sexual, able-bodied students), I was charged as a critical teacher educator to disrupt their normative Selfs, and help them unpack these assumptions and political alignments that they would then perform onto their students in their future classrooms. What I found, though, when I started my first course teaching this normative-reliant population, was that interrogations of race, class, and gender – as well as many other traditional 'isms' such as white supremacy and religiosity – were not enough when thinking about the nature of exclusion in the classrooms they would lead in the future. Much of the ways they had begun to try and deconstruct their ideological commitments to social constructs such as white supremacy lacked any interrogation of how disability as a social construct *separate from* impairment pervasively imbued a 'catch-all' for rationales of separating students from their general education counterparts, or how disability overlapped with other markers of difference that they may have explicitly addressed.

Because of this reality, I aligned myself with the theoretics that when one helps teachers un-pack their experiences and deconstruct their biases, there needs to be an inquiry into the fragmented ideology-in-pieces (Philip, 2011) students bring to the table to help build new narratives that could be used later on by these teachers to challenge the deficit paradigms so actively used in schools against youth and their cultures. These narratives,

mind you, more often than not mirror similar negative views of peoples in society more broadly that become distilled into the nature of schooling as a social institution. This is where disability became paramount to help students engage with the exclusion we co-create (Boda, 2017b); this is where to be engaged with critical pedagogy it required understanding disability.

Disability and Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We?

We often talk about exclusion and difference as if they were these predominant logics of critical pedagogy wherein all markers of difference are included. However, the reality that I found searching through the literature is that even when discussing disability in a critical way there is a loss of understanding for the pragmatic realities that formulate and foster exclusion – some of which I have written about extensively (Boda, 2018). Indeed, as many authors have noted (cf. Erevelles, 2000, 2011; Gabel, 2002; Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2011), there have been lacking implementations of the broad theory of critical pedagogy in relation to more pragmatic realities for students labeled with disabilities, which then places a charge on critical researchers to go beyond the primarily philosophical arguments that have been emphasized in a critical pedagogy frame related to disability in terms of teacher education. The contribution of this chapter, thus, aligns well with the integration of a disability studies perspective within critical pedagogy that some researchers have shown to re-focus on the nature of disability exclusion as something that occurs *by design* rather than from emergent interaction (Smith and Routel, 2009; Ware, 2001; Watts and Erevelles, 2004), as well as engages critical pedagogy on how disability is inherently tied to race and class in systematic ways (Annamma et al., 2013; Gillborn, 2015).

It was from this more pragmatic bricolage that I found myself constantly straying away from more abstracting notions of critical pedagogy to help teachers make sense of difference in ways that actively and pragmatically addressed the fundamental material realities of exclusion that, in my own personal experience, have been found to exist in surplus because of the lacking service paid to the influence of disability on labels of difference more broadly, by both teacher educators and their pre-service students. This exclusion, performed and fostered by analyses of difference *sans* disability, has been used to segregate students in self-contained classrooms away from the general education students and curriculum, and concurrently often created justifications *for* students of color *by* white teachers, even while these teachers touted 'cultural relevance' and 'wanting to be responsive' to these children's needs in critical ways. This seemingly counter-intuitive and pervasive exception to the 'culturally relevant/ responsive/sustained' approach was, and continues to be, intimately tied to the nature of disability and the perceived objective lens used within the medicalized rhetoric of lack – the rhetoric of special education that manifests in exclusive material realities for students always seen as 'in need' of a savior. Luckily, these asset-based pedagogies are not only being used to construct more intersectional narratives of the need to understand disability exclusion (Waitoller and King Thorius, 2016), but their originating authors are also responding accordingly in light of such arguments for disability inclusion within these frames (Alim et al., 2017), which provides a bridge to confront nuanced disability-based approaches to critical pedagogy.

Disability, Exclusion and Its Intersection with Race

There has been ample reporting that students labeled with disabilities are disproportionately youth of color (Artiles et al., 2010; Reid and Knight, 2006; Patton, 1998). Moreover,

even though there have been recent analyses that purport the opposite of such claims made about disproportionality over the past 30 years (Morgan et al., 2015, 2017), the nature of exclusion that is produced when students are labeled are such that this problem cannot be named and articulated by numbers alone (Collins et al., 2016). Indeed, utilizing descriptive statistics (Shifrer et al., 2013) has provided exemplary analyses of bifurcation of opportunity related to disability labeling that void the prior claims of 'underrepresentation' in their reductionist attempt to identify an argument to place more students of color within special education – that very same neo-colonial logic and praxis I call 'Separate But Equal Part Two'.

Moreover, even before being labeled with a disability, students of color are disproportionately more likely to be placed in lower-tracks courses (Mickelson, 2015); then, after labeling, students of color are disproportionately placed into self-contained classrooms, denying them interaction with general education students and content-specialist teachers (Annamma et al., 2014; Reid and Knight, 2006). Thus, there is a resounding need to engage with this overlapping and intersectional logic of oppression producing educational exclusion based on the rhetoric of special education 'needs' (i.e., lack) and the material realities manifesting from the labeling of students of color with disabilities that align with misguided white savior complexes over-utilized in urban education (Emdin, 2016).

To further engage with this rhetoric and reality, even when placing disproportionality aside, my own work showcases that the nature of exclusion based on disability and difference is not so cut and dry across the mere *labeling* of disability onto youth of color. In my own auto-ethnographic excavations (Boda, 2018), I illuminate that students of color where I taught in Brooklyn as a high-school science teacher were categorized as unable to learn, or teachers perceived them as being unable to be taught, based on these youths' racialized culture – their perceived 'streetness', or to put

it more explicitly, their 'Hip-Hop-ness' – that overlaps and intersects with disability labels vis-à-vis teachers' deficit perceptions of these students' identities departing from the normative center of schools (Leonardo and Broderick, 2011). Indeed, this aversion to diverse and rhizomatic youth cultures has also been widely reported across multiple disciplines (cf. Emdin, 2016; Giroux, 2003; Ibrahim and Steinberg, 2014; Lesko and Talburt, 2012). Given this reality, disability, race, and class intersect in ways that exclude concertedly and align well with research goals within critical pedagogy to emphasize understanding the systematic nature of exclusion in order to seek a dismantling of such policies and practices through work on-the-ground right now (Kincheloe, 2008).

Additionally, when these ideologies intersect (racialized youth culture, class-based constructs of youth, and disability), they compound onto one another and produce material conditions of exclusion that *by design* force students into subject positions that they then reify and own as their own Self, even as these students attempt to produce a counter-narrative that would label them as competent (Broderick and Ne'eman, 2008; Collins, 2013). In essence, what this short review provides for the reader is a criticalist's material reality narrative of disability that is fundamentally, first and foremost, tied to notions of race, class, and neo-colonial logics we use to justify exclusion in schools. However, the question remains: why, as critical pedagogues, are we not focusing on these intersections when we educate our pre-service students, and in-service teachers, through purposeful curriculum and pedagogical choices?

Moreover, if we are, why are we not publishing about such models of teacher education pedagogy to showcase the importance of such an approach for other teacher educators that may or may not be aware of such an equity-based model? This is where our story of redemption starts, and where we can make anew the nature of teacher education

by including disability, and challenging the narratives of neo-coloniality that produce exclusion derived from the disability narratives that buttress justified segregation across multiple markers of difference. The next three sections focus on the ideologies of the neo-colonial educational imaginary previously posed (ignorance, paternalism, and selfishness), while integrating my personal experiences in helping teacher-students make sense of their learning to teach process through emphasizing the intersections between Disability Studies and critical pedagogy in teacher education – working toward curiosity, inquiry, and care.

IGNORANCE AND CURIOSITY

When I started educating new teachers, I found myself always emphasizing the need to understand how to connect with them on a personal level – much like the way I used to connect to my students when I taught in K-12 contexts. However, what I found when I taught adults was that I needed to unpack my own bricolage – the tools I gained from my personal experiences – to truly focus on the needs of these new teacher-students. One narrative I found once I started to unpack my own biases was the notion of ignorance that was so prominent in my own learning experiences as a teacher-student. I found that my tenure as an undergraduate and graduate student had ill-prepared me to engage with narratives of disability, particularly how to teach and learn about them beyond a deficit lens. Thus this theme of ignorance emerged, in both my students and myself, which was at its base a description of how most teachers fail their students more broadly because of the fear that comes from ignorance about someone you've never interacted with on a personal basis. This meta-narrative of 'not knowing the unknown' – of ignorance – started my journey to envision teacher education at the intersection of disability and

critical pedagogy, as well as embodied the initial steps my teacher-students took when trying to construct their own bricolage about teaching and learning from a critical pedagogy perspective.

When I engaged with disability as a teacher-student, the narratives were just as stark as they are in many courses I've seen nowadays, over a decade later. Specifically, those more critical notions of teaching and learning were reserved for the singular pluralistic/urban/cultural politics 'diversity requirement' course to suffice the teacher certification process. In doing so, disability was explicitly segregated into the other 'special education' course that was also used solely for certification. When I looked back at my experiences and compare them to the present-day colleges in which I teach, I see a similar segregation of disability as separate, and defined as distinctly different, from the ideas that were being focused on in my 'more critical' courses. Why was this happening? Why was disability placed into a very real 'separate-but-equal' status of importance that, upon closer inspection, doesn't emphasize the principles of critical pedagogy at all? Instead, these special education courses focused on medicalized rhetoric that disability is something that needs to be cured and eradicated by any means necessary similar to literature of disability more broadly (Goering, 2015; Shakespeare, 2013), or focused on the implicit, i.e., 'softer,' eugenic logics that the inherent deficit has always, and will always, exist within the student (Artiles et al., 2016; Brantlinger, 1997). Indeed, this was problematic.

From this reflection of my personal experiences, I pushed forward to infuse counter-narratives of (dis)ability that brought to bear the nature of exclusion as it exists in the realities of students of color that are (mis)placed in special education because of the racialized culture they embodied on a daily basis. The response from my teacher-students was resounding, and quite clear: 'But disability *is* a medical problem…' 'you know, it's diseases and genes' so 'special education

has the answer for each of the problems on their individualized education plans (IEPs)'. From these responses, course after course, cohort after cohort, I began to see where this theme from my own experiences came from – it was ingrained in the neo-colonial imaginary that disability was deficit, just as race and cultures beyond whiteness were ingrained on both colonizer and colonized to be inherently deficit and 'in need' of a 'cure' of their 'uncivilized nature' (Fanon, 1963; Oliver, 2004).

These narratives of ignorance were so deeply present in every conversation I would have with my teacher-students that it became both a personal and professional commitment as a critical pedagogue to not only engage with them myself, but also to find ways to help my students engage with them in an attempt to eventually ameliorate these exclusionary ideologies they would use in the future to enforce ableist and racist logics of oppression. Here, I must say, there was an increasing need to identify ways to approach this master narrative of (dis)ability such that exclusion would be challenged beyond the traditional markers of difference that I had seen were siphoned and siloed into required courses – particularly those that failed to integrate (dis)ability in their discourse.

What I adopted was a critical model of teacher education that focused on grounding the abstract notions of critical pedagogy into pragmatic moves that were made by teachers (and myself, admittedly) to produce exclusion for students labeled with disabilities. In this shift, I had to break away from any particular bricolage I had created before and re-think what a critical teacher educator's pedagogy *looks like* and *feels like* when engaging with such ideologies in juxtaposition to one another and the master narratives of normality writ large. The model I ended up with was one of curiosity. Now many might read this now and say 'Well, okay, but aren't all teachers supposed to be curious?' What I provide here is a simple refute to this superficial statement: if teachers are supposed to be curious about their students, truly curious

that is, would they not also think about their lived realities and the experiences these students face outside of school to help them make sense of their pedagogy? The answer is quite facetious but needed: they would, but they aren't. Moreover, in the case of students with disabilities, if teachers perceive these students as being 'handled' by their special education counterparts, and therein outside of their purview of students that they are charged to 'care for', these teacher-students (in my experience) utilize this separate entity (the special education teacher and/or para-professional) as justification for *not* having to be curious about them – these students weren't *really* theirs.

What we find in this critical model toward disability in teacher education is the notion that teacher-students need both explicit and emergent experiences where they engage with (dis)ability on similar terms that they would race, class, gender, and all other markers of difference. In my own practice, this meant consistently and purposefully designing periods of discussion that focused on texts whose authors explored such overlapping and intersectional identities being negotiated and exploited, as well as rendering a new narrative about the purpose of schools and their role as educator – leveraging these intersections to cogenerate a bricolage that was not static or hierarchal, but fluid and differential. Therein, this new model was not just one of including (dis)ability into the curriculum of my courses, far from it. It was part of the bricoleur's process by which I re-thought about my own practices in the undergraduate and graduate classrooms where students were asked to analyze these intersections with the explicit intent to have (dis)ability emerge as a point of discussion and contention – *to design* a teacher education pedagogy to counteract and combat ignorance in a way that helps students build their own bricolage. Albeit this was not so cut and dry in the moment; hindsight is always 20/20.

Through these discourses that embodied *inclusion by design* (Dukes and Lamar-Dukes,

2009; Jehlen, 2002), my teacher-students started to more thoughtfully engage with their own practices and experiences in classrooms where (dis)ability was very rarely discussed, let alone criticized for its exclusionary premises. The ending product that emerged was curiosity incarnate, a genuine stance of accepted ignorance that was grounded in the need to come from a place of wanting to assess *for one's self* the validity used within the narratives imposed onto students before my teachers even saw them – to not assume an IEP, disability label, or special education placement constituted the extent of a student's personhood or possibility.

You know these narratives that exclude, we all do; the 'teacher-talk' when you receive your roster that jades you against students that, if you look hard enough, are often justified through the use of a disability label to explain students' inability to learn rather than a teacher's ignorance to the realities that student faces. Within this curiosity stance, (dis)ability became the pragmatic case of exclusion through which all other markers of difference were able to be deconstructed based on their juxtaposition to normative narratives, and then reconstructed through actions that were needed to fulfill this curious stance pragmatically. This is where the next theme emerged as a way to place credence to the philosophical and ideological commitments my teacher-students were wrestling with in my courses; this is where the need to move beyond curiosity into practice emerged.

PATERNALISM AND INQUIRY

Teachers are one of, if not *the,* most important role models in many students' lives when thinking about how much time students spend in schools and the relationships that can be built when teachers and students are authentic with one another in the process of building relational trust. Given this reality – which many normative-reliant teacher-students have

experienced first-hand, albeit in contexts where they embodied the idea of 'normal' – new pre-service teachers often come into their tenure as a teacher with a savior complex couched in the preoccupation of whiteness (Aronson, 2017; Emdin, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009) and the neo-colonial logics demanded by First-world imposition of culture (Khoja-Moolji, 2017; Mignolo, 2012). This white, neo-colonial savior-ism translates into a very explicit set of beliefs and perceptions that these new teachers hold and utilize to justify exclusion, if not challenged. In my experience working with over 150 new teachers over the past two years, this manifests as a need to be seen as a parent – not in terms of 'caring' and 'nurturing' guide, but as paternalistic savior – which complicates the ways they then react to having a student labeled with a disability in class.

Throughout my exposure to these new teachers' savior complexes, I have consistently heard the same narrative that was exploited in the 1990s and millennial movies of teacher-saviors: 'But their parents just don't care', 'When are they going to learn about the *proper* ways to act', and 'When I was their age all I needed was a little discipline … they need to learn right from wrong earlier rather than later'. I want to say now that I am not devoid of having these exact thoughts justify particular actions myself, and if as the reader you're saying that you have *never* thought these things, I would request you do some unpacking yourself – you drank too much of the neoliberal, neo-colonial Kool-aid: cut it out. We all think these things when first encountering populations different from us, and new teachers need a space to talk about them rather than being ridiculed. In my experiences, new pre-service teachers need diverse ways to express these ideas wherein accountability for these justifications are not beholden to their own Self, and rather made into an accountability discussion for all stakeholders and parties as group thought.

For example, my students started to create a more counter-narrative bricolage

when I was able to express my own experiences of wrestling with these ideas alongside them. Given that the curriculum provided the background to these analyses, particularly in relation to disability and intersectional difference, the need to break down the ways shoring up personal pride and obsession with becoming the authoritarian figure – the embodiment of paternalism, in 'knowing what's right' *for* someone – was required. Once my students recognized that they did have bias against people different from the white and able-bodied normative center of schooling (Leonardo and Broderick, 2011), there needed to be a space opened up about how to bear witness to a life and reality beyond their own subject position (Oliver, 2001). In these moments, disability was integrated as not only a concept to learn (i.e., moving beyond ignorance toward curiosity), but also a methodology from which new ways to view the purpose of education were seeded. In other words, the notion of the paternalistic white savior obsessed with 'right' and 'wrong' ways of knowing and being a subject – a student and citizen – was challenged by emphasizing the need to take action in light of the curiosity fostered by this newfound recognition of ignorance. It is here where the title of this chapter emerged.

In my teaching during this point, I utilized a whiteboarding discussion activity where students represented their interpretations of a set of readings in relation to a video clip presented to them on large dry-erase boards in any way they desired: oftentimes in lists and concept maps, but sometimes in comic strips and drawn scenarios. During one session about a year ago, one student responded to another group's explanation of their drawing by focusing on the nature of how disability made her think about the political nature of schooling being connected to societal expectations more broadly. She exposed herself to criticism by focusing on this abstract notion of being 'more than an educator but a political figure', which, in my courses, must always be brought back down to a pragmatic level to justify claims.

In doing so, she brought about a discussion on the material realities of disability, difference, and exclusion in relation to our obsession with 'one way' to 'do education' – i.e., 'why do we say there is more than one way to learn but not offer this possibility in our class structures or pedagogies?' This led to a consolidation of my students back into their groups to define actionable tasks that they could enact on the ground to inquire about lived realities beyond their own. In essence, while this is but one exemplar of this shift from paternalism to inquiry, after this session the emphasis to focusing on an action in relation to curious questions generated in class was the norm rather than exception. Here, there then began another layer of approaching their bricolage – their sense-making skills – due to the justifications used for actions to be taken by my students. It was at this point in my courses where critical pedagogy required a revisit to the *why* in how we approached education; it was at this point where my students often wrestled between selfishness and care.

SELFISHNESS AND CARE

In the previous two sections, I presented the progression of pragmatic teacher pedagogy examples I used to address the overlapping and intersectional nature of disability studies and critical pedagogy in teacher education. In this third section, the pinnacle theme that emerged from my experiences, my students sought out and utilized the abstract notions of critical pedagogy to approach their curiosity and subsequent inquiries in ways that shifted from a position of selfishness to an ethics of care. This phenomenon has been reported as pertinent for understanding asset-based pedagogy (Hambacher and Bondy, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995), as well as for making

sense of youth of color disproportionality placed in special education (Banks, 2017; Patton, 1998) and understanding material realities of disability in global contexts (Barile, 2003; Erevelles, 2011). It should not be surprising that this notion of care that emerged to help my students create a bricolage from which to critique their planned actions is couched within the fundamental tenets of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1998a), and thus was pertinent as an inclusion with many of my syllabi through Freire's (1998b) *Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*. Here is the point in my courses where critical pedagogy as a methodology to make sense of 'the world and the word' became ingrained into the minds of my students, and provided a conceptual framework to engage with exclusion critically – beyond selfish tendencies.

AQ: Please confirm citation.

While the notion of care in education theory and practice is widely published, and thus does not need to be elaborated here, there were examples where my students purposefully took up the logic of care beyond one's personal benefit to challenge other teacher-students that justified their actions in relation to selfish ends. The best exemplar comes from a discussion, of course, when students were asked to think about how they may act in ways that would benefit a child, given a particular scenario – a designed setup from the Paternalism and Inquiry theme presented above. This took many forms in different classes and included, but was not limited to, administering a youth study project, generating a solution from a collection of data within their own student population, and hypothesizing their reactions to problems they may encounter in relation to their practice. Given that my students had already engaged with the notion of being curious and then inquiring about the social realities of their students, the final task was to try to make sense of their inquiries in ways that would align with, or diverge from, the critical bricolage they were constructing.

During these whiteboarding discussions, small-group work, and individual explorations of classrooms as social sites of resistance, what emerged was a need for me to think about what justifications my students were providing for the ways they were thinking. This extra step for me to inquire about the undergirding logic placed onto particular questions and actions brought my classes full circle to thinking about how the rhetoric of schooling that they developed from their personal experiences may translate into rationales that sought to exclude based on selfishness and lead to teaching practices that excluded even as their intention was to include. These conversations often relied on a questioning dialogic between my students and I, as well as between peers. More often than not, since this process would take place toward the end of the course, students would lead this questioning tactic. Questions such as 'who benefits from your plan', 'why are you doing this', and 'in what ways is this focused on *your* [the teacher-student's] needs rather than the student's needs' led to explanations related to personal preservation (e.g., 'my evaluation requires me to show student growth' and 'edTPA has a place where we have to analyze videos of our teaching'), but those were few and far between. Most justifications, after a couple rounds of inquiry and dialogue, focused on utilizing 'how students interacted outside of class', fostering 'more participation between students to improve learning and collegiality', and came from 'personal conversations with students' about the teacher-student's attempt to implement critical pedagogy in their service learning. Through these justifications, what I found was a genuine situated sense of care related to students as social beings and my teacher-students focusing on how they could frame choices they make couched within that ethic of care.

While brief, this example focusing on how to engage new teachers to think about their justifications to particular actions was an important step in my own evolution as a critical teacher educator. In particular, as my students started to inquire about their students labeled with disabilities, who were often

also youth of color, they found that many of their students were 'unique, rather than defi-cit' and 'required more attention' that would inevitably 'benefit both my own practice [the teacher] and the student's experiences [in the classroom]'. This pinnacle analytic approach to the *process* that emphasized being a critical pedagogue on the ground aided in my teacher-students being able to approach their praxis both by addressing their normative thoughts that seeded exclusionary rhetoric, as well as the practices that would produce exclusion if they implemented them in ways that only ben-efited the teacher and not the student.

In this way, my approach to teacher education in relation to the overlapping intersections between disability studies and critical pedagogy modeled the *process* of learning to teach as a *methodical inquiry*, derived from a genuine sense of *curiosity*, and couched within an *ethics of care*. Through starting from a site of pragmatic material realities that produce exclusion, and then facilitation of a plan to negate such realities, my students emerged as critical pedagogues with a bricolage in-the-making – as in flux and always fluid – rather than fully formed and static. In essence, each step along this journey was not part of an either/or theory–practice divide; rather, it was a dialectic process that consistently and purposefully engaged my teacher-students with the notion of exclusion being both part of a larger rhetorical, and normative-reliant, narrative of exclusion, which included the subsequent material realities that end up producing exclusion for some and not others through this preoccupation with this normative center of schooling.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION, TEACHER EDUCATORS, AND TEACHERS

So, where do we find ourselves as critical pedagogues, critical researchers, and critical

theorists, now? In this chapter I presented a brief background of my own building of a bricolage as a critical teacher educator, explained how it became directly connected with intersectional notions of difference related to disability and 'Othering' markers of difference, elaborated on the literature that buttresses the nature of exclusion for Black and Brown youth, and then provided a sample of how my teacher-students built their own bricolage to counteract these exclusionary realities in relation to disability studies and critical pedagogy with aid from the peda-gogical scaffolds I provided. It should be evident to the reader by now that my use of (dis)ability and its relationship with markers of difference such as race and class are cru-cial to understanding the nature of exclusion in American schools.

Moreover, if we are to approach critical pedagogy in ways that embolden this funda-mental reality within teacher education we must depart from both neo-colonial logics of oppression and the medicalized rhetoric that sustains the pervasively used justification for excluding poor Black and Brown youth from general education classrooms whether they are labeled with disabilities or not. This savior-ism, this metaphor of students 'in need', maintains that students that embody position-alities away from a normative-reliant center – those students that live in the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987), in the margins (hooks, 2000) – will always require a 'cure' for what ails them, their deficit character incarnate in their Self. We must actively resist this logic, as well as make changes on the ground right now to support the students that live in these mate-rial realities on a daily basis.

This chapter provides but one starting point from which I view approaching and leveraging the overlapping and intersectional nature of disability studies and critical pedagogy in teacher education. Its implications are widespread and not isolated to teacher education alone. However, if you are a teacher educator, teacher education researcher, or, hell, just a decent human being

reading this chapter, you must recognize the need to respond to these realities in ways that bring about *both* systemic change in the long term and localized change right now. What this chapter illuminates is the nature of exclusion, not as a theory, per se; not in a philosophical argument of grandiose claims to an idealized post-whatever utopia; no, this chapter illuminates the rhetoric and realities that our K-12 students face right now, as well as a call to redemption for bringing back the criticality in our research and praxis within post-secondary contexts. Indeed, we must never forget that the nature of exclusion is a historical fact that derives its presence from the material realities faced by youth of color attempting to gain access to equitable education that upholds the rhetorical arguments and humanistic notion that all students are created equal and deserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In ending on this note, I want to make clear that this rhetoric will never come to fruition if we continue to disregard the material realities that position students of color, specifically students of color labeled with disabilities, outside of the purview of this credo by virtue of them existing as their authentic Self. It is here where this chapter has the greatest implication: don't let the notion of 'Separate But Equal Part Two' persist – the lives of our youth hang in the balance.

AQ: Please provide publisher locations for all book references.

REFERENCES

Alim, H. S., Baglieri, S., Ladson-Billings, G., Paris, D., Rose, D. H., & Valente, J. M. (2017). Responding to 'Cross-pollinating culturally sustaining pedagogy and universal design for learning: Toward an inclusive pedagogy that accounts for dis/ability'. *Harvard Educational Review*, *87*(1), 4–25.

Annamma, S. A., Connor, D., & Ferri, B. (2013). Dis/ability critical race studies (DisCrit): Theorizing at the intersections of race and dis/ability. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *16*(1), 1–31.

Annamma, S., Morrison, D., & Jackson, D. (2014). Disproportionality fills in the gaps: Connections between achievement, discipline and special education in the School-to-Prison Pipeline. *Berkeley Review of Education*, *5*(1), 53–87.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: la frontera* (Vol. 3). San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

Aronson, B. A. (2017). The White savior industrial complex: A cultural studies analysis of a teacher educator, savior film, and future teachers. *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*, *6*(3), 36–54.

Artiles, A. J., Kozleski, E. B., Trent, S. C., Osher, D., & Ortiz, A. (2010). Justifying and explaining disproportionality, 1968–2008: A critique of underlying views of culture. *Exceptional Children*, *76*, 279–299.

Artiles, A. J., Dorn, S., & Bal, A. (2016). Objects of protection, enduring nodes of difference: Disability intersections with 'Other' differences, 1916 to 2016. *Review of Research in Education*, *40*, 777–820.

Banks, J. (2017). 'These people are never going to stop labeling me': Educational experiences of African American male students labeled with learning disabilities. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *50*, 96–107.

Barile, M. (2003). Globalization and ICF eugenics: Historical coincidence or connection? The more things change the more they stay the same. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *23*(2).

Boda, P. A. (2017a). Less hope, more paint: On the political war being waged in urban contexts. *The Educational Forum*, *4*, 391–403. DOI:10.1080/00131725.2017.1350234.

Boda, P. A. (2017b). *Science, education and ability: The exclusion we co-create*. Paper presented at NARST-sponsored session at the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA). Los Angeles, CA.

Boda, P. A. (2018). Exclusion from participation in science: Confessions from an ally on the other side of the fence. In M. Koomen, S. Kahn, C. Atchison, & T. Wild (Eds.), *Toward inclusion of all learners through science teacher education* (pp. 301–311). Sense Publishing.

Brantlinger, E. (1997). Using ideology: Cases of nonrecognition of the politics of research and practice in special education. *Review of Educational Research*, *67*, 425–459.

Broderick, A. A., & Ne'eman, A. (2008). Autism as metaphor: Narrative and counter-narrative.

International Journal of Inclusive Education, *12*, 459–476.

Collins, K. M. (2013). Ability profiling and school failure: One child's struggle to be seen as competent. Routledge.

Collins, K. M., Connor, D., Ferri, B., Gallagher, D., & Samson, J. F. (2016). Dangerous assumptions and unspoken limitations: A disability studies in education response to Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, Mattison, Maczuga, Li, and Cook (2015). *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners*, *16*(1), 4–16.

Dukes, C., & Lamar-Dukes, P. (2009). Inclusion by design: Engineering inclusive practices in secondary schools. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *41*(3), 16–23.

Dussel, E. (2013). Ethics of liberation: In the age of globalization and exclusion. Duke University Press.

Emdin, C. (2016). For White folks who teach in the hood… and the rest of y'all too: Reality pedagogy and urban education. Beacon Press.

Erevelles, N. (2000). Educating unruly bodies: Critical pedagogy, disability studies, and the politics of schooling. *Educational Theory*, *50*(1), 25–47.

Erevelles, N. (2011). Disability and difference in global contexts: Enabling a transformative body politic. New York: Springer.

Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Freathy, R., Doney, J., Freathy, G., Walshe, K., & Teece, G. (2017). Pedagogical bricoleurs and bricolage researchers: The case of religious education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *65*, 425–443. DOI: 10.1080/00071005.2017.1343454

Freire, P. (1970). Cultural action and conscientization. *Harvard Educational Review*, *40*, 452–477.

Freire, P. (1998a). Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage. Rowman and Littlefield.

Freire, P. (1998b). Teachers as cultural workers. Letters to those who dare teach. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Gabel, S. (2002). Some conceptual problems with critical pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *32*, 177–201.

Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism: Race, class, gender, and disability in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *21*, 277–287.

Giroux, H. (2003). Zero tolerance, domestic militarization, and the war against youth. *Social Justice, 30 n.2* (92), 59–65.

Giroux, H., & McLaren, P. (1986). Teacher education and the politics of engagement: The case for democratic schooling. *Harvard Educational Review*, *56*, 213–239.

Goering, S. (2015). Rethinking disability: The social model of disability and chronic disease. *Current Reviews in Musculoskeletal Medicine*, *8*, 134–138.

Goodley, D., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2011). Problematising policy: Conceptions of 'child', 'disabled' and 'parents' in social policy in England. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *15*(1), 71–85.

Gutiérrez, K. D., & Penuel, W. R. (2014). Relevance to practice as a criterion for rigor. *Educational Researcher*, *43*(1), 19–23.

Hambacher, E., & Bondy, E. (2016). Creating communities of culturally relevant critical teacher care. *Action in Teacher Education*, *38*, 327–343.

Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, *106,* 1707–1791.

Hatt, B. (2012). Smartness as a cultural practice in schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, *49*, 438–460.

hooks, B. (2000). Feminist theory: From margin to center. Pluto Press.

Ibrahim, A., & Steinberg, S. R. (Eds.). (2014). *Critical youth studies reader*. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Jehlen, A. (2002). Inclusion by design. *NEA Today*, *20*(4), 8–9.

Khoja-Moolji, S. (2017). Pedagogical (re) encounters: Enacting a decolonial praxis in teacher professional development in Pakistan. *Comparative Education Review*, *61*, 146–170.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Critical pedagogy primer* (Vol. 1). Peter Lang.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2001). Describing the bricolage: Conceptualizing a new rigor in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *7*, 679–692.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*, 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). 'Who you callin' nappy-headed?' A critical race theory look at the construction of Black women. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *12*(1), 87–99.

Leonardo, Z., & Broderick, A. (2011). Smartness as property: A critical exploration of intersections

between whiteness and disability studies. *Teachers College Record*, *113*, 2206–2232.

Lesko, N., & Talburt, S. (Eds.). (2012). Keywords in youth studies: Tracing affects, movements, knowledges. Routledge.

Mickelson, R. A. (2015). The cumulative disadvantages of first-and second-generation segregation for middle school achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*, 657–692.

Mignolo, W. (2012). Local histories/global designs: Coloniality, subaltern knowledges, and border thinking. Princeton University Press.

Morgan, P., Farkas, G., Hillemeier, M., Mattison, R., Maczuga, S., Li, H., & Cook, M. (2015). Minorities are disproportionately underrepresented in special education: Longitudinal evidence across five disability conditions. *Educational Researcher*, *44*, 278–292. doi:10.3102/0013189X15591157

Morgan, P. L., Farkas, G., Hillemeier, M. M., and Maczuga, S. (2017). Replicated evidence of racial and ethnic disparities in disability identification in US schools. *Educational Researcher*, *46*, 305–322.

Nielsen, K. E. (2012). *A disability history of the United States* (Vol. 2). Beacon Press.

Oliver, K. (2001). *Witnessing: Beyond recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.

Oliver, K. (2004). The colonization of psychic space: A psychoanalytic social theory of oppression. University of Minnesota Press.

Parker, W. C., & McDaniel, J. E. (1992). Bricolage: Teachers do it daily. In E. W. Ross, J. W. Cornett, and G. McCutcheon (Eds.), *Teacher personal theorizing: Connecting curriculum practice, theory, and research* (pp. 97–114), Albany: State University of New York Press.

Patton, J. M. (1998). The disproportionate representation of African Americans in special education: Looking behind the curtain for understanding and solutions. *The Journal of Special Education*, *32*(1), 25–31.

Peters, S., & Chimedza, R. (2000). Conscientization and the cultural politics of education: A radical minority perspective. *Comparative Education Review*, *44*, 245–271.

Philip, T. M. (2011). An 'ideology in pieces' approach to studying change in teachers' sensemaking about race, racism, and racial justice. *Cognition and Instruction*, *29*, 297–329.

Reid, D. K., & Knight, M. G. (2006). Disability justifies exclusion of minority students: A critical history grounded in disability studies. *Educational Researcher*, *35*(6), 18–23.

Sandoval, C. (2000). *Methodology of the oppressed* (Vol. 18). University of Minnesota Press.

Scribner, J. P. (2005). The problems of practice: Bricolage as a metaphor for teachers' work and learning. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *51*, 295–310.

Shakespeare, T. (2013). *Disability rights and wrongs revisited* (2nd edition). Routledge.

Shifrer, D., Callahan, R. M., & Muller, C. (2013). Equity or marginalization? The high school course-taking of students labeled with a learning disability. *American Educational Research Journal*, *50*, 656–682.

Siebers, T. (2008). *Disability theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Sleeter, C., Torres, M. N., & Laughlin, P. (2004). Scaffolding conscientization through inquiry in teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *31*(1), 81–96.

Smith, P., & Routel, C. (2009). Transition failure: The cultural bias of self-determination and the journey to adulthood for people with disabilities. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *30*(1), n.p.

Steinberg, S. R., & Kincheloe, J. L. (2010). Power, emancipation, and complexity: Employing critical theory. *Power and Education*, *2*, 140–151.

Waitoller, F. R., & King Thorius, K. A. (2016). Cross-pollinating culturally sustaining pedagogy and universal design for learning: Toward an inclusive pedagogy that accounts for dis/ability. *Harvard Educational Review*, *86*, 366–389.

Ware, L. (2001). Writing, identity, and the other: Dare we do disability studies?. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *52*, 107–123.

Watts, I. E., & Erevelles, N. (2004). These deadly times: Reconceptualizing school violence by using critical race theory and disability studies. *American Educational Research Journal*, *41*, 271–299.