

CHAPTER FOUR

AT THE NEXUS OF CREATIVITY, CULTURE, INNOVATION AND MOTIVATION IN DIVERSE GLOBAL TEACHER EDUCATION CONTEXTS

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Abstract

Set against a backdrop of a pandemic, transnational mobility and shifting geopolitics that challenge our peace and stability, this chapter focuses on critical teacher education which is key in ensuring that teachers develop the skills, knowledges and sensibilities that are needed to address issues pertaining to the changing realities of schools. Drawing on pedagogical practices from different glocal contexts, the authors discuss how they worked at the nexus of creativity, culture, motivation and innovation with both preservice and inservice teachers to support them on their journey to become inclusive and transformative educators. Stepping away from conventional genres of academic writing, the authors adopt a conversational approach where they engage in a critical discussion to explore the complex relationships between creativity, culture, innovation and motivation in teacher education and the potential of creative practices to transform classroom pedagogy and the larger education structures.

Introduction

In this multi ethnography, we review our creative processes and practices in teacher education across contexts including Canada, Colombia and Sri Lanka in a world where the pandemic continues, geopolitics shift, transnational mobility increases and challenges to peace and stability multiply. Teachers work in an increasingly uneven world (Pennycook, 2022) where, as members of a global community, they cannot escape the effects of larger sociopolitical issues in different forms in their professional contexts. Our creative practices and processes are examples of critical teacher education which is key to ensuring that teachers develop the skills, knowledges and sensibilities that are needed to address issues pertaining to the changing realities of schools (Down & Smyth, 2012; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gray, 2019). Drawing on pedagogical practices from different global contexts that we have researched (see Gagné, Kalan, & Herath, 2022; Gagné, Herath, & Valencia, 2018; Gagné, Herath, & Valencia, 2017a; Gagné, Herath, & Valencia, 2017b; Gagné, Schmidt, & Markus, 2017; Gagné & Schmidt, 2016; Gagné & Soto Gordon, 2015; Herath, & Valencia, 2015; Valencia, & Herath, 2015; Valencia, Herath,

& Gagné, 2020), we discuss how these creative practices and processes unfolded at the nexus of creativity, culture, motivation and innovation with both preservice and inservice teachers to support them on their journey to become inclusive and transformative educators as they work with increasingly diverse students. The questions that have guided us include:

- How are our critical teacher education processes and practices related to creativity, motivation, culture and innovation?
- How might our critical teacher education processes and practices influence the way preservice and inservice teachers work with their own diverse students?

We explore the generative power of creativity and creative practices in teacher education as our work is fuelled by the hope that if we engage with teachers in creative ways, they will in turn imbue their practice with creativity. Illustrative examples of our creative practices include: 1) Me Mapping Pedagogy which is identity focussed, multimodal and encourages teachers to draw on their full language repertoire as they learn to push back against traditional and conservative approaches to language and literacies education; 2) identity portraits generated by teachers, and) elements of the neuroscience of creativity for teaching that allow preservice teachers to unpack their own learning journeys and develop their own repertoire of practices to engage their future students.

This chapter is a multi-ethnography or a conversation between the three of us and incorporates aspects of visual ethnography. In order to provide a more textured understanding of our work, we first introduce ourselves. Then we engage in conversations about the literature that informs our praxis and the potential of multi ethnography and visual ethnography to infuse criticality and innovation into research writing. Next, we focus our attention on our pedagogical practices and how they scaffold preservice and in-service teachers' learning. We conclude the chapter with a discussion of how we understand the connections between teacher and student learning at the nexus of creativity, culture, innovation and motivation. To provide a more textured understanding of creativity and creative practices in teacher education, we have visualized some of the key concepts and provide images of our own creative practices and the creations of our preservice and inservice teachers.

Context

Sreemali: I think it's important that we first introduce ourselves, our teaching contexts and our practices before we launch into talking about creativity in teacher education. In this chapter, I want to share my experiences working with preservice and in-service teachers in Sri Lanka in the aftermath of Sri Lanka's civil war. I used identity portraits to get teachers to tap into their imaginaries and reflect on their professional identities and their roles and responsibilities towards their learners. The teachers' enthusiasm and passion for creating their identity portraits surprised me. The identity portraits the teachers generated gave me access to "complexities of teachers' lives" (Freeman, 2002) that would have not been possible through spoken or written genres of communication. It opened my eyes to the richness of teachers' professional

lives and the need to provide teachers with alternative means to reflect on their identities. Secondly, the identity portraits created by the teachers gave me the confidence to explore creative methods in my work with teachers. Using creative approaches and tapping into teachers' own creativity provided insights that would not have been possible through more conventional genres of academic expression such as spoken and written language. I will talk about the identity portraits generated by the teachers and how they leveraged teachers' understanding of themselves later in our conversation.

Antoinette: As you know, my career in teacher education spans several decades and various settings including Montreal and Toronto in Canada, Chile, Pakistan and other parts of the world. Although the teachers and schools were dramatically different across these contexts, my practices have always included a focus on self-knowledge and the transformative power of imagination in teacher and student learning for a more socially just world. I will describe Me Mapping Pedagogy which brings together a number of elements from processes and practices that I have infused in my work with preservice and in-service teachers for many years.

Marlon: I am a Colombian-Canadian teacher educator with research interests in teacher identities, digital literacies, and the role of creativity in imagination in teaching and learning. This year I taught a practicum course in our Certificate in the Discipline of Teaching English as an International Language (D-TEIL). Necessity pushed me to be creative and redesign my practicum course in a way that my teacher candidates could teach and learn online. Before the pandemic my students and I would normally travel to either Brazil, Colombia, or Cuba for three weeks to observe and teach in our partner institutions' classrooms. In 2021 when our international partners were all delivering courses online due to sanitary measures in response to Covid, it was easier to imagine a fully online experience. However, it became more complex when these universities in the global south had returned to an in-person delivery mode and several Canadian institutions were still not allowing their faculty or students to travel. Luckily, our host institutions and professors in Colombia arranged to have cameras and microphones set up in auditoriums or taught their classes in computer labs to accommodate us spending time with them via the Zoom platform. This experience highlighted the ubiquity of screens in teachers' and learners' lives as they welcomed different ways for us to observe and capture these lessons to reflect on later. In this conversation, I want to share how my thinking regarding creativity has evolved to effectively and happily teach online under such challenging circumstances.

Multiethnography and Visual Ethnography: Our Interrelated Methodologies

Sreemali: To strengthen our focus on creativity in teacher education, we adopt non-conventional or creative methodologies to present and analyze our data. We draw in from two methodologies — multi ethnography and visual ethnography.

Antoinette: Can you remind me of the key tenets of visual ethnography before we talk more about multi ethnography?

Sreemali: Visual ethnography includes studying the social world using drawing, photography, film, and digital techniques (Mannay, Fink & Lomax, 2019). With the increase of visual material that is generated around us every day through technology and social media, visual methodologies are increasingly used in social science and humanities research to make sense of the world we live in (Rose, 2016).

Marlon: For several years we have found it important to infuse visual material in our work with teachers.

Sreemali: Yes, that's true. We have been moving away from the tradition that the generation of visual data for research rests in the hands of the researchers (Harper, 2012). The three of us have adopted a more participatory approach to visual ethnography where the preservice and inservice teachers, with our guidance, have created the visual data. We will share some examples of our creative work with teachers later in the chapter. We with Holland (2004) that creativity offers teachers opportunities for resistance. In fact, Deleuze (2015/1987) contends that "every act of creation is an act of resistance." The transgressive artifacts the teachers create offer rich understandings of the worlds the teachers we work with inhabit and "how these representations shape the social landscape and subjectivities of social actors (Mannay, Fink & Lomax, 2019, p. 4).

Marlon: Thank you Sreemali for that quick overview of visual ethnography. Can you elaborate on multi ethnography?

Sreemali: Reflecting on our previous collaborative work, (see Gagné, Kalan, & Herath, 2022; Gagné, Herath, & Valencia, 2018; Gagné, Herath, & Valencia, 2017a; Gagné, Herath, & Valencia, 2017b; Gagné, Schmidt, & Markus, 2017; Gagné & Schmidt, 2016; Gagné & Soto Gordon, 2015; Herath, & Valencia, 2015; Valencia, & Herath, 2015; Valencia, Herath, & Gagné, 2020), we have experienced the unique potential of multiethnography in allowing us to step away from conventional genres of academic writing. Multiethnography allows us to approach our data through a conversation about the intersections between creativity, culture, innovation and motivation in teacher education (Banegas & Gerlach, 2021).

Multi ethnography is genealogically embedded in the narrative traditions of storytelling and William Pinar's concept of "currere" (1975). Multi ethnography allows the three of us to provide similar and different meanings to a common phenomenon - in this case, creative practices - as we experience them in our glocal contexts (Norris, 2008). Multi ethnography will provide us a space to not only report our experiences but also interrogate them in a collegial conversation. This conversation/storytelling will position us as researchers and the researched and enables us to simultaneously generate, interpret and analyze data. The storytelling, in fact, acts as an "invoker" of recall and re-examination of experiences (Barone, 1990).

Antoinette: Another unique quality of the multi ethnography is that it creates a third space for the readers to insert their stories. As we engage with each other interrogating and adding meaning to our experiences, the dialogic nature of our conversation invites our readers to engage in the conversation and self-interrogate. Norris and Sawyer (2012) call this act of inclusion “bracketing in.” Multi ethnography provides the space for “artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experience” (Adams, Jones & Ellis, 2015, p.1).

Marlon: Engagement in rich discussions amongst ourselves and with different people exposes us to diverse perspectives and allows us to make connections between ideas that may seem divergent, but which can combine in truly innovative ways.

Antoinette: I see connections to some of Paulo Freire’s early work where he describes the concept of dialogue. In *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire’s (1970) seminal publication, he distinguishes between the ‘horizontal’ dialogue described as emancipatory and problematizing education and the ‘vertical’ dialogue described as oppressive anti-dialogue underpinning banking pedagogy (Freire, 1970). Shor and Freire (1987) explain that it is through dialogue that we can reflect together on what we know and don’t know, we can then act critically to transform reality.

Marlon: So, I guess we are engaged in what Freire describes as horizontal dialogue as our conversations inevitably lead us to grow and broaden our perspectives.

Antoinette: That’s right. In fact, Freire (1970) suggests that true dialogue cannot exist unless the partners engage in love, humility, faith, trust, hope, and critical thinking. His perspective on true dialogue assumes the positive connection between people with a drive to transform themselves as well as their reality.

Sreemali: I am reminded of the chapter that we recently wrote for a book on mentoring where we described the centrality of trust, respect and joy that has characterized our relationship spanning more than a dozen years.

Marlon: True. As multi ethnographers, it is important to highlight the convergences and divergences in our multiple identities. Our interests continue to converge around a commitment to social justice and critical teacher education and our identities as plurilingual educators and parents have allowed us to enjoy numerous collaborative activities in research, teaching, and knowledge mobilization. The ways in which we diverge have been equally powerful as these differences fuel our creativity. Figure 1 shows the fluid nature of our convergences and divergences.

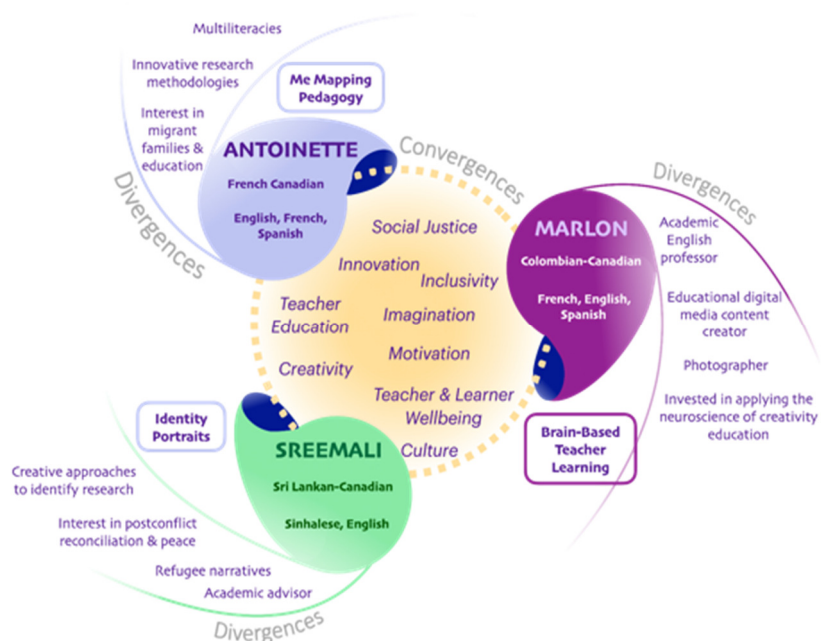


Figure 1: *Our Convergences and Divergences*

Antoinette: Our multi ethnography has grown from our conversations over time that have included email exchanges, chat messages as well as virtual meetings using various platforms. This has involved a process of deep and respectful listening, self-reflection and interrogation. The multi ethnography allowed us the creative space that more conventional research methodologies do not afford.

Literature Review

Antoinette: I think we need to draw on the literature from several fields to make sense of our creative practices and processes in teacher education. I also believe that we have to create a multidimensional lens to understand why these practices spark joy, create opportunities for teacher growth and eventually support student learning and the creation of more socially just spaces.

Sreemali: Critical teacher education is key to our discussion as our practices and processes have been driven by adopting a critical perspective.

Marlon: I have been reading a lot about the critical turn in teacher education which demands that as teacher educators we unsettle the common one-size-fits-all approach to teacher education based on highly Eurocentric and formulaic principles which can have a homogenizing effect on teacher education programs across the globe (Valencia, 2017).

I believe that as teacher educators, we have to contest the classist, monolingual, neocolonial, neoliberal, neo-national, gendered, and raciolinguistic narratives that are still highly pervasive in teacher education (Hawkins, 2011; Holborow, 2015; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; McIntosh, 2020; Pennycook, 2021, 2022; Wei & Garcia, 2022).

Antoinette: For the past 30 years or so, the notion of teaching methods understood as prescribed instructional procedures has been criticized because it does not recognize the need for teachers to adjust their practice to their context and diminishes teachers’ sense of professionalism while stifling their creativity (Scholl, 2017).

Sreemali: In response to the negative effects of rigid teaching methods, Kumaravadivelu (1994) proposed the notion of postmethod pedagogy as an alternative. He proposed that teachers theorize from practice and practise what they have theorized. Later on, Kumaravadivelu (2012) suggested a postmethod approach to teacher education for a global society known as the KARDS model – Knowing, Analysing, Recognising, Doing and Seeing. The KARDS model rejects a technical orientation and instead addresses a more holistic and transformative approach to teacher education. In fact, I think that many aspects of this model are useful to consider as we deconstruct our teacher education practices. The spirals in Figure 2 suggest the dynamic nature of this model and the interconnections between each module.

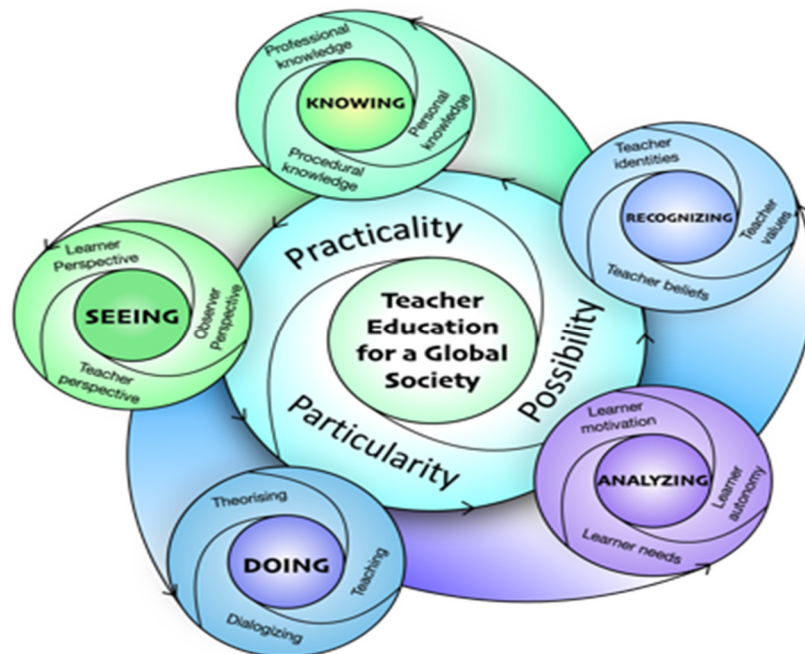


Figure 2: Kamaravadivelu’s Teacher Education for a Global Society: The KARDS Model

Antoinette: He also proposed the three pedagogical parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility to guide the implementation of postmethod pedagogy and prioritize the particularity of the teaching context, legitimizing teachers' personal practical knowledge of teaching while unleashing the creativity of teachers and students (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Once again the spiral in Figure 3 suggests how connected each parameter is to the other.

The principles of particularity, practicality and possibility which are central to the KARDS model have been influential when applied across a number of teaching contexts and also guide many of the choices I make as a teacher educator. Kumaravadivelu describes these parameters as follows:

Particularity – ‘... teacher education must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular socio-cultural milieu.’ (2001, p. 538)

Practicality – ‘Teachers must be enabled to develop the knowledge, skill, attitudes, and autonomy necessary to construct their own context-sensitive theory of practice.’ (2001, p. 541)

Possibility – ‘As a pedagogy of possibility, postmethod pedagogy rejects the narrow view of language education that confines itself to the linguistic functional elements that obtain inside the classroom. Instead, it seeks to branch out to tap the sociopolitical consciousness that participants bring with them to the classroom so that it can also function as a catalyst for a continual quest for identity formation and social transformation.’ (2001, p. 545).

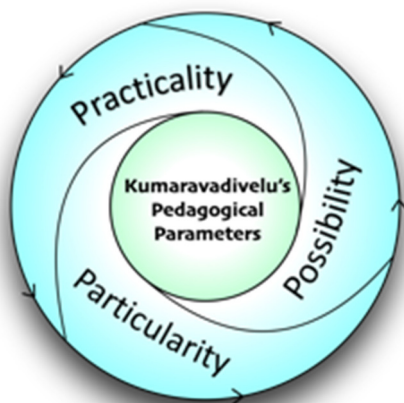


Figure 3: *Kumaravadivelu's Pedagogical Parameters*

Sreemali: Yes, Antoinette. I would like to draw your attention to one aspect of the KARDS model - Recognizing - which I feel lends itself well to our work. In the KARDS Model (2012), Kumaravadivelu highlights the importance of “recognizing” the teaching self. By this, he underscores the im-

portance of recognizing the convergence of teachers' identities, their beliefs and values in informing their praxis. Figure 4 from the larger KARDS model helps to visualize this. The creative work I do attempts to get teachers to recognize the diverse aspects of their teaching selves.

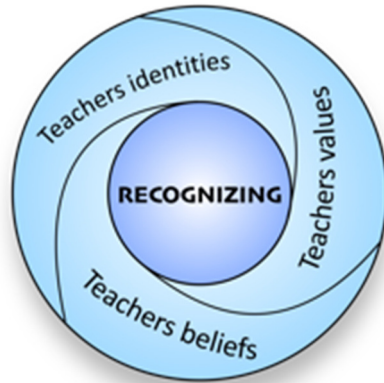


Figure 4: *Kumaravadivelu's Teaching Selves.*

Antoinette: Marlon, your interest in neuroscience has picked my interest and begun to influence how I think about working with teachers.

Marlon: It's true that I often insert a mention of research in these areas when you, Sreemali and I talk about our respective practices and processes in teacher education. Two important concepts that have sparked my creative endeavors in teaching and teacher education are emotions and creativity viewed from a neuroscientific perspective. Let me begin by telling you a bit about the work of Lisa Feldman Barrett (2018) which has been inspirational in my identity-focused work with teachers. She distances herself from what she refers to as 'the classical view of emotion' (p. 4) which roots emotions in easily measurable physiological fingerprints, that is, if you're happy, you smile, if you're sad, you make a sad face (whatever that is). She debunks this assumption as she shows how emotions are much more complex than that. Accordingly, Feldman Barrett argues that emotions do have a physiological base because after all, we perceive our experience of the world through our senses, and we convey/show our emotions using our bodies.

Antoinette: Ok Marlon, but don't other aspects of our upbringing have an influence on our emotions and how we look at and understand the world around us?

Marlon: You are on the right track Antoinette. Feldman Barrett also explains that our cosmivision and cultural upbringing (e.g., ethnic, linguistic, religious, national...) provide a powerful lens through which we filter our experiences and make sense of them. Last, she discusses the power of personal ex-

perience to make sense of the world, and which ultimately serves as a catalyst for ‘how emotions are made’ in our brains.

Sreemali: So does this mean that emotions such as anger, happiness, sadness, etc., are not universal and inherent features of our human condition?

Marlon: That’s exactly what Feldman Barrett explains! She says that emotions cannot be detached from our unique social and personal life histories and that we experience them in particular ways. As such her research resonates with me and has helped me to make sense of the identity-focussed work we do with teachers.

Antoinette: I find that fascinating! And I definitely see the many connections between our identity-focused work and this more nuanced and realistic understanding of emotions that argues that emotions are made and not simply a product of evolution as human beings. Now I am curious to hear about what you learned regarding the neuroscience of creativity.

Marlon: Certainly! I first became interested in understanding more about creativity through a neuroscientific lens in my previous academic appointment at a postsecondary institution where creativity played an important role across the curriculum. I had the opportunity to carry out collaborative research with colleagues like Joel Lopata who taught courses on creativity based on neuroscience and cognitive psychology.

Antoinette: Yes, I remember inviting one of these colleagues to my graduate class as a guest to present on his approach to working with international college students that induced flow and sparked creativity.

Marlon: My concern about student engagement in online learning during the pandemic led me to get more insights and make more connections between my practice and the neuroscience of creativity. In a recent publication, Lopata and colleagues (2022) emphasize that ‘while attention and engagement are critical, moments of disengagement are also beneficial in learning’ (p. 80).

Antoinette: That’s interesting, but what do engagement and disengagement have to do with creativity in teacher education?

Marlon: I will get to that. I find it interesting that so many educators have expended so much energy to find ways to facilitate the voluntary engagement of learners while entirely disregarding the important role of disengagement as part of the learning process.

Sreemali: Yes! I can tell you that planning for student disengagement is not something one often sees in lesson plans. On the other hand, I know a lot of teachers who use the revised version Bloom’s Taxonomy (Anderson et al, 2001) to guide them in planning lessons. This is a conceptual framework commonly used to make pedagogical decisions. In Anderson et al’s (2001)

revision they opted for the word ‘create’ as opposed to ‘synthesize’ as the top item on the pyramid often used to portray this taxonomy. This is a significant recognition of the importance of creativity as part of the learning process which builds from remembering all the way to creating as visualized in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Bloom’s Taxonomy

Antoinette: I am still having difficulty seeing the connection between disengagement and creativity in teacher education. Can we get back to this?

Marlon: Sure Antoinette. In their work, Lopata et al (2022) discuss how creative individuals can easily engage in the use of dual-process modes of creative cognition. These dual modes involve the use of three different but inter-related brain networks which are: 1) the default mode network (DMN), 2) the executive control network (ECN) and 3) the salience network (SN). Accordingly, the DMN is used when we work with low external demands; that is, when our minds wander or when we are thinking introspectively. On the other hand, we rely heavily on the ECN when we are doing task-oriented work and we are focused on achieving particular goals. Last, the SN’s job is to modulate and control our use of both the DMN and the ECN. Therefore, to enhance the ideation process represented in Figure 6, it is recommended that teachers plan lessons where learners have numerous opportunities for their minds to roam without constraints; thus, facilitating a freer ideation process. Then, from those ideation processes, learners or, in the case of teacher education, preservice or inservice teachers can select their best ideas to ‘produce new or original work’ as described in the revised version of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Anderson et al, 2001).

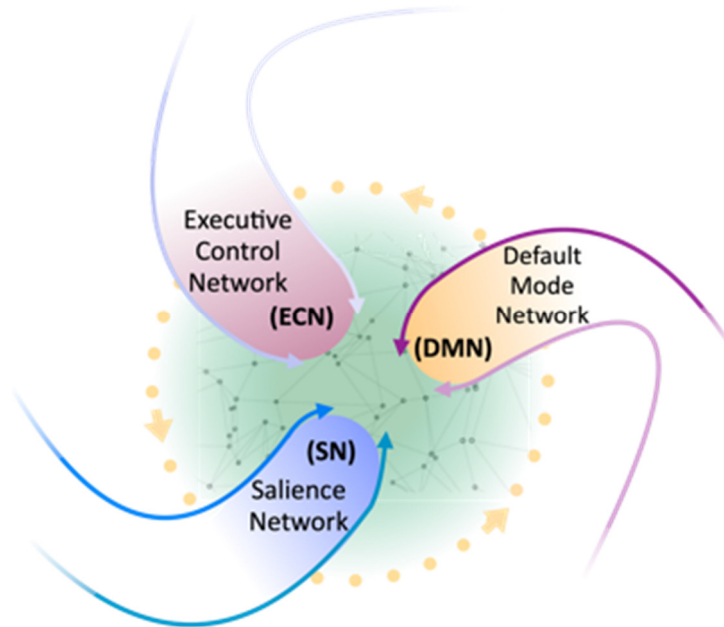


Figure 6: A *Representation of the Ideation Process*

Antoinette: This is very interesting! I can see what you initially said about including both moments of engagement and disengagement, allowing learners' minds to wander, but then, going back to being engaged in creation. As I know that flow is another concept we are both interested in, can you tell me what, if any, is the relationship between flow and disengagement?

Marlon: The important consideration that we must keep in mind is that student attention goes up and down, especially during long classes such as three-hour seminars or lectures that are common in North American universities and in teacher education programs in particular. Therefore, facilitating a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) in which learners experience complete engagement and even absorption in their learning tasks or processes, should definitely be part of one's lesson plan but that should not be all!

Antoinette: I recently watched Csikszentmihalyi's 2004 TedTalk where he explains that the flow concept originated from his interviews with creative individuals who described different ways of 'being in the zone' or fully immersed and energized with feelings of joy. He also described some of the conditions required to experience flow which got me thinking about how we can facilitate flow for preservice and inservice teachers so they might benefit from increased happiness, higher intrinsic motivation, greater creativity, and

better emotional regulation, among other positive effects associated with finding flow.

When I consider the key factors that Csikszentmihalyi (1990) found contribute to the flow state, I can see that it is possible to create a flow-supporting context in courses or workshops for preservice or inservice teachers by doing the following:

- Setting clear goals for a task and provide continuous feedback as appropriate.
- Explaining the need for intense focused concentration to complete the task.
- Ensuring that the task balances the skills required and the challenge level of the task.
- Building in some options to ensure that my students feel a sense of personal control and agency over the task.
- Explaining the rationale for the task and clarify that there are no 'right' answers so that my students' level of reflective self-consciousness is lowered.
- Reducing distractions by suggesting that multitasking goes counter to finding flow. I can make sure that the task is inherently pleasant for my students.

In fact, I think that Me Mapping Pedagogy has the potential to induce flow.

Three Conversations Centred on Our Processes and Practices

Sreemali: As we discuss some of our own practices and experiences, it will be interesting to explore how the concepts of creativity, culture, innovation and motivation interact and intersect with some of the literature that has influenced our work with preservice and inservice teachers who teach diverse learners amidst realities such as war, poverty, privatization of education, linguistic imperialism, and migration.

Me Mapping Pedagogy

Antoinette: I want to begin by introducing you to Me Mapping Pedagogy which is at its core identity-focussed and multimodal. It provides preservice and inservice teachers with the opportunity to showcase their plurilingual repertoires and important milestones in their lives while sharing their dreams and hopes for the future. Developing their own Me Maps allows teachers to push back against conservative approaches to education and to imagine a future for themselves and their students which is more inclusive.

Sreemali: Can you explain how this happens?

Antoinette: When infusing Me Mapping in teacher education, preservice and inservice teachers begin to recognize the diversity and strengths of their students and use an asset-based approach to support them. In addition to experi-

encing Me Mapping Pedagogy themselves, teachers are invited to access the Me Maps generated by multilingual students on the Me Mapping with Multilingual Learners site (<https://sites.google.com/view/memapping/>) to 1) reflect on the diversity of learners, 2) create detailed profiles of learners, 3) assess the language proficiency of learners and 4) consider ways to support their language and literacy development. We encourage teachers to explore ways to adapt Me Mapping pedagogy to meet specific goals of their programs and contexts.



Figure 7: *Teachers Learn about the Diversity of Learners by Exploring their Me Maps*

Marlon: Are any aspects of the KARDS model central to Me Mapping Pedagogy?

Antoinette: The three pedagogical parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility. The Particularity parameter is taken up by focussing on learning about oneself and one's students. The Practicality parameter is enacted through the direct experience with Me Mapping in courses and workshops for teachers. The Possibility parameter is visible as teachers work with the Me Maps of students and recognize them as much more than students trying to master a particular subject but as multifaceted individuals with unique backgrounds as well as hopes and dreams for their future.

Sreemali: It seems to me that some of the KARDS modules proposed by Kumaravadevelu must be foregrounded in your Me Mapping work with teachers.

Antoinette: You're right. The Recognizing and Analyzing modules are indeed infused in how I operationalize Me Mapping Pedagogy in teacher education.

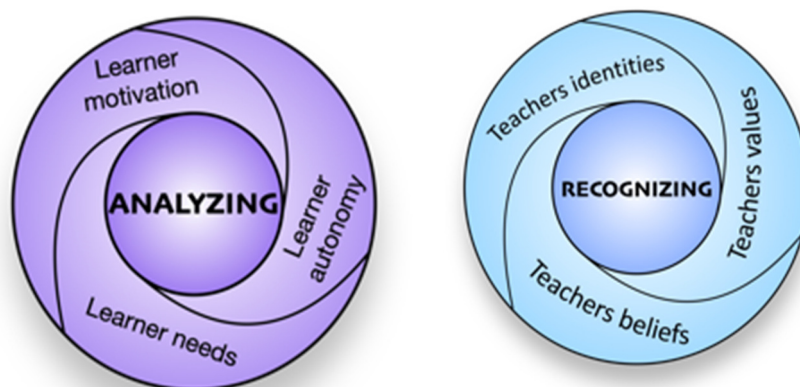


Figure 8: Kumaravadivelu's Analyzing and Recognizing Modules for Teachers

The Analyzing module of KARDS recognizes that students in today's world need to develop strong intercultural communication skills driven by the idea of global citizenship that is firmly rooted in local identities (Lamb, 2004). Teachers in turn need to learn how to motivate student learning by getting to know them better and engaging them in making choices about what and how they want to learn about the world around them with information technology and social media as central forces.

Sreemali, like you, I am deeply invested in the Recognizing module which places importance on teachers becoming aware that their identity shapes their perceptions about what constitutes teaching and learning and understanding that their beliefs influence how they interpret classroom events and activities. Like Kumaravadivelu, I believe that teacher education must help teachers become aware of their subject positions as well as the possibilities for personal and professional identity transformation. Teacher education must help teachers to analyze their beliefs and critically reflect on them.

Marlon: What are the other theories and concepts that underpin Me Mapping pedagogy?

Antoinette: Freire's (1970) humanizing pedagogy, where students are not viewed as passive learners but are encouraged to express their consciousness through education is central to Me Mapping. Humanizing pedagogy encourages educators to listen to their students and build on their knowledge and experiences to engage in contextualized, dynamic, and personalized educational approaches that further the goals of humanization and social transformation. The reality of the learner is crucial in humanizing pedagogy where

educators actively inquire into students' identities inside and outside of school to further understand the diversity and multiple identities of their students and the cultural differences that affect teaching and learning.

Marlon: It is exciting to see how Freire's ideas come to life in Me Mapping Pedagogy more than 50 years after the publication of his seminal Book "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed"! However, it pains me that so many of Freire's transformative concepts regarding education have not been taken up in more contexts around the world.

Sreemali: Don't forget the work of Jim Cummins' that spans several decades as he has proposed a number of frameworks that help to operationalize Freire's ideas.

Antoinette: It's true... Embedded in Humanizing Pedagogy is Cummins' (2009) Transformative Multiliteracies and Literacy Expertise Framework which views students as intelligent, creative and able to participate in constructing knowledge through the creation of identity texts. Cummins' framework emphasizes students' prior knowledge and the need to involve them in cognitively engaging activities leading to knowledge construction and dialogue via art and technology, as well as how teachers/mentors can accomplish this by focusing on meaning, language and use (Cummins, 2006; Cummins, 2009; Cummins, 2011; Cummins et al., 2015).

Marlon: You mentioned earlier that Me Mapping allows students to showcase their plurilingual repertoires. How does this tie in with humanizing pedagogy?

Antoinette: Me Mapping Pedagogy also recognizes the humanizing aspects of translanguaging (Garcia et al. 2017) which acknowledges that multilingual learners need to be able to use their linguistic resources to make sense of and interact with the world around them. In Me Mapping Pedagogy, teachers create space for their students to use their full linguistic repertoire rather than insisting on the use of only one language.

Sreemali: I was thinking back to what Marlon was saying about emotions earlier and how our experiences of the world act a catalyst in the 'making' of emotions. I was wondering how emotions factor into Me Mapping Pedagogy if at all.

Antoinette: Emotions play an important role in Me Mapping Pedagogy. When learners feel that they are seen and heard, they typically feel safe, happy and confident. By focussing on aspects of one's past, current and future self, Me Mapping Pedagogy elicits a range of emotions that make the experience of engaging in Me Mapping more memorable. Joy, sadness, anger, and a range of other emotions emerge as teachers and students map themselves.

In addition, the notion of mutual vulnerability underpins Me Mapping Pedagogy as teachers must be willing to open to their students to facilitate their students sharing about their lives and experiences. Keet, Zinn, and

Porteus (2009) define mutual vulnerability as “the pedagogical process that allows teachers and other authority figures to open up and render their frames vulnerable for learners and students to risk their full participation in the pedagogical transaction (p.110). Figure 9 shows how these various concepts flow through Me Mapping Pedagogy.

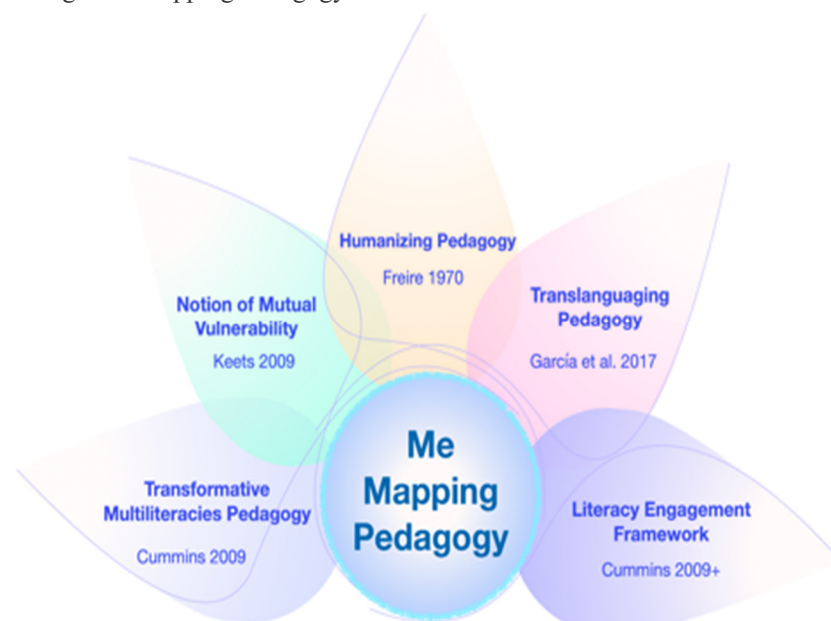


Figure 9: *Theories and Concepts Informing Me Mapping*

Sreemali: Can you provide some examples of your practices with teachers to highlight the nature of Me Mapping?

Antoinette: Sure. For example, to support teacher learning, I encourage teachers to explore their own plurilingual journey by engaging in Me Mapping activities that involve the creation of linguistic portraits, timelines, language flowers and so on. Reviewing their plurilingual journey requires pre-service teachers to think about the languages in their lives, map out their language learning journey, and reflect on the relationship between their language, culture and identity. Teachers can share their plurilingual journey in the form of a video, PPT, blog post, artwork and other formats so they can reflect on the relationship between languages, cultures and identities.

Marlon: I heard you mention culture and I see how it is interwoven into all aspects of Me Mapping Pedagogy. Do you have any sense of how Me Mapping can be understood through a neuroscientific lens which is my new passion?

Antoinette: As Me Mapping Pedagogy allows teachers to explore a range of

aspects of their lives and experiences as well as to imagine their future, it incorporates a range of practices that allow teachers to engage and disengage as well as draw on different neural networks as they generate their Me Maps. I see how flow occurs for some teachers as they immerse themselves in mapping the terrain of the self multimodally.

Below are some examples of what teachers created while working with one of my colleagues, Shakina Rajendram, who is also a teacher educator. Figure 10 shows an adaptation of the linguistic portrait activity where a teacher has drawn a portrait of a plurilingual teacher.

Figure 11 is one teacher's language portrait with the ten languages he connects with identified in different colours. Figure 12 is a screenshot of a video clip of two teachers explaining their timeline. Figure 13 shows an excerpt of a bilingual poem created by three teachers working together and Figure 14 is an example of one teacher's language flower with their different languages and how they use them on each petal.



Figure 10: An Adaptation of the Linguistic Portrait



Figure 11: One Teacher's Language Portrait



Figure 12: Screenshot of a Video Clip of Two Teachers Explaining their Timeline



Figure 13: An Excerpt of a Multilingual Poem Created by Three Teachers Working Together

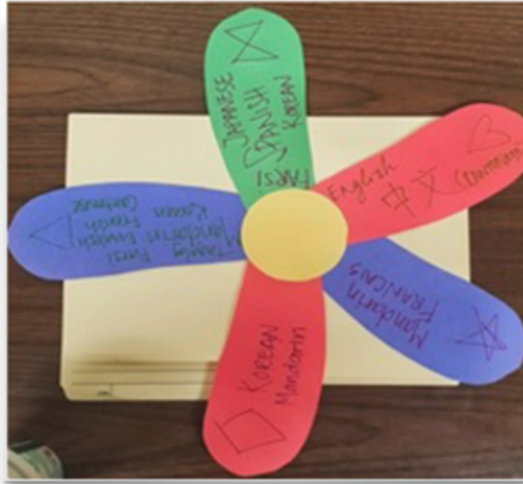


Figure 14: Example of one Teacher's Language Flower with their Different Languages and their Uses

Sreemali: I can see lots of connections to the way I work with preservice and inservice teachers in an attempt to make them more self-aware.

Antoinette: Another learning opportunity for teachers that integrates the Me Mapping videos produced by multilingual learners is the creation of the profile of a student. Teachers are asked to select and view the Me Map of any learner posted on the Me Mapping site (<https://sites.google.com/view/memapping/>) as well as do additional research on the background of the learner. This might include finding out about the characteristics of the languages they speak, researching the political, sociocultural and geographical landscape of the learner's home country, finding out about the cultural traditions and festivals the learners talk about in the video and so on.

Additionally, teachers are asked to assess the oral language proficiency of the learner. The culminating task is for teachers to create a profile for the learner with individualized recommendations for how to support language learning, academic success, social adjustment, and emotional well-being.

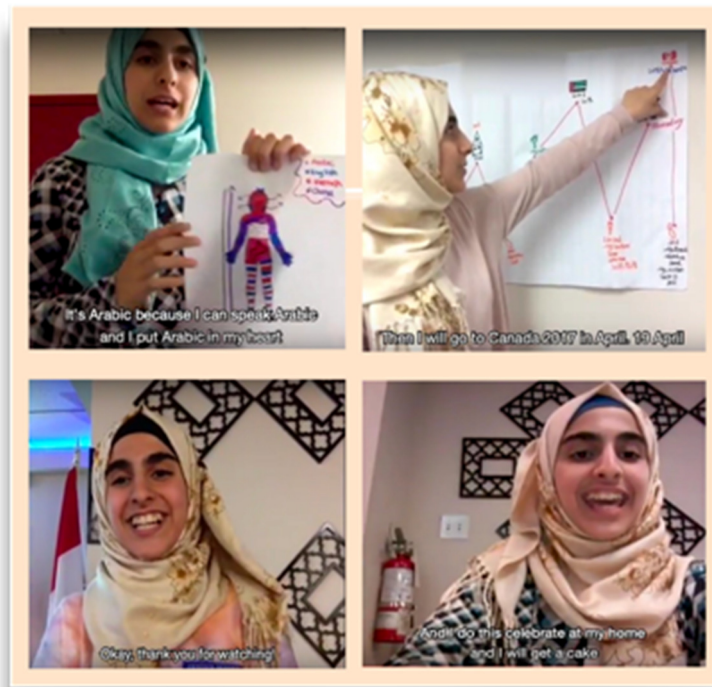


Figure 15: Preservice Teachers Review one Learner’s Me Map to Create a Profile

In Figure 16, you can see a few screenshots from one preservice teacher’s presentation of the profile of Aakifah, a Grade 6 multilingual learner from Afghanistan. Some elements of Aakifah’s profile include 1) her family, aspirations, interests, age, languages, and countries she’s lived in, 2) a timeline to show her birth in Afghanistan, her move to Canada, when she started schooling, and other important milestones, 3) the cultural and religious traditions essential to Afghan culture, 4) the characteristics of the languages that Aakifah speaks, and their similarities and differences to English. The preservice teacher has researched items 3 and 4 as there were not part of Aakifah’s Me Map. The profile also includes the preservice teacher’s assessment of Aakifah’s speaking abilities with examples from Aakifah’s Me Map to support the assessment. Finally, the preservice teachers suggest strategies to support Aakifah’s learning of English which is her new school language.

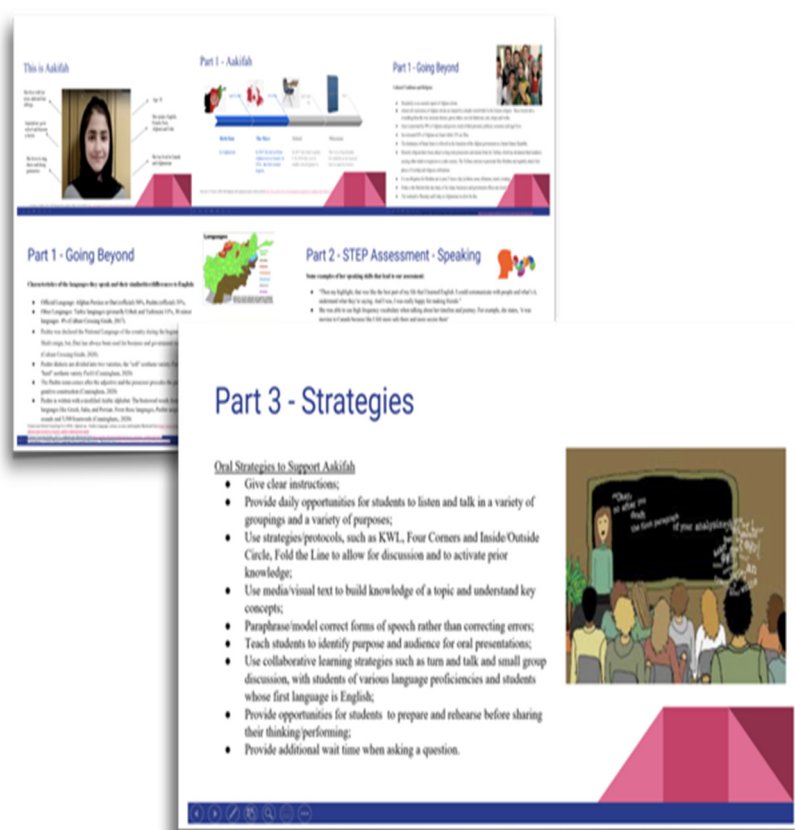


Figure 16: One Teacher's Profile of Aakifah based on her Me Map

Marlon: It's great to see the rich multimedia content on the Me Mapping website and how it has led to teacher engagement with such important issues. Hearing about Me Mapping has made me feel even more confident that my focus on visual ethnography and the development of digital multimedia content is the way forward in teacher education.

Antoinette: It really has been heartening to observe the growth of teachers as they experience Me Mapping. By learning about the linguistic and cultural repertoires of the learners, preservice teachers developed professional and pedagogical knowledge about linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogy from the ground up. Kesha who migrated to Canada when she was in Grade 2 explains:

It's important to give them the space to express their identity... I came from Sri Lanka, and I really enjoyed sharing how I lived back home and about my culture. I think what was really apparent in the

Me Mapping videos is that all of the students really enjoyed talking about themselves. And, you know, using their first language has to do with their culture as well. It's very much tied together. At the end of the day, students want to know that you're taking an interest in them and that you care about how they're how they're doing. So incorporating activities that are meaningful to students is really important in engaging them in any kind of learning.

Nicholas, a preservice teacher who was born and raised in Canada, came to a realization of the importance of linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogy when he learned about his own linguistic and cultural identity through Me Mapping. What he appreciated about Me Mapping was that it helped students.

What I appreciated about the Me Mapping activities is to help the students acknowledge that where they come from is very important, and to embrace their own culture. Doing the Me Mapping activities myself helped me to learn about myself. It's important for educators to know where they come from, to acknowledge their own biases, their own opinions. Prior to this, I didn't consider myself an English language learner. I was like, I've only learned English really. And I grew up speaking English. But that was all kind of turned upside down as soon as I did these activities myself, and I now really appreciate it... So that's kind of a pedagogical shift, if we are going to embrace other cultures.

The feedback from teachers who have experienced Me Mapping Pedagogy reveals that it has helped them to view their own languages and cultural experiences as well as their students' languages and culture as valuable and legitimized. In short, Me Mapping Pedagogy promotes an assets-based way of viewing multilingual learners.

Identity Portraits

Sreemali: In my work with preservice and inservice language educators, I use identity portraits or body silhouettes to get teachers to reflect on their identities; their beliefs about teaching, pedagogical practices and their students; and their expectations for themselves and their students. I present teachers with a body silhouette and a box of crayons and ask them to map out their sociocultural identities and their expectations towards diverse learners using words, colours, pictures, cartoons and/or photographs to best represent the different elements of their "teaching selves" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Marlon: What is the connection to creativity?

Sreemali: This activity recognizes the centrality of creativity in higher order learning as in the revised version of Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al, 2001). After the teachers complete their identity portraits, I get them to narrativize and interpret theses. This emic perspective prevents me from making inaccurate inferences. As recommended by Busch (2010) and Gauntlett &

Holzwarth (2006) researchers who employ creative visual methodologies should get the creators to interpret their work. The identity portraits and their accompanying narratives allow me to gain deeper and more nuanced understandings of how teachers conceptualize their professional identities.

Antoinette: If I understand this correctly this shift from solely relying on spoken and written language to visual and creative means of meaning-making necessitates an epistemological rethinking of “data generation” (Mason, 2009) as a creative process in which teachers are empowered to provide their emic perspectives (Prasad, 2014) of what it means to be an educator.

Sreemali: I have experienced firsthand the power of visual and creative methods of inquiry. They have the potential to challenge traditional notions of inquiry that are primarily reliant on written or spoken language and are based on the premise that language alone is insufficient to explore the social world. The emphasis on creative means makes identity portraits a more inclusive tool to tap into one’s identity. The adoption of creative methods provides a “different way into a research question...and engages the brain in a different way” (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006, p. 84). I see how teachers map out aspects of their identities that would not usually emerge in a conventional interview.

Antoinette: You explained how this activity pushes teachers to tap into their creativity. Can you tell us about the epistemological premise of identity portraits and how generating identity portraits can motivate teachers to be innovative?

Sreemali: I was first introduced to identity portraits by Gail Prasad in a doctoral seminar conducted by Jim Cummins when I was a doctoral student at OISE, University of Toronto. She built her work on Brigitta Busch’s (2006, 2010) research with school children in South Africa that emphasizes the importance of visual representations in meaning-making processes in social life. Busch’s (2010) work stresses how certain aspects of our lives cannot be verbalized but instead operate unconsciously. To use her own words,

The switch in mode of representation from word to image helps to deconstruct internalized categories, to reflect upon embodied practices and to generate narratives that are less bound to genre expectations. While the logic of the word is characterized by a time-bound linear sequence, visual representation is characterized by space and simultaneity and requires attention to the ways in which the various components of the picture relate to each other. Language portraits thus foreground the current situation rather than emphasizing the path which has led to it. (p. 286)

These identity portraits are similar to what Cummins and Early (2011) call identity texts, i.e., products of students’ creative work or performances that allow learners to invest their identities in their creations (Cummins, 2006). Identity texts are a powerful pedagogical tool that promotes equity and

social justice among students from marginalized backgrounds. I noticed that the switch in the mode of engagement to visualizing their identity and away from writing, motivated teachers to be innovative. I have always seen how enthusiastic teachers get when we ground activities, discussions, and projects around the teachers, their identities, teaching contexts, experiences and challenges. I imagine that the motivation to be innovative and create these rich and nuanced identity portraits is, in part, tied to novelty as teacher education in many contexts remains quite conventional.

Marlon: That is a concern I have too. I often think about the performativity (Butler, 1990) that underpins the creative activities I assign my students. After all they create to share with me, the professor.

Antoinette: Can I shift your attention to culture? Can you share with us some examples of the identity portraits your teachers created and elaborate how the teachers conceptualized culture? What elements of their culture did they share?

Sreemali: That's a very good question, Antoinette. I will share with you examples of creations to elaborate how identity portraits assisted teachers to engage with culture and their multiple cultural identities.

The identity portraits created by the preservice teachers highlight how they identify themselves primarily by social or institutional identities such as their religions, language and ethnicity. Coming from segregated communities and schools, these preservice teachers sometimes have difficulty situating themselves in the larger educational fabric. As you can see in the identity portraits in Figure 17, the teachers placed their religion on their heart or face. As a researcher who has worked extensively on postconflict reconciliation, it is worrying that these prospective teachers have failed to develop more inclusive pan Sri Lankan identities that Sri Lankan teacher education programs envision for their graduates.

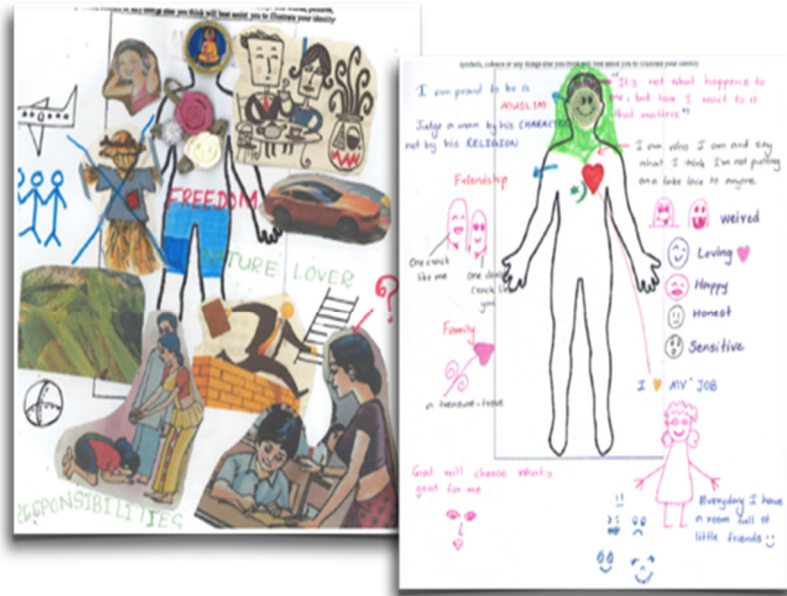


Figure 17: *Identity Portraits Created by Preservice Teachers*

Contrary to the identity portraits generated by pre-service teachers, the inservice teachers' identity portraits are much more nuanced and show the complexities of their teaching selves that go beyond institutional labels. As you can see in Figure 18, the more experienced teachers mapped out their identity, beliefs and values (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). For them, being a teacher means the convergence of their multiple personal, professional and social cultures.

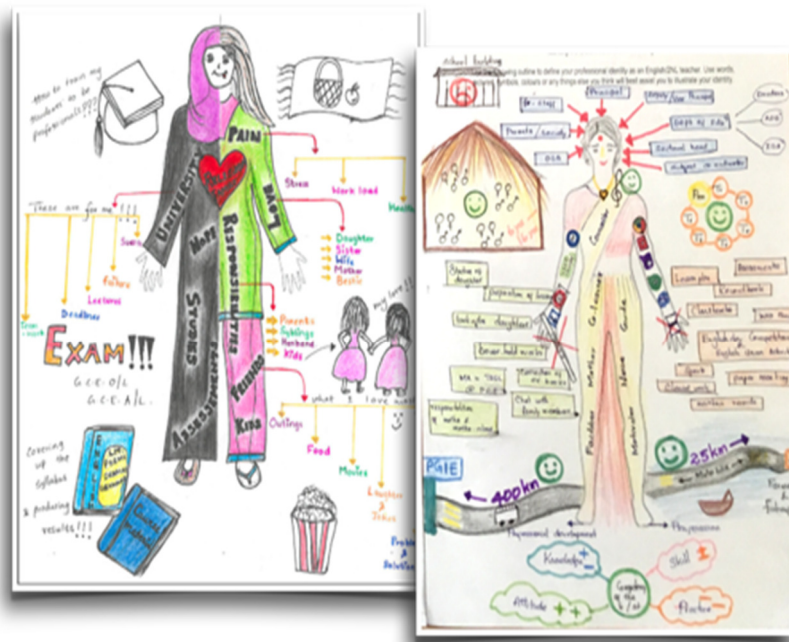


Figure 18: Identity Portraits Created by Inservice Teachers

Making an identity portrait provides teachers with a creative space to map out their identities and articulate aspects of their identities that might not have been possible otherwise. This is a creative tool that can be used in teacher education to help teachers reflect on their professional identities and also their growth over time.

Antoinette: Are you saying that the identity portraits your teachers create are close reflections of their lived experiences? For me knowing my students, their interests, their experiences, and plans is important. That is one of the reasons why I carry out identity-based creative activities with both the pre-service and inservice teachers I work with. They help me understand my students well. You probably noticed the strong connections between Me Mapping Pedagogy and identity portraits as they are one way of mapping the teacher self.

Sreemali: Of course, Antoinette I see these connections! The identity portraits have really opened my eyes. I learned how critical incidents in teachers' past can shape their professional lives. Let me share with you Nilu's identity portrait (Figure 19). She grew up in northern Sri Lanka amidst the civil war. Unlike many other preservice teachers who grew up in safer parts of the country whose identity portraits went beyond the body silhouette, and spoke of their futures and ambitions, Nilu's identity portrait was confined to the

here and the now. It reflected her family position as daughter and sister, the identities that were assigned to her such as religion, language and ethnicity as well as her identity as a teacher and her role in the community as the Treasurer of the Women's Society.

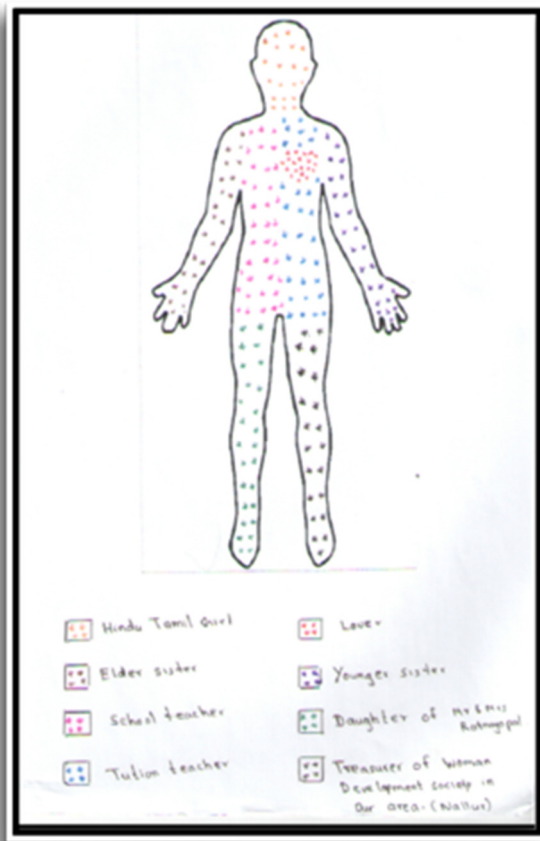


Figure 19: *Nilu's Identity Portrait*

In contrast to Nilu, Waseem (Figure 20) who grew up in a multicultural city in the Central Province in a household where Tamil, Sinhala and English were spoken, created a portrait that spoke loudly of many dreams, plans, interests, hobbies connected to his many identities. The freedom he experienced growing up, allowed him to dream. I think having access to these critical experiences is key in helping teachers develop a better understanding of their identities and explore ways in which we can develop inclusive pedagogies that build on identity.

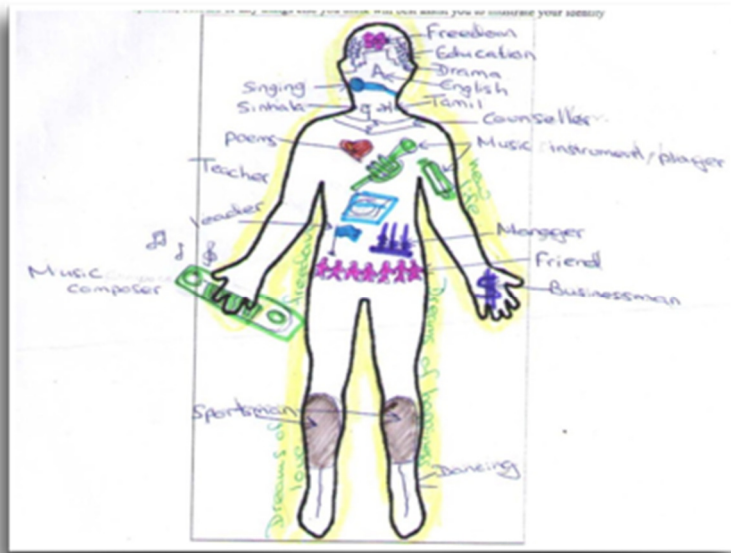


Figure 20: Waseem's Identity Portrait

I also got an insider view on what it means to be a teacher in a Sri Lankan school and the conditions that shape practice. Look at Figure 21. These two identity portraits were created by two teachers who worked in very different parts of Sri Lanka — Jaffna, in the Northern Province which was affected by the 30-year war and Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. I call these identity portraits the “Shackled Angels” because they show the teachers’ desire to fly and how they are chained to the ground by various social and economic factors. These creations have helped me develop more creative and critical approaches in my teaching.

This activity is closely linked to Freire’s (1970) notion of humanizing pedagogy that you discussed earlier, Antoinette. Identity portraits allow teachers to build on their experiences and knowledge and allow me, the teacher educator, to develop contextualized pedagogies that centre around the particular (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). As you point out, tapping into teachers’ lives outside of school is an important element of humanizing pedagogy.



Figure 21: *The Shackled Angels*

Marlon: Can you tell us how your teachers incorporate aspects of identity-focused practices in their work with students?

Sreemali: Yes, Marlon. My students use this activity in multiple ways. First, they use it as a self-reflective tool. The English language teachers I work with are not first language users of English. For them, English is their second or third language and sometimes a foreign language as well (Herath, 2020). This creative activity helps them to reflect on their pedagogical practices, the conditions they work in and the larger socio-political factors that shape their work and their students' learning without being hindered by oral or written language. Articulating their teaching selves creatively helps them to be more informed of their practices. Some teachers use this activity as a pedagogical tool to learn more about their learners and make their classes more inclusive. In addition, some inservice teachers completing graduate degrees use identity portraits as a research tool to tap into teachers' and students' identities. In

fact, several of my graduate students have been very successful in exploring various aspects of language education using identity portraits.

Antoinette: It is great to hear that identity portraits can be used with learners of various ages as a pedagogical practice or as a research tool.

Brain-Based Learning & Teaching Online

Marlon: I have been reflecting on how what I have learned about brain-based learning and creativity has influenced the way I teach. I'd like to tell you how my teaching has evolved through the lens of my English language and practicum courses for students considering a career teaching English as an international language. During the pandemic, I explored how to 1) effectively combine synchronous and asynchronous online instruction, 2) embrace teaching as a creative endeavour, and 3) prepare my preservice teachers for video-mediated classroom observation via Zoom by engaging them in visual autoethnography.

Sreemali: I look forward to hearing about how you have taken up concepts related to the neuroscience of learning in an online environment. As I move between teaching in person to teaching online, I think about the affordances each mode provides.

Marlon: There are still frequent debates, and, I'd even say complaints among my colleagues about how teaching remotely is not the same as teaching in person, and they are right. It's definitely not the same! However, I feel strongly that the quality of education that we provide does not have to be inferior when we teach online. What I mean is that an online class doesn't have to be some sort of watered-down version of its in-person counterpart.

Antoinette: I think that some of our colleagues try to replicate what they do when they teach in the bricks-and-mortar classroom and this is why they find teaching online so unsatisfactory.

Marlon: The difference between teaching online and in person is what motivated me to transform the three-hour lecture format of my courses by combining asynchronous and synchronous teaching. For example, in classes where I taught English as an additional language, I had students do asynchronous work for the first hour and then we met on Zoom during the second hour when they often did group presentations related to course materials. The last hour was devoted to further language practice or reflection.

Sreemali: Could you provide some more detail about what happening in each of the three hours of your class.

Marlon: Sure. The first 'asynchronous' hour started with a pre-recorded mini-lecture or introduction to the topic of the week and a list of activities posted on eClass, our learning management system. These activities had to be completed during the first hour. During the second hour, we met via Zoom and

my students did group presentations related to course readings or we discussed course materials. The third hour involved asynchronous work and the students typically worked independently researching and reflecting on the topics discussed in the previous hour. My courses that focussed on becoming an English teacher typically involved an hour of asynchronous work followed by two hours of synchronous work characterized by rich discussions of assigned reading and viewing.

Sreemali: I have seen snippets of some of your mini-lessons on social media and I am curious about the rationale for these mini-lessons and the process involved in creating them.

Marlon: These mini-introductory lectures were usually five to seven minutes long. I recorded them in my makeshift studio at home. I produced the videos using different digital media tools such as *iMovie*, *Camtasia* and *VoiceThread* and then posted them on *YouTube*. You can see a screenshots of one of these mini-lessons using a green screen and produced using *iMovie* in *Figures 22* and *23*. It was a lesson on the history of the English language, so we talked about Anglo-Saxons, kings, battles, and invasions. In this lesson, I played the role of a fictional king, Marlon the Elder.

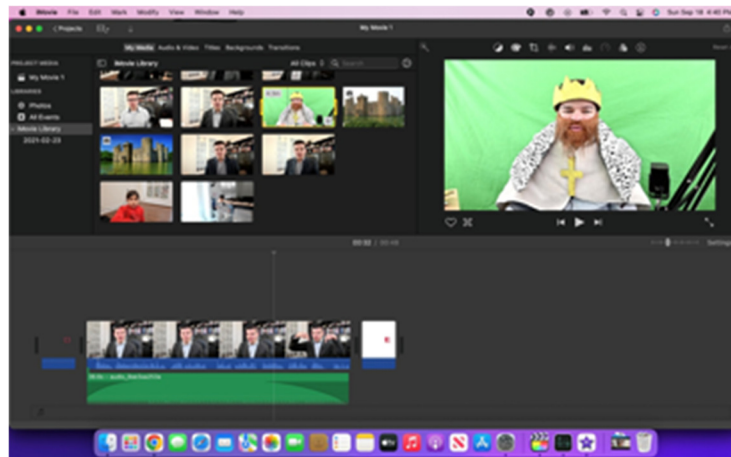


Figure 22: Mini-lesson editing on *iMovie*



Figure 23: *Lesson delivered by King Marlon the Elder*

In creating this digital content, I was mindful of the plethora of videos that already exist on YouTube as well as the nature of the content and viewer habits. I'm curious, how do you decide which informative or educational videos to watch on YouTube?

Antoinette: I'd say the length of the video is probably the most important as I typically don't want to spend more than 5 minutes to find the answer to a question I have about a process or product. Of course, the content and quality matter too as when I go searching for information, I want to find an answer to my questions. The style of the presenter also plays a role in determining if I watch the video as I find some 'YouTubers' quite annoying. I imagine that your videos featuring King Marlon or other characters made your students smile or even laugh bringing positive energy into their virtual learning.

Sreemali: I agree that these mini-lessons have a fun and funny side. Turning back to your question Marlon, I usually won't opt for video that is more than 8 minutes long. Sometimes I find myself skipping to different parts of a video review to see the specific thing that I want to learn about and not the whole thing! Actually, it seems increasingly common practice that longer videos are segmented so you can easily skip to the part that you want to watch. Tell us more about your rationale for these mini-lessons.

Marlon: Absolutely! I created the short videos lessons as a way to connect to my students using one type of web 2.0 (user-generated) digital content that they are already familiar with and leverage that to activate their prior knowledge on the lecture topic. Now, to return to our conversation on the neuroscience of creativity, my lessons usually begin with some sort of a crescendo of engagement leading to time for 'off-task' reflective thinking. This reflection might involve taking part in an online conversation on eClass where students post comments and respond to each other. When I teach

online, I try to create spaces for students to engage both their Default Mode Network (DMN) and Executive Control Network (ECN). Combining asynchronous and synchronous online activities supports preservice teachers in making connections between theories of teaching and learning and practical applications. I try to provide opportunities for divergent thinking and task-focused work in every three-hour class.

Sreemali: Now I have a better understanding of how you're building on the neuroscience of creativity to plan and deliver your lessons. What other activities did you do in your class to put creativity in the spotlight?

Marlon: In addition to dual modes of teaching, I provided opportunities for my students to discover their creative selves. In the second half of the practicum course, we focused on wellbeing and used Sarah Mercer and Tammy Gregersen's textbook *Teacher Wellbeing* (2020). As we read and discussed every chapter, I provided my students with opportunities to examine how they activated their creative and productive modes. This included considering internal and external factors, such as the pressure of looming deadlines, enjoying a good restorative sleep – something that seems like a luxury these days – or rewarding themselves with breaks. We also explored the moments and conditions under which we experienced our own 'Eureka' moments. That is when our brains are highly creative. I shared with my students how taking a shower is one of those moments that unleashes my creativity. I explained how the 'four white walls in a tiny room without distractions, the warm water touching my skin and listening to the white noise produced by the water calmed me'. My most brilliant ideas often come to me in the shower!

Antoinette: I see what you mean. When I do an activity that requires little attention because I am involved in a process that has become automatized in my brain like when I go hiking kayaking or swimming, my mind is free. I can relate to the feeling you describe as when I am kayaking alone on the lake I sometimes come up with new ideas to address an issue or solve a problem. I think that sometimes I even experience flow when I am surrounded by trees and animals sliding across the water powered either by my own energy when I am swimming or by paddling in the kayak.

Marlon: That is precisely the background thinking and problem-solving that can happen when we can let our DMN take over! In class, we also discussed the importance of having a hobby to provide our minds with a much-needed break from work and stimulate one's own creative thinking. I think that anything that we do to find joy in our lives goes a long way to prevent teacher burnout by making teaching not only sustainable but enjoyable. Moreover, this could possibly allow us to more easily transition between the DMN and ECN. For me, the activity that sparks my creativity and curiosity is photography!

Sreemali: Well, we know that for sure! You have always been our group photographer when we go on conference trips and for any academic events

that we co-organize. I would say that for me, like Antoinette swimming is the activity that I find relaxing, and which helps me move into a different kind of zone thinking-wise. When I swim, I feel I can review all the things that happened during the day and visualize all the things I need to do.

Antoinette: Now that I understand the reasoning behind your use of dual modes of online lesson delivery from a brain-based perspective, I would like to hear about how you infused your practicum class with elements of visual ethnography and why.

Marlon: This was a process born out of necessity to be creative and redesign the practicum so my teacher candidates could teach and learn online given the fact that we couldn't travel for our international practicum. Thus, I implemented a visual ethnographic approach that allowed preservice teachers to document and unpack their journeys by tapping into their lived experiences in the course and helping them 'see' teaching with a new lens.

Figure 24 shows a class picture I shared on my Instagram at the beginning of the term when we were in hybrid delivery mode with some preservice teachers in person and others joining online. However, for the second half of the course, we all were entirely online. Moreover, because our practicum involved working with Colombian partner institutions, we had to connect through video calls to experience their classrooms virtually. We recorded all the classes we visited virtually using our institutional Zoom accounts. It was great to have a repository of lessons that we could revisit, but I felt I first needed to train my students to focus on particular aspects of their classroom experiences that would make sense to them. I wanted them to be mindful of what they observed and more importantly that they tried to see things they weren't actually looking for.



Figure 24: *Hybrid Teaching Fall 2021*

Sreemali: I remember that in that course you drew on Kumaravadivelu's ideas and used his 2012 book as the text for your course.

Marlon: You remember well! In his theorizing, Kumaravadivelu builds on an ethnographic approach to observe and learn. For him 'seeing is like a thread that interlaces the tapestry of all the teacher preparation modules-knowing, analyzing, recognizing and doing (2012, p. 99). Consequently, he builds on two complementary ways of seeing introduced by Kvernbekk (2000): 'seeing-as' which refers to the ability to see perceptually (just seeing) versus 'seeing-that' which connects perception with conceptual knowledge. Kvernbekk begins her article with an indirect quote of Howard Becker published in a manuscript by Margaret Buchmann (1989). Her words aroused my curiosity which led me to read more about Becker's view. Below are the words that captured my attention from the fragment cited by Buchman. Becker explains the challenge of seeing and making sense of classroom observations given that most of us in the Western hemisphere have spend thousands of hours in classrooms by the time we become teachers, 'it becomes impossible to single out events in the classroom as things that have occurred, even when they happen right in front of you'. He adds 'that it takes a tremendous effort of will and imagination to stop seeing the things that are conventionally 'there to be seen' (Becker, 1971, as cited in Buchmann, 1989, p. 182). That's when I remembered the words of my colleague Ian Martin, who used to teach a module on classroom observation within this practicum course and called it 'Teach me to see'. This notion builds on the idea that preservice teachers have to learn different ways of seeing or as Kumaravadivelu puts it, seeing the classroom from different angles including the learner perspective, the teacher perspective, and a more detached observer's perspective.

Antoinette: These multiple views that you refer to are shown in Figure 25 adapted from Kumaravadivelu's book which I refer to often in my work with teachers as well. So, what did you do to support your preservice teachers to develop an eye to see what could easily be missed because of their similar experiences in Western classrooms?

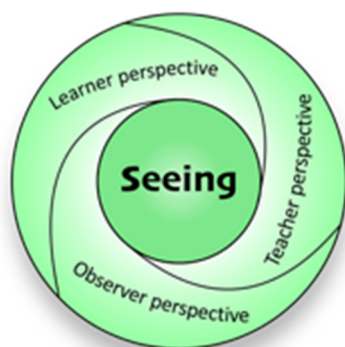


Figure 25. *Kumaravadivelu's Seeing Module for Teacher Education*

Marlon: Sure, I can describe two strategies that helped me prepare teacher candidates for international classroom observation on Zoom: 1) the use of identity texts and, 2) watching a fairly realistic portrayal of classroom teaching and learning when compared to Hollywood films.

Antoinette: I have heard you describe your use of identity texts before. However, I would like to hear more about how you understand these as visual ethnography and connected to creativity.

Marlon: Let me explain how I used this tool. I asked teacher candidates to create identity texts (Cummins & Early, 2011) which are multimodal autobiographies. These rich autobiographies and their corresponding autoethnographic reflective manuscripts created by my preservice teachers allowed them to combine the teacher, learner and observer perspectives with but their life histories and personal experiences as a starting point. Here's an excerpt of the instructions I gave preservice teachers to create their actual identity texts:

In this class I want you build on your use of information and communication technologies, as well as learn about new tools and develop skills to create a virtual text in which you tell me and show me who you are, what you are passionate about, and anything you want to share about yourself. I also want to know where you want to go next (what academic program you are interested in, how you see yourself as a future professional, etc.). This digital creation is called an identity text (Cummins, 2009) as it is meant to be a space to explain your multiple and diverse identities.

Figures 26 and 27 below show screen captures of Camila's and Lucia's identity portraits (all names are pseudonyms). Camila, a Canadian-born TC, chose to include videoclips of the two places where she traced her origins: Guatemala and the Philippines whereas Lucia showed her passion for anime by discussing the film *Anastasia* (1997). In their identity texts, they both included personal and family stories that involved their parents, siblings, as well as stories about teaching and learning from those relatives.

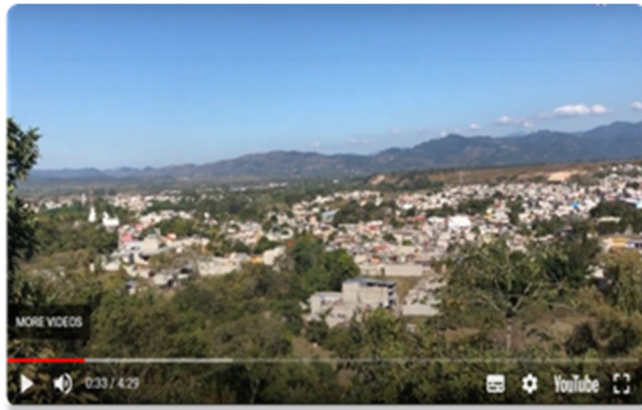


Figure 26: *Guatemala as Shown in Camila's Identity Text*

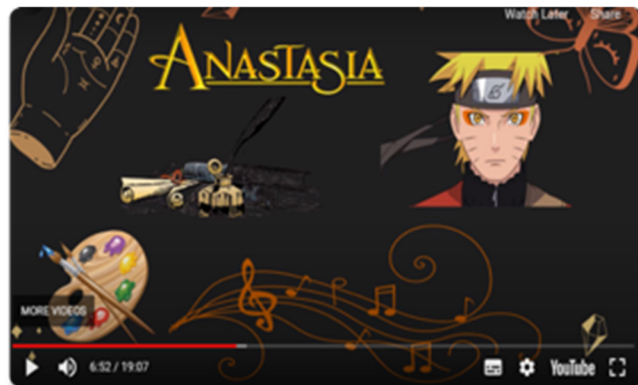


Figure 27: *Lucia's Passion for Anime*

I encouraged preservice teachers to examine their lived and witnessed experiences based on visual ethnography, which Sarah Pink argues, is 'research that accounts for and harnesses this human experience, imagination and action' (2021, p. 1). In addition to that, I created a website where everyone's identity text was posted in a gallery and where my preservice teachers could see each other's creations. This resulted in a deeper kind of reflection which helped many of my preservice teachers to realize how their own experiences with education shaped the ways they imagined themselves as teachers.

Sreemali: It makes sense to look at ourselves before looking at classrooms, but how did you integrate viewing a film into the training of your preservice

teachers's eyes in preparation for their classroom observation on Zoom, and their subsequent practicum interventions?

Marlon: Allow me to elaborate on this! I selected the French *Entre les murs* (2008). This film, also known as *The class* (shown in Figure 28), depicts the classroom interactions of Monsieur Marin and his students in an urban school in Paris and distances from the traditional white teacher hero narrative commonly reproduced in Hollywood films.



Figure 28. ‘*Entre les murs*’ Movie

I asked my students to put themselves in the shoes of M. Marin and explain how they would deal with a particular situation depicted in the film. Once more, I told them to revisit the literature that we had read to come up with solutions that address Kumaravadivelu’s principles of particularity, practicality, and possibility drawing on their strengths as teachers and acknowledging possible areas for improvement. I also directed them to ask themselves how prepared or unprepared they felt to teach in such a challenging environment.

Antoinette: My mind is flooding with ideas of how to infuse films of classrooms into my own teaching and, like you, encourage my students to move from simply ‘remembering’ to ‘applying’ and ‘creating’ as described in Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Marlon: Antoinette, you might be interested in taking a look at the introduction to an essay written by Farah, one my preservice students. Farah explains the disruption that the film *Entre les murs* created between her evolving understanding of teaching and the common hero teacher narrative. In the fragment below, you can read how this reflection made her more aware of teach-

ers' vulnerabilities and how acknowledging one's limitations could be a good starting point for growth and transformation, which could have a positive impact on learners.

Entre les murs, is a film that can be credited for capturing a compelling portrayal of some of the realities of teaching and learning that are generally excluded in Hollywoodized school films. I have to be honest, having been accustomed to the "hero/super-teacher" narrative, I found this film rather refreshing, and authentic. Oftentimes we find ourselves in positions where we have to prepare to be the "ideal" teacher, the savior, the campus that our students use to help navigate the chaotic world around them. The truth is we can't always be that superhuman teacher, but perhaps we can attempt to be transformative and evolving teachers. As future teachers, we can try our best to listen to and proactively attempt to create a dynamic classroom for all our students that celebrates diversity, respects differences, and motivates student engagement.

Sreemali: I see from your account and Farah's that this film was a powerful catalyst to help teacher candidates make sense of video-mediated classroom experiences informed by visual ethnography. I would like to combine using visual ethnography and duoethnography to support the growth of my preservice teachers.

Revisiting Core Concepts

Antoinette: I think it is important to note that before having our final conversation where we revisited our core concepts and considered connections or intersections, we followed the ideation process and moved between networks with periods of engagement and disengagement.

Marlon: It's exciting to have been able to experience this ideation process with you.

Sreemali: I now have heightened sense of awareness of how brain-based learning is operationalized in the process of taking part in a multiethnography.

Antoinette: For me, the most challenging part of our multiethnographic journey has been this one where we have worked to create a visual representation of how our processes and practices connect to creativity, culture, motivation and innovation as well as to a number of other core concepts that we have discussed such as flow and multimodalities.

Sreemali: I agree that moving from words alone to something more visual was not as straightforward as I thought it would be.

Marlon: Yes, I found that I needed frequent periods of disengagement to allow some of the ideas to percolate a bit like in the coffee-making process.

Antoinette: I like your coffee-making metaphor which suggests how you have filtered the many ideas discussed in our multiethnography through your experiences when you were disengaged.

Sreemali: I have to admit that I have found it difficult to disengage as all the concepts and ideas discussed in our multiethnography seem to be swirling around in my brain all the time.

Antoinette: What you are describing is all part of the ideation process which led us to Figure 27 which looks a bit like a lotus flower with its many layers of petals and a pinwheel at the centre.

Sreemali: Did you know that the first documented pinwheel was in China in 400 BC? Apparently, the pinwheel is significant in Chinese culture because it symbolizes turning one's luck around.

Marlon: No, I didn't know that. However, I have seen my children enjoy seeing how when they blow on a pinwheel it turns or even better, how their pinwheels spin when they catch the wind.

Antoinette: The pinwheel symbolizes how teacher educators, through their classroom processes and practices can effect changes in the lives of the pre-service and inservice teachers they work with. In turn, teachers can effect changes in the lives of their students.

Sreemali: What I love about the pinwheel is that it is connected to notions of time, seasons and the cyclical nature of most everything.

Antoinette: The lotus flower also carries many meanings which vary from culture to culture. However, I like the interpretation that views lotus flowers as symbols of strength, resilience, and rebirth because they return to muddy water every night and open their pristine blooms at dawn.

Marlon: We have placed preservice and inservice teachers at the centre of the lotus flower where we show them embedded in critical processes and practices experienced as part of teacher education opportunities which have a transformative effect on teachers increasing their strength and resilience amidst the often difficult circumstances in which they work.

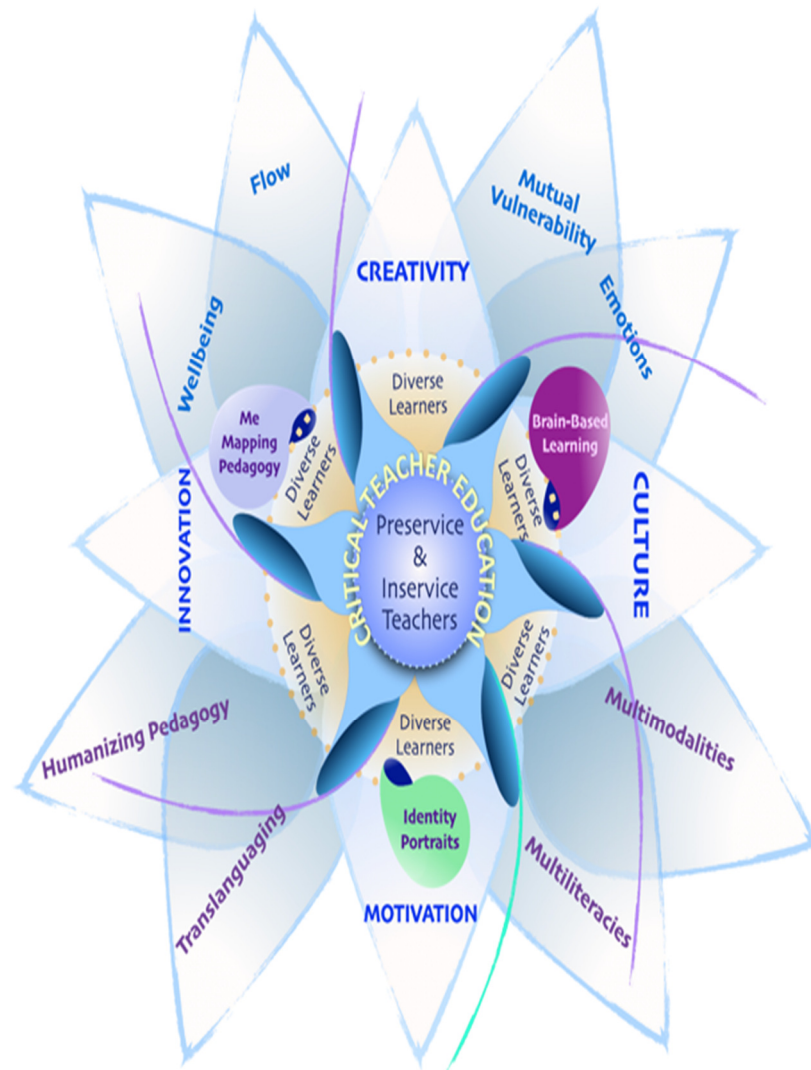


Figure 27: *Connections and Intersections*

Sreemali: We have placed diverse learners around their teachers at the centre of the lotus flower as they too may experience some transformation as a result of their teachers embracing more critical practices and processes.

Marlon: Is there any reason why certain concepts are embedded in different layers of the petals in the lotus flower?

Antoinette: Indeed, through our conversations about our processes and practices, I think it became clear that creativity, culture, innovation and motivation were core elements which contributed to the development of each process or practice described. As such they are embedded in the first layer of petals located the closest to the centre.

Sreemali: We agree that there are several other concepts such as wellbeing, multiliteracies and vulnerability with strong connections to the teacher education processes and practices we have deconstructed.

Marlon: The notions of multimodality and multiliteracies are foundations of my work with preservice teachers as I believe they need to experience these first hand to be able to imagine how to make multimodality and multiliteracies central in their own teaching. Preservice teachers report that they have been more motivated to learn as result and appreciate the innovative ways I have supported them in their learning. They also say that by experiencing multimodality and multiliteracies, they can imagine ways to work in culturally responsive ways with their own students.

Conclusion

Antoinette: Fostering creativity in teachers while supporting them to become more student focussed and inclusive, has required use consider a layering of lenses from different disciplines.

Sreemali: Indeed Antoinette. Our multiethnography with aspects of visual ethnography has revealed the complex relationships between creativity, culture, innovation and motivation in teacher education as well as the potential of creative processes and practices to transform teachers, their classroom pedagogy and, we hope, the larger education structures and global circumstances they work in.

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