Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals in Post-Conflict Reconciliation: A Study of Sri Lankan Language Teachers’ Identities, Experiences and Perceptions

by

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Abstract

The UNDP (2005) notes the twentieth century as one of the bloodiest in human history. It has been defined by wars between countries and regions, as well as conflicts within countries. As members of the global community, it is hard for educators not to encounter the effects of violence and war in different forms in local and professional contexts. Set against the aftermath of one of the longest civil wars in recent times, this study explores what three Sri Lankan teacher education programs in the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) are doing to prepare prospective English language teachers to teach in a time of post-conflict reconciliation.

This qualitative study was conducted in three teacher education programs in the Western, Central and Northern Provinces of Sri Lanka and includes the voices and perceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidates and teacher educators. Most of the war zone was located in northern Sri Lanka. In particular, this study focuses on teacher candidates’ identities, their experiences within the program and with diversity, their understanding of diversity as well as their roles and responsibilities when teaching socially and culturally diverse learners.

This qualitative research inquiry utilizes a blend of narrative and case study methodologies, and includes a variety of traditional data sources such as semi-structured face-to-face interviews,
formal and informal observations, and document analysis, as well as non-traditional methods such as picture descriptions, identity portraits and mind maps generated by the teacher candidates. The research is informed primarily by a group of focal participants comprised of 12 teacher candidates (4 from each program). Their voices are complemented by a peripheral group of 16 teacher candidates and 9 teacher educators from the three teacher education programs, thus providing a rich understanding of how Sri Lankan English language teachers experience the process of becoming teachers.

An integrated conceptual framework based on notions of pedagogical orientations (Cummins, 2009; Miller and Seller, 1990; Miller, 2007, 2010) support the analysis of teacher candidates’ diverse perspectives and experiences relevant to curricular practices in their teacher education program. Additional concepts and theories are considered to allow for a more textured understanding of the prospective teachers’ identities, the nature of their experiences in the program and their perceptions of their own roles as future teachers. These include post-structuralist identity theory (Clarke, 2009; Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000), social justice teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Zeichner, 2009, 2011) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2000, 2002).

The findings of the study highlight the promise of language teacher education programs to create conditions for teacher candidates to become transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1985) in the larger post-conflict reconciliation process underway in Sri Lanka.
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Acronyms

CC – Central College
CLD – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners
CRP – Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy
IDP – Internally Displaced Person
ILO – International Labor Organization
IP – Identity Portrait
LLRC – Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission
LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NC – Northern College
NCOE – National Colleges of Education
NGO – Non-governmental Organizations
NILET – National Institute for Language Education and Training
NLP – National Languages Project
SJTE – Social Justice Teacher Education
TC – Teacher Candidate
TE – Teacher Educator
UIS – UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
WC – Western College
Glossary

Bharatha dancing - Also spelled Bharatanatyam, this is a classical Indian dance form that originated in the temples of Tamil Nadu.

Deepavali – Also known as Diwali, this is the Hindu Festival of Light.

Eelam – The name of the state the Tamil separatists fought for in Sri Lanka.

Elle - A local game very similar to baseball.

Gothaya – A derogatory term used for someone who has a stammer.

Kandyan dancing - Also known as Udarata dancing, Kandyan dancing is a dance form that originated in the area called Kandy of the Central hills region in Sri Lanka. Today it has been widespread to other parts of the country.

Karnatik music - is a system of music commonly associated with the southern part of the Indian subcontinent.

Kovil – The Tamil term for a Hindu temple.

Pottu – Also known as a bindi, it is a dot kept on the forehead

Shalwar kameez - The shalwar are loose pajama-like trousers. The kameez is a long shirt or tunic. In Sri Lanka, it is the national costume of Muslims. Both men and women wear shalwar kameez.

Sinhalese and Tamil New Year – Sinhalese and Tamil New Year coincide and fall in the month of April. It is the beginning of a new year.

Siyambala tree – Tamarind tree.

Thai Pongal - The harvest festival celebrated by Tamil people at the end of the harvest season. It falls in the month of January.
Three-wheeler – A vehicle with three wheels. They have the front single wheel and mechanics similar to that of a motorcycle and the rear axle similar to that of a car. It’s a common form of transportation in many South Asian countries.

Udarata dancing – see Kandyan dancing.

Vesak lanterns - Sometimes informally called "Buddha's Birthday", it actually commemorates the birth, enlightenment (nirvāna), and death (Parinirvana) of Gautama Buddha in the Theravada or southern tradition. During Vesak celebrations, lanterns are made and lit.
Chapter 1:
Point of Departure

Background Vignettes

_July 30, 1984: Kandy, Sri Lanka_

We didn’t know what was happening. All we knew was that we didn’t have to go to school that day, and it was a rare treat for us. As my brother and sister and I played with our cousins in the garden, we saw orange flames and black smoke rising from some parts of Kandy, the Sri Lankan town in which we lived. Our house was located on a small hill, and from it we got a very good view of the town and the Kandy Lake. The way children everywhere are entertained by fires and emergencies, we watched with amusement. The smoke seemed like it came from an ordinary fire—a cooking accident, an electrical problem, a child playing with matches. In a short time though, the flames spread, and plumes of black smoke appeared all over the town, and by then we knew something was wrong.

My aunt, who worked in a bank, returned home shortly. We listened in as she narrated, in tears, the things she had seen in town: Murthy’s grocery store down the lane, in flames, and none of the family to be found. Murthy and his wife owned the store and their children often played there after school. We went there to get candy whenever we had money. They were Tamil. Later in my life, more of what happened that day would be told to me. I would hear of Sinhalese mobs, worked into a frenzy, destroying their neighbors’ shops and businesses. Of my friend’s Sinhalese driver leaving his job to join a mob. Of the butcher my aunt saw as she hurried home, sharpening his knife—not for meat,
but for killing. Of being told not to tell anyone about the Tamil neighbors my parents harboured in our home, of being told not to talk to anyone who might come in search of them, as they did, with a voter list in their hands, marching down the street in a mob to the addresses of the homes with Tamil surnames.

Before that day, my cousins and I would often wander down to a Hindu kovil to play. No one thought anything of it—not our parents, not the Hindus, not us children. After July of 1984, the kovil was barricaded, and the peacocks and deer that lived there, the sweets and the coconuts we ate and the flowers we put in our hair, the red pottu we put on our foreheads, and the childhood of living with friends and neighbors, who happened to be Tamil, was locked away behind the barricade.

July of 1984 continues to be called “Black July.” As I learned later, the riots against the Tamils were a response to a Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the LTTE, that had attacked and killed one officer and 15 Sinhalese soldiers in Thirunelveli near Jaffna in Northern Sri Lanka. I was seven years old, and that is my first memory of ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and the Tamil. I never imagined that many more experiences of violence, fear and uncertainty were to follow in the years to come.

**March 1986: Kandy, Sri Lanka**

We lined up at the gates of our school each day. Parents and teachers opened our bags and our lunchboxes. The ambience was light-hearted as they did this, casually sifting through our things, looking for bombs. People had grown concerned that Tamil terrorists would put bombs in our backpacks as we rode

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1 The meanings of all italicized non-English words are in the glossary.
to school on public transport. Later we were told to carry our things in see-through plastic bags. We struggled to hold onto the awkward plastic bags with our many books, lunches, and water bottles, and they often broke. After some time, we were allowed to bring cloth bags. The cloth bags were sort of cool, and we slung them at our sides. I suppose the idea was that we would notice if someone had placed a bomb at our sides, as opposed to at our backs. As a child, I remember being relieved to get a real bag again, to escape the flimsy plastic bags. That a person might place a bomb in the bag of a school-aged child was the less salient idea. Other kids, somewhere else in the world, might have been told what to do in a fire drill; our teachers blithely advised us to crawl under our desks if we heard shooting. That was now the reality, for everyone.

August 1990: Kandy, Sri Lanka

It was not everyday that I watched the news. In Sri Lanka in the early 1990s, you had to wait until 8:00 p.m. for it, and the news of a bus bomb here, or a small skirmish there, was not worth the wait. It had become commonplace by then. That day, however, we were all impatiently waiting for 8:00 p.m. The radio had earlier in the day delivered the scaffolding of the story: a mosque in Batticaloa, in eastern Sri Lanka, was attacked by the LTTE, the Tamil militant rebel organization that was fighting for a separate land within Sri Lanka.

Eight o’clock came, and we stood in the glow of the TV, looking at the bodies, the blood, the broken limbs. None of this was new to Sri Lankan TV, and by now we had seen it again and again. What kept us in front of the TV was the unfolding of the story: a group of LTTE cadres had disguised themselves as religious Muslims, had entered a mosque during Friday prayers, and had fired automatic guns and thrown grenades at the unsuspecting worshipers. I
remember that we all said, maybe aloud and maybe only to ourselves, “No! No! You don’t do this! Not in a place of worship, not like this!”

**January 31, 1996: Kandy, Sri Lanka**

The Central Bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka’s capital was a symbol of the nation. Very few buildings were that tall in the city. The large, tubular architecture was recognizable to everyone. We were proud of the building.

On January 31, 1996, I was yet again watching the evening news in horror. At the Central Bank, a public place that anyone could have been at, that we all recognized and knew and passed through or nearby all the time on a regular basis, a truck containing a large quantity of explosives had crashed into the gates. While LTTE gunmen and the bank’s security guards exchanged fire, a suicide bomber traveling in the lorry detonated a bomb. The bank was destroyed, and many other surrounding buildings were damaged. The news showed body after body, victim after victim, bloodstain after bloodstain, smoke and dust still billowing in the air behind them, emergency crews in confusion.

While Sri Lanka had become a place of nearly constant violence, there was something different about this event. You could see it on the faces of the victims, the police, the crowds. My parents asked in anguish as they watched the news: “How could this happen? How could this happen? How could this happen?” This was the deadliest of the terrorist attacks I had seen so far. It left hundreds dead, wounded and blind.

**July 1999: Colombo, Sri Lanka**
I was in a room in a small one-storey building with several other interns. Who can say what we were talking about? It was just another ordinary day. I was interning at a human rights NGO in Colombo, and this was the second month of my first real job. Now that I know what the sound was, I find it strange that it wasn’t louder, or sharper. But a small bomb, in a car, it turns out, makes a dull sound, a softer sound than you might expect. Doom, it sounds like. We didn’t even get up because we didn’t know anything was terribly wrong. Then the voices started, the footsteps, the commotion, the security guards running. We went outside, toward the noise.

In front of me was a blackened car, pieces of it scattered everywhere. Blood and flesh mingled around the vehicle—some of it from the driver, some of it from the suicide bomber, and some of it the remains of the gentle, respectful, sophisticated chairman of our NGO, Dr. T. His body was draped over the door of the car, as though he had leaned out to be sick. A security officer came over to the director and said what we all knew, what was in front of us but could not be misunderstood: Dr. T. had been killed, along with his driver, by a suicide bomber.

I think we integrants started talking to each other then, to not feel lonely, to not float away with the deadened feeling that overcame us, and, probably, the other onlookers gathering in the street nearby. I hadn’t known him very well, but Dr. T. had been very kind, very generous with his time, very interested in young people, in our ideas, in change for Sri Lanka.

Crowds, police, journalists, all began to arrive. Dr. T.’s torn body and the shattered car, along with body parts of his driver and the suicide bomber who threw himself on Dr. T.’s car, lay there in the hot sun for hours as the police...
carried out their investigations. This really stuck with me, that they left him there, and that we were all just standing there, unable to change anything about it--able only to look. I could only think: “How could somebody do this?” Until now, there had always been a distance between me and the violence, and although I felt an obvious compassion for the victims of violence, it was of the kind that you feel for anyone, for violence in general, for loss in general. Now, the distance was no more than ten feet, and the compassion that I felt was for a person I knew, a person who had invited us to dinner, a person I had talked to only days before.

Dr. T. was a Tamil politician, a legislator, and a scholar. He had been working with the Sri Lankan government to resolve the historical demands of the Tamils through peaceful and non-violent political means. The LTTE, on the other hand, was fighting for a separate state for minority Tamils within Sri Lanka through violent means. Dr. T. was one of many Tamil victims who were swallowed up into the violence because they struggled for peace. Now it seemed that everyone was killing everyone, and nothing made sense.

**Summer 2008: Toronto, Canada**

Friends and I are attending an event organized by the Sri Lankan consulate in Toronto at the Harbourfront Centre. There is an exhibition, a series of cultural events, and a group of Sri Lankan food stalls. While the event is going on, an LTTE protest takes place outside. Bus loads of Sri Lankan Tamil men, women and children are brought in to hold placards and protest. They are asking the Canadian government to get involved in the problem in Sri Lanka.
May 11, 2009: Toronto, Canada

My family and I watch the local Toronto news station CP24 as reporters give live coverage of the Tamil protestors blocking the Gardiner Expressway. The highway is closed down for hours as the protestors walk along the highway and block traffic. They have altercations with the police as they try to disperse the protestors. Back in Sri Lanka, fighting between the government and the LTTE has intensified. Many predicted the war would soon be over with the government defeating the LTTE. The Tamil protestors in Toronto have been trying to turn the attention of Canadian politicians to what is happening in Sri Lanka. This is not an isolated incident; there have been many more events like
this in places such as Parliament Hill, the Sri Lankan High Commission in Ottawa, and Toronto’s Dundas Square. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94UQJqthMhk)

Focus and Aims of the Study

This dissertation is shaped ideologically, historically and socioculturally by my personal experiences growing up, studying and working in Sri Lanka. The ethnic civil war in the country, fought between the Sinhala-led Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), fighting for a separate state for minority Tamils, lasted for over three decades. The conflict spared no one. When the war ended in 2009, Sri Lanka entered a new era of post-conflict and reconciliation. My aim in undertaking this work has been to document and understand how English language teachers have and can become active agents of change in the larger reconciliation processes underway in Sri Lanka.

Contrary to the common practice of positioning teachers at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, where information is funnelled down to them by administrators, politicians, managers, and the like, this study assumes teaching to be an intellectual practice and, accordingly, identifies teachers as (at least potentially) “transformative intellectuals” (Giroux, 1988). The study is based on the premise that it is through the intellectual engagement of teachers as well as the collaborative efforts they make between and among themselves that change can take place (Motha, 2014). I proceed, therefore, from the belief that teachers need to come to full terms with their agency and the power they have to make change. They also need to understand that inequalities can either be sustained or defused through instruction, and that, as teachers, they are well-positioned to notice and prevent the reproduction of the existing status quo.

In order to understand how language teachers can be transformative practitioners who have the knowledge and the ability to be reflective and connect events within their classrooms to larger sociohistorical contexts, my study looks at the nature of the residential teacher preparation program for English language teachers offered at the National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka (NCOE). I look at the orientations to pedagogy that exist in the NCOE and what transformative learning opportunities are offered for prospective teachers so that they can
become transformative practitioners. In particular, I look at the identities of teachers who are participants in this program, the nature of the program, the opportunities it offers and the manner in which teachers’ perceptions change over the course of their studies in the program. Each analysis chapter (Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9), concludes with a discussion highlighting different aspects of what it means for a teacher to be a transformative intellectual in a time of reconciliation. In the final chapter (Chapter 10), I pull in these pieces and construct an integrated framework that can be utilized in teacher education to prepare teachers to be transformative intellectuals in times of post-conflict.

This study, conducted during the aftermath of one of the longest and bloodiest ethnic civil conflicts in the world, is the result of fieldwork I undertook in Sri Lanka from 2011 to 2013. While those in the war zones experienced the conflict directly and on a daily basis, many others who lived in relatively safer areas experienced the war in the form of suicide bombers and explosions of bombs in public places (e.g., places of worship and the public transportation system) and at public events. These disturbances and the tight security imposed throughout the country made day-to-day life very difficult for all Sri Lankans. Many had friends and family members who were in the military and were actively fighting or who were injured or dead. Some fled the country as refugees. Although as a member of the majority Sinhalese community who grew up in the city of Kandy, I had a relatively safer life than many others who lived in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka, war was nevertheless at the backdrop of my childhood and adolescent years. I continued to feel its effects even after arriving in Toronto in 2006, a place I thought was distant and removed from what was happening in Sri Lanka.

Although I used Chetail’s (2009) definition of the term “post-conflict” to indicate a society that has recently experienced a violent conflict that has seriously affected the daily lives of many citizens, the findings of the study reveals that this term is too simplistic to depict the situation in Sri Lanka. Instead, as Davies (2004) points out, conflict and post-conflict are not dual, or are they linear. They are phases ad transitions. (Davies, 2004) One of my research sites, an area in northern Sri Lanka that was cut off from the rest of the country during the three-decade-long war, is one of the highlights of this study. While this work is based on Sri Lanka, its implications and application extend beyond this single case. My aim is not merely to describe and document civil society peace work, but, more importantly, to ask critical questions about it.
The research behind this dissertation is qualitative. My data is drawn from the life history narratives of pre-service English language teachers and teacher educators in three teacher preparation programs in three distinct geographical regions, in the northern, western and central provinces of Sri Lanka. Teacher narratives are intertwined with my own narratives as I performed the roles of student, teacher and researcher. The purpose of using life history narratives is to foreground how the identities and life experiences of participating Teacher Candidates (TCs) and Teacher Educators (TEs) have shaped their pedagogical practices and choices (Clandinin, 1992; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Golombek, 1998, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Narratives of this nature that bring out teachers’ experiences are being used increasingly in research on teachers, their lives, and their practices (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, 2000; Golombek, & Johnson, 2004; Johnson, 2007; Johnson & Golombek, 2002).

I use stories to give voice to periphery practitioners (Canagarajah, 1996, 2012; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Feuerverger, 1997) and mark their professional and personal journeys. These narratives are used and analyzed to shape existing practices and develop theories in teacher learning and teacher preparation. However, in keeping with the narrative tradition, it is important to point out that narratives are not meant to describe phenomena and experiences objectively, but are infused with interpretations. As Golombek & Johnson (2004) state:

> Since narratives are social, relational and culturally bound, they gain their meaning from our collective social histories and cannot be separated from the sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts from which they emerged. (p. 308)

The subjective nature of the narratives presented in this study is also a result of how different communities in Sri Lankan society experienced change and altered circumstances throughout their shared history. The degree to which different segments of the society were impacted by the conflict varied, depending on different communities’ ethnic, religious and social backgrounds as well as their geographical location. This dissertation creates a space for teachers’ voices (Clandinin, 1992) that allows them, and me, to share our nuanced experiences and perceptions. Personal narratives help to bring out the nuanced nature of lived experiences.

I use Mason’s (2009) term “data generation” to highlight the manner in which data was co-constructed with the participants of the study. Mason uses the term “data generation”, as opposed
to “data collection,” based on the premise that data is not out there to be collected as such, but is instead co-constructed through dialogue and mediation between the researcher, her participants and the immediate as well as historical context in which the study is being conducted. This dissertation and the rich data it presents are a result of my collaboration with my participants and their enthusiasm for sharing their stories with me. My study, however, does not offer a panacea for a set of long drawn-out problems. Instead, it is of an exploratory nature.

Research Questions

In order to understand how English language teachers can be transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) who can foster intercultural awareness and help their students to become active and critical citizens in a time of post-conflict reconciliation, this dissertation focuses on understanding the nature of three pre-service teacher preparation programs in Sri Lanka. To do so, I ask the following research questions:

1. Who are Teacher Candidates in Sri Lankan English language teacher education programs?

2. What are Teacher Candidates’ experiences within the teacher education program?

3. What are Teacher Candidates’ perceptions and experiences with diversity?

4. How do Teacher Candidates perceive their roles and responsibilities toward “the other”?

“The War is Over. So What?” The Role of Education in Reconciliation

Sri Lanka presents a very fertile ground for research on post-conflict reconciliation as it is one nation in recent times that experienced the end of an ethnic civil war. This study identifies the role that teacher education and, more specifically, the role that English language teachers have played and continue to play in processes of reconciliation in Sri Lanka’s post-conflict situation. I argue that the post-conflict context has been a pivotal point in changing the course of education in the country and, through that, in transforming previously existing intergroup relations between diverse Sri Lankan communities. This finding has local as well as global, pedagogical and social implications. In short, I suggest that English language teachers serve as agents of change (Gay,
1993; Goodwon, 2000). As such, they have the potential to bring together polarized communities in post-conflict locations and regions around the world.

The relationship between educational systems and conflict, however, often poses a conundrum. It is a complex and multidirectional relationship. On the one hand, schools are complicit in conflict by reproducing skills, values, attitudes, and social relations of the dominant group in society, reproducing the existing status quo and perpetuating particular versions of history (Buckland, 2005; Christie & Collins, 1984; Herath; 2013, Kallaway, 1984). On the other hand, however, education is critical in reconciliation and reducing the risk of relapsing into conflict. A solid education system can help build stronger resilience against conflict and a solid foundation for post-conflict reconciliation (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Minow, 1998; O’Malley, 2010; Parmar et al., 2010; Paulson, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Smith & Vaux, 2003; Vargas-Baron & Alarcon, 2005). Education has the power to shape the understandings, attitudes, dispositions and behaviors of individuals. Therefore, in post-conflict times, education should be utilized to make a socially constructive impact on intergroup relations in post-conflict situations (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Education systems, more so than other social systems, have a unique and crucial role to play in rebuilding shattered communities after conflict (World Bank, 2005).

Teachers and teacher education programs are the most crucial resources in making these goals a reality. In a discussion about the importance of teachers being well equipped to address issues pertaining to diversity, Cummins (1997) stresses the importance of teacher education programs in providing sufficient information about language and social development of diverse learners as well as solid pedagogical strategies to help students learn. Cummins (2001) goes on to say that teacher education programs can discriminate systemically against culturally diverse students when they continue to:

…treat issues related to culturally diverse students as marginal and send new teachers into the classroom with minimal information regarding patterns of language and emotional development among such students and few pedagogical strategies for helping students learn. (p. 205)

The consequences of discrimination in Sri Lanka, the inability of the two major ethnic communities, the Sinhalese and the Tamil, to communicate, and their subsequent polarization and estrangement resulted in a war that affected every aspect of life and stunted the country’s
development and economic growth for decades (Wickrema & Colenso, 2003). Against such a backdrop, teacher education programs have a special role to play in preparing teachers who are willing and able to bring estranged ethnic communities together. In the aftermath of a war, teachers who are well equipped to meet the needs of diverse learners can function as cultural brokers or ambassadors. Unlike other teachers who teach various subjects in first languages, English language teachers are uniquely positioned as teachers of the “Link Language” (Constitution of Sri Lanka, 2000). They are not compelled to teach in schools in their own first languages, but can teach in schools where other languages are the medium of instruction.

Why Focus on Teacher Identities and Experiences?

While there is a large body of literature focusing on the relationship between education and reconciliation and various reconciliation initiatives in post-conflict contexts; however, I have not been able to find studies that focus on teachers’ active role in reconciliation. In order to understand how teachers learn to teach in post-conflict situations, as in any other situation, it is important to know who teachers are and what life experiences and perceptions they bring to the programs they work in. This argument is based on research on the professional learning processes language teachers engage in. Research on teacher cognition (Freeman & Richards, 1996; Woods, 1996), for example, has uncovered the “complexities of teachers’ mental lives” (Freeman, 2002) and recognizes teachers as “rational professionals who make judgements and decisions in…uncertain and complex environments” (Shavelson & Stern, 1981, p. 456).

In order to understand how teachers learn to teach and how their professional lives evolve, inquiry into teachers’ cognitive worlds, teaching practices, interpretations, beliefs, reactions, previous language learning experiences and the contexts in which those experiences have taken place is crucial (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Freeman, 2002; Borg, 2003, 2006; Johnson, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). As this dissertation unfolds, I hope readers will understand who Sri Lankan English teachers are, what expectations and experiences they bring to teacher education, how they experience the three-year residential program, their perceptions about teaching diverse learners and their considerations of how they can transform the existing educational climate.
A Metaphor for My Approach: A Journey

I use the metaphor of a journey to guide the organization and development of this work. As Shuell (1990) points out, “If a picture is worth a 1000 words, a metaphor is worth 1000 pictures” (p. 102). Far from being a decorative device or an elliptical simile, metaphors structure our perceptions, thoughts and actions. Metaphors are powerful mental models of thought through which people understand their worlds (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). Metaphors can function as effective cognitive devices (Saban, Kocbeker & Saban, 2007) that allow researchers to explore comparisons and similarities. They can act as a lens, a screen, or a filter through which the subject or the situation is viewed and become a mental model for thinking about it in light of another (Yob, 2003).

Research literature on metaphors in teaching and learning is quite vast in scope. In teacher education, metaphors have been used to uncover and explore assumptions about teaching and learning (Alger, 2009; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Marshall, 1990; Martinez, Sauleda & Huber, 2001; Taylor, 1984); about self as a teacher (Carter, 1990); as a tool for identifying changes in teacher thinking and feeling (Bullough & Knowles, 1991; Russell, Munby, Spafford, & Johnson, 1988); as a tool for supporting novice teachers (Bullough, 1991; Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Carter, 1994; Conelly & Clandinin, 1988; Dickmeyer, 1989; Goldstein, 2005; Marshall, 1990; Provenzo, McCloskey, Kottkamp & Cohn, 1989; Stofflett, 1986); and as a way to encourage teacher development (Bullough, 1992).

Considering the general aspects of metaphorical thinking, the use of the journey metaphor exerted a powerful influence on my process of thinking about, analyzing and writing this dissertation. As the following chapters will reveal, this study documents my own personal, intellectual, professional, social and physical journeys across continents and cultures over the last couple of years. My own journey is interwoven with the journeys of my participants who shared with me their life histories and journeys into becoming teachers in an increasingly changing global and local milieu. Our individual journeys were then intertwined with our collaborative journey during the data collection and analysis phase. The use of the journey metaphor provided a reference point for me to think about the doctoral journey, and refer to not only what doctoral research is like, but also what it is like to be doing research at a doctoral level.
Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 provides the historical and social background this study is rooted in. It provides an overview of the history of Sri Lanka, the status of the English language in the country, and the Sri Lankan educational system. The literature review offered in Chapter 3 situates the study within the literature on teacher education during times of reconciliation and teacher education for diversity. Chapter 4 discusses several complementary theoretical frameworks that underpin the analysis of this research. Chapter 5 describes the research methodology, data collection tools and the participants who took part. Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 analyze and discuss the findings from this research in relation to each of the research topics investigated. Chapter 10 summarizes and discusses the main findings and proposes some implications and recommendations for second language teacher education in post-conflict times.

The Butterfly Effect: Why Should We Care?

While conflicts are conceptualized as “development in the reverse” (World Bank, 2003), war and violence are understood as experienced directly by many nations across the globe in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in varying scales and magnitudes (Paulson, 2011a, 2011b; Vargas-Baron & Alarcon, 2005). Many other countries, such as Canada, the USA, Australia and many European countries that are deemed relatively peaceful, experience the increasing influx of refugees and immigrants who are fleeing war-related violence in search of secure homes. Conflict and security have now become a universal concern (Smith, 2005) and it is unlikely that conflicts will decrease in the near future (Davies, 2005). What is even more concerning is the fact that more of the dead in these conflicts are civilians than was the case in earlier wars (Novelli & Cardozo, 2008). As the UNDP (2005) notes:

The twentieth century, one of the bloodiest in human history (Hobsbawm, 1994), was defined first by wars between countries and then by cold war fears of violent confrontation between two superpowers. Now these fears have given way to fears about local and regional wars fought predominantly in poor countries, within weak or failed states and with small arms as the weapon of choice. Most of the victims in today’s wars are civilians. (p. 12)
As members of the global community, it is hard for those of us in the field of education not to encounter the effects of violence and war in different forms in our local, professional contexts. This is because conflicts often debilitate and destroy schools, leaving them in a position of neglecting education and leaving them impoverished, with resources often being directed away from education (Balasuriya & Hughes, 2003; Paulson, 2011d). Eighty-two per cent of the reported 113 million children out of school are from crisis and post-conflict countries (Smith & Vaux, 2003). Wars not only affect people physically and psychologically, but also divert necessary resources away from social services such as education toward military spending. The UNDP (2005), UN (2005) and ILO (2004) reports note that there are increases in military spending in recent times in both developed and developing countries. The resultant lack of education becomes a vicious cycle that leads to increasing social inequality and poverty (Dryson-Peterson, 2011). If we don’t care about these issues, the results will be perilous.
Chapter 2:
The Island of Sri Lanka: A History of Colonization, Independence, War and Reconciliation

Why Contextualize?

In order to understand the teacher-preparation programs, schools, and teacher narratives at the heart of this dissertation, it is important to contextualize them in relation to both Sri Lanka’s present-day circumstances as well as its history. This is because, as Cochran-Smith has observed, teaching per se is a “complex activity that occurs within webs of social, historical, cultural and political significance” (2004, p. 14). Moreover, as Dewey (1931) notes, actions can only be understood in terms of their antecedents and the direction and purpose toward which they are heading. According to him, actions are serial and “no act can be understood apart from the series to which it belongs” (p. 253). The participants of the study, the teacher preparation programs and the schools in which the research for this dissertation was conducted are deeply rooted in social, political, and cultural systems and an understanding of the learning that takes place in these institutions would not be clear without an understanding of the larger structures within which teacher preparation takes place.

This chapter highlights various aspects of Sri Lanka’s changed and changing “webs of significance” in six sections. It first provides a current profile of the country, with a particular focus on its contemporary sociocultural, economic, religious and linguistic diversity, as well as its population distribution in rural and urban areas. This sketch is then followed by a brief overview of the history of Sri Lanka, ranging from colonial times, through independence, to the civil war. Sections three and four, respectively, deal with the history of English language planning and policy in Sri Lanka and the status of English in the country today. The history of the school system and teacher-education programs is the topic of the fifth section. The sixth and final section of the chapter looks at post-conflict Sri Lanka and, particularly, the ways processes of reconciliation have shaped and are being shaped by developments in the education sector.
This account of the Sri Lankan sociopolitical, cultural, and historical context is, on the one hand, intended to give a better understanding of the making of Sri Lanka as a nation. On the other hand, its purpose is to highlight how past grievances and injustices, be they socially, politically, ethnically, linguistically, or educationally oriented, continue to haunt the present. Sri Lankan teachers’ (and indeed learners’) self-conceptions today are very much a reflection of the reiterative tensions various communities have continued to experience throughout Sri Lanka’s long-drawn history.

**Sri Lanka at a Glance**

Sri Lanka, located off the southern tip of India, is a small island with a current population of 20 million people (The World Bank, 2013). Until recently, it was known as Ceylon. In recent times, it has been known for a disastrous and bloody ethnic civil war fought between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil militant group the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam\(^2\)). The conflict, which lasted for close to three decades, killed and displaced thousands. The International Displacement Monitoring Centre has estimated that by August 2008, the war had resulted in 70,000 deaths and the displacement of over one million people (Davies, 2011). It ended in May 2009, with the defeat of the LTTE by the Sri Lankan government. Since 2009, Sri Lanka has changed dramatically and has maintained a relatively strong economic growth rate in comparison to other South Asian countries (The World Bank, 2013). However, in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka, issues related to displacement, destruction of businesses, houses and infrastructure, and security remain a problem. In 2009, 200,000 people were estimated to be in refugee camps, of which 65,000 were children (GTZ, 2009; cited in Davies, 2011).

\(^2\) The independent state that the Tamil Tigers fought for.
Map 1: Map of South Asia

The sociocultural makeup of Sri Lanka consists of people belonging to various ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds and differing socioeconomic classes. Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims are the three main ethnic groups (see Figure 2). They identify themselves as speakers of either one of two major languages: Sinhalese and Tamil. The upper classes of both these linguistic communities speak English. Another major indicator of Sri Lankan identity is religion. The majority of Sinhalese are Buddhist and the majority of Tamils are Hindu. However, a small portion of both Sinhalese and Tamil communities are Christian (see Figure 3).
Figure 2: Composition of the Sri Lankan Population According to Ethnicity

(Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2014)

Figure 3: Composition of the Sri Lankan Population According to Religion

(Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2014)
The two main languages spoken in Sri Lanka are Sinhalese and Tamil. In addition to these two languages, a small portion of speakers of all Sri Lankan languages also commonly speaks English. Table 1 below depicts the percentages of speakers of Sinhalese, Tamil and English.

Table 1: Composition of the Sri Lankan Population According to Languages Spoken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinhalese</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Department of Census and Statistics, n.d.)

Figure 4 below depicts the ability of Sri Lankans to read and write in Sinhalese, Tamil and English.

Figure 4: Ability to Read and Write in Sinhalese, Tamil and English

(Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2014)

As in any other country, Sri Lankans can also be classified according to their socioeconomic status and the geographical areas they live in. Tables 2 and 3 below indicate the percentage of
people living below the poverty line in urban, rural and estate sectors, and the percentage of Sri Lankans living in urban, rural and estate areas.

Table 2: Percentage of Poor Households Based on the Official Poverty Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey period</th>
<th>Sri Lanka</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Estate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002 (%)</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2014)

Table 3: Percentage of Sri Lankans Living in Urban and Rural Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By sector</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate(^3)</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2014)

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\(^3\) The “estate” category comprises mainly tea plantations.
Sri Lanka’s History: From Colonization to the End of the Civil War

The recorded history of Sri Lanka begins in the fifth century with the arrival of Prince Vijaya (the legendary founding father) and his 700 companions. Vijaya and his friends had been banished for misconduct from the Kingdom of Sihapura in northern India by Vijaya’s father, the king (De Silva, K. M., 1981). Vijaya became the first Sri Lankan king, setting up a kingdom in the interior of Sri Lanka. The political history of the long and eventful period since then has evolved around numerous successive kingdoms that shifted to different parts of the country. Under these kingdoms, which were administrated by both Sinhalese and Tamil kings, agriculture, irrigation and religion flourished under royal patronage.

The western colonization of Sri Lanka ensued with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505. When the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka, the island was divided into seven warring kingdoms that were unable to fend off intruders. The Portuguese founded a fort in the port city of Colombo. Their main objective was to secure a monopoly on East-West trade, so they established themselves in the coastal areas and gradually extended their control over the coastal areas. In 1592, the Sinhalese moved their kingdom to the inland city of Kandy, a more secure location from invaders. Although the first interactions the Portuguese had with the Sri Lankan king were merely in the form of exchanges of gifts, gradually they took over the cinnamon trade. They realized that they needed to secure political control over areas of cinnamon production to ensure a reliable supply of trading goods. Thus, they continued to expand their power, which rested on their superior military and naval forces. However, Portuguese power came to an end in the country when, in 1658, another western naval power, the Dutch, attacked and overthrew the Portuguese.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch, too, were initially interested in the “Spice Island” for trade and commerce. They made a treaty with King Rajasinghe II, the king of Kandy, to get rid of the Portuguese who by then were ruling most of Sri Lanka’s coastal areas in return of Dutch monopoly of trade over the entire island. However, the Dutch refused to hand over the coastal areas previously occupied by the Portuguese. The Dutch ruled Sri Lanka, maintaining the old Sinhalese and Tamil administrative systems of kingdoms intact. They had a monopoly over the cinnamon trade and trade in exporting elephants, various spices and textiles (De Silva, C. R.,
During the periods of Portuguese and Dutch rule, only the coastal areas of the country were under colonial rule; the central part of the country, which consisted of the Kandyan Kingdom, remained autonomous (De Silva, C. R., 1987).

The end of the Dutch conquest in Sri Lanka occurred when the British East India Company’s administration in Madras then mobilized a large force that seized the coastal areas of Sri Lanka that were under Dutch rule. Dutch rule in Sri Lanka came to an end in 1796. During the initial stages of British rule, Britain controlled only the maritime provinces. In 1815, they were able to capture the Kandyan Kingdom and ruled the country as a one nation-state. In 1832, the British-sponsored Colbrook-Cameron Commission was appointed to make economic reforms. They recommended that English be made the official language of the country (Canagarajah, 2005).

When the British colonized Sri Lanka, 88% of its population was engaged in agriculture. The population was divided into two main ethnic groups: the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority (De Silva, K. M., 1981). British rule changed the social, political, demographic and even the geographic make-up of the country. Before the arrival of the European powers, as Nissan & Stirrat (1990) note, “ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences were not used as the bases for exclusion from the polity. At various times, groups would speak alternative languages, adhere to alternative religions, and claim alternative identities” (p. 31).

One of the not so visible, yet most powerful after-effects of colonization by the Portuguese, Dutch and British was the rise of modern nationalism. By the time the British took over Sri Lanka, their Portuguese and Dutch predecessors had already encouraged religious intolerance by favoring certain groups and demeaning others. The British continued this trend by introducing a number of aggressive political, educational, and religious policies that provoked a counter-reaction by the Buddhist clergy. These policies had a profound impact on the shape and dynamics of Sri Lankan politics by the time Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 (Little, 1999). As I will discuss, even to this day, Sri Lankans view their identity primarily along ethnic, religious and linguistic lines.

Following independence, English continued to be the official language of the country. The governing classes, the English educated elite, were not interested in changing the constitutional status of the language they benefited from (Canagarajah, 2005). However, in 1957, in order to
appease the Sinhalese majority, who felt they had been discriminated against by the British “divide-and-rule” policy that benefited the minority Tamils, the newly elected prime minister, SWRD Banadaranaike, introduced the controversial *Official Language Act of 1956* or the “Sinhala Only Act,” making Sinhalese alone the official language of the country (De Silva, K.M., 1986). The Act denied Tamil official language status and disappointed Tamil politicians. The Federal Party wanted to establish a semi-autonomous Tamil linguistic state within Sri Lanka. C. Suntharalingam, a minister in the post-independence Sri Lankan cabinet, threatened to get the help of South Indian Tamils and establish a separate state. It was the time when the “Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Movement” was striving in South India to create a separate Tamil state in India. The possibility of a Tamil state in Sri Lanka revived, among the majority Sinhalese, a fear of the Tamil community (Manogaran, 1987).

In response to this situation, SWRD Bandaranaike, then prime minister, passed the *Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act no. 28* of 1958, making Tamil a regional language. However, the legislation did not satisfy the Tamils (De Silva, 1987) and lead to the unrest among them. The status of the Sri Lankan languages did not change in the 1972 and 1978 constitutions (De Silva, 1987; Manogaran, 1987). The next change in the status of Sri Lankan languages came about in 1987 with the 13th Amendment to the 1978 Constitution that declared Tamil as an official language along with English as a Link Language (Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, 1987). However, these reforms to the constitution failed to impact a society that had experienced growing polarization for decades. By this point, constitutional changes remained dead letters with no social impact. Tamil separatists were demanding a separate homeland.

Although it took decades after independence to make Tamil an Official Language, it has always remained a regional language used in Tamil-dominated areas. While constitutional changes were taking place, Tamil youth, impatient with the peaceful methods adopted by their politicians, started making demands for the creation of an independent and sovereign state called Eelam. The Tamil separatist group the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) took up arms and adopted violent means to fight the government (Manogaran, 1987). By the 1990s, the LTTE had established a de facto regime in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. From that point on, ethnic violence between the LTTE and the government continued until the war ended with the
The killing of the LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in May 2009. Map 2 shows the growth and decline of the de facto state of the LTTE, until they were defeated in 2009.

Map 2: Map of Sri Lanka With the LTTE Controlled Areas

The History of Sri Lankan Language Planning, Policy and Status:

The Focus on English

English can hardly be called a foreign language in Sri Lanka. It was the official language of Sri Lanka since “Sri Lanka Portuguese” ceased to be the lingua franca of the country (Smith, 2001).
It was the official language of the country from 1796 to 1956. Although it is currently not an official, national or even a second language, it has been used in various capacities and for various purposes in the country for over two centuries. As Gunasekera (2005) notes, “English has been used in Sri Lanka, along with Sinhalese and Tamil, and is one of the languages of Sri Lanka, although it has always been the language of a minority” (p. 11).

As stated in the previous section, English was first introduced to the country when the British colonized the maritime provinces of the island in 1796 (Peebles, 2006). The Colebrook-Cameron Commission, appointed in 1832 by the British administration to make recommendations for economic reforms, recommended that the administration should be centralized, with English being made the working official language (Canagarajah, 2005). Along with the Commission’s recommendations that English should be introduced as the working official language of the country, the Commission recommended that English should be the medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels (Canagarajah, 2005; Gooneratne, 1968). These recommendations of the British elevated the status of English above native languages. In a discussion about the global spread of English, Pennycook (1999) calls this position that blindly proclaimed the benefits of English over other languages a “colonial celebratory” position.

As in other British colonies, the British colonial administration ensured that English remained a limited resource (Canagarajah, 1999, 2005; Peeble, 2006; Pennycook, 1998; Ramanathan, 2005). The government’s interest in education was merely to maintain a few superior English schools that would train a few natives to fill in the lower rungs of the colonial administration (De Silva, K. M., 1981). The language policies of the British very much revolved around establishing and sustaining their power on the island. They had no intention of making English, the language they had declared as the official language of the country, accessible to all. Only those who could afford it had access to it. However, the benefits of the English schools could not be contested as an English education alone was the gateway to social and economic mobility. It was a language of prestige and power and assured those who spoke the language access to higher echelons in society that would not have been accessible to those educated in native languages (Pennycook, 1994). The English language was the privilege of a few and was “an important hallmark of elite status” (De Silva, K.M., 1981, p.332). The linguistic divisions of education ran alongside socioeconomic lines (Brutt-Griffler, 2002) and prompted what Skuttnabb-Kangas (1988, 1998)
terms linguicism, or the unequal power distribution to speakers of a certain language over speakers of other languages.

English continued to be the official language for close to ten years after Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948. Even amidst the ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, it is important to note that English has held a peculiar position in Sri Lankan history. On one hand, it was the language of the colonizer. Therefore, the fight for independence was also a fight to overthrow the dominance of English. On the other hand, English was and still is perceived as a language of power and prestige. It was the language that was used in the fight for independence. Later, in the face of the ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, English was a neutral link language between the warring communities.

**Status of the English Language in Sri Lanka Today**

Today English is the global language of trade, commerce, technology, media, research and knowledge (Reagan & Schreffler, 2005). Debates about the status of the English language vis-à-vis vernacular languages have taken a pendulum swing from scholars such as Crystal (1997) who has uncritically viewed the spread of the English language as beneficial and a means of promoting unprecedented possibilities of communication, to proponents of minority language rights such as Phillipson (1992, 2009) and Skuttnad-Kangas (1999, 2000) who have claimed that the spread of English leads to the inequitable status of English and local languages. Critical scholars like Pennycook (2002) and Motha (2014) argue that the political dimension of the spread of English cannot be overlooked.

In Sri Lanka, English has existed along with the local languages for over two centuries. Although its constitutional status has undergone changes along with nationalist sentiments of both the Sinhalese and the Tamil, it has continued to be a language of power. It continues to provide socioeconomic advantages to those who speak it. These advantages are not simply felt within the confines of Sri Lanka. Globalization has broadened the borders of the nation state and has “reinserted the importance of the English language for all communalities, through multinational production and marketing relationships, pop culture, cyber space and digital technology” (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 419). However, English can no more be considered the language of the colonizer or even a foreign language; rather it is another language of Sri Lanka that has
undergone many changes over the centuries. The current status of English in Sri Lanka, to a certain extent, can be understood along the lines of the work on world Englishes (Kachru, 1986).

As is the case in many postcolonial societies, Sri Lankans have appropriated English on their own terms. Thus, the English that is used in present-day Sri Lanka is Sri Lankan English (SLE), a variety that has evolved from British English and has been greatly influenced by Sinhalese and Tamil languages. Many Sri Lankans, however, are either unaware or are unwilling to accept that they speak a local variety of English as opposed to British English (Gunesekera, 2005, 2006). Speakers of English in Sri Lanka have appropriated their own variety of English that is used to serve their own purposes. Canagarajah (1999) calls this the “resistance perspective” since those in postcolonial societies find ways to negotiate and reconstruct their languages and identities in ways that benefit themselves. As Canagarajah notes, “The intention is not to reject English, but to reconstitute it in more inclusive, ethical and democratic terms (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 2).

The Sri Lankan Education System and Teacher Preparation for English Language Teachers

Sri Lanka provides free universal education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This includes the teacher education provided in the National Colleges of Education (NCOE), the focus of this dissertation. I will start my discussion by providing an overview of the history of schooling in Sri Lanka, as present-day educational practices are very much a continuation of past practices.

History of Schooling in Sri Lanka

The history of Sri Lanka documents the existence of a monastic education that was responsible for the spread of education. Some of the monastic temples had curricula covering a broad range of subjects such as writing, metal work, architecture, town planning, construction of irrigation systems, art and painting, in addition to religious instruction. However, this system of education was disrupted with the invasion of the country by the Portuguese (1505-1658), the Dutch (1640-1796) and the British (1796-1948). The focus of education then began to be influenced by the economic and religious considerations of the colonizers (Dilrukshi et al., 2007).
The British introduced a dual system of schools, which consisted of government-assisted English-medium schools run primarily by Christian missionaries. These institutions were patronized by the elite, and a parallel system of vernacular schools was administered by the state for the less privileged. The English education provided by the British was paramount for securing good employment (Sumathipala, 1968). As DeVotta (2003) notes, the excellent English education system the American missionaries instituted enabled Sri Lankan Tamils to become disproportionately represented in the elite Ceylon civil service, the judicial service, and higher education.

However, with the dawn of the twentieth century, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim nationalists demanded self-government and started to establish a large number of religious-based Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim schools which were set up with the help of religious societies (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2004). Some of the best schools in present-day Sri Lanka continue to be the schools that were established by colonial missionaries to spread Christianity and the schools that were built by Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim nationalists to compete with the missionary schools. These schools continue to promote religion and attract students from similar backgrounds. As discussed in the Chapter 7, Sri Lankan schools continue to be tied to a particular language, religion and ethnicity.

What is important to note here, however, is that while separatist Tamils were fighting for their own state, Tamils and Tamil-speaking Muslims have always enjoyed the right to education in the Tamil medium in whatever part of the country they lived. This was not confined to secondary education, but extended to tertiary education as well (De Silva, 1987). Although linguistic nationalism has taken the centre stage of Sri Lankan politics and the status of local languages has constantly undergone change, compared to other South Asian countries, Sri Lanka has managed to maintain very high literacy rates in vernacular languages. Although English remained the governing language even after independence and the Sinhala-only bill gave supremacy to the Sinhalese language, parallel reforms such as the Kannangara Free Education Scheme of 1945 facilitated vernacular literacy development. By the mid-1960s, education from pre-school to university was in Sinhalese and Tamil (Lo Bianco, 2011). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) underscores Sri Lanka’s literacy accomplishments, which Lo Bianco (2011) asserts have remained remarkable even against a backdrop of immense social and political upheaval. As
documented by UIS, Sri Lanka’s percentages of male and female youth literacy and gender 
parity index (ratios of male to female youth literacy) are higher than that of other countries in the 
region. The following table shows Sri Lankan literacy rates compared to those of other South 
Asian countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: National Literacy Rates of Youths 15-24 (UIS, 2014)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Although the status of Sri Lankan languages has undergone dramatic changes, Sri Lanka has 
managed to maintain high literacy rates in both Sinhalese and Tamil.

The School System in Sri Lanka (Grades 1-13)

All graduates of the National Colleges of Education, the teacher education program my 
participants were in, are given teaching appointments in government schools. Sri Lankan 
government schools are classified according to the classes and the different subjects they offer.4 
Although the resources available in these schools vary immensely, all these schools follow the 
same curricula and textbooks. Students in government schools sit for two standardized 
examinations, the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (GCE/OL) in Grade 11 and

4 Type 1AB – Schools with GCE/Advanced Level Science stream.
Type 1C – Schooling with GCE/Advanced Level Arts and Commerce streams.
Type 2 – Schools having classes up to Grade 11 (GCE/Ordinary Level).
Type – 3 Schools having classes up to Grade 5 (these are primary schools).
the General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level (GCE/AL) in Grade 13. In a context where a mere 16.1% of those who graduate from high school (University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka, 2009) can be accommodated in local universities, these examinations very much shape the entire teaching-learning process. Therefore, the dominant instructional mode adopted in Sri Lankan schools is what Freire (1970) called the “banking” model where teachers deposit information and students memorize that information and reproduce it at examinations.

According to the school census for 2008, there is a higher number of schools and schools that consists of higher grades and offer a variety of subjects in the more developed provinces such as the Western and Central provinces. For example, the highest percentage of 1AB and 1C schools is in the Western Province (23.2%) and Central Province (16.8%) respectively; whereas there are fewer schools in the less-developed provinces. However, there are only 28 schools where students learn in all three languages: Sinhala, English and Tamil (Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, 2008). Sri Lankan schools are linguistically and, therefore, ethnically segregated.

**English Education in Sri Lanka**

Recent government initiatives, such as the “Presidential Task Force on English and IT” and the declaration of the year 2009 as the “Year of English and IT,” highlight government efforts to promote English throughout the country. Free English education is not a new phenomenon in Sri Lanka. However, the reality of English education is that it is still the language of a minority. Even after thirteen years of English instruction in primary and secondary school, many students continue to be alienated from the language.

Students who go through the Sri Lankan school system can be divided into two groups where English is concerned: 1) those who come from English-speaking families and therefore learn English as a home language, and 2) those who are first introduced to the language in school. Very often those in the latter group have no access to the language outside school. Under these circumstances, those in the former group who speak English continue to speak standard Sri

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5 There are 9 provinces in the country and Western Province and Central Province are the most developed and urbanized provinces in Sri Lanka.
Lankan English (SSLE); whereas many of those who are newly introduced to the language possess a passive knowledge of English (Canagarajah, 1993).

Critiques of English education in Sri Lanka present various reasons as to why the wide availability of English education has not resulted in the greater spread of English competence. Advocates of the recent government initiatives to promote the English language blame measures taken by previous governments, calling them “colossal failures” (Fernando, 2010, p. 73). Canagarajah (2005) asserts that one of the main reasons for this failure is the “dismantling of the English education system” set up by the British, and the “departure of native English teachers” after Sri Lanka gained independence (p. 424). Hanson-Smith (1984), Goonethillke (1983; cited in Canagarajah, 1993) and Kandiah (1984) identify the causes of the problem as lack of student motivation. Such statements have resonances with what Ryan (1972) calls blaming the victim.

Another reason why the teaching of English has not produced the anticipated results is the lack of English teachers. Many graduates, who are highly proficient in the English, do not take up teaching, which is a considerably lower paying and less prestigious form of employment. As I will discuss in Chapter 6, many become teachers because they have no other career options. In order to fill in vacancies in rural schools, the Ministry of Education recruits teachers from rural areas with lower grades and appoints graduates from the NCOE to work in schools in less-privileged areas (Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2009).

**National Colleges of Education (NCOE)**

The focus of my study is the English language teacher preparation program offered in the National Colleges of Education (NCOE). There are seventeen NCOE located in various provinces of the country and each college offers several subject areas of specialization in Sinhala, Tamil and English. In these colleges, prospective teacher candidates (TCs) receive training in subjects of their choice (Jayasena, 2004). All the NCOE follow the same national curriculum.

The NCOE offer a three-year program. This consists of a two-year residential training and a one-year internship. During the two-year residential training, the TCs are provided meals and
accommodation. During the internship year, they receive an allowance of Rs. 2,500\(^6\). Those who complete the course are awarded a National Diploma in Teaching. They will receive teaching appointments in districts that are categorized as “difficult districts.” The teachers who register in an NCOE must sign a bond for Rs. 500,000\(^7\) for the cost of the training they receive. TCs who fail to complete the program or fail to teach in a government school for five years are subjected to paying the bond (Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2009). Table 6 provides an overview of the program offered at the NCOE.

Table 5: Overview of the Program Offered at the NCOE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(^\text{st}) Year</td>
<td>Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TCs reside in the college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(^\text{nd}) year</td>
<td>Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TCs reside in the college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3(^\text{rd}) year</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Post-conflict Sri Lanka: A Time for Reconciliation

The current Sri Lankan government acknowledges the integral role of the status of local languages in post-conflict reconciliation. The 2011 report by the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), produced by a government-appointed commission, makes recommendations that pertain to Sri Lanka moving toward a trilingual state in which all Sri Lankan citizens will become proficient in Sinhalese, Tamil and English. Some of the LLRC’s recommendations in relation to curricula changes at the primary and secondary school level include that learning the other second official language be made compulsory. Learning the other

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\(^6\) Approximately CAD $25 per month

\(^7\) Approximately CAD $5000
second official language is viewed as a tool to ensure attitudinal changes between the two linguistic communities. It is the LLRC’s position that teaching Sinhalese to Tamil students and Tamil to Sinhalese students will promote greater cultural harmony. Moreover, the LLRC Report (2011) advocates that learning English will provide all Sri Lankan communities with a common language as well as the language and linguistic skills to function in an increasingly globalizing society.

In addition to curricular changes, the current government has also implemented a number of institutional mechanisms in order to achieve the goals set out by the LLRC. These include the creation of the Department of Official Languages, the Official Languages Commission and the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration, all of which take measures to implement official languages at a national level (LLRC, 2011).

The Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration has played an active role in promoting the local Sri Lankan languages. It has introduced countrywide language training and incentive programs for government officials to learn the two official languages, intensified language training programs, and appointed government officials at district and local levels to coordinate the implementation of the official language policy. Moreover, it has also undertaken projects such as the National Language Project (NLP). The NLP, based on a bilateral agreement with the Canadian government, is aimed at strengthening relationships between Sinhala- and Tamil-speaking citizens, increasing respect for language rights and linguistic diversity, and thereby fostering social cohesion and peace. Some of the aims of the NLP are to enhance public sector leadership of national languages policies and programs and increase awareness of, and support for, language rights, bilingualism and linguistic diversity among the public that influences policy makers. The NLP also aims to increase citizens’ access to public communications and services in their national language of choice, enhance delivery of translation and interpretation services and translator and interpreter training programs, and increase the number of innovative models of bilingual/trilingual local service delivery in critical geographic areas that promote gender equality, good governance and social cohesion (Herath, 2015).
The NLP supports translator training programs and has increased citizen access to services in a national language of their choice (Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration, 2012). In the meantime, other local and international NGOs are supporting the trilingual language policy through community awareness building and education, lobbying and monitoring, and other small-scale language projects (Martyn, 2013). Additionally, other national level mechanisms exist, such as the Official Languages Commission (OLC), the Department of Official Languages and the National Institute of Language Education and Training (NILET), which were established solely to work toward making official language policies in Sri Lanka a reality (Herath, 2015).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the history of Sri Lanka from pre-colonial times to the present-day, post-conflict situation. Following a section of introductory information about the demographics of the country, I presented a discussion about the colonial rule Sri Lanka experienced under the Portuguese, Dutch and the British, and the effects of colonialism on the Sri Lankan social fabric. As my study focuses on the preparation of English language teachers in Sri Lanka, I then provided an overview of the history of language planning in Sri Lanka with a special focus on the English language and its status. This was followed by a discussion of the evolution of Sri Lankan schooling and the programs offered at the National Colleges of Education (NCOE). All this information was provided as it lends support to a better understanding of the context in which my study was conducted and the chapter that follow.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to my study and points out how my study can be situated, conceptually and comparatively, within the broader research on post-conflict teacher preparation. The body of works I examine fall into the following six key areas: education in reconciliation and post-conflict situations; reconciliation initiatives; policy and intervention in Sri Lanka for social cohesion and peace; teacher preparation for cultural and linguistic diversity; teacher identity and reconciliation; and teacher cognition and personal practical knowledge (PPK). All these divergent, yet, overlapping areas of study focus on diversity and inequality in education and the question of how teacher education can prepare prospective teachers to become more inclusive professionals.

The Role of Education in Reconciliation in Post-conflict Situations

Education is often regarded as a panacea for a broad spectrum of social ills. This assumption is based on the premise that formal education can shape the understandings, attitudes and, ultimately, the behavior of individuals. However, it must be noted that such shaping can produce negative or even harmful effects. Education can, in fact, exacerbate ethnic hostilities and tensions through uneven access to education, the use of education as a cultural weapon, the manipulation of history, curriculum and textbooks for political purposes, and the segregation of education to ensure inequality and stereotyping. Thus, as a socially constructed phenomenon, education can have a destructive impact on intergroup relations (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

Moreover, it is acknowledged increasingly that the wrong kind of education has the potential to aggravate tensions between different ethnic groups. Education can drive a wedge between people instead of uniting them (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005a, 2005b, 2010; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). To portray the interplay between ethnic conflict and education, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) name seven negative and conflict-provoking manifestations of education. These are:
1. Unequal distribution of education by denying access to some, while privileging others

2. Education as a means to cultural repression or ethnocide

3. Closing and destroying schools as a physical or symbolic weapon of war

4. Education serving the political goal of manipulating history

5. Manipulation of textbooks by emphasizing war instead of peace or reinforcing ethnic stereotypes and bias

6. Education as a means of decreasing self-worth or encouraging scapegoating

7. A segregated education system to enforce inequality, low self-esteem and stereotypes.

Moreover, there is the potential risk of educators becoming pawns of political powers (Vongalis-Macrow, 2007) and of education reinforcing the wider social and political structures that are a part of the conflict (Davies, 2010).

In contrast, at the end of a conflict, education can be used to foster social and political reconciliation and integration. It can provide opportunities to dampen the impact of the conflict, nurture and sustain an ethnically tolerant climate, desegregate minds, foster linguistic tolerance, cultivate inclusive citizenship, and disarm history (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Scholars and international bodies that work toward restoring peace have consistently pointed out the crucial relationship between education and reconciliation (Barakat, et al., 2008; Minow, 1998; Parmar et al., 2010; Smith & Vaux, 2003). In order to address conflicting ethnic relations, education reforms have to take a prominent role in peace building initiatives.

With regard to the Sri Lankan context, it has been argued that negative features of the Sri Lankan education system have contributed to fuelling ethnic tensions in the country (MoE, 2006; Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Colenso, 2005). Ethnically segregated education in Sri Lanka, for instance, which educates children from different ethnic and religious groups separately, has led to limited interethnic interaction and tolerance (Lopes Cardozo, 2008). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), teaching children how to live together peacefully, by recognizing the other and by overcoming
prejudices within the individual and between individuals and communities, should be the main objective of peace initiatives (Nocolai, 2009).

Although the assumption that education contributes to reconciliation informs many local and international educational initiatives, there are differences in the understanding of what reconciliation means, what its components are, how it might be pursued and fostered through education, what it looks like in practice, and who is involved. There is also the question of how to ensure if reconciliation has been achieved (Hamber & Kelly, 2009; Paulson, 2011c; Quinn, 2009). However, as Steiner-Kahmsi (2003, p. 181) instructs, the “political will to work towards social integration of conflicting ethnic groups” is crucial for reconciliation initiatives. It is important for all parties involved in education to recognize education for reconciliation as a political process. Taking this assumption as a starting point, this literature review explores how pre-service teacher education can mediate reconciliation by helping prospective teachers become transformative intellectuals who are actively involved in the post-conflict reconciliation process.

Reconciliation Initiatives

A wide spectrum of educational initiatives, ranging from citizenship education, curricular reforms, and the reshaping of historical narratives to the development of integrated schools geared toward reconciliation have been adopted in many post-conflict situations around the world as a means of reconciling estranged communities. Some of the ways in which previously conflicted groups and communities reconcile their relationships include: providing more opportunities for inter-group contact (Donnelly & Hughes, 2009); fostering co-existence (Sampson, 2003); learning to live together (Sinclair, 2004); and encouraging dialogue (Tully, 2004). More critical scholars, however, emphasize the need to acknowledge pre-conflict injustices and inequalities prior to seeking solutions (Davies, 2004; Laplante, 2008).

The need to acknowledge such difficulties is crucial for Sri Lanka. As Walker (2004) has observed, Sri Lankan society is culturally inclined to avoid and deny rather than admit the existence of a conflict. Sri Lanka does not have formal or informal mechanisms for dealing with conflicts between ethnic groupings (Walker, 2004). Therefore, the need to acknowledge pre-conflict injustices, the fact that the country actually experienced a war for decades, and what the ending of the conflict through the exertion of military power means to different Sri Lankan
communities is of great importance. While the conflict in Sri Lanka was resolved through military power, the roots of the ethnic conflict and the grievances of the minorities affected are yet to be addressed. As Ropers (2010) states, as long as there is no political solution for the problems of Sri Lankan minorities, there is still the possibility of conflict in the future (cited in Davies, 2011).

A conundrum many post-conflict states face in introducing such initiatives is to balance the need to take quick action that is visible in the eyes of citizens and wins their trust and the need to wait for the right time and place to develop new initiatives (Shah, 2012). That is not all. Shared ownership, transparent decision making, and greater community participation are essential for educational reform in post-conflict situations if the aim of schooling is to mitigate rather than aggravate existing conditions (Miller-Grandvaux, 2009). The manner in which post-conflict states manage, deliberate and execute transformative initiatives is crucial in changing the fragile social conditions that prevail (Davies, 2009; Paulson, 2011e).

Curricular Reform and Textbooks

Curricular reforms evolve primarily around the question of whose knowledge is of worth (Apple, 1979). It is important for educational reformers in post-conflict states to construct new state curricula with a clear and broad understanding of what it means to be a nation (Shah, 2012). However, the development of new curricula that help build a national identity is often a result of a “violent process of deconstruction and reconstruction of social relations and structures” (Tawil & Harley, 2004, p. 9). Therefore, curricular reform needs to be a part of a broad political project of fostering social cohesion among a nation’s people (Shah, 2012). New curricula should include local values and beliefs rather than initiatives based on international norms and best practices (Brown, 2009; Hart, 2011). Many studies show that the process of building social cohesion and integration through curricular reform requires dialogue, debate and time (Earnest, 2003; Freedman et al., 2008; Murray, 2008; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006). The process of reforming curricula creates a forum for various social groups to interact and learn about each other (Heyneman, 2001).

Linked to curricular change is the way in which textbooks, particularly those in history, social studies, civics and geography, are redesigned (Freedman, et al., 2008; Suarez, 2008). As Giroux
(1992) points out, students need to be given texts that both affirm and question their own complex histories in relation to the histories of other communities. A key issue in the promotion of social cohesion in education is the manner in which minority cultures are represented in textbooks (Heyneman & Todoric-Babic, 2000). Textbooks are read by all students and thus have the potential to influence students’ minds. It is vital that textbooks are examined for sensitivity to different cultures and for the imparting of inappropriate values (Aturupane & Wickramanayake, 2011).

Greaney (2006) points out eight ways in which textbooks can undermine respect for diversity and tolerance: 1) narrow nationalism; 2) religious bias; 3) omission; 4) imbalance; 5) historical inaccuracy; 6) treatment of physical force and militarism; 7) use of persuasive techniques; and 8) artworks. An examination of Sri Lankan textbooks reveals that they highlight the lives and experiences of the majority Sinhalese community over the other ethnic, religious and linguistic communities (Herath 2008, 2013). History textbooks, in particular, can be made a prime tool for the promotion of peace and social cohesion. In fact, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Sri Lanka has been a multicultural society from pre-historic times and, furthermore, to ascertain a close genetic affinity between Sinhalese and Tamils (Kshatriya, 1995).

Kearney (2011) discusses how history is often rewritten in favor of a unified country. In his examination of Northern Ireland, Norlan (2007, p. 282) notes how “emphasis was placed upon the importance of creating a shared understanding of history.” Various authors have shown how, in post-apartheid South Africa, a new curriculum infused with ideas of human rights and social and environmental justice was developed for all subjects (Asmal, 2004; Keet & Carrim, 2006; Welson, 2009). Taking this a step further, Otsuki (2011) argues that the joint history textbooks used in China, Japan, and South Korea create a historical dialogue that acts as a strong force to build democratic and ethical relationships with others.

In certain countries, however, quite the opposite effect can happen through textbooks. Stabback’s (2004) analysis, for example, shows how the portrayals of aggressors and victims in Bosnian textbooks worked against peace building (Stabback, 2004).
Programs for Peace and Reconciliation

Closely tied to curricular reform is the introduction of education programs such as human rights education, citizenship education, and intercultural and peace education that aim to foster social cohesion. In isolation, these initiatives do not offer any particular solutions; thus, they need to be integrated into a “complex matrix of educational initiatives” (Smith, 2005, p. 386). Many countries around the world have now included citizenship education into their curricula (Schulz, et al., 2010). In other nations, citizenship education is included in history, social studies, and religion courses (Hahn, 1998). The aim of citizenship education is to develop “knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable [young people] to participate in communities of which they are part” (Arthur et al., 2008, p. 5).

In a literature review of citizenship education in post-conflict contexts, Quaynor (2011) presents studies from across the world (see also Akar, 2006, 2007; Joseph, 2005; Oraison & Perez, 2009). Though globally diverse, Quaynor’s findings yielded common interesting trends. For example, it appears that controversial issues were rarely discussed in civic education classrooms in post-conflict situations; both students and teachers expressed a desire to avoid contact with people from previously antagonistic groups, and many lacked trust in political parties. Moreover, most students and teachers showed authoritarian tendencies and a scepticism about democracy.

Davies (2005b), discussing different modes of teaching about war and conflict, stresses the need to move peace and citizenship education higher up on the teacher education agenda. She feels it is not getting the attention it needs. Her approaches to teaching about conflict will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 in relation to the topic of helping Sri Lankan teachers become reflective practitioners during a post-conflict time.

The manner in which citizenship education is implemented needs to be rooted in a country’s history and local context. Rwantabagu (2010), for example, discusses a new moral education program initiated to bring together the divided society in Burundi. As he explains, based on traditional values, the underlying belief among Burundian citizens was that the troubled history of the country was due to the lack of a moral dimension in education. The new community- and situation-based program involves teachers, parents and the church. As Rwantabagu (2010) demonstrates, new initiatives toward peace and reconciliation need to be tied to local realities.
and experiences. Top-down measures that overlook the lived experiences of those expected to take part in them might be met with resistance (Hart, 2011; Kearney, 2011; Paulson, 2011e).

A review of the existing literature shows how teacher education programs in different post-conflict contexts adopt strategies to help teachers become sensitive and assist their students with learning in the aftermath of a war. Rutaisire and Gahima (2009), reviewing international research on educational policy and research in post-conflict contexts, highlight the importance of taking into consideration the local context in designing and implementing new initiatives. However, as the literature also highlights, even though the contexts may differ and matter, the same issues arise across the world, even when the nature of social divisions and tensions vary as much as the country’s history and development level (Johnson & Stewart, 2007). New initiatives geared toward teacher preparation need to be based on the premise that teachers are key agents of social change (Vongalis-Macrow, 2006).

The handful of studies that focus specifically on teachers and teacher education highlight the challenges of such initiatives as well as factors that are necessary to take into consideration. Weldon (2010)’s case study of post-apartheid South Africa discusses a teacher development program, Facing the Past, that provided conditions for teachers to engage with the past in such a manner that they were able to integrate issues of moral and ethical decision-making into their teaching. This study highlights the importance of taking teacher identities into consideration.

In two different studies on citizenship education, pre-service teachers pointed to the use of a global (Koutselini, 2008) and European (Mason, 2005) citizenship as a promising concept for fostering reconciliation in their societies. However, many teachers in Koutselini’s study were critical of involvement by international organizations in their countries’ affairs. Rutaisire and Gahima (2009) highlight the complexity of implementing large-scale, system-wide changes in the specific context of a small African nation emerging from a recent period of intense conflict. Many teachers in post-conflict contexts are not taught or introduced to more democratic teaching methods or inclusive pedagogies (Harber & Serf, 2006).

However, new initiatives toward reconciliation should not necessarily be confined to contexts where the actual conflicts themselves took place. They may be usefully extended to places where war victims flee. Dryden-Peterson (2011) finds reconciliation in action in an elementary school.
in Massachusetts, in the United States. Her research with African migrant children dislocated by various experiences of war offers fresh insight into how reconciliation is a global concern. Her study shows how a school can function as a site of reconciliation, not just for the students but also for their parents.

Contact and Integration

Education systems are often used for the purpose of inculcating particular identities. Therefore, shifting away from divisive education that stirs up social and cultural hostilities should be welcomed in divided societies. Getting to know people from other communities and receiving knowledge about them can lead toward improved attitudes (Johnson & Stewart, 2007). Neuberger (2007), who calls for “democratic education” that promotes “democratic socialization”, argues:

> The role of the education system in a democracy is to “teach” coexistence, tolerance, cooperation, compromise and the capacity for at least some rational choice. In this way, democratic education creates a “democratic personality.” Democracy is built not only on constitutions, laws and institutions, but depends on a political culture of social trust, moderation and participation, and thus to a large extent on democratic socialization, both at home and in school. (p. 292)

Frequent interaction among people from different social and cultural groups enhances intergroup collaboration and understanding (Allport, 1954). The structure of schooling is very important in building ethnic relations. Although there is no empirical evidence that increased interethnic relations lead to peace, it is unlikely that schools with integrated education will fare worse than segregated schools (Johnson & Stewart, 2007).

Studies by Johnson (2011) in South Africa and Smith (2011) in Northern Ireland, however, show how programs that offer integration alone will not reconcile previously conflicting societies. Johnson’s study shows how, even with a formal integration policy, the single issue of language and the apartheid legacy makes integration difficult in present-day South Africa. Smith’s work in Northern Ireland, where sending children to integrated schools is voluntary, shows how only six percent of students are studying in integrated schools. Both these studies show that even after years of achieving peace, many people are slow to change.
Role and Status of Teachers

Although policy formulations and educational reforms are an important first step in post-conflict reconciliation, ultimately teachers are the ones who have to implement these changes. However, within the literature on post-conflict education there is less emphasis given to teachers. Talking about his experiences in South Africa, Weldon (2010) argues that a country emerging out of ethnic conflict needs to “signal a new society, with new values that stand in stark contrast with the old” (p. 353). In this respect, teachers need to have the agency to challenge the exclusionary and biased values that might exist within educational institutions and replace them with more just and inclusive norms. Theorists in critical pedagogy and Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE) view teachers as key agents of change. However, teachers in post-conflict situations are not a tabula rasa. They have, either first hand or second hand, experienced the conflict itself and/or the discrimination that accompanies the conflict (Weldon, 2010). Moreover, the strategies a teacher employs in a post-conflict classroom are not only based on personal and professional experiences, but are to a great degree influenced by the larger educational framework which may facilitate or impede the ability of teachers to act as agents of change (Vongalis-Macrow, 2007; Lopes Cardozo, 2009; Giroux, 2009).

Another factor that determines the extent to which initiatives geared toward reconciliation and social cohesion are made a reality largely depends on the status of teachers and the extent to which “diversity-sensitive recruitment and deployment policies ensure adequate recruitment of male and female teachers from different ethnic groups and an adequate supply of teachers to provide education to different groups in their first language” (Smith, 2006, p. 382). Some of the challenges of ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared include the quality and type of teacher education available, the significant numbers of untrained teachers, and difficulties in recruiting and retention (UNESCO, 2004). A study conducted by UNESCO across 44 sub-Saharan African countries highlights the challenge teacher education is faced with in post-conflict situations:

The main focus of teacher education in post-conflict countries is to design and implement comprehensive teacher training policy and teacher training programs….These teacher training programs aim at enhancing countries’ capacities of curriculum renewal and development, particularly to focus on peace, human rights
and democracy, literacy and girls’ education, [and] education for youth returning from combat. (UNESCO, 2004)

One of the challenges of preparing teachers to address issues related to post-conflict situations is that the teachers themselves can be working or living in or be a part of one of the communities in conflict and therefore find it difficult to challenge the values of their own community (Tawil & Harley, 2004). Two large-scale, multi-sited studies undertaken by the World Bank Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit (World Bank, 2004) and World Bank education team (Buckland, 2004), stressed the need for new initiatives to be conflict sensitive.

Research on civil society engagement in reconciliation and peace building argue that civil society organizations are more suitable and efficient in such processes than state actors. This is because they are less expensive, more flexible, less constrained by mandates and able to work directly with grassroots populations without losing their credibility (Orujuela, 2008; Ross & Rothman, 1999). It is possible that language teachers could fall into this category of civil society and could thus work directly toward reconciliation in their capacity as teachers. Unlike many other civil society groups, teachers work in close collaboration with students, parents and the wider community. Schools could, therefore, be a space where inclusive, non-extremist identities are nurtured, while peace-minded teachers could oppose extremism and pave the way for a new multicultural society.

What is Happening in Sri Lanka?: Policy and Intervention

Over the last couple of decades, successive Sri Lankan governments have taken different steps for peace building and social cohesion through education. These include policy implementations as well as various government and non-government interventions geared toward social cohesion and peace.

Social Cohesion in Education in Sri Lanka: The Evolution of Policy

A vision to unite and reconcile local communities was presented in Sri Lanka’s National Goals of Education in the First Report of the National Education Commission in 1992. Some of the clauses that pertain to building unity, equality, social cohesion and peace are as follows:

1. Nation building and the establishment of a Sri Lankan identity through the promotion of national cohesion, national integrity, national unity, harmony, and
peace, and recognizing cultural diversity in Sri Lanka’s plural society within a concept of respect for human dignity.

2. Creating and supporting an environment imbued with the norms of social justice and a democratic way of life that promotes respect for human rights, awareness of duties and obligations, and a deep and abiding concern for one another.

3. Fostering attitudes and skills that will contribute to securing an honourable place in the international community, based on justice, equality and mutual respect.

4. The active partnership in Nation Building activities should ensure the nurturing of a continuous sense of deep and abiding concern for one another.

(National Education Commission, 2003).

These 1992 goals were followed by the propositions of the General Education Reforms of 1997, which put a greater emphasis on pre-service and in-service teacher education in promoting social cohesion. Some areas that were promoted through teacher education reforms included promoting social cohesion and peace, human values, human rights, national cohesion, and democratic principles. Moreover, Sri Lankan teachers were expected to develop skills of empathetic listening and democratic leadership, while developing children’s self-esteem and conflict resolution skills through role plays (Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit, 2008).

Moreover, reforms in 1997 stipulated the creation of the Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit (SCPEU) within the Ministry of Education. This development reflects the importance given to education in achieving national goals toward peace. It also highlights the Sri Lankan government’s recognition of the need to centralize the various initiatives that are geared toward peace. The SCPEU’s mandate is to provide stronger assistance and guidance to the education sector in implementing peace education initiatives in schools. The expectation was that a greater coordination between the different initiatives would bring stronger synergy between various activities and assist in achieving better outcomes. A significant aspect of the SCPEU is that it is a distinct and stand alone unit. It does not include other cognate areas such as environmental education or religious education as these can dilute or sidetrack the focus on peace. The Global Review of UNESCO Associated Schools (Davies, Harber & Schweisfurth, 2002) found that, when combined together, schools chose “safer” subjects such as the environment rather than tackling more controversial issues surrounding conflict and national unity. The SCPEU aims to help future citizens foster a sound understanding of conflict and avoid stereotypical and prejudicial ideas (Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit, 2008).
The 2003 *National Policy Framework on General Education in Sri Lanka* (National Education Commission, 2003) also included clauses pertaining to peace and social cohesion. They are:

1. National building and the establishment of a Sri Lankan identity through the promotion of national cohesion, national identity, national unity, harmony and peace, and recognizing cultural diversity in Sri Lanka’s plural society within a concept of respect for human dignity.

2. Creating and supporting an environment imbued with the norms of social justice and a democratic way of life that promotes respect for human rights, awareness of duties and obligations and a deep and abiding sense of concern for one another.

This document was followed by the *Education Sector Development Framework and Programme* of 2006 which includes four themes. Theme 2, Improving Education Quality, focuses on promoting values, ethics, civic consciousness and social cohesion in schools. Against a backdrop of segregated education, it recognizes the role of teachers as mediators who act as models for non-violence, democracy and the promotion of rights, and who actively engage in peace building. In this characterization, teachers need to be able to identify the causes of social disintigration and other educational problems and be able and prepared to tackle controversial issues in order to assist their students to develop critical thinking skills (Ministry of Education, 2006).

In 2008, the *National Policy and Comprehensive Framework of Actions on Social Cohesion and Peace Education* (SCPE) was presented by the Education and Social Cohesion Unit of the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka. This policy intervention stemmed from the perceived need among government to implement a coherent and well-coordinated peace education initiative. This initiative recognized the key role of education in social cohesion. The objectives of the Social Cohesion and Peace Education (SCPE) framework it presented are fivefold:

1. to generate innovative strategies which build on existing provisions;

2. to provide coherence across the various organizations and activities involved;

3. to provide coverage and avoid gaps;

4. to avoid unnecessary duplication, and

5. to ensure sustainability.
The policy is centered in the Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit (SCPEU) of the Ministry of Education. The SCPE initiative identified seven strategic areas and activities across the entire education system. The strategies and the activities are summarized in the following table. These strategies are closely linked to the country’s National Goals of Education (National Education Commission, 1992) discussed above.

**Table 6: Seven Strategic Areas and Activities Identified by the National Policy on Education for Social Cohesion and Peace**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Area</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Reinforcement of the importance to ESCP of the existing Life Competencies and Citizenship Education (Grades 6-9) and the Citizenship Education and Governance (Grades 10-11) curriculum. Monitoring the impact of this through research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher education</td>
<td>Development of curriculum, manuals and other materials for use in teacher training to ensure teachers are exposed to ESCP goals and can work to promote ESCP concepts and vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second National Language (2NL)</td>
<td>Strengthening the provision of 2NL through the development of a clear policy on 2NL and the establishment of a specific National College of Education for 2NL teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole school culture</td>
<td>Development of a clear focus on a school culture and ethos that fosters peace and respect for rights in schools and the community, so that schools can become designated as a Peace Schools in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Promotion of further integrated schools, and if not physically possible, more ways of linking schools and sharing experiences found, such as twinning. Every child should be guaranteed a “peace experience” such as an exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curriculum</td>
<td>Strengthening and monitoring of co-curricular activities, including links with outside agencies and using events and dialogues to promote intercultural understanding as well as skills of living in a democratic society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Creation of a research network, to bring researchers in ESCP together, both to develop a program and to submit proposals for funding. Recognizing the need to establish a research grant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following illustration provides a summary of the recommendations made about the National Policy on Education for Social Cohesion and Peace (2008).

Figure 5: Summary of the Recommendations of the Comprehensive Framework of Action for Education for Social Cohesion and Peace (Source: Social Cohesion and Peace Education Unit, 2008).

Government and Non-government Initiatives for Social Cohesion and Peace

The various government initiatives for peace and social cohesion in Sri Lanka are complemented by initiatives funded by foreign governments and donor agencies. Most peace initiatives in Sri Lanka fall under the umbrella term “social cohesion.” Education is seen as a key instrument in the promotion of social cohesion through its role in the transmission of knowledge and attitudes that help individuals to cope with diversity and change (Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011). Heyneman (2010) points out four ways in which education can contribute to social cohesion: (a)
by teaching students the basic principles of what it means to be a good citizen and the consequences of not adhering to those principles; (b) by providing students with an experience consistent with these principles that brings them closer to those of different ethnicity and background; (c) by providing equal opportunities to all students; and (d) by providing students with a common understanding of citizenship, while incorporating the interests of diverse communities (p. 4).

However, in communities that are facing civil strife, education can either play a crucial role in bridging diverse communities and building social cohesion or it can aggravate disharmony and conflict (Buckland, 2006; Cardozo, 2008; Davies, 2006). At the end of the war, Sri Lanka identified the need to renew efforts for lasting peace and recognized the role that education can play in building trust and understanding among various Sri Lankan communities.

The German Development Corporation (GTZ) plays an active role in promoting social cohesion in Sri Lanka. Davies (2011), who conducted the *Sri Lanka Case Study* in a larger project titled “Promoting education in countries affected by fragility and/or conflict,” provides an overview of various GTZ-supported education programs. The German-supported projects fall within the program titled “Education for Social Cohesion (ESC)” and is a part of the “Education Sector Development Framework and Programme (ESDFP)” of the Ministry of Education that started in 2005. The following illustration maps out the five components and the three levels of implementation all components act on.
Figure 6: Components and Levels of Implementation of the Sri Lankan Education for Social Cohesion Programme (Davies, 2011).
Adapted from Davies (2011), the following table provides an overview of the five initiatives and their characteristics.

Table 7: Education for Social Cohesion Programs (Davies, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Value Education (PVE)</td>
<td>Develop an awareness within learners and teachers of the concepts, skills, positive attitudes and practices that are necessary for achieving mutual understanding and respect, good will and social cohesion in the multiethnic and multicultural society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinhala and Tamil as Second National Languages (2NL)</td>
<td>Strengthen Sinhala and Tamil as second languages in order to bridge the communication gap and therefore contribute to positive attitudes toward social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for Disadvantaged Children and Youth</td>
<td>Address the needs of disadvantaged children through appropriate and innovative teaching methodologies. Children who are displaced because of the war and children living in camps fall into this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-Social Care/Guidance and Counselling (PSC)</td>
<td>This was designed following the 2004 tsunami to specifically address the needs and challenges of teachers and school children. Then it extended to providing guidance on how to handle children with psycho-social distress caused through conflict. GTZ works with the Psycho-Social Resource Centers set up by UNICEF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Safety Education/Disaster Risk Management</td>
<td>This component was designed following the 2004 tsunami to give guidance on how to prevent, mitigate and cope with natural disasters. Then it broadened out to include building design and preparedness for fire, mine risk and bomb attacks. The objective is to qualify teachers to handle disaster.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A popular program under *Peace and Value Education* called *Pals of Two Cities* (in Sinhalese *Denuwara Mithuro*) brings around 100 students each from the North and the South together for four-day workshops. They are grouped in mixed groups (Tamil, Muslim, Sinhala) for games, sports, language classes, visits and discussions. Parents become interested as well. Though there isn’t any solid evidence of its success, the Ministry of Education’s Peace and Social Cohesion Unit thinks the program is very useful. Many participants expressed changed perceptions of other Sri Lankan communities and established friendships that were maintained even after the program was over (Davies, 2011).

In addition to the programs the Sri Lankan government is executing with the assistance of the German Development Program (GTZ), there are various other innovative interventions geared toward fostering social cohesion and educating children who affected by the war (UNICEF, 2009). The following table provides an overview of some of these interventions.

### Table 8: Education Intervention for Children Affected by War in Sri Lanka (UNICEF, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing flexibilities in the education system</td>
<td>Administrative flexibilities: Provided educational facilities for IDP children. For example, students and teachers were attached to more accessible schools during wartime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Open School Program</strong>: Under the above-mentioned GTZ “Education for disadvantaged children and youth” program, these schools educated children who have dropped out of regular school. There was no age limit. Students can learn in the evenings and on weekends. There were no fixed locations for classes to be held. They can vary depending on where the fighting was taking place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Home-school modules</strong> – When children could not attend school everyday, a designated adult worked with them. A teacher circulated to these locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Remedial Education programs</strong> – Helped school dropouts and slow learners catch up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support transportation – Provided children bicycles to facilitate the commute to school.

Ensure safety of the route to school – In conflict areas, check-points often delayed the commute to the school and often students were late coming to school. This experience triggered school dropouts. So a student register was given to the checkpoints and a teacher or another personnel was assigned to assist the process.

Develop emergency preparedness plans – Schools were asked to prepare their own plans.

Community solidarity – Programs to prevent adolescent abduction.

Peace and community cohesion education – Conducted to provide opportunities for children to think about various types of conflicts and develop non-discriminatory attitudes.

“Child-led risk reduction” – Led by Save the Children in Sri Lanka, this program helped children develop awareness, skills of mapping and mitigating risks, and ideas for advocacy.

Promoted the idea of children as resources, not just service receivers.

The Ministry of Education and UNICEF have asked individual teachers to go out and find children who have stopped coming to school.

National Child Protection Authority (NCPA): Established to protect children from any kind of harassment and violation.

National Council for Disaster Management and Disaster Management Centre.

Teacher Centres and Educational Resource Centres have been set up across the country as focal points for education in a time of emergency.

The education reforms as described so far in this chapter center around curriculum development, revision of textbooks and teacher training and development. As Aturupane and Wickramanayake (2011) point out, teachers are one of the most valuable components in the promotion of concepts of peace building and social cohesion. Therefore, it is vital that teachers are trained in peace education so that these concepts are transferred to students. It is also important that teachers
themselves believe in these values and are convinced of the importance of imparting them to their students. Although the policies that were mapped out earlier by the Sri Lankan government stressed the importance of teacher education in concepts of peace and national solidarity, these policies have not been effectively implemented in Sri Lanka. There are still many principals and teachers in rural areas who have not received any guidance and training in implementing the new programs in their classes and schools. According to the National Institute for Education:

150 in-service teachers have been trained in Civic Education in 10 Teacher Centers since 2009, and the new Non-graduate Training Course for teachers in the system has trained 7,040 teachers in General Education which incorporates the subjects of civics, peace and value education and concepts of social cohesion. Although these numbers are provided, it is not clear how many teachers have actually been trained in aspects of social cohesion to date. (Aturupane & Wickramanayake, 2011, p. 7)

Moreover, a baseline survey conducted in August 2010 by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education (NIE) indicates that although 80% of teachers said they understood the concepts of peace and value education, only 24% of these were able to give an appropriate example (MOE & NIE, 2010). The survey also indicated that a significant number of teachers who had, in fact, received the training were unable to use what they had learned or apply the new skills in the classroom.

Teacher Preparation for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Diversity can be considered as any factor (e.g., ability, class, ethnicity, gender, language, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, nationality) that may affect learners’ engagement due to its possible effect on how learners and their families are perceived and how they relate to other members of their local and broader communities (Rivière, et al., 2008). The importance of addressing issues pertaining to social and cultural diversity is not a new educational phenomenon. Close to two decades ago Darling-Hammond (1997), in her forward to Preparing teachers for cultural diversity, stated:

…meeting the challenge of cultural diversity is an agenda that is central to today’s quest to develop schools that can educate all students for the challenging world they face – a world that is both technologically and more multiculturally rich and complex than ever before in our history. (viii)
Despite attempts by many governments to curtail the number of immigrants entering their countries, diversity is increasing around the world (Cummins, 2009). Schools across the globe are experiencing a rapid influx of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners. Traditionally, and even today, the failure of these students in the school system is attributed to factors such as family deficiencies, genetic inferiority, cultural deprivation, poverty, and the use of a first language at home (Cummins, 2009; Nieto, 2004). However, demographic changes have forced many teacher education programs, especially those in North America and certain European countries, to restructure their educational programs so that their candidates are better equipped to meet the varied academic, cultural and linguistic needs of their students. The literature on teacher preparation for diversity helps us understand how teachers can be assisted in addressing and accommodating diversity in their classes.

Historical and Current Trends in Teacher Preparation for Diversity

The idea of including training in teaching CLD learners gained currency in the 1970s when arguments that cultural differences were not synonymous with deviance or deprivation forced the academic community to re-examine previously held understandings about educating minority students (Baratz & Baratz, 1970). In *Blaming the victim*, Ryan (1976) articulates this sentiment:

> We are dealing, it would seem, not so much with culturally deprived children as with culturally depriving schools. And the task to be accomplished is not to revise, and amend, and repair deficient children but to alter and transform the atmosphere and operations of the schools to which we commit these children. (p. 61)

Many teacher education programs responded to this need by introducing courses on various forms of multicultural education\(^8\) (Goodwin, 1997). The understanding was that meaningful multicultural education should begin with teacher self-awareness, which would then be transformed to thought and action (Ramsey, 1987; Banks, 1991). Multicultural education began to be viewed not as something a teacher does for somebody else, but instead as a process that begins by teachers understanding themselves.

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\(^8\) The concept of multicultural education is drawn from Bank’s notion (1989) that “all students, regardless of the groups to which they belong, such as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, culture, social class, religion, or exceptionality, should experience educational equality in the schools” (p. 23).
Goodwin (1997) identifies three distinct phases multicultural education has evolved through: exclusion, inclusion, and infusion. During the exclusion phase, the need to address diversity was absent from the curricula. During the inclusion phase, an awareness that teachers needed to be prepared to work with CLD learners was incorporated into teacher education norms. However, multicultural education suffered from an “additive” approach (Banks, 1991), whereby multicultural initiatives were fragmented and functioned as mere add-ons to the existing curricula with little follow-up or long-range planning (Banks, 1988; Nieto & Rego, 2000; Ramsey et al., 1989). Moreover, the general understanding about multicultural education was the remediation of visible racial and ethnic minorities who were perceived as deprived and disadvantaged. Multicultural or multiethnic education was synonymous with “minority” education and the presumption that students needed “fixing.” The infusion phase included a recognition that multicultural teacher education cannot be successful as long as its concepts and content remain on the margins of teacher preparation. Instead, multiculturalism needs to be infused throughout the entire teacher education curriculum. However, to date this remains a challenge.

Perceptions of Diversity

As (Plaine, 1990) argues, teachers need to be able to “attend to diversity” and be able to “relate to differences.” Teacher educators need to assist prospective teachers to recognize what teaching a diverse population of students involves, develop a willingness and a commitment to teaching them, and develop educational perspectives and skills necessary to fight inequalities in access to knowledge and power (Ross & Smith, 1992). Teacher education programs need to assist students to identify and confront their beliefs about society, education and the social conditions of schooling (Liston & Zeichner, 1990). There are educational implications for the ways in which teachers think about difference, and it is important to understand the perspectives prospective teachers bring to the profession.

Plaine (1990) presents four orientations to diversity: individual difference; categorical difference; contextual difference; and pedagogical difference. From an individual difference orientation to diversity, people are viewed as being different in many ways. This perspective draws mainly on psychological and biological explanations of diversity. From this perspective, teachers view
students’ problems and the solutions to those problems as residing in the individual concerned. In the second approach to observing difference, categorical difference, repeating patterns of variation across individuals are noted. Such characteristics include social class, race, gender, etc. However, there is no emphasis on explaining the link between the categories and their qualities. The third category, contextual difference, is built on the first two categories, individual difference and categorical difference. From this perspective, differences among individuals “occur in patterns, yet these patterns are seen as connected to a social situation or embedded in a larger, dynamic context” (p. 3). According to this view, differences are not fixed or dichotomized, but are dynamic and change according to interactions. Differences are seen as a social construct. What is significant about this orientation is that it takes into consideration the causes of difference. The final approach to difference, the pedagogical perspective, takes into account not only the causes of difference, but also the implications. From an educational point of view, diversity is viewed as having pedagogical implications or consequences for both teaching and learning. From this perspective, difference cannot be separated from action.

Transformed Program Practices

Most teacher education programs have made curricular transformations and introduced courses designed to address issues pertaining to diversity. Some of these include: multicultural education (Dilworth, 1992; Grant, 1993; Larkin & Sleeter, 1995; Sleeter, 1992); critical multiculturalism (May, 1999); antiracist education (Lee, 1995; Lee, Menkart & Okazawa-Rey, 1998); global education (Easterly, 1994; Gilliom, 1993; Merryfield, 1995, 2000; Merryfield, Jarchow & Pickert, 1997; Tye & Tye, 1992; Wilson, 1982, 1983); Social Justice Education (Cochran-Smith, 2004); Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009); critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1991); critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn, 1999); and education and human rights (Grant, 1988; Kymlicka, 1996; Tarrow, 1987, Modgil, et al., 1986). However, very often most of these courses are introduced as sole courses or have been inserted in isolation to existing courses rather than through genuine infusion of multicultural content and perspectives into the entire curriculum (Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). Most of these additions are superficial add-ons to the curriculum that perpetuate certain stereotypes of diverse cultural and linguistic groups (Rego & Nieto, 2000).
In addition to introducing content knowledge through various courses, there are various other approaches taken to prepare prospective teachers for diversity. These involve: promoting teachers’ self-knowledge through courses and activities; teachers doing ethnographic research in the communities they teach in (Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1999); immersing TCs in community field experiences (Gomez et al., 2009; Hones, 1997; Pagano, et al. 1995; Proctor, et al., 2001; Wolffe, 1996); case-based teaching (Shulman & Mesa-Bains, 1990); and community service learning (Wade, 1997). Although many of these studies discuss the transformative nature of these initiatives and the positive impact they have on TCs, the focus of these initiatives is on educating a group of TCs who are largely representative of the dominant class. This is mainly because the existing pool of teachers consists of members of the dominant class.

This discrepancy between white, middle-class teachers and the CLD learners they teach is one of the most common criticisms against teacher preparation for diversity in North America and Europe (Swartz, 2003; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). With the exception of a handful of studies (e.g., Villegas & Davis, 2008) that focus on the preparation of minority teachers for diversity, the underlying assumption in the existing literature is that teacher candidates are different from the learners they teach and therefore need additional training for teaching CLD learners. While this assumption highlights the reality of the teaching profession as one dominated by the dominant group, the literature fails to address issues such as the recruitment, retention, and education of minority teachers.

More recent studies on teacher preparation show how universities are taking more holistic approaches to addressing diversity and equity in teacher education (Gagne, Kjorven & Ringen, 2009). These initiatives respond to the urgent call for the teaching profession to reflect the increasingly multicultural student body (Dei, 2002; Fenwick, 2001; Gordon, 2000; Rong & Preissle, 1997). Instead of attempting to educate largely white/dominant culture TCs to teach diverse learners, these new initiatives try to diversify the pool of teacher candidates so that it is more representative of the students TCs teach.

Gagné (2009) discusses the measures taken by a Canadian university to make the teaching force more representative of its students. Some of these measures include: admitting both first and second generation immigrants to the program; outreach strategies to attract minorities;
admissions criteria that give prominence to candidates’ experiences that reflect their ability to work with diverse learners; and infusion of diversity and equity across the curriculum. Similarly, a network of universities in Norway has designed a BA for bilingual teachers to diversify their teaching force. This initiative aims to give a formal qualification to bilingual teachers as well as elevate the status of bilingual teachers who are already in the school system (Ringen & Kjorven, 2009). In Scotland, there are specific projects such as Refugees Into Teaching in Scotland (RITS) and Recruitment of Ethnic Minorities into Teaching (REMIT) that attempt to assist foreign-trained and refugee teachers who have gained training abroad into the school system (Smyth, 2009). In an increasingly globalizing world, initiatives of this nature reduce the cultural and linguistic distance between teachers and their students.

Teacher Candidates’ (TCs) Experiences and Reactions to New Initiatives

Frederick, Cave and Perencevich (2010) look at a group of TCs’ narratives in the United States to map out how their thoughts shifted regarding social equity. This study reveals how the groups’ thinking regarding issues pertaining to social justice transformed and how they began to view themselves as agents of change. Smith’s (1994) study that was also conducted in the United States focuses on how TCs in a multicultural education course reacted to the course and developed a plan of action to support learning for CLD students. This study presents the challenges in teaching a course on multiculturalism, such as expressing and clarifying thoughts about diversity, monitoring classroom interactions, and challenging white males. However, Smith concludes by stating the limitations of potential changes set by attitudinal factors, such as the inability of TC to acknowledge privilege and the lack of a broad vision of change. Oliveira and Shoffners (2009) explore TCs’ experiences in a special methods course that provides exposure to and experiences of the needs of diverse learners from various linguistic backgrounds in an American university. The objective of the special methods course investigated is to foreground the special needs of English language learners. The findings of studies such as these that focus on one particular course TCs take are important in highlighting new directions in redesigning and modifying teacher preparation programs, or in introducing new courses.

Winitzky and Barlow’s (1998) study “Changing teacher candidates’ beliefs about diversity,” however, moves the focus beyond one particular course TCs take, and instead, focuses on the
entire pre-service experience. Winitzky and Barlow investigated TCs’ entire program and student life experiences to discover how these related to positive changes toward diversity and the characteristics that contributed to this change. Similar to the studies discussed in the previous paragraph, the findings of Winitzky and Barlow’s study can be used not just to restructure course content, but to create an environment conducive for multicultural initiatives to thrive. The authors highlight the point that it is not merely the content TCs learn during their pre-service training that contributes to their developing a positive outlook toward diversity; it is also the environment in which such learning takes place.

While the studies mentioned in this section discuss the positive impact and the limitations set by new program initiatives, they do not shed light on how much of the knowledge the teachers gained and the attitudinal changes that took place actually contributed to changed attitudes and practices toward teaching diverse learners. TCs’ perceptions about their preparedness to teach CLD learners is the focus of O’Niel, et al. (2008) and Wenger & Dinsmore (2005) studies. Both these qualitative studies explore TCs’ assumptions about student diversity in the schools they planned to teach in and what aspects of the teacher preparation program they thought would be helpful and unhelpful. The findings of these studies reveal that the TCs involved did not feel they had not received explicit feedback on teaching CLD learners with limited English language skills. The majority of the participants stated they didn’t feel they were adequately prepared to teach CLD learners.

Studies such as these highlight the need for further research that explores not merely the impact of isolated courses on learners, but the impact of the entire teacher education experience on prospective teachers in a more holistic manner. The fact that TCs’ attitudes have changed, or that they have gained more knowledge about CLD learners and how to teach them, doesn’t necessarily translate into an increased confidence to teach CLD learners, nor does it contribute to transformed teaching practices.

**Practicum Experience in Relation to Teaching Diverse Learners**

In many teacher education programs, the practicum or field-based placement is designed to give prospective teachers exposure to the kinds of diversity they will experience in their future schools. Zeichner and Melnick (1996) discuss a program based in Chicago where students lived
together in a multicultural and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood and spent a significant amount of time planning interactions with community activists and neighborhood residents. Seidl and Friend (2002) worked with TCs in Columbus, Ohio where the students were partnered with equal status adults in an African American church. Although the common understanding is that this experience would assist in broadening TCs’ perceptions about CLD learners and give them first-hand experience teaching them, the existing literature shows mixed results.

Hones (1997) takes a service learning approach to the field component. By using narrative case studies, he explores how TCs’ lives were affected by their community experience. The participants, who were mainly white and middle-class, were placed in schools where they came into contact with diverse socioeconomic, ethnic and linguistic groups. Hones shows how the TCs’ lives were affected by their experiences and how the use of narratives helped them to better understand the educational lives of their learners. The participants used narratives to draw parallels between their educational aspirations and needs and those of their students. While this study shows the impact of narratives in getting TCs to raise moral questions related to their field experiences, it also shows the impact of that experience in increasing the TCs’ empathy and understanding of CLD learners. Similarly Pagano, et al. (1995) and Wolffe (1996) showed how field-based placement experience had positive effects on TCs’ beliefs and attitudes about teaching CLD learners. There are also studies by Habberman (1991) and Wiggins and Follo (1999) that show negative results of field experiences with diverse learners.

Proctor, et al. (2001) explore TCs’ expectations prior to the practicum, what they leaned about teaching in urban schools, and what factors would encourage/discourage them about teaching in urban schools. Their study revealed that many TCs did express positive attitudes about teaching in urban schools. Although many TCs stated that the courses they took prepared them for that experience to a certain degree, they also revealed that they were not adequately prepared. They stressed the need for specific instruction in multicultural strategies and also the space to reflect on their experiences. Studies such as this point out the need for further research that could reveal what exact skills TCs might need in order to be successful with CLD learners.

There are also studies on field-based placement experiences that focus particularly on “early field experiences,” a component that teacher preparation programs have incorporated to help TCs
clarify their career goals and commitment to teaching early on in the program. Numerous studies have reported the positive personal and social outcomes of early field experiences (e.g., Blieszner & Artale, 2001; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Moyer & Husman, 2006; Peetsma, 2000). Teachers have also revealed the early field experience to be the most important aspect of their teacher preparation (Richardson-Koehler, 1998). A 2009 study by Gomez, et al. looks at the impact of early field experience on TCs’ career goals and commitments. It reveals how this experience gave prospective teachers an informed and realistic picture of the contexts they might later be teaching in. However, the findings also reveal that TCs who taught in schools that had a higher proportion of CLD learners from lower-income families had lost interest in teaching as a career. A similar decline in interest in teaching was visible among monolingual English speakers in comparison to bilingual English/Spanish speakers.

There seems to be a certain sense of ambiguity among TCs about the specific skills that can better prepare them for the day-to-day lives of the schools in which they intend to teach. Although the studies discussed in the previous section reveal how TCs’ benefited from their coursework and the various initiatives their programs took to make them better prepared for the actual teaching experience, there are no studies that focus specifically on the link between the coursework taken and how the knowledge gained from it can be transformed into practice. There are also no findings that show how the TCs involved in these studies used the knowledge they gained during the field component of their programs. Such a focus is crucial, as one cannot assume that positive attitudinal change will transform into changed practice. The studies also lacked a focus on the exact nature of the field components observed. Although their authors did mention the characteristics of the field components (e.g., the resources that were available to the TCs, the demographics and the socioeconomic status of the students), there was no clear indication of what the practicum actually entailed.

**Second Language Teacher Preparation for Diversity**

The literature discussed so far in this section reveals that the preparation of TCs for diversity has a long and intense history. It also highlights the complex nature of the agenda to prepare TCs for the ever-increasing diversity among prospective students. Although the studies reviewed do not focus specifically on preparing second language teachers, teacher educators in various fields,
including those in second language teacher preparation, can apply literature on general teacher education. This could be one of the reasons for the paucity of literature on language teacher education for diversity. However, as Tedick and Walker (1994) point out, dependence on research on general teacher education alone is not enough as language teaching is fundamentally different from other disciplines. Unlike other disciplines, a body of subject matter content cannot define language teaching alone. This unique nature of second language teacher education (SLTE) requires a discussion of issues that are specific to SLTE.

In their discussion of problems in SLTE, Tedick and Walker (1994) identify two “problems that plague us” in relation to teaching CLD learners. First, they highlight the importance of understanding the interdependence between the acquisition of a second language and a culture, along with the continual acquisition by learners of their first language and culture. As many studies have shown, “subtractive bilingualism” (Cummins, 2001) that neglects the first language and the culture of minority students has proven to be detrimental to their academic achievements (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1981). This finding calls for second language teachers to focus on making connections between the first and second languages and cultures of their learners. It also raises the question of what kind of knowledge TCs should have in order to assist their learners to be bicultural and bilingual. Tedick and Walker (1994) argue for a movement away from language-specific teacher education to a more holistic perspective of language learning that includes continual first language development.

The second of the “problems that plague us” identified by Tedick and Walker (1994) is the continued failure within SLTE to reflect on the connection between language and culture in second language instruction and second language teacher education. Studies have shown the significance of culture and its inextricable link to minority students’ achievement (Cummins, 1981, 1986). However, there is a history of educational neglect of cultures and languages of minority students. The culture that is dealt with in second languages classes is “culture specific and acontextual in nature” (1986, p. 308), lacking any critical inquiry into the interrelationship between language and culture.

Textbooks support this neutral approach toward culture. In order for culture to play a more significant role in second language education, it needs to be explored in teacher education.
programs. Therefore, language teachers need to have a clear understanding of themselves as cultural beings and the various worldviews espoused by their students. This cannot be achieved by adding more courses to the curriculum that TCs follow. Instead, culture should become an integral part of teacher education programs. However, several studies (e.g., Castro, Sercu & Garcia, 2004; Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006) have shown that although second language teachers are aware of the importance of incorporating culture into their classes, in reality, most of their class time is usurped by the teaching of language.

In a later discussion, Tedick and Walker (1995) discuss a second language teacher education program that addresses the problems discussed above. This is an integrated academic program that has been developed within a framework of critical reflection. The components of the program involve underlying themes, coursework, ongoing experiences, and a portfolio that allows TCs to demonstrate their development as teachers. What is significant about this initiative is the way the various program components are embedded. There are ten themes underlying each component that are identified by Tedick and Walker as essential to second language teacher development. These underlying themes, some of which are linked to issues pertaining to diversity, are not confined to one segment of the program but instead are tied to all program components.

Dogancay-Aktuna (2006) calls for the expansion of the sociocultural knowledge base of language teacher education. He does so based on the assumption that the broader the knowledge base of the teacher, the greater their ability to deal with the demands of their profession. He proposes the inclusion of domains of inquiry that would lead to the preparation of teachers who are more culturally and sociopolitically conscious. Among these domains are an awareness of cross-cultural variation in language teaching and learning, the tools for investigating this variation, and an awareness of the factors surrounding teaching English. Like Tedick and Walker (1994, 1995), Dogancay-Aktuna also stresses the need to make teachers more critical of language teaching so that they do not view it as a neutral act.

**Teacher Identity and Reconciliation**

The centrality of identity is well recognized in literature on peace and reconciliation (Orjuela, 2008) and promoting inclusive identities is central to bridging ethnic divides in postwar
communities. However, while identity is often recognized and respected as non-negotiable (Burton, 1990), the role of identity is often overlooked in research on reconciliation. Thus, it needs to become a more integral part of the research. In this respect, Rothman (1997) argues that conflicting parties need to overcome polarization and construct shared identities around mutual interests.

In Sri Lanka, successive Sinhala governments and the Tamil LTTE to perpetuate a sense of privilege and inequality in order to promote their respective political agendas have manipulated ethnic identities. These identity-based tensions have also impacted other Sri Lankan ethnic communities such as the Muslims (Johnson, 2006). As I will discuss in Chapter 6, shared identities are absent in the identity narratives of the TCs in my study.

Kaldor (2006), for example, proposes “cosmopolitan identities,” i.e., identities that hold humanitarian values and do not nourish exclusivist and rigid identities. The civil society, of which teachers and TCs are a part, is a space where inclusive and non-extremist identities can be nurtured. It is such identities that can pave the way for a new, inclusive multicultural society (Lederach, 1997; Richmond & Carey, 2005; van Tongeren et al., 2005).

What is important in this respect is that the composition of future English language teachers will need to become quite diverse. Although the diversity within the three Sri Lankan National Colleges of Education (NCOE) in my study varied, there are teachers from diverse sociocultural backgrounds and regions that bring diverse experiences into the country’s teacher education program. In my view, this diversity is a resource the Sri Lankan teacher education program needs to tap into to foster multicultural and inclusive identities among TCs. Yet the formation of inclusive identities should not serve to gloss over differences and obscure or reinforce inequalities. Rather, it should be used to defuse them.

Recent research on language teacher education in general has focused a great deal on teachers’ identities. Researchers and teacher educators alike acknowledge consistently the importance of encouraging teachers to reflect on who they are, what their interests are, and what beliefs they invest in, as well as on how they are perceived by their students, colleagues and the wider communities they live and work in (Miller, 2009). As Clarke (2009) argues:
…if the commitment to identity is not just a metaphysical proposition but a serious recognition that our work as teachers shapes and is shaped by the very mode of our being, then thinking about the formation of our identities is crucial for all of us in education. (p. 186)

For Clarke, engaging in “identity work” is essential for teachers if they wish to “exercise professional agency” and “maximize their potential for development and growth” (p. 187). The importance of focusing on identity lies in the fact that when a teacher walks into her classroom, she does not leave her identities behind to assume her role as a teacher. Instead, her multiple identities shape her curricular choices, the manner in which she delivers the curriculum, how she plans her teaching day, and the relationships she establishes in her school community. As teachers’ multiple identities impact their teaching (Clarke, 2009; Liu & Xu, 2011; Varghese, et al., 2005), their personal and professional lives cannot be separated.

Miller (2009) groups the literature on teacher identity into three strands: 1) identity and knowledge (Borg, 2003, p. 2); identity and practice (Clarke, 2009; Liu & Xu, 2011; Varghese, et al., 2009); and identity and the non-native language teacher (Liu, 1999; Pavlenko, 2003). In order to capitalize on teachers’ lived experiences, teachers’ identities are embraced as a form of pedagogy (Morgan, 2004). Language teacher identity is now considered a site for pedagogical interventions and, increasingly, language teacher education programs are focusing their attention on teacher identity (Brogden & Page, 2008; Varghese, et al., 2005).

The first analysis chapter of this dissertation (Chapter 6) focuses on the multiple identities and the identity negotiations of the participants of my Sri Lankan study. Identity in this study is viewed from a poststructuralist perspective. Therefore, identity is viewed as the intersection of the multiple and diverse factors (Hancock, 2007) that allow a teacher to understand herself and her relationship to the world and that may shape her possibilities for the future (Norton, 2000). According to this view, identities are constantly shaped and negotiated through social interactions, and may be assigned, claimed (Varghese, et al., 2005) or enacted by individuals (Herath & Valencia, 2015). Moreover, as Morgan and Clarke (2011) argue, “identity relies on a repertoire of communicative resources (e.g., rituals, texts, and signs) through/by which categories of difference/individuality are perceived, maintained or resisted and these communicative resources are fundamentally social in nature” (p. 817). The importance attached to representational tools underpins Blommaert’s (2005) notion of identity as “semiotic potential.”
Imagination and Identity

As Carl Sagan (1980) states, “Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were, but without it we go nowhere” (p. 2). Imagination is a powerful force for constructing identity as it moves beyond the here-and-now of engagement in practices by allowing individuals to create images of the world and their place within it across time and space. In terms of identity, imagination is a creative force. As Wenger (1998) states, “it is through imagination that we conceive of new developments, explore alternatives, and envision possible futures” (p. 178). In language teacher education, membership in imagined communities has legitimized new identity options for non-native speaking teachers and their students to position themselves as legitimate L2 users (Pavlenko 2003; Pavlenko and Norton 2007).

Drawing on Anderson’s (2002) concept of imagined communities, and Lave and Wenger’s (1991) situated learning and communities of practice, Norton gives imagination an “identitary function” (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 253). She argues that language learners may feel more reluctant to speak to individuals they perceive to be acting as gatekeepers of the imagined communities language learners may want to be part of or invest in. Fettes (2005) argues that pre-service teachers’ identity development is “in part a journey of imaginative development,” since TCs “come to imagine teaching and themselves as teachers, in new ways” (p. 3). This notion helps us understand how prospective teachers perceive their identities as future teachers.

Recognising the Teaching Self

In his modular model for knowing, analyzing, recognizing, doing and seeing; Kumaravadivelu (2012) raises awareness of how teachers’ practices are impacted not only by teachers’ identities, but also by how these converge with teachers’ beliefs and their values. Kumaravadivelu argues that the interactions of teachers’ identities, their beliefs, and values are the core components under which teachers’ teaching selves align.
Kumaravedivelu’s notion of teacher identity is helpful in increasing our understanding of how the identities of teachers might shape the manner in which they address identity related issues in their classes. In the globalized world we live in, groups living within pluralistic communities strive to protect and preserve their own identity, resulting not in genuine multiculturalism but multiple monoculturalisms (Sen, 2006). Individuals need critical knowledge to help them choose and form identities in such a complex environment. With critical knowledge of others’ cultural value systems, they can develop a global cultural consciousness that can enrich and transform their lives through knowledge bases such as the internet or by engaging in critical reflection (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). As Kumaravadivelu (2012) goes on to say:

…teacher identities in a global society are constructed at the complex intersections between individual, social, national and global realities. Teachers everywhere are faced with the challenge of aligning their teaching Self within congruence with contemporary realities while at the same time attempting to transgress any artificial boundaries the realities might impose on them. Teachers’ identity formation, then, resides largely in how they make sense of the contemporary realities, and how they negotiate contradictory expectations, and how they derive meaning out of a seemingly chaotic environment. (p. 58)
Teachers’ ability and willingness to exercise their agency plays a crucial role in how successful they are in succeeding in forging a “desired teaching Self.” This “agentive quality” (Martin, 2007) allows teachers to recognize how power is embedded in pedagogy and reproduces and sustains existing social inequalities. Agentive quality motivates teachers to “develop counterhegemonic pedagogies” (Giroux, 1988, xxxiii) that can empower their students to become critical social agents.

However, teachers do not exercise their agency to transform their identities as isolated individuals. As sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1986) has argued, identity and agency are socially constructed and socially shared notions. Thus, the teaching self is forged through continual critical reflection and engagement with others who share teachers’ professional space. However, as Zembylas (2003) suggests, this dialogic and shared nature of the creation of a teaching self, does not lead to the creation of a singular and essential “teaching self,” but instead manifests as multiple, unique identities.

Narrative Constructions of Identity

In this dissertation, Sri Lankan teachers’ identities are constructed primarily through their narratives. The epistemological underpinning of narrative inquiry rests on the assumption that “human beings make sense of random experiences by the imposition of story structures” (Bell, 2002, p. 207). This outlook of narrative aligns itself well with the interpretist paradigm in educational research. Narrative knowledge is one of the two human modes of cognition. Unlike scientific knowledge, narrative knowledge accommodates ambiguity and dilemma (Bruner, 1990, 1996). This ambiguity is central to human experience and, more particularly, to identity construction and negotiation. Moreover, stories are the closest we can come to people’s experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994). These qualities of narrative inquiry have made it an increasingly vibrant approach in identity research in education in recent times (Barkhuisen & de Klerk, 2006; Kraus, 2006; Liu & Xu, 2011; Norton & Early, 2011; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013).

In a narrative theorization of identity, Sfard and Prusak (2005) argue that identities consist of collections of stories about persons and that narratives about individuals are “reifying, endorsable, and significant” (p. 16). Gee (2001) reiterates the storied nature of identity when he
asserts that narratives are central in defining a person’s “core identity” (p. 111). According to him, “each person has a unique trajectory through “Discursive Space.” It is this trajectory, and a “person’s own narrativization” (Mishler, 2000), that constitute a person’s “core identity.” This “core identity” is “never fully formed” and is “always potentially changing.” Resonating with Mishler’s (2000) motif of self-narrativization, Holland and her colleagues’ (1998) add an affective dimension to the definition of identity. For them, identity [narration] consists of “self-understandings with strong emotional resonance for the teller” (p.3).

Although narrative events are often presented and understood in relation to one another (Ricoeur, 1991), and although the struggle to maintain coherence and continuity is prominent in narrative conceptions of identity (Carr, 1986), narrative identity does not suggest “a stable or unchanging identity or linear identity development” (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013, p. 122). Narratives of identity constantly undergo change (Heikkinen, 2002) and life experiences force individuals to reinterpret their stories (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). This process of reinterpretation in relation to life experiences can change an individual’s identity (Polkingthorne, 1996a).

A vibrant characteristic of narrative understandings of identity that emerges from these definitions is its recognition of human agency (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Identity narratives are selective (Crossley, 2000a) and include experiences that are significant to the narrator (Heikkinin, 1999). Human agency is visible not only in narrative constructions of identity, but also in their interpretations. As Sfard and Prusak (2005) assert:

…identities are human-made, and not God-given, they have authors and recipients, they are collectively shaped even if individually told, and they can change according to the authors’ and recipients’ perceptions and needs. As discursive constructs, they are also reasonably accessible and investigable. (p. 17)

These notions of identity highlight the dynamic nature of narrative constructions of identity that might not be present in traditional approaches to the study of identity.

Teacher Cognition and Personal Practical Knowledge (PPK)

The notions of teacher cognition and personal practical knowledge (PPK) shed light on understanding teachers’ beliefs, experiences and perceptions, the teaching of diverse learners and how these beliefs and experiences impact teaching. Borg (2003, 2006) uses the term teacher
cognition to refer to the unobservable cognitive dimensions of teaching: what teachers know, believe and think. Teacher cognition consists of teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions and perspectives about teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, instructional activities, and (the teaching) self. The underlying assumption is that teachers are “active, thinking decision makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically oriented, personalized and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs” (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Teachers have cognitions about all aspects of teaching and they inform their classroom decisions. In contrast to what is usually the case for other professions, when teachers come to teachers’ college to receive their formal training to become teachers, they have already been exposed to teaching for a very long time. Lortie (1975) in his seminal work describes teachers as “apprentices of observation” who have spent some 13,000 hours observing their teachers. These observations form very strong impressions that might exert influence over teachers throughout their careers.

Clandinin (1986) and Clandinin and Connelly (1986) use the term “personal practical knowledge” (PPK) to characterise teachers’ experiential knowledge. For them, PPK consists of personal philosophies constructed through the beliefs and values that have grown out of teachers’ experiences as well as the metaphors that structure the way teachers think about teaching, rhythms, and narrative unity. Clandinin (1992) further defines PPK as:

...knowledge that reflects the individual’s prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher’s knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through processes of reflection. (p. 125)

Notions of teacher cognition and PPK are important concepts in teacher learning that help researchers analyze the unobservable dimensions of teaching. They are central to my study of Sri Lankan TCs as they allow for a robust understanding of teachers’ experiences, perceptions, beliefs about diversity and the teaching and learning of diverse learners. Teacher cognition and PPK are also important in clarifying how my TC participants’ prior experiences shape their professional practices.
Chapter Summary

The literature review undertaken in this chapter was organized into six sections. In the first, I focused on works dealing with the role of education in situations of post-conflict reconciliation in different parts of the world. In the second section, I focus on reconciliation initiatives. In the third section, I looked at literature on post-conflict Sri Lanka in particular. I examined the ways government and educational policy documents pertaining to peace and reconciliation have evolved from the 1990s in the country and I highlighted various texts relevant to more recent government and educational initiatives geared toward Sri Lankan social cohesion. The discussion in the fourth section revolved around studies on teacher preparation for cultural and linguistic diversity. Though most of these studies are from American educational contexts, they are important for the way they shed light on various initiatives in a range of help in understanding the range of programs intended to prepare teachers for diverse classrooms, on TCs’ responses to these initiatives and on TCs’ practicum experiences in relation to diversity. In the fifth section, I focused on a body of work examining teacher identity and the role of teachers’ identity negotiation in post-conflict and reconciliation situations. The sixth and final section of the chapter considered publications concerned with the concepts of teacher cognition and personal practical knowledge (PPK) and the role these concepts can play in expanding our understanding of how teachers’ beliefs, experiences and perceptions shape their teaching. The literature reviewed in this chapter will be drawn on at various points throughout the remainder of this dissertation to analyze and illuminate the data generated in my study.
Chapter 4:  
An Integrated Conceptual Framework

Introduction

This study uses an integrated conceptual framework consisting of multiple and intersecting theoretical frameworks. The use of multiple intersecting frameworks has been extremely helpful in allowing me to deconstruct, analyze and understand the nuances of the rich and complex data my research generated.

In order to create inclusive and peaceful school environments in post-conflict contexts, an alternative mindset is required. Embracing and promoting critical reflection rather than passive acceptance, inclusion rather than exclusion, tolerance rather than prejudice, peace rather than violence, and democratic values rather than repression are crucial in post-conflict reconciliation. My integrated conceptual framework draws on theories and approaches directly relevant toward creating such an alternative mindset.

Overall, the framework can be seen to rest primarily on Cummins’ (2009b) and Miller and Seller’s (1990) notions of orientations to pedagogy. Orientations to pedagogy supports the analysis I undertake later in this dissertation (Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9) of Sri Lankan Teacher Candidates’ diverse perspectives and experiences relevant to curricular practices in their teacher education program. In addition to orientations to pedagogy, I also consider concepts and theories that align with transformative approaches to pedagogy. I do so to encourage a more textured understanding of Sri Lankan prospective teachers’ identities, the nature of their experiences in the program and their perceptions of their own roles as future teachers. These additional concepts and theories include the notion of teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Motha, 2014), Social Justice Teacher Education (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Zeichner, 2009, 2011) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings,
1992, 1994). Finally, I also pull in Cummins’ (2001) framework of coercive and collaborative relations of power and Pierre Bourdieu’s forms of capital to understand how power relations and various forms of capital in the larger society are manifested in Sri Lankan educational contexts.

The following page presents a figure, which is my attempt to provide a visual representation of the integrated conceptual framework I have adopted and to show the way its multiple components are interconnected.
Figure 8: Orientations to Pedagogy with a Special Focus On Transformative Pedagogy

- **Transmission**
- **Transaction/Social Constructivist**
- **Transformative**
  - **Social Justice Teacher Education**
    - Connecting the school with the community
    - Teachers as agents of change
    - Curricula that raises teachers' awareness
    - Critical reflection
    - Developing inclusive ideals and attitudes
  - **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**
    - Developing a cultural diversity knowledge base
    - Designing culturally responsive curricula
    - Building culturally caring learning communities
    - Developing critical consciousness
  - **Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals**
    - Teaching is a form of intellectual labor and it is through the intellectual labor of teachers that change can take place
    - Teachers' roles transcend the mere transmission of knowledge
Orientations to Pedagogy

Orientations to pedagogy help us in understanding how curricula, schools and teacher education programs as well as, teachers and students themselves are positioned in teaching and learning. These orientations offer frameworks for analyzing and understanding diverse perspectives in relation to curriculum practices. In relation to my Sri Lankan study, in particular, orientations to pedagogy has made me consider more critically the nature of the learning opportunities provided to my study participants, how those opportunities were used and the potential the teacher education program offered in helping new teachers become active agents of change in post-conflict reconciliation processes.

The 3T Model (Miller & Seller, 1990)

Miller and Seller (1990) presented the 3T Model, which consists of three major orientations to the curriculum: Transmission (T1), Transaction (T2) and Transformation (T3). Together, the 3Ts constitute major orientations in curricular programs and provide a tool for curriculum development, implementation and evaluation.

In T1, the transmission orientation, there is a one-way flow of information from teacher to student, involving instructional strategies through teacher explanations, textbooks and rote learning. This position adopts an atomized view of the individual and encourages competition among learners. Most of the instruction in the Sri Lankan NCOE takes a transmission orientation. T2, the transaction orientation, presents more opportunities for interaction and emphasizes intellectual as well as problem-solving skills. There is more dialogue between the teacher and the students. Based on the work of Freire (1970), T3, the transformative pedagogy orientation, advocates for social justice and change in education. It acknowledges “wholeness” in teachers and students, emphasizing the need for teacher education programs to bring together body, mind and spirit (Miller, 2007, 2010).

Miller and Seller (1990) discuss the 3Ts in terms of their function in education; the various instructional strategies used to promote them; the philosophical, psychological and social contexts upon which they are founded and implemented (including particular historical moments); and, finally, the view of the individual and the way each teacher views the individual.
Miller (2010) argues that all three positions should be used in teaching the whole child. For teachers to become “transformative intellectuals” (Giroux, 1988), however, there needs to be a greater degree of transformative pedagogy.

Drawing on these three orientations to pedagogy has allowed me to better understand the learning opportunities that were available for the participants in my study. In addition, it has helped me to understand the kind of potential the TC had, or would likely have in the future, within the Sri Lankan teacher education program to prepare themselves to become transformative intellectuals playing active roles in the country’s processes of post-conflict reconciliation.

Adapted from Miller and Seller (1990), Table 9 on the following page summarizes the three orientations to pedagogy, mapping out the paradigm, the aims, teaching strategies and evaluation method.
Table 9: Three Approaches to Teaching: Transmission, Transaction and Transformation (Miller & Seller, 1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Teaching Strategies</th>
<th>Evaluation Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transmission</strong></td>
<td><strong>Atomysm:</strong> Reality is seen in terms of separate, isolated building blocks</td>
<td>Master (usually traditional) school subjects with a focus on content</td>
<td>Mastery Learning: Divides subjects into smaller units with specific objectives or outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn basic skills such as reading, writing and basic math</td>
<td>Phonics: Notion of phonemic awareness and the ability to discern individual sounds in spoken words</td>
<td>Fill in the blank tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adopt basic cultural values</td>
<td>Cultural Literacy: Shared background knowledge</td>
<td>Multiple choice tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Standardized tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigm</td>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Teaching Strategies</td>
<td>Evaluation Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivism:</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td><em>Problem-based learning</em>: Students are presented an open-ended problem to solve and work in groups to reach a solution</td>
<td>Observation Interviews Rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inquiry skills</td>
<td><em>Case Study Method</em>: Gather relevant factual information, encourage ethical reasoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical thinking skills</td>
<td><em>Discipline-based Inquiry</em>: Connected to a particular discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness:</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td><em>Autobiography/Journals</em>: Have students write about themselves</td>
<td>Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compassion/Caring</td>
<td><em>Roots of Empathy</em>: Students witness and identify with change and growth over a period of time</td>
<td>Peer evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of Purpose</td>
<td><em>Service Learning</em>: Community work</td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cummins’ (2009) Nested Pedagogical Orientations

Cummins (2009b, 2004; Skourtou, Kourtis Kazoullis & Cummins, 2006; Cummins, Early & Stille, 2011) presents three broad orientations to pedagogy: transmission, social constructivist, and transformative. Though these three orientations to pedagogy were developed mainly with educating culturally and linguistically diverse learners in mind, they have very close parallels with the 3T Model discussed above. In this formulation, the three pedagogies are nested within each other such that they are understood as interconnected and codependent rather than isolated from each other.

![Figure 9: Nested Pedagogical Orientations (Cummins, 2009b)](image)

Transmission-oriented pedagogy, located at the center of the nest and occupying a small space, has the narrowest focus. Its aim is to transmit information and skills directly to students. This is similar to what Freire (1970) calls “the banking model” of pedagogy (i.e., teachers simply “deposit” knowledge into their students’ “empty” minds as one would deposit money into a bank account). Although the importance of activating students’ prior knowledge might be acknowledged by teachers who follow this approach, in practice, transmission-oriented pedagogy takes the form of revisiting prior lessons and activating students’ knowledge about content they have previously learned. Exclusive reliance on a transmission approach, Cummins argues, would promote memorization rather than deep and active learning.
Social constructivist pedagogy, occupying a broader pedagogical space in Cummins’ nest, is located between transmission and transformative pedagogies. While acknowledging the importance of transmitting knowledge, constructivist pedagogy additionally focuses on “the development of higher order thinking abilities as teachers and students co-construct knowledge and understanding” (Cummins, 2009b, p. 5). In this orientation, there is a focus on experiential learning, collaborative inquiry, and knowledge building. The importance of enabling students to take an active role in the learning process is emphasized.

Finally, the transformative approach to pedagogy is located in the outermost layer of the pedagogical nest, broadening the educational focus even further. It highlights the importance not only of transmitting the curriculum and constructing knowledge, but additionally, and most importantly, of enabling students to “gain insights into how knowledge intersects with power” (Cummins, 2009b, p. 6). In practice, students engage with materials and undertake discussions with the purpose of identifying the types of social action they can take to change their own and others’ social realities. Transformative pedagogy, attentive especially to issues of equity and justice, thus enables students to challenge existing power relations in society. It builds on both the transmission and social constructivist pedagogy approaches to include a wide and rich variety of pedagogical, educational, and sociopolitical goals. For teachers to be transformative intellectuals, teacher education needs to have a greater emphasis on transformative orientations to pedagogy.

Both the 3T Model (Miller & Seller, 1990) and Nested Pedagogical Orientations (Cummins, 2009b) help us understand the nature of the curricular opportunities that are available TCs in my study and the affordances that would allow them to develop the skills and the knowledge to become transformative intellectuals.

**Transformative Approaches to Pedagogy**

To further our understanding of how teacher education can facilitate prospective teachers to be active agents of change, I draw from Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) approaches, both of which align closely with the major tenets of transformative pedagogy. Both these approaches focus on lessening social inequalities through education. They are valuable theoretical lenses with which to analyze the negative face of
education and they provide important lessons for making education more inclusive and peaceful. In tandem with transformative pedagogy, both SJTE and CRP focus on transformation.

Teacher identity is another salient aspect of transformative pedagogy. Within transformative approaches to pedagogy, teachers are identified as key agents of change (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Enns & Sinacore, 2005; Giroux, 2009; Grant & Augusto, 2008; Howard, 2003). Thus, I discuss the notion of teachers as transformative intellectuals to understand how their multiple identities can shape their learning experiences.

Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE)

Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE) aims to provide socioculturally diverse students equal access to educational resources regardless of their differences and personal circumstances (Cochran-Smith, 1995, 1999, 2004; McDonald, 2005; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner, 2009, 2011). Teaching for social justice can help create citizens who are committed to social justice, who, in turn, can promote justice and peace in the wider society. Conversely, the lack of a social justice agenda in teaching and learning processes can bring about social injustices and conflicts within the larger society.

However, it is because of this strong political agenda in SJTE that critics such as Will (2006), MacDonald (1998) and Stern (2009) have argued that the progressive political ideas in social justice education work to the detriment of genuine knowledge. The understanding is, that the focus on political ideas and social justice can divert the time and focus on what is perceived as not relevant to the curricula. Nevertheless, Tawil and Harley (2004) argue for the need for social justice education within a post-conflict context, stating that an “apolitical education” fails to acknowledge ethnic conflicts that are present in educational settings as well as the larger society. Therefore, a strong political agenda needs to be built into education. This is justly so in relation to Sri Lankan education which is innately political and cannot be viewed in isolation from its post-conflict context. A greater emphasis on social justice within classrooms and in wider school communities is essential to improving interethnic relations in the country.

While SJTE draws from various aspects of social reconstructionist, multicultural, antiracist, bilingual and inclusive education, it is distinguished from these approaches in its attempt to bring
about broad-scale social change in the social, economic, political and educational spheres of society (Kailin, 2002; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner, 2011). As Zeichner (2011) states:

* SJTE aims to respond to preparing teachers to teach in ways that contribute to a lessening of the inequalities that exist in school systems throughout the world between children of the poor and children of the middle and wealthy classes, and the injustices that exist in societies beyond systems of schools - in access to shelter, food, healthcare, transportation, access to meaningful work that pays a living wage, and so on. (p. 7)

Therefore, Conklin (2008) and Zeichner (2011) argue that Teacher Educators working within an SJTE framework should also model the same kind of inclusive and understanding attitudes that they hope their Teacher Candidates (TCs) will assume in their primary and secondary classrooms. Teachers having inclusive mindsets is key in post-conflict reconciliation. Villegas and Lucas (2004) argue that teacher education programs need to implement admission policies that screen applicants on the basis of a variety of factors, such as their commitment to teach all students and their ability to draw on personal and social identity characteristics related to intercultural teaching competence.

The existing literature on SJTE sets forth five major themes relevant to my study: 1) connecting schools with communities; 2) teachers as agents of change; 3) curricula that raise teachers’ awareness; 4) critical reflection and action research; and 5) developing inclusive idealisms and attitudes. Each of these themes is described briefly below.

**Connecting Schools with Communities:**

As Hawkins (2011) states, SJTE should aim to permeate classroom walls in order to reach out to families, community members, and community organizations, etc. Drawing on research on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies that intend to address inequalities between what learners bring to school and what they need to succeed in school (De Jong & Harper, 2005; Gibbons, 2002; Gonzalez, et al., 2005; Hawkins, 2010; Richards, et al., (2007); Valdes, 1998; Villegas & Lucas, 2007), Hawkins (2011b) lists how teachers can assist learners to bridge such differences in equitable and caring ways:

- Acknowledging, valuing, recruiting and building on what students know and bring
- Focusing on effective classroom participation structures
- Engaging students in authentic, collaborative tasks with appropriate scaffolding
- Connecting the worlds of school and home
- Understanding the interconnections between languages, literacies, cultures and the construction of identities
- Valuing, supporting and utilizing students’ home languages
- Exploring teachers’ own beliefs, attitudes, and values.

In order to make new teachers more aware of the realities of communities that are different from their own, they can be given cultural immersion experiences in which they live in culturally different communities. This experience can then be carefully monitored and analysed to help teachers develop a deeper understanding of students from other communities. Teachers need to function as role models, cultural brokers, and cultural agents (Gay, 1993; Goodwin, 2000) who help students to bridge the home-school gap. As Mahan (1982) proposes, noncertified adults from different communities can be used as paid Teacher Educators to provide new teachers cultural and social knowledge.

**Teachers as Agents of Change:**

Teachers’ agency is at the forefront of SJTE. The teacher is a role model for tolerant behavior and interactions in the classroom (Bretheron, 2003). In order to become educators who work toward social justice, teacher education programs need to help prospective teachers develop a clearer sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities, social location and knowledge of how power and privilege operate in their societies (Marx, 2006). This would include helping prospective teachers deeply examine their own attitudes and assumptions about those who are different from themselves (Banks, et al., 2005).

While SJTE aligns itself closely with “critical” language teacher education (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Norton, 2005) in its focus on how societal inequalities based on differences such as race, ethnicity, class, language and gender lead to inequitable distribution of resources and access to education, SJTE “highlights teachers’ responsibility to serve as agents of social change” (Hawkins, 2011a, p. 2). The focus of SJTE is thus on the teachers and their responsibilities toward diverse learners. SJTE redefines the role of teachers as agents of change (Hawkins, 2011a), transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 2009), and democratic coordinators who adopt learner-centered participatory teaching methods (Howard, 2003; Bretheron, et al., 2003; Balasooriya, 2007; Bar-Tal, 2002; Shor, 1993; Freire, 1974; Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Colenso,
Collaboration, dialogue, reflection and working to empower and legitimize teachers, while recognizing the tensions of working within larger societal and institutional power structures, are central to SJTE (Hawkins, 2011a).

Zeichner (2011) argues that in its attempt to help bring about broad-scale social change in the social, economic, political, and educational spheres of society, SJTE calls for the recruitment of a more diverse teaching force. These teachers need to be able to go beyond the celebration of diversity so that they are able and willing to work within and outside of their classrooms to change the inequalities that exist in both schooling and the wider society (McDonald & Zeichner, 2009). To ensure this activism takes place, teacher education programs need to create opportunities for interaction with other cultures as opposed to simply studying about cultures. Teachers who work toward bringing about social justice need to be able to take on leadership roles and reconstruct the educational landscapes they are working within in order to create greater equity in opportunities and outcomes among students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds (Zeichner, 2011). This recognition of teachers’ autonomy is close to Dickinson’s (2010) notion of a teacher as a judge, where teachers’ freedom to make decisions about their learners’ needs and environment is recognized. SJTE recognizes teachers’ “professional authority” (Kyeyune, 1991, p. 86) to make change.

Curricula that Raise Teachers' Awareness:

As Clarke and Morgan (2011) discuss, in order to prepare teachers who actively work toward social justice, teacher preparation programs need to adopt curricula that seek to raise teachers’ awareness of racism, sexism, homophobia, economic and environmental exploitation and the ways in which these factors influence pedagogy and constrain students’ life chances beyond the classroom. Such curricula would not present “knowledge as objective and atomized, something that can be transmitted unchanged and parcel-like from one direct individual mind to another” (p. 66). Instead, it would recognize “the partial, situated and dialogic nature of knowledge, emphasizing how it is always co-implicated in relations of power as different parties contest the right to define reality and society” (p. 67). Moreover, as Hawkins (2011b) argues, the curriculum in SJTE cannot be prescriptive and the teachers cannot follow a scripted curriculum. On the
contrary, teachers need to devise ways to become immersed in community building and social change.

Curricula that seek to raise greater awareness about social inequalities and injustices also need to help new teachers build higher expectations from all students (Zeichner, 1996). New teachers also need to be taught how to learn about their students’ families and communities and how to translate this knowledge into culturally responsive and inclusive teaching practices (Lucas, 2005). In order to make these curricular changes a reality, they cannot be simply limited to the classroom. Instead, notions of inclusivity and commitment to diversity need to be incorporated into the program and, more broadly, at an institutional level (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Curricular changes need to adopt an integrative and whole-school approach in which each subject and the whole school pursue peace and social justice (Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Lopes Cardoso & May, 2009; Kodituwakku, 2006). Recruiting, supporting, and retaining more diverse teacher education faculty can be one way of making this pursuit a reality (Zeichner, 1999).

Critical Reflection and Action Research:

The SJTE agenda stresses the importance of cultivating a culture of critical inquiry and action research skills that would empower Teacher Educators and prospective teachers to not only understand the varied needs of their learners but also help them respond creatively and satisfactorily with professional authority (Kyeyune, 2011; Toohey & Waterstone, 2011). Giroux (2009) stresses the importance of critical reflection and the need for honest learning environments where teachers and students can reflect critically on how knowledge is co-constructed through interaction. Critical reflection thus contributes to a more realistic and broader worldview (Bar-Tal, 2002).

In a post-conflict context like Sri Lanka, the conflict itself needs to be discussed critically. In her Approaches to Teaching about War Davies (2005a) develops a typology of ten modes of teaching about war. She looks at the direct and deliberate ways teachers and schools teach or don’t teach about conflict, and which of these are likely to be negative and which can contribute to peace. As Figure 10 shows, she proposes a range from processes that are more likely to increase conflict, through neutral or passive stances to those acting to challenge war through
positive and active learning approaches. These approaches range from focusing on the hate curriculum that promotes war to encouraging students to actively challenge violence.

![Diagram of active and passive approaches to teaching about war]

**Figure 10: Ten Approaches to Teaching about War (Davies, 2006)**

In the following section, I will discuss each of the 10 approaches briefly:

**The denigration or ‘hate’ curriculum:** Usually in textbooks when the enemy is described in graphic and denigrating terms and one’s own nation is portrayed as heroic.

**The ‘defence’ curriculum:** Conflict is seen as a constant threat and students are taught how to defend themselves physically against the enemy.

**National and transnational stereotypes and allegiances:** War and conflict are taught not as hating or fearing the enemy, but as a result of stereotypical cultural which permeates everyone in that country.

**War as routine (part of a continuous past):** There is emphasis on understanding the causes of war, and this may be viewed objectively from both sides. Yes, war maybe presented as a series of inevitable events with little distinction between them.

**Omission:** The conflict is played down or not mentioned in order not to ‘inflame’ or ‘cement’ attitudes.
**Tolerance:** There is emphasis on tolerating the other. This would most often happen in a multicultural setting in order to promote harmony.

**Conflict resolution techniques:** The conflict is acknowledged and the need for young people to have skills and strategies to deal with this in their lives is identified. Some of the techniques include: conflict prevention, negotiation and bargaining, mediation, arbitration, anger management, consensus seeking and restorative justice.

**Education for humanitarian law:** This is specific project that explores ethical issues related to human behaviour in times of armed conflict and war. It consists of modules that focus on the role of citizenship and the need to demilitarize youth and reverse the culture of violence.

**Dialogue and encounter:** differences are recognized and there is an attempt to bring people of traditionally opposing sides to share perceptions, experiences and emotions. This involves greater risks.

**Active challenge to violence and experiential learning about conflict:** Involves conflict resolution as well as learning about issues such as the arms trade and the encouragement to take an active role in campaigns. Teachers model resistance to violence and demonstrate how to use their agency. Here the role of imagination plays a role in engaging young people to rationally and emotionally envision an ideal future society.

In the wake of an ethnic conflict, teacher education needs to encourage teachers to critically reflect in the classroom on taboo topics such as ethnicity, discrimination, and violence. Davies’ Approaches to Teaching about War can facilitate that discussion. She highlights the need and the importance of discussing war in school. Moreover, in such discussions, teachers need to be made aware of and sensitive toward which ethnic aspects to take into account or ignore in order to avoid reductive or stereotypical practices (Howard 2003; Cochran-Smith, et al., 2009b).

Action research, which is critical, political, and emancipatory (Freire, 1998), can assist a teacher to reflect on what is unsatisfactory within a curriculum, program, or the broader society and motivate her to go on to bring about change. Alternatively, the teacher can change directly the way they are teaching and then go on to bring about change (Elliott, 2003). Critical inquiry in teacher education should consist of praxis that makes a genuine effort to critique the existing
status quo (Lather, 1991) and help teachers develop reflective practices (Rodgers, 2002) that enable them to reflect on issues of power and authority. Such practices nurture a culture of reflective inquiry and encourage teachers to take on curriculum leadership (Henderson & Gornik, 2007).

**Developing Inclusive Idealisms and Attitudes:**

In order for social justice education for peace to be realized, teachers and students alike need to develop inclusive idealisms and attitudes. Teachers need to create classroom environments that help students foster such attitudes and mindsets. Weldon (2010) argues for the need for teachers in countries emerging out of war to help with the development of “mutual understanding” between opposing ethnic communities. This idea can be linked to Freire’s (2009) notion of recognition. Said (2000) argues for the importance of the teacher’s role in helping students challenge their stereotypical beliefs about the “other” by making them understand that ethnic identity is a social construct that can be shaped and changed over time. He stresses the importance of focusing on the similarities rather than the differences between and among individuals and groups. There are similarities here to Giroux’s (1992) notion of “border pedagogy,” which encourages teachers and students to re-territorialize their own ethnic borders to include rather than exclude others. Such attitudes will help teachers embrace multiple and hybrid identities in themselves and in others as well (UNESCO, 2011).

Another attitude that helps promote social justice is civic consciousness. It helps teachers develop certain idealisms about the future of their community and build a level of civic courage that extends beyond the classroom to the larger society (Davies, 2005a; Giroux, 1992). In contrast to traditional education that keeps social and political issues outside the classroom, teachers for social justice need to play an active role in conveying the importance of democratic values, civic duties, and human rights. They also need to present the social and political issues
their countries are facing in a manner that is comprehensive to their students (Lopes & Cardoso, 2009). Community building projects can promote civic consciousness and provide opportunities for teachers and students to take leadership in promoting wider community involvement (Balasooriya, 2007). Getting the wider society involved in such projects can broaden the reach of social justice work and add to its success (Bretheron, et al., 2003). This is important as effective and long-term reform requires changes in the wider society.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is a term created by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) to describe “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 17). CRP means that teachers create a bridge between students’ home and school lives, while still meeting the expectations of the district and state curricular requirements. CRP utilizes the backgrounds, knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences of students to inform the teacher’s lessons and methodology (Gay, 2000, 2002).

Although this framework is based on the diversity that exists in American schools and focuses on the success of African American children, many components of it are relevant to analyzing the Sri Lankan context. CRP sheds light on analyzing the manner in which Sri Lankan TCs and TEs perceive diversity and their responsibilities toward diverse learners. It also helps us make sense of the strategies TCs and TEs use to accommodate diversity and promote learning, the expectations TCs have for diverse learners, and how diversity is addressed overtly and covertly in the formal, symbolic and societal curricula.

There are four main components within the CRP approach that are of particular value for my study: 1) developing a cultural diversity knowledge base; 2) designing culturally relevant curricula; 3) building culturally caring learning communities; and 4) developing a critical consciousness. A brief description of each of these components follows.
Developing a Cultural Diversity Knowledge base:

Gay (2002), who uses the term Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, defines CRP as, “Using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (p. 106). In her view, teachers need to encourage students to maintain their “cultural integrity.” Culture needs to be used as a vehicle for learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). The underlying assumption is that when academic instruction is situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, their academic achievement can improve. The first major premise underlying the framework is that in order to promote cultural awareness, teacher education programs need to develop a cultural diversity knowledge base in their curricula that provides their candidates explicit knowledge about the characteristics of various groups that exist in society. Multiculturalism needs to be woven into teacher preparation programs and classroom instruction in schools. In a context like Sri Lanka, where education is deeply rooted in the culture (religion and language) of the learners, the cultural diversity knowledge base needs to extend to other cultures as well. Other cultures need to be used as a vehicle for teaching and learning.

Designing Culturally Relevant Curricula:

Secondly, teachers need to be able to convert their knowledge of diverse cultures into culturally relevant curriculum designs and instructional strategies. Gay (2002) identifies three kinds of curricula that are present in classrooms that offer teachers different opportunities to teach cultural diversity. The first, the formal curriculum, consists of instruction approved by policy and governing bodies of a country’s educational system. Curriculum is enacted in classrooms through textbooks and other curriculum guidelines such as standards. Although these materials might not be sensitive to the treatments of diversity, culturally responsive teachers know how to determine the strengths and weaknesses of curriculum designs and instructional materials and make necessary changes to make their teaching more inclusive. This view assists my analysis of both the formal curriculum used in teachers’ colleges in Sri Lanka and the ways teachers adapt the curriculum to make their teaching relevant to all groups of students.

The second type of curriculum Gay identifies is called the symbolic curriculum (Gay, 1995). It includes images, symbols, icons, mottoes, awards, celebrations, bulletin board decorations, rules
and regulations, tokens of achievement and various other “artifacts that are used to teach students knowledge, skills, morals, and values” (Gay, 2002, p. 108). Classroom walls are important spaces that teach lasting and valuable lessons to students. Over time, students come to value what symbols are present in the environment around them and devalue the symbols that are absent. Culturally responsive teachers are critically conscious of the power of the symbolic curriculum and how it can be a valuable teaching and learning tool for conveying important information about social and cultural diversity. This view provides a lens through which we can understand how Sri Lankan TCs and TEs use the symbolic curriculum to promote diversity outside of formal instruction. As I will discuss in Chapter 7, in my three research sites, there was a robust symbolic curriculum that included various multicultural aspects.

The third type of curriculum Gay identifies is what Cortes (2000) calls the societal curriculum. This includes the knowledge, ideas and impressions about various social and cultural groups that are portrayed in the mass media. The messages that are transmitted by the mass media are too influential for teachers to overlook in their classes. Therefore, CRP includes a critical analysis of the manner in which various ethnic groups are represented in the mass media and the popular culture. The notions of symbolic and societal curricula will also be used in my analysis of the classroom observations I conducted in the NCOE teachers’ colleges and the practicum sites of the participating Teacher Candidates. Both notions enabled me to understand how TCs and TEs use classroom and the wider school building space to introduce and promote learning.

Building Culturally Caring Learning Communities:

The next important component of CRP that is relevant to my study is what Gay refers to as “demonstrating culturally sensitive caring and building culturally responsive learning communities” (Gay, 2002, p. 109). The notion of caring in CRP is action-oriented and it requires that teachers have high expectations of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. In order to ensure these high expectations, which, in turn, promote high levels of achievement, teachers need to use imaginative strategies in their teaching. Culturally responsive teachers need to genuinely believe in the potential of culturally diverse learners and their responsibility to facilitate culturally relevant teaching without ignoring, demeaning or neglecting students’ social and cultural identities. This view helps to understand teachers’ expectations about low-achieving
students and the kinds of instructional action they take or don’t take to promote students’ learning. Bringing this view into my study provides us with a more robust understanding of TCs’ own notions of their responsibilities toward culturally and linguistically diverse learners and how they transform into practice.

Developing a Critical Consciousness:

Ladson-Billings (1995b) contends that culturally relevant teachers “engage in the world and others critically.” In order to do this, she says, “students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities (p. 162). Ladson-Billings suggests that providing opportunities for students to critique society may encourage them to change oppressive structures. Drawing from her own experiences, Ladson-Billings states that instead of focusing on the fact that textbooks are out of date and unrepresentative of many of the cultural backgrounds of students in the classroom, teachers can help students look critically at the “knowledge represented in the textbooks, and the system of inequitable funding that allowed middle-class students to have newer texts” (1995b, p. 162). She also proposes that teachers bring in articles and resources that represent knowledge that supplements what is presented in textbooks.

Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

Critical pedagogists and proponents of transformative approaches to pedagogy identify teachers as transformative intellectuals and assume teaching to be an intellectual practice (Auerbach, 1995; Benesch, 2001; Giroux, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; McLaren, 1995; Motha, 2014; Pennycook, 2001, Simon, 1987). Such an understanding assumes that it is through the intellectual engagement of teachers that change can take place. Therefore, research on teacher education needs to come to full terms with teacher agency and the power of teachers to make changes. As Giroux (1988) points out, by referring to teachers as transformative intellectuals, we rethink and restructure the nature of teacher work. He points out the importance of the category “intellectual”:

First, it provides a theoretical basis for examining teacher work as a form of intellectual labour, as opposed to defining it in purely instrumental or technical terms. Second, it clarifies the kinds of ideological and practical conditions necessary
for teachers to function as intellectuals. Third, it helps to make clear the role teachers play in producing and legitimizing various political, economic and social interests through the pedagogies they utilize. (p. 125)

Motha (2014), who also views teachers as transformative intellectuals, sees them additionally as theorists who are knowledgeable and sensitive analysts of their own work. She points out that teacher education programs need to support new teachers to shape and craft their emergent transformative practices. When teachers are viewed as transformative intellectuals, their role is recognized as being in tune with their social, political and historical realities. This perspective aligns with an approach in which the teacher’s role extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and skills in the classroom to a broader, more inclusive vision of the whole socioeducational process.

In post-conflict contexts, the teacher’s responsibility further involves bringing together estranged communities and fostering intercultural awareness. Teachers should not keep other cultures and cultural knowledge outside of their classes. Instead, they need to integrate these elements into the instruction they provide. As I discussed in Chapter 2, religion and language are integral parts of Sri Lankan education. Therefore, teachers need to make space within their instructional practices to bring in topics relevant to other cultures and get students to talk about them.

Understanding How Power Operates in Society and Shapes Learning Environments

Jim Cummins’ framework of coercive and collaborative relations of power and Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977; 1986; 2007) framework of different forms of capital are extremely useful for academics and professionals in the field of education. Both models enable us to understand how power and various kinds of capital operate in society to privilege some social groups over others. A deeper understanding of the unequal distribution of power, wealth and privilege is key in the process of creating more equitable learning environments.

Cummins’ (2001) Framework of Coercive and Collaborative Relations of Power

In this framework, Cummins’ (2001) discusses how coercive and collaborative relations of power manifested in macro-relations between dominant and subordinate groups of people are reflected in the micro-interactions between educators and students. Coercive relations of power
refer to dominant groups’ use of power to the detriment of subordinate groups. Coercion is a process through which dominant groups define subordinate groups as inferior and therefore automatically defining themselves as superior. Coercive relations of power are shaped by the use of language and “operate to maintain and legitimate the division of resources and status in the society” (Cummins, 2001, p.15). Such definitions and divisions, particularly in educational contexts, may result in educators having low expectations of their students, a situation which may, in turn, restrict the development and potential of students. Such an outlook invokes beliefs that Ryan (1972) termed “blaming the victim,” where the school failure of certain groups of people are attributed to purported intrinsic characteristics of the learners such as genetic inferiority, unsophisticated linguistic background, parental apathy, poverty, etc.

Collaborative power relations, on the other hand, can be generated at an interpersonal level. As Cummins (2001) explains:

Participants in the [collaborative] relationship are empowered through their collaboration such that each is more affirmed in her or his identity, and has a greater sense of efficacy to create change in his or her life or social situation. Thus power is created in the relationship and shared among participants. The power relationship is additive rather than subtractive. Power is created with others rather than being imposed on or exercised over others. (p. 16)

Within this framework, collaboration can result in the empowerment of students. Students who have experienced collaborative relations of power develop the confidence and the ability to succeed in school. The challenge in teaching diverse students lies in the shift from coercive to collaborative relations of power.

The framework also suggests that the power relations that operate in the wider society influence the ways in which educators define their roles. Role definition refers to “the mindset of expectations, assumptions and goals that educators bring to the task of educating culturally diverse learners” (ibid., p. 19). Understanding Cummins’ framework of coercive versus collaborative power relations is important for my study as it allows us to understand how Sri Lankan TCs and Teacher Educators define their roles in relation to diversity and how they envision their responsibilities toward diverse learners. The framework also allows us to understand the various strategies and scaffolds educators use in their classes to promote student
learning. Finally, the framework sheds light on the kind of power relations that are promoted in educational settings and the factors that shape them.

**Pierre Bourdieu’s Forms of Capital (1986)**

Schools and teacher preparation programs are a part of a larger social fabric. As Pennycook (2001) points out, contrary to the common understanding that education provides equal opportunities for all and that everyone receives equal treatment and reaches equal levels of success, schools are more the “agents of reproduction than of social change” (p. 121). Amid claims of equalization, schools are key social institutions that sustain and legitimate the existing social and political status quo (McLaren, 1986). Pierre Bourdieu’s forms of cultural capital (1977; 1986; 2007) provides a useful way of looking at power in terms of forms of capital that people have access to. His notion of cultural capital was first developed as a theoretical hypothesis to explain the differential school achievements among children from different social classes. His focus was with “specific profits which children from different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, [and] the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243).

Bourdieu (1986) posits three forms of capital: economic, social and cultural. Cultural capital itself takes three forms: embodied capital that is a part of *habitus*, objectified cultural capital and institutionalized cultural capital. Thus, for Bourdieu, economic capital is only one among other forms of capital. One’s access to material goods is related to the power and access they have to cultural, linguistic, social and symbolic capital. For all of the various forms to operate, they need to be accorded symbolic capital, or legitimacy. In his later work (1991), Bourdieu focuses more on symbolic and linguistic capital.
Chapter 5:
Research Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the methodology I employed in my study. The first part of the chapter provides a rationale for the use of a narrative case study approach and an explanation of how the prolonged data collection period and my residency in Sri Lanka, from 2011 – 2013, added a deeper and more critical ethnographic dimension to the study. In this section, I also position myself. In the second part of the chapter, I describe each of the three research sites, all of which are part of the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) system. In keeping with the name of the province the college is located in, each research site was given the following pseudonyms: Central College, Western College, and Northern College. The third section provides the research schedule. The fourth part of the chapter discusses the participants and how they were recruited. The fifth section elaborates on the methods and procedures I implemented for data collection and data analysis. The sixth section discusses how the data were analyzed. The seventh, eighth and ninth sections provide an overview of the ethical considerations surrounding this study.

Approach: The Narrative Case Study

This doctoral study adopts a qualitative research paradigm. In a metaphoric definition of qualitative research, Creswell (2013) describes qualitative research as,

…an intrinsic fabric composed of minute threads, many colours, different textures, and various blends of materials. This fabric is not explained easily or simply. Like the loom on which the fabric is woven, general assumptions and interpretive frameworks hold qualitative research together. (p. 42)

For Creswell, the researcher is an artist who creates a fabric of qualitative research. Aside from their differences, creative artists have the common task of making the fabric. In other words, while some foundations of qualitative research are common, qualitative research also allows a great degree of freedom and creativity for the researcher to create their own fabric or research project. This unique quality of qualitative research gave me the freedom of creativity and allowed me to use innovative approaches to generate rich, nuanced data.
While qualitative research provides the researcher the space to create their own fabric, it is also based on the premise that any phenomenon gains meaning within a socially situated context and is shaped by its history, relationships, assumptions and future trends. Qualitative research attempts to engage in the lives of the participants, their work and experiences (Hathaway, 1995; Merriam, 1988, 1998). In my exploration of how Teacher Educators (TEs) teach and how Teacher Candidates (TCs) learn to become teachers in a post-conflict context, the qualitative approach I adopted allowed me to engage actively in the research process instead of being detached and trying to explore neutrally their social realities and how those realities shape the lives of the participants.

Case Study

This study employs a narrative case study approach consistent with the research purpose and questions. As Yin (2006) states, the case study method is ideal when “research addresses descriptive or exploratory questions and aims to produce a firsthand understanding of people and events” (p. 112). Case studies are also ideal when the goal of the study is to seek an extensive, intensive and rich understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It allows the researcher to examine various dimensions of the research situation (Stake, 1995) and helps the researcher make direct observations and collect data in natural settings (Yin, 2006). In other words, case studies produce first-hand understandings of people and events (Yin, 2006). They are ideal when the focus of one’s research is to uncover peoples’ experiences (Yin, 1995).

Because the data collection took place in three teachers’ colleges, multiple case studies provided a platform for comparative analysis of the findings (Yin, 1989). Yin (2003) presents four types of case study research design: 1) the single-case study with one unit of analysis; 2) the single-case study with multiple units of analysis; 3) the multiple-case study with a single unit of analysis; and 4) the multiple-case study with multiple units of analysis. My study involves multiple contexts and multiple units of analysis such as TCs, TEs, and documents; thus, it falls into Yin’s fourth type.

Yin (2003) goes on to argue that multiple-case studies can provide compelling evidence of a phenomenon unlike single-case studies. Considering the exploratory nature of my study, the multiple-case study approach provided rich and multilayered insights into the plethora of
Teacher Candidates’ beliefs, experiences and expectations in relation to becoming teachers in the aftermath of a long-drawn war.

My two-year residency in Sri Lanka, the prolonged data collection period and my constant interactions with the participants added a complex ethnographic dimension to my narrative case study. As Johnson (1992) states, an ethnographer is an observer who stays on the scene for over a year to learn about the community. The centrality of the cultural context in my study aligns it closely with ethnographic research. In highlighting the main characteristics of ethnographic research, Johnson identifies the cultural emphasis of ethnographic work, and the group focus: “The ethnographer studies the cultural system of a group and provides a rich description and cultural interpretation of communicative and other behaviour, attitudes and values” (Johnson, 1992, p.134). Another key feature of ethnography lies in its focus on the group rather than on the individual. Moreover, ethnographers study the phenomena “in their natural state and as unobtrusively as possible” (p. 134). In an ethnography, the researcher conducts extensive observations while being immersed in the lives of the participants (Creswell, 2013). My field visits, the fact of my being a resident of Sri Lanka for two years, and my focus on the cultural dynamics of the Teacher Candidate communities was in keeping with ethnographic research.

**Narrative Inquiry**

The case study approach used in this study consists of a narrative dimension. The use of narrative inquiry provides rich data that cannot be gathered from other forms of data collection such as questionnaires, experiments, or observations. Moreover, the uniqueness of one’s own personal narrative as a researcher and that of each of the participants in a study manifests rich data. This data can be analyzed in myriad directions, with the analytical focus placed on narrative contents, structure, style of speech, affective characteristics, motives, attitudes and beliefs of the narrator, or his or her cognitive level (Lieblich, et al., 1998). Polkinghorne (1988) claims that narrative is the “primary form by which human experience is made meaningful” (p. 1). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) reiterate that, “stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell of our experience” (p. 415). Participants’ narratives give rich insights into their own experiences that researchers are not able to get at otherwise.
Another strength of narrative inquiry is that it provides an emic, or insider, perspective. In narrative inquiry, the “participants construct stories that support their interpretations of themselves” (Bell, 2002, p. 209). A number of educational scholars whose focus is on teacher knowledge have made narrative a central element in their research (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 2000; Doyle, 1997; Elbaz-Luwisch, 1997). Clandinin and Connelly (1995) use teachers’ life histories to understand the development of “professional knowledge landscapes.” Canagarajah (1996) argues that narrative forms of inquiry function in opposition to elite forms of scholarly discourse and offer an opportunity for marginalized groups to make their voices heard and also participate in knowledge construction. This study includes life history narratives of prospective teachers, Teacher Educators and my own narrative.

Narrating the Self

Almost two decades ago, Canagarajah (1996) wrote a seminal paper about the value reporting qualitative research in language education. He stated:

For all practical purposes, the researcher is absent from the report, looming behind the text as an omniscient, transcendental, all-knowing figure. This convention hides the manner in which the subjectivity of the researchers – with their complex values, ideologies and experiences – shape the research activity and findings. In turn, how the research activity shapes the researchers’ subjectivity is not explored – even though research activity can sometimes profoundly affect the researchers’ sense of the world and themselves. (p.324)

In response to the issues raised by Canagarajah, Norton and Early (2011) use narrative inquiry to articulate and explore issues of researcher identity missing from the existing literature. They discuss the complex and multifaceted identities that emerge in contexts where outside researchers carry out research. Their study highlights the importance of exploring researchers’ identities, how these identities impact the research process, and how the research impacts the researcher. More recent work by me and colleague Marlon Valencia (Herath & Valencia, 2015) and Donato, et al. (2015) document the lived experiences of doctoral students as they struggle to develop emerging scholars’ identities.

To highlight how I negotiated multiple identities in Sri Lanka, a context where I was neither a complete insider nor a complete outsider, I used an ongoing journal, a multimodal identity text that documented multiple identities. My narrative is woven into the sections that follow to shed
light on how my identity impacted the data collection and analysis and how that process, in turn, shaped my multiple and shifting identities. Who I am, what I believe, and what experiences I have had, impact what, how and why I research. What may make these research revelations more problematic for me is my own membership in the dominant social, linguistic and ethnic group. In her research among African-American children, Ladson-Billings (1995) discusses how own her identity can work against her. She talks of the potential of facing the presumption of what Banks (1992) and Narayan, 1993) call a “native” perspective, as a member of one of the groups studied.

The questions raised by Narayan (1993) are relevant to the positioning of myself in my own study:

“Native” anthropologists then, are perceived as insiders regardless of their complex backgrounds. The differences between kinds of “native” anthropologists are also obviously passed over. Can a person from an impoverished American minority background, who despite all prejudices, manages to get an education and study her own community be equated with a member of a Third World elite group who, backed by excellent schooling and parental funds, studies anthropology abroad, yet returns home for fieldwork among the less privileged? Is it not insensitive to suppose the issue of location, acknowledging that a scholar who chooses an institutional base in the Third World might have a different engagement with Western-based theories, books, political stances, and technologies of written production? Is a middle-class white professional researching aspects of her own society also a “native” anthropologist? (p. 677)

The location of myself as a member of the socially and politically dominant Sinhalese Buddhist community can result in my work being perceived as biased. Thus I maintained a journal that documented the multiple and changing identities that were assigned to me, or those that I assumed. The process of documenting allowed me to reflect constantly on my identity and how it was being played out during the data collection and analysis stages (see Herath & Valencia, 2015)

Positioning: Neither a “Complete Insider” Nor a “Complete Outsider”

I was born and raised in Sri Lanka. Most of my education was undertaken in Sri Lanka and I also worked there as a teenager. I moved to Toronto in 2006 to live and then to attend graduate school. When I returned to Sri Lanka in 2011 for
my data collection, I was returning to my large, extended family and friends and to the “home” I had left years previously.

As someone who had grown up in the Sri Lankan context, knew the language, the cultures, the people and how to get around and get things done, I was an insider. Yet, my years of absence, my personal growth as a graduate student and a teacher, and most importantly, my affiliation to the University of Toronto looked on by the Sri Lankan school system as an elite institution made me an outsider.

During one of my interviews, one of my participants asked me, “Are you Canadian?” Although this question would not have surprised me in any other context, at that point my first reaction was surprise. Why would anybody think I was Canadian when I looked Sri Lankan, had a Sri Lankan name, and spoke a local language fluently? I was dressed the way Sri Lankan women dress in professional contexts. I could relate to most of the things my participants said. I had a home and a family in Sri Lanka. And I was able to get most of my data collection done because of my many local connections.

I perceived myself as having all it takes to be Sri Lankan. Being asked if I was a Canadian made me think about who I was and my identity. I went into the research site with a fixed identity as a Sri Lankan. For me, there was no question about that. But the research journey made me realize that identity is not all that straightforward. It’s not simply what I perceived or how I wanted others to perceive me. Rather, insider-outsider identity is much more complex and multifaceted.
The Three Research Sites: Central College, Western College, and Northern College

Compared to other research methods, the case study method has the ability to “examine, in-depth, a ‘case’ within its “real-life context” (Yin (2006). To gain rich, contextual understanding, the participants were studied within their natural settings (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), the National Colleges Of Education (NCOE). My goal was to maximize the “ecological validity” of the study, or the ability to interpret the results in the natural context (Duff, 2008). Each NCOE functioned as a case study site. Having multiple cases assisted me in strengthening the findings of the entire study (Yin, 2006).

All three NCOEs that prepare English language teachers in Sri Lanka—Central College, Western College, and Northern College – are included in this study as they all follow the same national curriculum but are located in different geographical regions. Because the student populations, Teacher Educators, educational cultures, and teaching contexts vary, each college offers quite distinct and varied perspectives. Due to the demographic distribution and the history of the country, each NCOE attracts a different social, ethnic and linguistic group of learners.
Central College (CC)

Central College (CC) is located in a small village just outside of the city of Kandy, the city that I grew up in. As the name of the college suggests, Central College is located in the Central Province of Sri Lanka and is located in hill country. In addition to preparing English language teachers, Central College also prepares Second National Language (Sinhala and Tamil) and Western Music teachers. At the time of my study, most of the students in this college were from the Central Province, but there were also Muslim students from the eastern parts of Sri Lanka. This is a multicultural college that has students from all sociocultural backgrounds.
Just like most other NCOE, Central College is also located outside of a big city. It is connected to the city by a small road and is located in a land mass covered in a lot of greenery. The classrooms, library, administrative buildings, sports facilities and student and staff residences are spread throughout the massive compound. The college compound is well maintained with sculptures, murals, and paintings by students. The college also maintains a beautiful garden where they grow flowers, fruit and vegetables. One important thing I noticed is that all TCs in this NCOE had uniforms for different occasions.

Figure 12: Entrance to Central College
Western College (WC)

My visits to Western College were always day trips. This college was about a two-hour drive from Colombo. During the data collection period, my family (husband and daughter and parents) and I lived in Colombo. Visiting Western College was relatively easier for me than visiting the other two colleges. Unlike the two other NCOE that prepare teachers to teach various subjects, Western College is uniquely for English teachers. Until recently, it was the sole college that prepared English teachers. During my fieldwork, the Teacher Candidates at this college came from various parts of the country and they consisted of all ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. The general belief was that this college was the one that attracted the best students.

Similar to Central College, Western College is also located outside of a big city, in a small rural town. You have to drive for about two miles from the main road to reach Western College. It is also located in a large green space with the classrooms, administrative buildings, playground and other sports facilities, and teachers’ and students’ residences spread across the compound. Many of my participants often complained about the amount of walking they had to do to get from one place to another. During my many visits, I also spent quite some time going from one place to another. Many of us who traversed the campus carried umbrellas to shield ourselves from the heat of the sun and avoid getting sun burned.

Figure 13: Academic Buildings in Western College
Northern College (NC)

My trip to Northern College (NC) and my data collection there was the highlight of my research. NC is located in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, a predominantly Tamil province of the country. Since the war ended in 2009, there had been greater mobility between the north and the rest of Sri Lanka. If the war had been ongoing while I was doing my research, data collection in NC would not have been possible for me and the focus of the study would have been quite different. My single visit to NC not only gave me insights into the lives of emerging English language teachers, but also to the destruction that had resulted from years of fighting, as well as the living conditions of the people who had continued to live amidst a war. Many people were experiencing the return of electricity, running water and Internet access for the first time in years.

The trip to NC took almost a day’s drive. As we drove further away from Colombo, the condition of the roads became progressively worse, and, except for a few big cities, we were mostly passing through small villages in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. As we drove further north, the landscape changed and the weather was much hotter and drier. What I noticed all along the way was the amount of road construction that was going on. One of the main agendas of the present government has been to develop infrastructure and a good road system that connects the country together. The city of Jaffna, the capital city in the Northern Province, is a busy city with a lot of commercial activity. However, I could not help noticing how poorly developed this city was. It reminded me of a city in southern Sri Lanka in the 1980s. I felt the city was frozen in time.

The majority of the students in NC are Tamil and live in or around Jaffna. Since the end of the war, more and more Muslim students from the Eastern Province and North-Western Province have been present. However, there were no Sinhalese students or students from the southern parts of Sri Lanka in this college. Compared to the other colleges, the English teacher cohort was quite small. There were only 20 students in the focal cohort.
Research Schedule

The research took place in five stages over three years in Canada and Sri Lanka. By the time I started my data collection, the prospective participants were already in their internship schools. Therefore, I visited each TC in their respective schools. Although this prolonged the data collection period, visiting local schools gave me a deeper understanding of local schools and the professional contexts my participants were working in.
Table 10: January- Research Schedule

**Stage 1: January – August 2011 (Canada)**

1. Completed my doctoral comprehensive examination.
2. Prepared my doctoral research proposal.
3. Established connections with Teacher Educators and administrators from the three research sites.
4. Collected relevant documents.
5. Received feedback from my supervisor and committee.
6. Revised my research proposal by incorporating the changes recommended by the committee.

**Stage 2: September – December 2011 (Sri Lanka)**

7. Relocated to Sri Lanka.
8. Collected further documents relevant for the study (e.g., curriculum documents, assignment schedules, government gazettes, and various studies done on the NCOE).
9. Visited and made contact with the administration and the English staff of WC, CC and NC.
10. Submitted my revised Ethical Review application to the IRB of the University of Toronto.
11. By December 2011, I received consent to commence the research.
12. Presented segments of my work at international conferences.

**Stage 3: January – July 2012 (Sri Lanka)**

1. Engaged in participant recruitment, scheduling and conducting interviews, conducting formal and informal observations, and assigning and collecting task sheets.
2. Traveled to three different provinces of the country for data collection in WC, CC and NC.
3. Undertook formal and informal observations and TE interviews.
4. TCs completed their identity portraits, mind maps, and rubrics with information about their internship schools and assignments.
5. Conducted follow-up interviews.
6. Presented segments of my work at international conferences.
Stage 4: August 2012 – June 2013 (Sri Lanka)
1. Transcribed interviews.
2. Conducted follow-up interviews and observations.
3. Proceeded with coding, data analysis and planning and writing up of the dissertation.
4. Presented segments of my work at international conferences.

Stage 5: July 2013 onwards (Canada)
5. Relocated to UofT Student Family Housing in Toronto.
6. Returned to work at the York University English Language Institute.
7. Continued analyzing data and writing up the dissertation.
8. Presented segments of my work and other ESL topics at North American conferences.

Participants

The research was informed primarily by a group of focal participants comprised of 12 Teacher Candidates (4 from each program). Their voices were complemented by a peripheral group of 16 Teacher Candidates and 9 Teacher Educators from the three teacher education programs, thus providing a rich understanding of how Sri Lankan English language teachers experience the process of becoming teachers. The TC participants were third (final) year TCs who were in the process of doing their one-year internship in a school. The TC participants were chosen to represent diversity in Sri Lankan education. The focal participants were chosen from the larger pool of TCs because they were representative of the larger group or they possessed unique characteristics that would shed light on my data analysis.

Participant Recruitment

I used a “strategic sampling” (Mason, 2002) method called “purposive sampling” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to screen my participants. According to Mason (2002), purposive sampling means “selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, theoretical position and analytical framework, your analytical practice, and most importantly the argument or explanation that you are developing” (p. 124).
Participant recruitment took place in the third stage of my study. First, I got in touch with the Presidents of the three NCOE and got their consent to conduct the study in their colleges (see Appendix A for the information letter and consent form). At this point, the prospective participants were in the process of doing their internships. Once a month, all TCs who were doing their internships visited their colleges for professional development workshops and to meet their supervisors to discuss their research and projects. I had to visit each site on those days to recruit participants. As I had familiarized myself with the administration and the academic staff of the colleges, they were aware of my study and plans for recruiting participants. The TCs were given information letters (see Appendix B) and consent letters (see Appendix C). A flyer containing information about the study was also displayed on the notice boards (see Appendix D). Consenting TCs were given the Background Profile Questionnaires (see Appendix E).

The Teacher Educator (TE) recruitment took place during my visits to the research sites. As I got to know the TEs, I handed out information letters (see Appendix F) and consent letters (see Appendix G). Consenting TEs were given Background Profile Questionnaires (see Appendix H).

While I did visit NC on one occasion, it was not possible for me to make frequent visits there. Therefore, I requested two Teacher Educators to recruit participants for me from NC. When the TCs visited NC for professional development, they were briefed about my study. Ten TCs returned the consent forms and I was given the phone numbers of the consenting participants. I contacted them over the telephone and scheduled interviews for June. I traveled to Jaffna, where the NC is located, for the interviews and observations.

The TE participants for WC and CC were recruited during my many visits to those colleges. I distributed information letters to TEs from the English program. I also put up a notice on the notice board of the teachers’ room. Three TEs from WC, four from CC, and three from NC consented to taking part. All consenting TEs returned the consent form along with the Background Profile Questionnaire.

Teacher Candidates (TC)

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all participants were given pseudonyms. To simplify the identification of which college the TCs were from (i.e., Central, Western or Northern
College, TCs from Central College (CC) were given names beginning with the letter “C”; those from Western College (WC) were given names beginning with “W”; and those from Northern College (NC) were given names beginning with the letter “N.” As there were female and male TCs from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, they were given pseudonyms that reflected their social and cultural identity. Chapter 6 provides details collected from the Background Profile Questionnaires.

Western College was the most diverse of the three research sites in terms of participants. As this was exclusively an English teacher preparation college, there were about 300 TCs in each cohort and there was greater social and cultural diversity among them. Unlike those in the other two colleges, the TCs of WC were from various parts of the country, including three TCs from the predominantly Muslim areas in the eastern parts of Sri Lanka.

The participants of Central College also consisted of a socially and culturally diverse group of TCs who belonged to different ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. Although they came from different hometowns, they were located in close proximity to the Central Province, i.e., the province CC was located in. There were TCs from both urban and rural areas.

Given its location in a predominantly Tamil town in northern Sri Lanka, all the TCs in Northern College are Tamil speakers. The majority of the TCs from NC in my study were Tamil with a few being Muslims from the east of Sri Lanka. There were no Sinhalese TCs. The participating TCs from NC were relatively homogenous compared to the TCs of the other two colleges. They consisted of Tamil female TCs who spoke Tamil as their first language. The TCs’ identities will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

Teacher Educators (TE)

In addition to the TC participants, a small group of Teacher Educators (TEs) were also included in the study. The TEs who consented to being interviewed and observed were invited to take part in the study. They were instrumental in helping me with participant recruitment and ensuring that the participants returned their completed documentation and stayed involved in the study until the end of the data collection process. For easy identification, all TEs, irrespective of their affiliation, were given names beginning with T for Teacher Educator.
In CC and WC there were both male and female TEs. However, they were all Sinhalese and spoke Sinhalese as their first language. Except for Tina, all the TEs were Buddhist. In NC, all the TEs were Tamil males who spoke Tamil as their first language and were Hindu.
Table 11: Teacher Educators' Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>First language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>WC</td>
<td>51-55</td>
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Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection

Multiple data collection tools were used in this study for the purpose of triangulation. This approach assisted me in gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the issues I was planning to explore. As Yin (2006) states, it is important to “triangulate” or establish converging lines of evidence to make the findings as robust as possible” (p. 114). Triangulation works when three or more sources direct their responses toward the same set of events or facts (Yin, 2006). In addition to triangulating the perspectives of the TCs and the TEs, different data collection techniques (e.g., interviews, observations, document analysis, and tasks completed by the participants) were triangulated. This triangulation method, or “crystallization,” to use Richardson’s (1994) term, increased the internal validity of the study.

The following list identifies the multiple sources and instruments used in this study:

1. Background Profile Questionnaire for TCs (see Appendix E) and TEs (see Appendix I)
2. Semi-structured interviews with TCs (see Appendix K for first interview schedule and Appendix M for second interview schedule) and TEs (see Appendix N)
3. Picture descriptions of two students (see Appendix P) and picture descriptions of two classrooms (see Appendix M)
4. Identity portrait (see Appendix N)
5. Rubrics completed by TCs: Projects completed during the internship (see Appendix O) and information about Block Teaching schools and students (see Appendix P)
6. Mind map of diversity in Sri Lankan schools (see Appendix Q)
7. Follow-up interviews with selected TCs
8. Formal observations done by me in participating TE classes (see Appendix R for observation protocol)
9. Ongoing informal observations done by me in the three research sites (see Appendix S)
10. Symbolic curriculum observation guide (see Appendix T)
11. Document analysis

12. Student assignments

All the interviews, questionnaires, and the various tasks the TCs completed such as the identity portrait, minds, maps, rubrics, were conducted in English. As TCs were English language teachers, they were fluent in English. As a result, I did not have to use Sinhalese and Tamil with my participants.

Background Profile Questionnaire

The consenting Teacher Candidate and Teacher Educator participants were first asked to complete a Background Profile Questionnaire (see Appendix E for the Background Profile Questionnaire for TCs and Appendix H for the Background Profile Questionnaire for TEs). These questionnaires attempted to elicit basic biographical details, including age, gender, religion, ethnicity, languages spoken, hometown, and parents’ occupation. TE participants were asked about their work experience and academic qualifications. The questions that asked TCs about their hometowns and parents’ occupations were intended to determine their social class.

The purpose of the questionnaires was to get the participants to provide as much information as they could in the non-face-to-face environment and to familiarize them with their role in the data collection process. Data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed along with the interviews. All consenting TCs and TEs were asked to fill in the Background Profile Questionnaire prior to the interviews, so that I would have a better understanding of who they were. The TEs returned the questionnaires when I visited their colleges for observations; the TCs returned them when I visited their schools to conduct the interviews.

Semi-structured Interviews

The bulk of the data for this study came from qualitative interviews, or interviews that are in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured (Mason, 2002). All my interviews were face-to-face and recorded on my smart phone using an application called iTalk. As these interviews attempted to gain deep insights into participants’ experiences, they took the form of what Burgess (1984)
calls a conversation with a purpose. These conversations attempted to generate narrative-like responses.

Each participant was given the interview schedule in advance. They were also informed that they could talk to me in case they wanted to clarify any questions. The participants were told that the focus of the interview was not to judge their English language skills, but to get a deeper understanding of their experiences. At times when I felt the participants did not understand a question, I elaborated and explained it. At times, the participants’ responses led to answers to questions that I was already planning to ask later on in the interview.

The first interviews were scheduled in the TCs’ internship schools. The TCs informed me of dates and times they were available. On some occasions, several participants were scheduled for an interview on the same day. The participants selected quiet places where the interviews could be held. Each interview took approximately two hours.

**Observations**

Non-participant observations were conducted by me in two contexts: the NCOE and in participating Teacher Candidates’ practicum sites. These non-participant observations were fundamental as they provided me with an etic view of the TCs experiences in the program and served as a window into how Teacher Educators’ and Teacher Candidates’ beliefs translate into practice. As Adler and Adler (1994) recommend, I used these observations in conjunction with the interviews and the questionnaires.

I started the informal observation during my initial visits to the case study sites. Once I recruited the TE participants, I scheduled times to observe their classes. Observations were also conducted during the school visits. I made ongoing observation notes as I visited TCs in their internship schools.

I continued to make informal observations in the CC and WC to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the three teacher preparation programs. I took field notes during all observations and used an observational protocol during formal observations to document the teachers’ and the students’ actions (see Appendix R). However, keeping in line with qualitative observation that is not bound by “predetermined categories of measurement or response, but are free to search for
concepts or categories that appear meaningful to subjects” (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 378), this observation protocol did not look for specific categories of behavior. Instead it looked for instances that addressed issues related to the research questions. I also observed the symbolic curriculum (Gay, 2002). In other words, I took note of how posters, information on bulletin boards, and various other artifacts were organized (see Appendix S).

Documents

The analysis of curriculum documents, course outlines, handbooks, policy documents, various research-based reports on the NCOE and government gazettes were viewed as relevant for this study. All three NCOE follow the same curriculum and also have the same recruitment criteria. However, each NCOE is located in a distinct geographical location, and therefore attracts a distinct group of students and academic and administrative staff. As a result, the cultural and institutional environments are different in each NCOE.

In addition to the formal documents listed above, I encouraged the participants to allow me to look at various assignments they had completed during the first two years of the program in the NCOE. These assignments included the projects they completed in their internships such as: School Profile, Child Studies Report, and Four Skills report. Participants also shared reports of the four projects they did during their internship and their action research projects.

Multimodal Identity Portraits

Multimodal approaches to the study of identity, such as language portraits, have been used in research on linguistic identities and language practices by Busch, et al. (2006) and Busch (2006, 2010). These studies emphasize the importance of visual representations in meaning-making processes in social life. In discussing how certain aspects of our lives cannot be verbalized but instead operate unconsciously, Busch (2010) notes:

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 space and simultaneity and requires attention to the ways in which the various components of the picture relate to each other. (p. 286)
Such representations, Busch (2010) argues, foreground the current situation of a particular research site rather than the past or the path that led to it.

To better understand how the TCs perceived their social and cultural identities, they were asked to complete an Identity Portrait (IP) by using a body silhouette. They were asked to use any medium (e.g., words, colours, pictures, cartoons, photographs, etc.) to represent the different elements of their sociocultural identities (such as language, religion, ethnicity, roles they played in society, etc.). The data in these IPs were used to complement other data generated through the interviews to understand how TCs perceived their identities. The TCs completed the IPs after the interviews. They used different media to depict their multiple identities and the practices they saw as related to their social and cultural identities. Some used a legend to identify their portraits, some named the portraits and some narrated their identity texts verbally or in writing.

These Identity Portraits were similar to what Cummins and Early (2011a) call identity texts, i.e., products of students’ creative work or performances that allow learners to invest their identities in their creations.

Tasks Completed by the Teacher Candidates

Data was collected through various tasks I requested the participants to complete. These tasks were explained during the interviews. Some TCs were given more clarification over the phone. These tasks included:

a) **Mind map of diversity in Sri Lankan schools:** The TCs were given a skeleton of a mind map with “Diversity in Sri Lankan Schools” written on it (see Appendix Q). They were asked to complete it any way they felt was most appropriate. Here, too, they were encouraged to be creative and use any medium to express themselves.

b) **Details of practice teaching schools:** All TCs completed a rubric that elicited data about the three two-week practice teaching sessions they did in their second year. They were asked to provide the names of the schools where they did their practice teaching, to identify whether it was a boys’/girls’/mixed school, and to give a brief description about the school and the students of each school (see Appendix P).
c) Assignments completed during internship: All TCs completed a rubric that consisted of details about the four projects they were expected to complete during their one-year internship. The rubric listed the four projects they were supposed to complete: 1) co-curricular project; 2) community related project; 3) administrative project; and 4) student support project. The TCs had to list what they had done for each of the projects (see Appendix O).

Picture Descriptions

Another layer of data was added with picture descriptions. The TCs were presented with two sets of pictures photographs. Two pictures labeled, “Student A” and “Student B,” showed two students who appeared, respectively, to be from an advantaged and a disadvantaged background (see Appendix L). Two pictures labeled, “Classroom A” and “Classroom B,” showed two differently resourced classes – one with very limited resources and another with unlimited resources (see Appendix M). The students were asked a set of questions that elicited information about their preferences about teaching different students and teaching in different classroom environments.

Ongoing Journal Notes

In order to retrieve information over a long period of time, I kept a systematic account of my ongoing research activities and reflections by writing a journal. This journal forms part of my analysis and interpretation (Duff, 2008). Throughout the research, I maintained field notes where I noted down observations and reflections. The notes helped me to clarify and reflect on what I learned during the various stages of data collection. I used the journal and my field notes to triangulate the findings of my study and make the research analysis more transparent. In maintaining field notes I used a field note, chart (see Appendix R) that helped me to guide my observations.

Data Analysis

The data analysis follows the qualitative research tradition. The following section discusses how each data source was used and analyzed.
Background Profile Questionnaires

The data on the Background Profile Questionnaires were used to generate profiles of each participant. Later, this information was used to interpret data generated through other data sources such as interviews, documents, observations, Identity Portraits and Mind Maps. The details in the Background Profile Questionnaires gave me a deeper understanding of the participants’ social and cultural backgrounds.

Interview Data

All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed in full. Doing the transcriptions myself allowed me to make note of recurring patterns and other observations while transcribing (Duff, 2008). All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Once the interviews were transcribed, files were created for each participant. The first interview and any follow-up interviews were placed in these files.

The transcriptions were analyzed using qualitative content analysis as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). That is, generative themes in the narratives were identified and clustered, and overlapping patterns in these themes were identified and interpreted to answer the research questions. I generated a coding scheme using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strause, 1967) to better organize and cluster the data. Since this study involved multiple cases I had to “determine the generality of the identified themes” across each case study site (Duff, 2008, p. 162). The result of this process was the identification of “salient patterns, themes, clusters or critical incidents” that were later used to discuss and interpret in the analysis (Duff, 2008). As the study involved multiple cases, first the individual cases were analyzed, which led to a comparative “cross-case analysis” (Duff, 2008, p.164). Drawing on Miles and Huberman’s (1994) recommendations, visual displays of themes and relationships that emerged from the data were documented with the use of maps, tables, charts and tree diagrams. These visual displays were helpful in comparing cases. The entire process gave me a better understanding of the perceptions, experiences and expectations of socially and culturally diverse learners.
Observations and Other Documents

Informal observations in the case study sites and formal observations in the participating TEs’ classes provided insights into the nature of the academic and non-academic environments in which the TCs spent the first two years of their program. I got deeper insights about student life, the kind of community the TCs were immersed in, and the various extra curricular activities they were engaged in as they were preparing to become teachers. The formal policy and curriculum documents and government gazettes I examined allowed me to understand the macro-structures that shaped the teacher education program at large. The assignments collected from the students helped me to get a better sense of the nature of the assignments that were given to the TCs, how they performed on those assignments and the various challenges the TCs faced in the program. They also helped me gain a holistic understanding of the multiple factors that shaped their learning and teaching practices.

Visual Data: Identity Portraits and Mind Maps

In order to analyze the visual data I generated such as the Identity Portraits, Mind Maps and pictures taken during my field visits, I used the four stage content analysis for visual elements proposed by Rose (2012). The first step involves finding images that are appropriate for the questions that are being asked. As I was certain of the visual data I was using, I did not have to follow any sampling strategy. The second step involved devising categories for coding or attaching a set of descriptive labels to the images. The coding categories were:

- Exhaustive: every aspect of the images with which the research is concerned was covered by one category
- Inclusive: the categories did not overlap
- Enlightening: the categories provided a breakdown of the imagery that was analytically interesting and coherent (Slater, 1993; cited in Rose, 2012).
The third step involved coding the images. Each image was carefully examined and all relevant codes were attached to it. As Rose suggests this important step was extremely tedious. I checked off each category that emerged in the images. The final step was analyzing the results. Each image had a number of codes attached to it and those codes were further tabulated for clarity. They were then counted in order to produce a quantitative account of their content. In order to manage the data in a timely manner, I chose the important categories that referred to the broader research questions.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations form an integral component of qualitative research that is primarily concerned with the treatment of individuals. Dominant ethical considerations include “issues of access, informed consent, security of data and anonymity of participants” (Muholland & Wallace, 2003, p. 141). Furthermore, researchers need to value “…trust, symmetry, risk sharing, humility” (p. 142). As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, the data for this dissertation was generated or was co-constructed with the participants. My participants and I were equally invested in the generation of the data. This posed minimal risk to the different parties involved. Ethical considerations adhered not only to the participants’ narratives, but also my own as we were all research subjects in this study. As Clandinin and Connelly caution, “autobiographical studies pose a somewhat unique case... we must consider issues of care for those field texts and research texts we create about ourselves” (1998, p. 169).

In order to ensure ethical consideration, the following measures were taken. I recognised that some of the participants may have experienced discrimination as a result of their ethnic, social and linguistic status. This may have been specially the case for Tamil participants from the northern part of the country who had grown up in a war zone that was separated from the rest of the country for close to two decades might find it traumatizing to talk about conflict issues and their experiences pertaining to diversity. They also might not have felt comfortable discussing their experiences and expectations about diversity with me, a researcher from the dominant Sinhalese community, a community which some of them might feel had colonized them.

In addition, I was aware that participants from other ethnic and linguistic minority groups might not have felt very comfortable sharing their views on diversity with me because of my ethnic,
linguistic and social background. To avoid traumatizing the participants, I did not ask them to retell unpleasant and distressing experiences and memories. To ensure that the interview questions did not offend or place participants in a difficult position, an education specialist who has worked extensively with teacher candidates and educators in Sri Lanka reviewed all the questionnaires.

As mentioned previously, to protect the anonymity of the participants, they were assigned pseudonyms. Each NCOE was also given a pseudonym, so that the participants’ institutional affiliations also remain anonymous. They were also told that they could withdraw from the study if they did not feel comfortable taking part in it. Although in the North American context, giving cash rewards as honoraria for participating in research studies is common, this is considered culturally inappropriate in the Sri Lankan context. Knowing that my participants would not feel comfortable or might feel insulted if they were offered money, I gave each participant a gift voucher from a local bookstore.

What the Data Revealed

The nature of the data that was generated shifted the focus of my study. When I launched my dissertation journey, my original idea was to explore how pre-service English language teachers were prepared to address diversity in their classes. I had planned to adopt a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical framework to use as a lens to understand my data. However, the rich data I generated through the use of multiple traditional and well as non-traditional data collection tools, prompted me to refocus on post-conflict teacher preparation. As I read new literature on post-conflict reconciliation, it became clear that sociocultural theory was no longer the appropriate lens for analysis. Orientations to pedagogy with a particular focus on transformative pedagogies such as Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) were more appropriate for analysing my data. As a result, the data collection tools, particularly the interview questions are not informed by the conceptual framework I used to analyze my data.
Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology employed in this study. The chapter opened with an introduction to the overall approach, the narrative case study. This was followed by a discussion about my position as a researcher and my relationships to the research sites and the participants. A description of the three research sites, Central College, Western College and Northern College, the research schedule and a description of the participants followed. A description of the multiple data collection instruments and how the data was analyzed was introduced next. The chapter concluded with a discussion about the ethical considerations surrounding the study. The following chapter, the first of the four analysis chapters, will focus on teacher candidates’ identities.
Chapter 6
Teachers In Post-Conflict Sri Lanka:
Diverse Teachers, Diverse Identities

Introduction

The centrality of identity is well recognized in research on post-conflict reconciliation and peace (Orjuela, 2008; Weldon, 2012). In peace and reconciliation processes, identity is recognized as a non-negotiable factor that has to be respected (Burton, 1990). Therefore, the role of identity cannot be overlooked in research on peace and reconciliation, but instead needs to be an integral part of the research. That is why the first findings chapter of this dissertation focuses on prospective teachers’ multiple identities.

In the literature on peace and reconciliation, it is argued that warring parties’ need to overcome polarization and construct shared identities around mutual interests (Rothman, 1997). Teachers, too, need to overcome rigid nationalist identities and build more inclusive identities, particularly, identities that hold humanitarian values and don’t nourish exclusivist and rigid identities. It is such inclusive identities that can pave the way for a new, inclusive and multicultural society (Lederrach, 1997; Richmond & Carey, 2005; van Tongeren, et al., 2005).

When a teacher walks into a classroom, she does not leave her identities behind. Her multiple identities shape her instructional decisions, the manner in which she delivers the curriculum or lesson, the learning opportunities she creates for her learners and the relationships she establishes with the school community (Clarke, 2009; Liu & Xu, 2011; Varghese, et al., 2009). Therefore, engaging in identity work is essential if teachers are to exert their professional agency and maximize their potential for growth (Clarke, 2009). In a study that aims to better understand how teachers can be transformative intellectuals who are willing and able to transform their practices, it is imperative to focus on their identities. Drawing on a post-structuralist perspective, this study looks at the intersections of multiple and diverse identity factors (Hancock, 2007).

This chapter, the first of four consecutive chapters, which focus on the findings of my study, attempts to understand and bring to center stage the diverse sociocultural identities of the
participating Teacher Candidates (TCs). I focus, in particular, on the ethnic, linguistic, religious, familial, cultural and experiential dimensions of identity that different TCs identified with most closely and most often within the context of post-conflict Sri Lanka.

The data included here were gathered with a multimodal methodology from several sources: the TCs’ Background Profile Questionnaires; their narratives; and their Identity Portraits (IPs). The use of narrative constructions of identity is based on the premise that identities consist of a collection of stories (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) and that narratives are central in defining a person’s “core identity” (Gee, 2001). It is a person’s own narrative that constitutes their core identity. However, it is important to note that one’s core identity always has the potential to change. Narratives help us in understanding such changing and non-linear identity development (Rouhotie-Lyhty, 2013). Another vibrant characteristic of a narrative understanding of identity is its recognition of human agency (Rouhotie-Lyhty, 2013). Because my study aims to understand how prospective teachers can become transformative agents of change, the narrative and multimodal methodology I use is a way to recognize my participants’ agency.

The purpose of this multimodal presentation of data is to provide a more detailed and personal account of who the participants of this study are and to highlight the manner in which they were active participants in co-constructing this narrative case study. The TCs’ identities, experiences, insights and, most importantly, their devotion to being a part of my prolonged study and willingness to constantly oblige my multiple requests would not be effectively accounted for if I limited my presentation to a simple prose description only.

A multidimensional look at TCs’ identities is important because it helps us understand that identity is not something static. Rather, it is dialogic, dynamic, multiple, situated and negotiated (Thesen, 1997; Norton, 2000; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). Creating an identity is a constant process of defining, redefining, and constructing one’s sense of self as well as one’s sense of belonging, or not belonging, to groups. While identification may entail a search for what is “pure” or “essential,” in reality, identity is not a stable core of the self or group. Instead, it is constituted through differences formed through discourse as well as practices. As a result, identities are never complete and consummate, but contain ambiguities, doubts and contradictions (Hall, 1990, 1996).
To capture this complexity, TCs’ identities are viewed in this chapter from multiple angles. This approach is used in an attempt to reduce the risk of reinforcing oversimplified identities and ensure that TCs’ identities are not treated as clear-cut and static.

The chapter begins with a section on the status of English language teachers in Sri Lanka. In order to understand how committed teachers can become transformative intellectuals, I look at how TCs feel about being teachers and why they chose the teaching profession. This section is then followed by a section in which I present a selection of vignettes from the focal participants of my study in order to give a clearer and more intimate picture of who they are. The rest of the chapter is organized into three main sections as follows: Sociocultural Identities; Experiential Identities; and Perceived Identities. It ends with a discussion on Inclusive Teaching Selves and Role Definitions.

The Status of English Language Teachers

A factor that determines the extent to which initiatives geared toward reconciliation and social cohesion are made a reality is the status of teachers (Smith, 2006). Most TCs in my study stated that they did not want to become teachers as they did not find it to be an attractive profession. The most common reason they gave me for becoming an English teacher was the influence of immediate as well as extended family members. The family members recognized that becoming an English teacher brought economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) for the teacher as well as their families. The TCs however, viewed teaching as a fallback career option.

From the entire pool of TCs in my study, only Chaman stated that she, herself, chose to become a teacher. The rest of the TCs said they had been compelled to get into the teaching profession by their families. Their families not only saw teaching as a profession suitable for women; they recognized that teaching was a way to elevate women’s social status and provide them with social capital such as marriage proposals. This could be why the teaching profession is dominated by female teachers in the NCOE and the teaching profession in general. Nagula notes how she went into teaching, and English teaching in particular, not by choice, but because her family considered it a respectable job for women, and one that offered more freedom than many other professions.
My dream was to become a nurse. But my parents thought it wasn’t a very suitable job for a girl. There is a lot of hard work. You have to do night shifts too. Now that I am a teacher, they are happy. They think it’s a suitable profession for a girl. We get lots of holidays. (Nagula)

In Sri Lanka, the diploma from the NCOE ensures a government teaching job and decent pay, unlike a university degree, which does not guarantee employment or financial security. The guaranteed government teaching job, the pension and the economic capital it provided were important considerations for many TCs and their families. Chintha’s parents, for example, emphasized these aspects.

I didn’t want to become an English teacher. My parents wanted me to have a government job. And teaching is a government job. This job will secure my future. My father is a government servant. He knows the advantages of having a pension. (Chintha)

Some TCs had parents or younger siblings who were financially dependent on them. In these cases, their families pushed them into teaching for the job stability and permanency the profession provided.

Some TCs also stated that they became teachers due to the lack of higher education and career options available for them. In some cases, they did not have sufficient grades to get into degree programs of their choice. In others, they did not have English language skills and therefore lacked the elite linguistic capital and social capital that would otherwise have provided them access to social connections and possibilities for more lucrative private sector employment. In still other cases, they did not have the resources and economic capital needed to move to a big city. Teaching for them was a fallback option. However, as Neth confirms, it was nevertheless considered a respectable profession, and one that could bring good prospects for marriage.

Actually I didn’t have any alternative. I wanted to become a doctor. But I didn’t get enough marks to go to medical school. Teachers are respected. All doctors and lawyers want to marry teachers. (Neth)

True to Neth’s statement, many TCs said that they had received marriage proposals during their internship through other staff members. As I was informed through emails and Facebook

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9 Only about 20% of those who graduate from Sri Lankan high schools can get admission to university.
messages, many of the TCs had become married within a year after graduation from the teacher preparation program.

Camal, a male TC was one of the few male TCs who took part in the study. Although he stated that he was happy that he has fulltime employment, he was not happy with his salary and the lack of respect for male teachers. Even during his internship he was teaching private language classes to make extra money and said that he was aspiring to become a university professor one day.

As we can see from the narratives above, the reasons behind why the TCs became teachers is because of their middle-, lower-middle and working-class social backgrounds. They did not have the financial or the linguistic means to pursue careers of their choice. Yet, the teaching profession elevated their existing family status. Their families viewed teaching as a respectable job for women that could further their marriage prospects. They felt that English teachers and English-medium teachers were more respected than teachers who taught in L1. This attitude reflects the elite status of the English language in postcolonial societies.

The reason many TCs did not want to become teachers was because teaching was not considered a profession with a high status. This attitude raises the question of how committed they would be to implementing change and taking transformative action in their classes. For teachers to take action toward change, they need to be proud of their professional identities and recognize their agency to challenge existing exclusionary biases and values that exist within educational institutional settings (Weldon, 2010). The fact that a few teachers stated they were enjoying what they were doing is an indication that, although they did not want to be teachers in the first place, with time they could come to see their own professional value. That is why teacher education programs need to be more explicit in making teachers aware of their role in reconciliation initiatives.

Focal Participants’ Vignettes

While the data for this study is drawn from narratives and other data sources of 28 participating TCs, my primary focus will be on twelve focal participants—four TCs from each of the three NCOE I travelled to: Western College (WC), Central College (CC), and Northern College (NC). These focal participants were chosen either because they were representative of a larger group or
because of their unique positions. Table 12 provides an overview of these TCs’ backgrounds. The table is then followed by excerpts from their narratives in order that we might hear their voices and get a closer understanding of their identities.
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<td>Islam</td>
<td>Muslim village in eastern Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Muslim schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withya</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Multicultural town in the Central Province</td>
<td>Tamil Hindu school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neela</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Multicultural town in eastern Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Tamil Hindu school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagula</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Though originally from Jaffna, due to the war, she grew up in Colombo city</td>
<td>Tamil Catholic schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilu</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Jaffna city</td>
<td>Tamil Hindu schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neth</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Rural village on the outskirts of Jaffna</td>
<td>Tamil Hindu village school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cala

I went to Madeena Muslim Girls’ School. There were Tamils, Muslims and Christians, but it is a Tamil-medium school. There were no Sinhalese. Islam is observed. Most of the students spoke English. They can’t write in English but can speak. That is because of the parents and school. When I came to CC, I got to know a lot about other communities, but one group I can’t understand are Muslims from the East. They are very different, and they have a different mentality and talk with a different accent. They don’t accept other Muslims like us who are from other parts of the country. I enjoyed the time in college. My biggest fear is getting a teaching assignment in a rural area after graduation.

Chintha

I didn’t want to become an English teacher. My parents wanted me to have a government job, so I will have a secure future. I also have to help my family financially. We lived on my father’s pension, but he passed away last year and I have to look after my mother. I went to Sarav School. The students there are not from good families, but my father didn’t believe in going out of the way to get me into a good school. So I grew up mainly in a Sinhalese Buddhist school environment. Later, when I went to Greenbrook High School, which was also a Sinhalese Buddhist school, many mistook my last name, McShane, to be a Eurasian name. I was discriminated. The two years in CC were challenging. One thing I realized was how determined minority students are. Most Sinhalese students don’t even make an effort to talk in English but the Muslims and the Tamils always spoke and practiced their language. When Muslims and Tamils came into the program they only spoke Tamil, but by the end of the program
they were conversant in both English and Sinhalese. We Sinhalese are where we began.

Chaman

At home we use four languages: Malay, Sinhalese, Tamil and English. Malay is my first language. I am fluent. It’s different from Malaysian Malay. We talk in Malay with cousins, and aunts and uncles. In Matale, my hometown, we have a big Malay community. We talk in Malay. We try to keep the language going. English is also a home language for me. My mother’s parents lived on a tea estate, so my mother knows Tamil and we learnt from her. When the housemaids come we hear Tamil, then we watch Tamil TV. All my education is in Sinhala. I went to a Sinhala Buddhist school. There were other Muslims and Malays in that school as well. I am good in all languages and I can survive anywhere – with Muslims, Sinhalese or Tamils. I think it’s because of my strong English language skills that I got to do my internship in a school like St. Andrews. CC only lets teachers with good English skills come here. I think this is an amazing opportunity for me to improve myself. But the school culture here is very different from that of a public school. So I am not sure what it will be like to teach in a public school.

Camal

I grew up in a small village on the outskirts of Ratnapura. It is a Sinhalese village. People are poor, but they value education. My sister is a teacher and when she travels by bus, village people offer her their seat. I want to help my village people. They are waiting for me. There are so many English teachers in city schools, but there are no teachers in my old school. I feel we have to do much more than just teach. But the salary we teachers get is not enough, especially for a man. Me and four other colleagues from CC decided to come
to this school for the internship because we know we can help the students. They are all very poor and their parents have no education. Some of their mothers work as housemaids in the Middle East and their fathers are dead. Some do drugs, sell trinkets or drive three-wheelers. Most students drop out of school and continue to do their parents’ jobs.

Wanya

When I was small, my parents were very poor. I know what it is to be poor. It’s an awful feeling. But when I was in Grade 3, my father started a business and we became rich. Neither of my parents speak English. But they wanted me to learn English well. So my mother got a tutor for English. I was put in a Catholic school because their English is good. The biggest challenge I am facing during my internship is dealing with the senior teachers. They think they own this school. I wish I had gone to a smaller school. The students in this school are from very influential families and this school is very demanding. But I think living in the WC for two years with all sorts of people has taught me a lot. I can now work in any kind of work environment.

Waheed

I grew up in Kathankuddi in eastern Sri Lanka. We are all Muslims. Life there is very different. I didn’t know people from other ethnic groups. When I was growing up, we were very poor. After my father was shot by the terrorists, my mother had to raise me and my five siblings alone. We often didn’t have enough to eat. My first exposure to other communities was in WC. It was a big surprise for me at first. I asked for a Sinhala school for my internship, but I was placed in a Muslim school. They said it’s because of Ramadan and Friday prayers.
Muslim schools have a different school calendar. My internship school attracts all the poor Muslim students in the neighborhood. They are at the bottom of the society and they have no way out. Most of them drop out of school and end up making tea in roadside teashops, driving three-wheelers or working as day laborers. I want to change that. I think teachers can do something good for society. Besides, I don’t think schools should be segregated. The school is the place that molds future citizens. The school is the place we first learn about society, other religions and how to adjust to society. But all schools are divided. Sinhala students are in Sinhala schools, so they don’t know others’ values or traditions. They don’t learn how to respect others. ¹⁰

Waseem

The situation in my home is strange. I am technically Muslim. At home, we all speak in Sinhalese. But with my father’s side of the family we speak in Tamil, and we act Muslim. But with my mother’s side, we speak in Sinhalese, and behave like Sinhalese. Although my mother converted to Islam after marriage, we know she still practices Buddhist rituals. During Ramadan, she fasts, but we know it doesn’t mean anything to her. She socialized me and my sister as Sinhalese. I was sent to Sinhalese Buddhist schools. My father didn’t care about our education as long as we stayed out of trouble. But that is not good. We have to belong to one group. When I was in WC, this was a big problem.

Over there, everybody identified themselves and belonged to one ethnic group.

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¹⁰ Waheed was not one of the TCs who initially consented to taking part in my study. Yet, his name along with Waleed’s came up in many interviews. They were both from Muslim-dominated eastern Sri Lanka and were very religious. Their mannerisms and outlook to life often surprised other TCs. He consented to participating in the study later on. Waheed’s father along with his uncles was shot dead by the LTTE. When he came to CC, many said that he harbored a lot of anger toward the Sinhalese. Yet many others stated that his anger subsided as he progressed in the program.
Especially Muslims from the East were very tough and religious. The women covered themselves from head to toe. I think the differences among the provinces are greater than differences between the Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. They didn’t even accept Muslims from other parts of the country. I got along with all groups, but never belonged to any one of them.

Withya

I grew up in Badulla, where Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese live together. My parents had friends from all ethnic groups. I speak both Sinhalese and Tamil fluently. When I went to WC, I was able to adjust well. But many Muslim girls from the East met Sinhalese people for the first time in WC. They didn’t want to move with Sinhalese. They always wanted to be with the Muslims, Muslims and Muslims. They criticized the Sinhalese. They felt the Sinhalese people neglect us minorities and discriminate us. They said we should not go to Sinhalese schools for our internship. Although I am Tamil, my mother is Muslim, so some of them were friendly with me. They warned me, “Don’t stay with the Sinhalese. They will brainwash you!”

Neela

There are lots of differences among the Tamils from the East and Tamils from the North. In Batticaloa [in eastern Sri Lanka], where I grew up, people are not traditional or religious like Jaffna Tamils. It was a multicultural town. I knew Muslims, but didn’t know any Sinhalese because there was context for us to meet and get to know each other. There were Sinhalese in our town and we have Sinhalese relatives from my mother’s side of the family. Here in Jaffna, everybody is Tamil and there are lots of religious festivals. People here are very strict in following them. People in my hometown, Batticaloa, are not that strict.
Here, there are lots of restrictions about food. If we eat fish, we can’t go to the temple. They often fast. There are so many temples. The girls don’t wear jeans and they are not allowed to go out after 6 p.m. Even their Tamil is different from the Tamil we speak in the East. Then there is the caste system. People don’t openly talk about it, but it exists. In Batticaloa, there are people from all ethnic groups. I am also Tamil, but what I saw in Jaffna is new to me. Maybe that is because I am Christian. But I wish we got to mix with more TCs, not just Tamils. As teachers, we should be able to reach any student in the country.

Nagula

Although my family is from Jaffna, I grew up in Colombo. When the war ended in 2009, we moved to Trincomalee [in eastern Sri Lanka]. I felt very free in Colombo. It is a multicultural city and we can wear anything we want. We can go anywhere we like at any time. Here, in Jaffna, it is not like that. People look at you and are judgmental. It was difficult for me to adjust to living here in Jaffna. Tamils here are different from the Tamils in the East and in Colombo. Jaffna Tamils are very cliquey. They made outstation people feel left out. They were friends only with Jaffna people. The culture here is different. They give a lot of importance to education. All parents expect their child to become a doctor or an engineer. So the children don’t get to enjoy their childhoods. Some parents don’t even have a TV in their houses. They think it’s a distraction.
Nilu

I am happy I am doing my internship here in Hindu Girls' School. It’s my old school. The students are brilliant. I have to prepare very hard to teach. Here in Jaffna, people who speak English are respected, but we don’t have a culture of speaking in English. We only speak in Tamil here. Even in NC, all the social events are in Tamil. People want to preserve their traditions. I am so happy to talk to you in English. I wish there were other linguistic groups of people living in this town. Here we are all Tamil. The caste system is gradually disappearing. Castes are related to occupations, like people who wash clothes or cut hair. Brahmins are the highest caste, and carry out the rituals in the temples and they are vegetarian. Now many low caste people are in good positions. They are well educated. They live in big houses. They earn a lot. They have government jobs. We are from the goldsmiths’ caste. Most women in my family are not educated. I am one of the few who are educated. Others are married and have three or four children.

Neth

I am from a rural village and my family is very poor. My father and brother are security guards. I am the first person in my family to finish high school and get into higher education. This school I am doing my internship in is a rural school. The students are very poor. Their English is weak and I have to prepare a lot. I don’t get to develop myself. There aren’t many facilities for the teachers in this school. The classes are noisy, there aren’t enough books in the library, there are lots of rules about borrowing them, and there are power cuts. I wish I were doing my internship in a big school in the city. But I feel people respect me because I am a teacher.
These vignettes from the TCs’ narratives give a preliminary insight into who the TCs are and what their backgrounds and perceptions toward teaching and diversity are. In the rest of this chapter, as well as in the following three chapters, I will continue to draw from the narratives of the focal participants.

**Sociocultural Identities**

Research on teacher preparation for diversity and equity calls for the teaching profession to better reflect the diversity of its student body (Dei, 202; Fenwick, 2001; Gagné, Kjorven & Ringen, 2009; Gordon, 2000; Rong & Preissle, 1997). More specifically, research on reconciliation and social cohesion initiatives in education highlight the need for “diversity sensitive recruitment and deployment policies” (Smith, 2006, p. 382) that ensure the adequate recruitment of teachers from different ethnic and linguistic groups. Social Justice Teacher Education calls for the recruitment of a diverse teaching force if teacher education is to bring about broad-scale social change (Zeichner, 2011). Diversity of teachers, on the one hand, ensures that teachers are representative of their students. In a segregated educational environment like Sri Lanka, there are teachers from diverse backgrounds who can function as cultural brokers. They can work in schools that are different from their own background and thus provide the students with opportunities to learn from a teacher who is from a background different to theirs.

The three research sites for this study (Northern College, Western College, and Central College) were located in distinct geographical locations in the Northern, Western and Central provinces of Sri Lanka. Thus, it is first important to understand the composition of TCs in each college.

As Table 13 below reveals, among the three research sites, the participants at Western College (WC) were the most diverse. As WC is exclusively an English teacher preparation college, there were about 300 TCs in each cohort and there was great social and cultural diversity among them. There were TCs who belonged to all of Sri Lanka’s ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. Unlike their counterparts in the other two colleges, the TCs of WC were also from different provinces of the country, including three TCs from the predominantly Muslim areas in the eastern parts of Sri Lanka.
Table 14 below shows that the participants of CC also consisted of a socially and culturally diverse group of TCs who belonged to different ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. However, in this case, they came from towns and villages located in close proximity to the Central Province, the province the CC was located in, unlike the TCs from WC who came from all over Sri Lanka.

During my field visits to WC and CC, I noted that all Sri Lankan languages were spoken by the TCs and the TEs and that there were signs, posters and notices in all Sri Lankan languages. I also observed differences in clothing and dress. For example, there were female TCs who wore the sari in different ways, thus symbolizing their ethnicity and which part of the country they were from. There were also TCs who wore different religious symbols such as the headscarf.

Figure 11: Teacher Candidates of Central College
All these markers are indicative of how WC and CC are largely representative of Sri Lanka’s multicultural population. Even in the TCs’ discussions about their experiences, they spoke about the rich, eye-opening multicultural experience they had gained during their residency period in these colleges.
Table 13: Sociocultural Backgrounds of Teacher Candidates of Western College (WC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>2-Province</th>
<th>3-Gender</th>
<th>4-Ethnicity</th>
<th>5-Religion</th>
<th>6-First Lang.</th>
<th>7-Other Lang. Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Wafa</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Waheed</td>
<td>Uva</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Waleed</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wansha</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Wanya</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Waruni</td>
<td>Sabaraga muwa</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Wasa</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Wasana</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Waseem</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Weena</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. William</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Wityha</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14: Sociocultural Backgrounds of Teacher Candidates of Central College (CC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-Name</th>
<th>2-Province</th>
<th>3-Gender</th>
<th>4-Ethnicity</th>
<th>5-Religion</th>
<th>6-First Language</th>
<th>7-Other Lang. Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cala</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Male√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>Muslim√</td>
<td>Sinhala√</td>
<td>Sinhala√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Camal</td>
<td>Sabaragamuwa</td>
<td>Female√</td>
<td>Sinhala√</td>
<td>Buddhist√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>English√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Careema</td>
<td>Sabaragamuwa</td>
<td>Male√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>Hindu√</td>
<td>Sinhala√</td>
<td>English√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chaman</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Female√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>Muslim√</td>
<td>Malay√</td>
<td>Malay√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cheryl</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Male√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>Muslim√</td>
<td>Sinhala√</td>
<td>English√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Chintha</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Female√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>Muslim√</td>
<td>Malay√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Choola</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Male√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>Muslim√</td>
<td>Malay√</td>
<td>English√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cindy</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Female√</td>
<td>Tamil√</td>
<td>Muslim√</td>
<td>Malay√</td>
<td>English√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we can see from Table 15 below, the TCs of Northern College (NC) were, in contrast to those of WC and CC, a relatively homogenous group. Whereas WC and CC are located, respectively, in the multicultural Western Province and Central Province, NC is located in the Jaffna Peninsula, the traditional homeland region of Sri Lankan Tamils. Although the peninsula was not under the direct control of the LTTE during the war, it was influenced directly by the ethnic conflict. As a result, there was little passage and little dialogue between the North and the rest of the country for decades. Even when I visited NC in 2012, three years after the end of the ethnic civil war, the sociocultural fabric of NC was not as diverse as that of the other two colleges.

As Table 15 reveals, all the TCs in NC are Tamil speakers. The majority of the TCs in NC were Tamil with a few Tamil-speaking Muslims from the East. There were no Sinhalese TCs or TCs from other provinces in NC. The small cohort of TCs in the English program came from some of the best schools on Jaffna. However, the symbolic curriculum (Gay, 1995) (e.g., images, symbols, icons, bulletin board decorations, etc.) showed evidence of other local linguistic and religious cultures. As Figure 9 below shows, there were murals with multiple religious symbols outside the main administrative building.

![Multiple Religious Symbols on the Main Administrative Building in NC](image-url)
Table 15: Sociocultural Backgrounds of Teacher Candidates at Northern College (NC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-Name</th>
<th>2-Province</th>
<th>4-Gender</th>
<th>5-Ethnicity</th>
<th>6-Religion</th>
<th>7-First Language</th>
<th>8-Other Lang. Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sinhala</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nadi</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nagula</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nalini</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Neela</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ncha</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Neriya</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Neth</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nilu</td>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commentary

Most literature on diversity in teacher populations (Swartz, 2003; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996) highlights the homogeneity of teachers and points out the discrepancy in backgrounds between teachers and learners. Contrary to this picture, however, the TCs in the NCOE in Sri Lanka, overall, consisted of teachers from all the country’s ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. There were also TCs from urban and rural areas from different parts of the country.

However, the manner in which the TCs were placed in the three different colleges either provided a multicultural experience or curtailed it. WC and CC in particular attracted a multicultural TC population, which provided the TCs there with exposure to ethnolinguistic and religious communities they previously had not encountered. In contrast to WC and CC, the TCs in NC were primarily from the Northern Province and were Tamil. Although the war had ended and although there was greater mobility in overcoming the geographic and sociocultural barriers that had separated the North from the rest of Sri Lanka during wartime, TCs from other parts of the country who belonged to other ethnic, religious or linguistic groups were not present in the NC. As a result, TCs from the North did not have exposure to these groups. They were in a community very similar to their own. This situation shows how, even after the end of the war, the different ethnic groups continued to lead segregated lives.

The entire pool of TCs in my study was representative of a cross-section of Sri Lankan society. They don’t belong to one Sri Lankan community, but belong to all Sri Lankan ethnic, religious, linguistic and regional groups. On the one hand, this means all Sri Lankan groups are included in the teaching profession. On the other hand, the multicultural and diverse groups of prospective teachers show the potential for English language teachers to be cultural brokers who teach in schools that are different from their own background. As these teachers teach English, the Link Language of the country, it is not necessary for them to know the first languages of their students. The Sri Lankan Education Sector Development Framework and Programme of 2006 states that teachers need to act as role models of non-violence and democracy and actively engage in peace building between and among communities. They can do so by going into schools that are populated by students with backgrounds different from their own. Teachers can thus use their
own sociocultural identities as a resource to introduce students to another sociocultural group they do not have much contact or insight about.

Experiential Identities

As Wenger (1998) points out, “identification takes place in the doing” (p. 193). For him, engagement and doing are crucial to the construction of professional identities (Trent, Gao & Gu, 2014). As this dissertation is set against an identity based ethnic conflict and attempts to understand how TCs can be transformative intellectuals who are prepared to address issues of diversity and work toward peace and reconciliation in a post-conflict situation, I look first in this section at the TCs’ exposure to, experiences of, and engagement with ethnic diversity in Sri Lanka as they grew up. Then, I hone down on the TCs’ experiences with the civil war. Although this study is based on the premise that teachers are key agents of change (Giroux, 1998; Hawkins, 2011; Motha, 2014), teachers are not a tabula rasa. They have either first-hand or second-hand experience of war, conflict and discrimination (Weldon, 2010). When teachers are members of communities that are part of a conflict, they might find it difficult to confront and challenge the values of their community (Tawil & Harley, 2004). However, it is important to understand what these experiences are.

What is important to note is that, although, Sri Lanka experienced a civil war for decades, it is not a failed state. In fact, it has a very strong government and a political structure. As a result, the impact of the war was felt strongly in some parts of the country, while for others, it was removed from their day-to-day lives.

Experiences and Exposure to Diversity

Many of the TCs in the three NCOE colleges had grown up in geographical and social settings that were multicultural yet provided them with little exposure to other cultures. The war, which had caused deep ethnic divisions and prevented traveling and communication between the northern and eastern provinces and the rest of the country, had contributed largely to this segregation. As a result, for many TCs, the teachers’ college was their first exposure to multicultural diversity in Sri Lanka.
The TCs who had had some exposure to multicultural diversity growing up were the ones who lived in larger cities. Of these, the Sinhalese TCs said they knew people from other communities. However, it was the minority Tamil and Muslim TCs who had had the greatest degree of exposure to others. Many of them spoke about growing up in multicultural cities and said they spoke other local languages and had friends from other communities. Withya provides an example.

> In my old school, there were only Tamils and Muslims. There were no Sinhalese. But my hometown, Badulla, is a multicultural city. Growing up, I knew lots of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Christians. We had friends who visited us. I can speak all languages. (Withya)

However, unlike Withya, many Sinhalese TCs, like Camal below, stated that they had not had exposure to other ethnic and linguistic communities.

> My elementary school was a Sinhala Buddhist school in my village. Then I went to another Sinhalese Buddhist middle/high school. All the students were low middle-class or poor. I knew only Sinhala people. (Camal)

Camal’s experience growing up in a predominantly Sinhalese Buddhist environment was representative of that of many other TCs who had grown up in multicultural cities or smaller towns but who had led ethnically and religiously segregated lives due to their education. As I will discuss in detail in Chapter 7, Sri Lankan schools are divided according to ethnicity, religion and language. Most of the TCs had gone to schools with populations that were similar to their own backgrounds. The only exceptions for this were Waheed and Chaman, two multilingual Muslim TCs who had attended Sinhalese Buddhist schools. Chaman, who had a strong Malay identity, did not talk about how her Sinhalese Buddhist-centered education threatened her identity. She often spoke of her extended family and her involvement in the larger Malay community.

> My old school is a Sinhalese Buddhist school. There were a few other Malays in that school as well. They were my cousins. So I never felt left out. We spoke in Malay with each other in school. Also, the Malay community in our town is very closely knit. We make sure we speak in Malay and we have all sorts of events. Although my schooling is in another culture, I have a very strong Malay identity. (Chaman)
On the contrary, Waheed spoke on many occasions of how he lost his Muslim identity as a result of going to Sinhalese Buddhist schools. He explained that while his Sinhalese mother had converted to Islam after marriage to his father who was Muslim, she socialized and educated him as a Sinhalese by sending him to Sinhalese Buddhist schools. However, as Waheed related, he was never fully accepted by the Sinhalese. Neither was he accepted among Muslims. For Muslims, he was not Muslim enough. Waheed’s narrative brought out the significance of religion and ethnicity in identity construction and his sense of the importance of belonging to a clear-cut group.

My home religion is Islam. I fast. I go to the mosque. I have finished the Quran. I know how to pray. But I don’t believe in any of that. My mother sent me to Sinhalese school where I learned Buddhism. My mother thought she was doing something good. But she has no idea about the damage she has caused by sending a Muslim kid like me to a Sinhalese school. I feel I have lost my identity and culture. I am tired of being in the middle. I am not a Sinhalese and I am not a Muslim. (Waheed)

Although the southern parts of the country were not directly affected by the war and people there did have the freedom to travel or live in any part of the country, many Sinhalese TCs from WC and CC, who were from smaller towns and villages, had been socialized in segregated societies similar to those in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka which were secluded due to the war. Tight security that monitored who crossed the borders of the LTTE-controlled de facto state, poor transportation, and poor road conditions prevented people from coming out of or going into areas that were controlled by the LTTE. Even after the war, although people had the freedom to travel, there was little interaction among the different communities. The Tamil TCs in the northern parts of Sri Lanka and the Muslims in the eastern parts had lived in ethnically segregated towns and villages as the war had limited the travel to and from those parts of the country. The TCs in NC stated that their only exposure to other ethnic groups consisted of their encounters with the Sri Lankan soldiers who were Sinhalese.

There are only Tamils here, and we all talk Tamil. We don’t know much about others. The only Sinhalese people we know are soldiers of the Sri Lankan Army. You are the first Sinhalese person I am talking to. (Nilu)
I met some Sinhalese people when we went on a field trip. Because the war is over, some TCs from other colleges came on field trips to Jaffna, and they stayed in our college. We got to speak to them. (Neth)

For many of the participating TCs in the NC, their interview with me was the longest conversation they had had with a Sinhalese person.

The Muslim TCs from the eastern parts of Sri Lanka who were in WC also came from ethnically segregated communities. WC was a multicultural college that gave them an opportunity to get to know and work with TCs from other communities.

My town is a Muslim town. We are all Muslim. Life was different there. It was a different culture. I never met people from other communities before I came to college. (Waseem)

However, unlike TCs from NC who were aware and sensitive to the fact that they did not have access to a large part of the country and its people, the TCs from WC and CC didn’t have the awareness that there was hardly any interaction with other communities.

What is interesting is, irrespective of whether the TCs had grown up in an area that was affected by the war and was, as a result, ethnically segregated, had grown up in a traditionally segregated area like eastern Sri Lanka, or had grown up in a multicultural part of the country, many had little exposure to sociocultural diversity.

Growing Up in a War-torn Country

How the TCs from different sociocultural groups and geographical regions experienced the Sri Lankan civil war is also important to understanding their identities. As the participating TCs were in their early twenties at the time of my study, they were born and had grown up during the war years. Unlike those from previous generations like myself who had known Sri Lanka before the civil war broke out, the TCs had not known a time without the war. There were a few TCs whose lives had been affected directly by the conflict.
Waseem’s Story

Waseem, who came from Muslim-dominated eastern Sri Lanka, had lost his father during the war. He and his five other siblings were raised by his mother.

My father is dead. He was a farmer. He was killed in 1990. The LTTE shot him and his three brothers when they were working in the field. This happened three days after my younger brother was born. I was two years old. I have four brothers and one sister, and my mother struggled to raise us. My mother is a housewife. She still cries when she talks about how she raised us. (Waseem)

Waseem stated that he had grown up in a Muslim community in eastern Sri Lanka, with no contact with other ethnic or religious groups. He first interacted with them after arriving in WC. Many of his colleagues from WC stated that Waseem had a lot of anger toward the Sinhalese when he first came to the college. For him, the war that killed his father and his uncles was a result of the Sri Lankan government not being able to address a larger social problem. Even during Waseem’s time in the teachers’ college, he remained close to other Muslims from the East and strongly requested a Muslim school for his internship.

Nagula’s Story

Another TC whose circumstances changed drastically because of the war was Nagula. Nagula was a Sri Lankan Tamil who had lived as an IDP (Internally Displaced Person) in Sri Lanka for 10 years.

In 1990, the Indian Peace Keeping Force came to Jaffna. That was the time I was born. Then my family moved to India. They returned after four years. By then the war had started. We had two options: either to go to Wanni or to Colombo. We decided to go to Colombo. My father continued to work in Jaffna. Me, my mother and my sister moved to Colombo. We lived in a room in Colombo for 10 years. My father had to fly to Colombo to see us and that cost a lot of money, so he came to see us only twice a year. In 2005, my father got work in Trinco [in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka], and we moved there. We lived together as a family after 15 years. (Nagula)

Nagula’s story echoes the experiences of many Sri Lankans who were displaced during the war.
Other Stories

Most of the TCs from Jaffna had family members or close friends who had been killed or wounded. Neriya narrated an incident that took place on her way home from school, when she and her friend saw a man shot dead.

I will never forget that incident. Me and my friend were coming home from school and we saw a man being shot. We don’t know what happened or who they were. But there was blood. (Neriya)

Nilu spoke of how she was caught in a crossfire on her way to a friend’s place.

Once, I was on my way to my friend’s place. It was very close to my home. But all of a sudden I heard gun shots. The army surrounded the area and cordoned off the area. The people on the road were cordoned off into a building and we were not allowed to go out. We didn’t know what was happening. All we could do was wait. I think the army had got some information about something going on in that area. All we could do was wait. My family was very worried about me. (Nilu)

Nilu also spoke of her neighbors who were affected by the war.

The LTTE used to take children. When the parents couldn’t pay them, they took the children. They took a child in my neighborhood. The mother still cries. She doesn’t know what happened to her son. Then there are those who join by choice too. (Nilu)

Commentary

Most participating TCs came from segregated social and educational settings. Although many (except those in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka that were in the war zone) were living in multicultural communities, there was little interaction among the different ethnic groups. This was due primarily to the segregated public schooling system. The TCs in NC, however, were conscious that they were cut off from the rest of the country and did not have a platform to communicate with other Sri Lankans. The TCs in WC and CC who had grown up in more peaceful parts of the country did not have the consciousness that they were cut off from people in northern Sri Lanka. This divide was also present in the TCs’ experiences with war. None of the TCs in WC and CC (except for Waseem) had had any experiences with war. Although they had grown up with a war, it was very much removed from their daily lives.
My findings show that the TCs bring a range of experiences in relation to diversity and war to their college experience. If teachers are to bridge communities and foster greater intercultural awareness, they need to have a greater sense of their own being. They need to first reflect on who they are (Miller, 2009). In particular, they need to reflect on their own experiences with diversity and war and how those experiences have shaped their identities and outlook on life. In this process of engaging in “identity work” (Clarke, 2009), TCs need first to acknowledge pre-conflict injustices and inequalities (Davies, 2004; Laplante, 2008) and how their shared experiences have shaped their different identities. Then, TCs need to understand the experiences of other TCs who come from different social and cultural backgrounds. For instance, although TCs from southern Sri Lanka were aware of a war, they did not know others who had had experiences with war. Similarly, the TCs from NC did not know what it was like to live outside of the war zone and experience the freedom those outside of the war zone were experiencing.

Teacher education programs need to view TCs’ experiential identities as a resource that needs to be openly shared in order to develop a greater understanding of what other Sri Lankan communities have experienced in their shared history. Greater awareness of what other communities experienced, either at an individual level or as a community, can help TCs broaden their cultural knowledge and identities. As I mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 3), Sri Lankan society is inclined to avoid and deny the existence of conflict (Walker, 2004). However, if transformation is to take place in education, the war cannot be overlooked or glossed over. It is in this respect that teacher education programs need to bring teachers’ experiential identities to the forefront.

Teacher Candidates’ Perceived Identities

Imagination is a powerful force for constructing identity as it moves beyond the here-and-now of engagement in practices by allowing individuals to create images of the world, and their place within it, across time and space. As Wenger (1998) states, “it is through imagination that we conceive of new developments, explore alternatives, and envision possible futures” (p. 178). In addition to their Background Profile Questionnaires and their narratives, the participating TCs were asked to complete Identity Portraits (IPs) as a means of unleashing more imaginative expressions of their identities. The TCs used colors, pictures, drawings, signs, and words to
describe their social and cultural identities as English language teachers. Some IPs were accompanied by the TCs narratives, and some were stand alone IPs. The TCs of WC stood out particularly in this regard. They employed photographs, drawings, sketches, and even three-dimensional objects such as flowers and buttons to express their identities.

Tables 16, 17, and 18 below depict the dominant identity traits the TCs identified with. Religious, ethnic and linguistic identities and familial ties were the most dominant identity traits that TCs from all three colleges aligned themselves closely with. In addition to these, the TCs of WC and CC depicted their interests, expectations and futuristic identities. Such futuristic identities were not present among TCs from NC.
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<th>Language</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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Table 17: Perceived Identities of Teacher Candidates of Central College (CC)

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<th>Hobbies &amp; interests</th>
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Table 18: Perceived identities of Teacher Candidates of Northern College (NC)

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Religious Identities

Religious identity was the identity that most TCs from all three colleges affiliated themselves closely with. Eight of twelve TCs from WC, six of eight from CC and five of eight from NC identified their religions. What was significant was that 16 of 19 TCs placed their religion in the heart or the head position of their IP to show how integral religion was to their identities. While some of the TCs simply wrote the name of their religion on their IP or stated that they were religious, others included religious emblems on their IP such as a crucifix for Christianity and the half moon and star for Islam. As depicted in Figure 13, Chintha pasted a badge/button of Lord Buddha on her face to highlight the prominence of religion in her life. Moreover, she included a picture of two children worshipping their parents, an image which is synonymous with the Buddhist culture.

Figure 13: Chintha’s Identity Portrait
Several of the Muslim TCs also made explicit statements about their religious identities.

Wafa said, “My religious identity as a Muslim lies in my heart”, while Careema expressed, “My head cover and my dress. I am a MUSLIM. [Her Identity Portrait shows her wearing a headscarf].” Similarly, Cala stated, “I am proud to be a Muslim. Judge a man by his CHARACTER and not by his RELIGION.” Finally, Chaman said “I have the heart of a Malay”.

Cala’s IP [Figure 14] shows how she brings her religious identity to the forefront.

(Emphasis as it appeared on the IPs)

Figure 14: Cala’s Identity Portrait
Such overt assertions were not present in the IPs of TCs from other religious groups. Waruni, William, Wasa, Wasana, and Careema, while aligning themselves with their own religions, also included other local religions in their portraits to show their acceptance of other religious groups or their solidarity with friends who belonged to those groups. William, for instance, stated, “I respect all religions.” On the other hand, Waheed, who is a Muslim raised and socialized as a Sinhalese and who constantly spoke about “not belonging to or not being accepted by either Sinhalese or Muslims” as a result of his upbringing, did not state his religious or ethnic identities in his IP. Instead, he stated he was multilingual. Although religion was absent in his IP, he spoke about the importance of having strong religious affiliations in affirming one’s identity.

I wish I belonged to one religion. At home I am a Muslim, but my mother educated me in Sinhalese Buddhist schools. When a Muslim child goes to a Sinhala school, they lose their identity. My mother doesn’t see the damage she caused. My mother pretends to be a Muslim. I know other couples who convert to Islam, and they lead happy lives as Muslims. You can’t be two things. (Waheed)

The importance of having a stable religious identity was echoed by Withya, a Tamil Hindu. Her Muslim mother had converted to Hinduism after marriage.

My mother is a full Hindu now. She was a Muslim, but she converted because of us. Otherwise we will be confused. At home we are all Hindu. (Withya)

However, Withya identified herself as a multicultural person. Her multicultural identity was shaped by her acceptance of other cultural groups. Withya stated, “I think I am multicultural. It’s not a problem for me. I like myself as a multicultural girl” (see Figure 17).

Irrespective of where the TCs were from or what their sociocultural backgrounds were, religion was important to them.

Familial Identities

Another identity that TCs from all three colleges embraced was their familial identity. TCs’ close ties with their families were evident, even though, in many cases, they had been strongly coerced by their families into becoming teachers. Many TCs used different mediums in their IPs to show the importance of their familial identities. Some expressed their familial identities by simply
stating the word “family” on different parts of the portrait silhouette such as the head, legs, arms or chest. Some TCs saw themselves as members of a nuclear family and others saw themselves as members of larger extended families or communities. Camal, for example, listed the words, “mother, father, 3 sisters, grandparents, other relatives” along the legs of his silhouette to show that he was a member of a larger extended family (see Figure 15).

On her silhouette’s legs, Careema wrote, “My parents who give me strength and support represent my legs.” Even in her interview, Careema spoke of how her family supported her. Cala identified her family as a “treasure trove” (see Figure 14).

Chintha, who created one of the most multimodal IPs, pasted a picture of a young woman worshipping her parents on her silhouette (see Figure 13). She wrote the word “responsibilities” underneath the picture to represent her sense of her responsibilities toward her parents. Worshipping older relatives and teachers is a common practice among both Sinhalese and Tamil cultures in Sri Lanka. The picture of the worshipping woman is symbolic of her respect for her parents. Strong attachment to their families was a theme common among the IPs of Teacher Candidates of all three NCOE.
Figure 15: Camal’s Identity Portrait

Ethnolinguistic Identities

Ethnic and linguistic identities were also represented heavily in the IPs. Many TCs identified strongly with their language and their ethnic backgrounds. While some TCs simply stated their ethnicity, others included pictures that depicted their ethnic identity, such as pictures of people dressed in ethnic clothes. As mentioned above, Cala, for example, had dressed her Identity Portrait in a headscarf (see Figure 14).
In their representations of their linguistic identities, many TCs identified with their first language, which was either Sinhalese or Tamil. Some TCs, such as Chaman and Waheed who were multilingual, listed all the local languages they spoke. Although all TCs who spoke English were in the process of becoming English teachers and prepared Identity Portraits in English, not many identified explicitly with the English language. Two TCs from CC and five TCs from WC
identified with the English language. None of the TCs from NC mentioned English in their IPs. While some TCs wrote the name of the language, others, such as Waruni, Wansha and Waheed, used another script to signify the other languages.

Multicultural and Sri Lankan Identities

In the IPs, the TCs aligned themselves with the ethnic and linguistic identities they affiliated themselves with. There were a few exceptions in which the TCs viewed themselves as multicultural. Careema, whose IP showed her dressed in a headscarf, and who identified herself very closely with her Muslim identity stated in her IP, “I am multicultural. I value everyone.” Careema’s notion of multiculturalism was tied to her acceptance of other cultures. Similarly, Withya also identified herself as a “multicultural girl” (see Figure 17). Of all the TC participants, only Camal (see Figure 15) and Wasa identified themselves as “Sri Lankan.” The rest of the TCs indentified themselves along their own religious, ethnic, linguistic, familial and professional lines.
Figure 17: Withya’s Identity Portrait

My beliefs in:
- religion
- caste
- ethnicity
- social groups
- relationships

@ - My father
* - My Mother
† - My Life partner

My Language fluency:
- Tamil
- Sinhala
- English

So I think I'm multicultural one. & It's not a problem to me. I like myself as a multicultural girl.
Futuristic Identities

The participants in WC included a wide range of social and cultural identities in their IPs. These identities consisted of their religious, linguistic and ethnic identities as well as the roles they played in the larger society, their personal qualities, hobbies and interests, their ambitions and future goals. Their identities did not consist simply of their present identities as TCs, but also their future goals and personal and professional ambitions such as marriage, further education and career advancements. Although Waheed’s IP didn’t show the cultural dilemma that was prevalent throughout his narrative, as depicted in Figure 18, it showed a range of interests and ambitions.

Figure 18: Waheed’s Identity Portrait
However, such multifaceted identities were not present in the IPs of TCs from NC. The majority of the TCs saw close affiliations with their religion and families and their identities as teachers. None of the TCs of NC included hobbies, interests, ambitions or future goals. These differences could be a result of their having grown up amid a war and in a situation where they were presented with very few options in life. Nilu’s IP in Figure 19 is representative of the identities that TCs from NC created.

![Nilu’s Identity Portrait](image)

**Figure 19: Nilu’s Identity Portrait**
Commentary

The IPs gave the TCs an imaginative space in which to recreate their identities as they perceived them. The TCs’ narratives were accompanied with multimodal IPs. In discussing advertising and media companies, Kress (2000, 2003) demonstrates how multimodal communications are used to make companies’ messages more persuasive and memorable. The use of IPs provided the TCs a medium to highlight and make memorable and persuasive the identities that mattered to them using any medium of expression. The very strong sociocultural identities that had fragmented the Sri Lankan society and were at the heart of the ethnic conflict were represented in the TCs’ IPs. Except for two TCs, none of the TCs identified themselves as Sri Lankan, but instead identified themselves in terms of their religious, ethnic, linguistic and family associations. As I will discuss later in Chapter 7, such divisive self-perceptions are also a result of the stratified Sri Lankan school system. Schooling is a process in which students align themselves with certain identities in opposition to other identities.

Moreover, while the TCs in WC and CC projected their future goals, ambitions and even hobbies and other interests, these elements were absent in the identity texts of the TCs in NC. NC TCs’ identities were tied primarily to their immediate social and familial identities. This result could be due to the fact of their having grown up and lived amidst a war and in a less-developed part of the country where there are fewer opportunities to imagine life in more creative ways. Even to this date, the infrastructure development in northern Sri Lanka is not as advanced as in other parts of the country.

The IPs helped shed light on an aspect of TCs’ identities that would not be possible through a traditional data collection tool. The IPs were very powerful in pointing out how deeply rooted religion, language and ethnicity are in TCs’ identities. These are the very identities that fracture Sri Lankan society. In order to help TCs consciously nurture more inclusive and non-extremist
identities (Orujuela, 2008), so that they can oppose extremism and pave the way for a more inclusive multicultural society, they first need to confront what constitutes their identities and what identity means to them personally and professionally. IPs are useful not only because they mirror TCs’ identities. By reflecting on their IPs, TCs can take a step back and scrutinize what they have expressed in them. In doing so they can see how they can foster more inclusive identities that take into consideration their agency and can help them to become transformative intellectuals.

Discussion: Toward Inclusive Teaching Selves and Role Definitions

Unlike the more homogeneous situation that exists in many other teacher education contexts, the TCs in the Sri Lankan NCOE have different ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds and come from different parts of the country. They are thus heterogeneous and, in this way, representative of the diversity of their prospective students. Research on post-conflict teacher preparation has highlighted the importance of teachers being representative of all the communities they serve (Smith, 2006). Therefore, there must be diverse teachers who can go into schools that are populated by students who have backgrounds different from their own and work as cultural brokers.

Yet although the overall teaching pool in Sri Lanka consists of diverse teachers, the specific composition of TCs in the respective three NCOE is not equally diverse. While the TCs at WC and CC are diverse, belonging to all Sri Lankan ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, the TCs in NC are primarily Tamil TCs from northern Sri Lanka. This segregation results in separating TCs who have lived in the war zone from those who have not. Placing TCs from war-affected northern Sri Lanka in WC or CC, both of which are located in areas that were relatively peaceful during wartime, and placing TCs from those relatively peaceful areas in NC would be a way of making Sri Lankan TCs generally more aware of the different experiences and living conditions that have and continue to affect different segments of Sri Lankan society.
Although the participants in my study consisted of a diverse group of TCs in terms of ethnicity, religion, and language, what is interesting are the parallels in their perceived identities. Although all the TCs were very careful in asserting their own identities by distinguishing them from the identities of others, they all had a strong sense of identity based on a set of common values and priorities. Religion, language, ethnicity and family were integral to their perceptions of their identities.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Sinhala nationalist ideology asserts a vision of a unified Sri Lanka with the aim of advancing the Sinhala Buddhist identity. In complementary contrast, Tamil nationalist ideology asserts the right for self-determination in a Tamil homeland located in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. The assertion of Sinhalese and Tamil identities is perceived as a threat to the other. The ethnic polarization that started at the dawn of Sri Lanka’s independence and was further cemented by the war is prevalent in how the TCs perceived themselves and distinguished themselves from other Sri Lankans. Although many Sri Lankans live in places of varying heterogeneity, segregation, polarization and incompatibility between and among various communities is common. Just as the warring parties drew clear dividing lines between who were considered their friends and who was seen as “the enemy,” the TCs, too, were explicit about who they are and who they are not. As I will discuss in detail in Chapter 7, one reason for this division is the segregation of primary and secondary education along linguistic and religious lines that prevent children from different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups interacting and bonding. As the TCs strive to preserve their identities, they move toward what Sen (2006) calls monoculturalisms within a multicultural society. Only two TCs saw themselves as having a unified Sri Lankan identity. Shared identities were absent in the TCs identity narratives.

What is also interesting is that, although all TCs made clear distinctions from others, ethnicity, religion, language and families are at the very core of all TCs’ identities, irrespective of their backgrounds. For many, the basic premise of their identities seems to be similar. Therefore, these core factors could be the foundation that inclusive and shared identities, or, to use Kumaravedivelu’s (2012) term, “teaching Selves” are built on. Therefore, teacher education programs need to help prospective teachers develop a clear sense of their ethnic and cultural identities, social location and knowledge of how power and privilege operate in their societies.
This would involve assisting teachers to examine deeply their attitudes and assumptions about themselves as well as those who are different from them (Banks, et al., 2005).

Diverse identities and experiences are a resource the teacher education programs in post-conflict times can utilize to encourage teachers to develop greater awareness and sensitivity toward “the other.” As Vongalis-Macrow (2006) asserts, teachers are key agents of social change in post-conflict reconciliation initiatives. For this agency to materialize, however, teacher education programs need to foster an institutional culture that helps TCs to develop more inclusive and pluralistic “teaching selves.”

Cummins (2001), in his discussion of coercive and collaborative relations of power, talks about the importance of “role definitions” or how educators define their roles. He points out that how teachers define themselves influences the ways they interact with their students, especially students who are different from themselves. Teachers’ identity negotiations either reinforce coercive relations of power or promote collaborative relations. If teachers have more inclusive and more pluralistic identities, they will be more willing to teach students from diverse backgrounds and their classrooms will be more inclusive. It is such inclusive identities that can pave the way for a new, inclusive multicultural society (Lederach, 1997; Richmond & Carey, 2005; van Tongere, 2005).

The following three chapters will elaborate further on the diverse experiences of TCs within Sri Lanka’s teacher education program at the NCOE and will examine more closely the question of how TCs’ identities and experiences shape their teaching practices and perceptions of their students.
Chapter 7: Becoming Teachers: Experiences Within The NCOE Program

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the program offered at the National Colleges of Education (NCOE). It starts with a journal entry that presents a typical day at Central College (CC). This is followed by discussions about the different aspects of the program, such as the multicultural residential experience, the coursework, assignments, projects and exams, extracurricular activities, the block teaching experience and internship. Then I present my journal entries of my visits to the schools in which my participants were doing their practicum. The purpose of these journal entries is to provide a clear notion of the culture of the schools the different participants were teaching in. The chapter concludes with a discussion on teacher education as a space for teacher growth and intercultural awareness.

A Typical Day for Teacher Candidates in Central College (CC): A Narrative

It is a Wednesday. The morning assembly at Central College in the Kandy District of the Central Province has just ended. Teacher Candidates (TCs) in their white uniforms walk out of the auditorium to their respective classes. This is a ritual that happens every Wednesday morning. All the TCs gather at the college auditorium after breakfast, which they eat in their residences following the daily physical exercise routine from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m.

The morning assembly begins with religious observations and is followed by various announcements made by the president of the college. If special events are taking place in the college that day, they are also announced during the morning assembly.
Sometimes there are special assemblies that take a longer time than usual. During my previous visit to Central College, for example, a special assembly was organized for the second year students who had just returned from their community outreach work in rural villages to report on the work they had done.

The atmosphere in CC is similar to that in a local government school. Seeing the TCs reminds me of my own school days. In my old school, a morning assembly was held every Monday. All students who go to public schools in Sri Lanka wear white uniforms. In a country where many people live in poverty, the uniform is intended as a symbolic way to equalize the highly economically stratified society. Additionally, white is understood as a more suitable color to wear in the hot and humid Sri Lankan weather.

The female TCs I observe are dressed in white saris. The male TCs wear white trousers and shirts. These clothes are the uniform the TCs wear during academic hours. Yet, there is some room for individual expression. The female TCs, for example, have the choice of draping their saris the way they want and I have noticed how TCs from different geographical and ethnic communities wear the sari differently. The Muslim female students wear headscarves. The TCs have various other uniforms they wear during different activities. For instance, they wear the college running suit during sports practices and various outdoor activities. The women have a special colored sari for special occasions. In CC, this sari is pink.

After the morning assembly, the TCs leave the auditorium and disperse to their respective classes. During their first two years in college, the TCs are divided into classes in which they remain throughout their residential training. Each
class consists of a mix of TCs from various social, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

After the assembly, I walk back with the rest of the Teacher Educators (TE) to the teachers’ lounge. There are two staff lounges and the staff is divided between the two locations. The teaching staff of the CC does not have their own personal offices, but instead have common staff rooms with individual lockers in which to keep their belongings.

The TEs then proceed to their respective classes. As Kandy is the town I grew up in, there were some in the CC staff I knew or who had worked with my parents. I follow Tanya to her methodology class. On our way to the class she briefs me about her students and what she plans to do.

By noon, the classes are over and the TCs hurry to their respective hostels for lunch. The TCs’ meals are provided at the hostel. Although the entire staff can have their lunch in the hostel cafeteria, many prefer to bring their lunch from home. During my field visits, I divided my time between having lunch in the cafeteria and the staff lounge. The cafeteria is a busy place, full of energy and many sounds of people eating and talking. Today there is a theatre group visiting the college, and they are also having lunch in the cafeteria. The TCs are busy eating, talking and serving food. Some finish their meals quickly and run to their residences to take a short nap before the classes resume at 1:00 p.m.

By 1:00 p.m., the movement in the college subsides and the TCs are in their classes. As I don’t have any observations or interviews scheduled, I remain in the staff lounge, filling in my observation field notes and talking to some of the
staff members. The few lecturers who are free during this time sit around a large table doing various tasks. Once I complete my work, I walk around the college taking pictures of the facilities, of the posters, pictures, and notice boards on the walls, and of the sculptures that are spread throughout the college ground.

At 4:00 p.m., the academic sessions are over. The TCs rush back to their residences for tea. By 4:30 p.m. they are congregating in different locations. There are groups of TCs near the playground, in front of the administrative building, and in the main auditorium. Some late-comers continue to trickle in. Instructors who are in charge of the evening activities join them. Typically this evening slot from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. is devoted to various extracurricular activities such as sports, meetings of various unions and societies, such as the Literary Association, and classes for learning aesthetic subjects. Today the TCs are getting ready for the English Day which will be held in a couple of weeks.

By 6:30 p.m., the TCs return to their hostels. Some rush back while a few stay on continuing their discussions. As I have felt during my many visits to the NCOE, I feel the TCs are always in a rush, moving quickly between their various tasks, duties and locations.

Multicultural Residential Experience

Researchers in education in post-conflict times point consistently toward the crucial relationship between education and reconciliation (Barakat, et al., 2008; Minow, 1998; Parmar, et al., 2010; Smith & Vaux). They argue that education can provide opportunities for nurturing ethnically tolerant communities and cultivating inclusive citizenship (Bush & Saltarelli, 2001). Winitzky
and Barlow (1998), for example, point out how learning environments that are conducive to multicultural initiatives can foster positive outlooks toward diversity. Particularly in a post-conflict situation, education can be used to foster social and political reconciliation and integration. Education alone can help dampen the impact of the conflict and nurture an ethnically tolerant climate, desegregate minds, disarm history and cultivate an inclusive citizenship (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Moreover, teacher education for social justice, which has a greater emphasis on teacher agency, insists on the importance of creating opportunities for prospective teachers to interact with others rather than simply studying about them. This experience can help new teachers take on leadership roles and reconstruct the educational landscapes they are working in in order to create greater equity, opportunities and outcomes for all students, irrespective of their backgrounds (Zeichner, 2011). Therefore, teacher education needs to provide teachers experiences that highlight their responsibility to serve as agents of change (Hawkins, 2011a) or as transformative intellectuals.

As discussed in the previous chapter, many of the TCs I met during my study had grown up in ethnically segregated communities. Their residential training period provided them the opportunity to coexist, collaborate and learn about the other communities of their fellow Sri Lankans. In their list of seven negative and conflict-provoking manifestations of education, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) state that segregated education enforces inequality, low-self esteem and stereotypes. Thus the multicultural experience provided at the NCOE can help TCs to overcome the negative impact of segregation. It can help them overcome the limited interethnic interactions and intolerance that is perpetuated in segregated primary and secondary education (Lopes Cardozo, 2008).

While many TCs complained about the rigor of the routine, they also spoke of the many advantages their residential training brought. Among these advantages was the fact that, for many, their college experience provided them with their first exposure to Sri Lankan multicultural diversity.

It was very helpful for us to be with different people. We always chatted. We learned a lot about their backgrounds, customs and many things we didn’t know. I will always value that experience. (Camal)
We got to meet people from different ethnic and religious groups. I didn’t know Sinhalese people before. I had only seen them on TV. But in college we got involved with them. We also celebrated all Sri Lankan religious and cultural events. (Cala)

Integrated education such as the one offered in the NCOE is recognized as an effective means to reconcile previously conflicting communities. Providing more opportunities for intergroup contact (Donnelly & Hughes, 2009) that foster coexistence (Sampson, 2003) and encourage dialogue (Tully, 2004) can help estranged communities reconcile. Getting to know people from different social and cultural groups and receiving knowledge about them can lead toward improved attitudes (Johnson & Stewart, 2007).

The TCs also celebrated all local cultural and religious festivals in the NCOE. These experiences further broadened their knowledge of other cultures. They did so primarily through the “symbolic curriculum,” (Gay, 1995, 2002). The celebration of cultural events made TCs value other cultures outside of the formal curriculum. The experience of living in the college broadened the TCs understandings of Sri Lankan society. In a society that is deeply rooted in its cultures, cultural celebrations play a significant role in Sri Lankans’ lives. These festivals are highly valued and considered important by all Sri Lankan communities. Therefore, celebrating these events are an affirmation of diverse cultures and identities.
During many of the interviews I conducted with them, the TCs discussed how they learned about other communities by living together with them for two years. However, the colleges were not static contexts that the TCs had to fit into. Although the colleges had a schedule, how the TCs experienced it was very personal.

When we went there, we didn’t know each other. We didn’t know anyone. We had to create our own environment. There was no one to tell us anything. We had to identify things, analyze and understand. (Waheed)

Camal, a male TC from a Sinhalese village spoke about the novelty of entering the teachers’ college. Every aspect of life in the college, ranging from the subjects TCs had to study, to the environment they had to live in, to interacting with their lecturers was a new experience. One of the biggest challenges for the majority of the TCs was the linguistic transition from communicating in their first language to functioning in English on a day-to-day basis as well as at an academic level.
It was a new experience. We come from a Sinhalese society, so when we come to the college, it’s a novel experience for us. The first thing is we are frightened to talk to the lecturers. We had to talk in English. But with time, we learned what we should do. It is a challenge. We got through the challenge with our effort and hard work. Then the lecturers helped us. Everybody in the college, from the minor staff to the admin, they helped us. (Camal)

Being immersed in an English-language environment of that nature facilitated the TCs’ language socialization. Many shed their inhibitions about speaking in English. As Neela stated, “We learnt to use English without being shy.”

Even during my many visits to the three colleges, I noticed the murals and many art works that depicted the coexistence of different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. Even in the exclusively Tamil Northern College, there were religious signs of communities who were not present in NC. This is another example of the strong symbolic curriculum Geneva Gay (1995, 2002) talks about. The presence of TCs from other cultures and the many cultural celebrations the programs hosted made the TCs aware of the existence of other cultures and gave insights into their cultural celebrations.

Coursework

Shah (2012) contends it is important for educational reformers in post-conflict nation states to construct new curricula with a broader understanding of what it means to be a nation state and with a focus on the skills teachers need to have in order to create more inclusive learning environments. However, the curriculum in the NCOE in Sri Lanka has not changed since the end of the war. Courses in human rights education, citizenship education, intercultural and peace education have the potential to foster social cohesion (Smith 2005), but these are not taught in the NCOE. Nor do the programs adopt curricula that seek to raise students’ awareness about inequalities or expose them to the fact that certain types of pedagogies can constrain students’ life chances beyond the classroom (Clarke & Morgan, 2011). Although the Sociology of Education curriculum includes topics such as “Diversity of sociocultural background” and examines the factors that contribute to sociocultural diversity such as social class/sub classes, ethnicity, religion locality (urban/rural) and their implications for classroom practice, these topics seem to be addressed as separate topics and events rather than seeing the causes, how they are interconnected and how they shape the social fabric. The common “formal curriculum”
(Gay, 2002) and assignment schedule as used in all three colleges of the NCOE does not include such courses. Instead, a transmission mode of pedagogy (Cummins, 2009) is used to prepare the students for their examinations.

As I discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), there have been educational reforms from the 1990s onward aimed toward social cohesion and peace. These reforms are also an indication that the Sri Lankan government views education as playing a role in fostering social cohesion. The 2006 *Education Sector Development Framework and Programme* (Ministry of Education, 2006) recognizes teachers as mediators who can act as role models for nonviolence, democracy and the promotion of rights and actively engage in peace building. The 2008 *National Policy and Comprehensive Framework of Actions on Social Cohesion for Education and Peace* (Ministry of Education, 2008) identifies the teaching of the Second National Language (2NL) for Teacher Candidates of the NCOE as a means of making future teachers competent in the other National Language. Its *Education for Social Cohesion and Peace Programme* (ESCP) identifies the NCOE as a college-level body that should implement the social cohesion program. The various components of the *Education for Social Cohesion and Peace Programme* (Ministry of Education, 2008) identifies how the NCOE can assist in making social cohesion a reality (Davies, 2011).

During the first two years in the NCOE program, TCs take 17 courses. These include six professional subjects that, irrespective of their areas of specialization, TCs follow. In addition, TCs take courses in the four subjects they major in, in three minors, and in four general subjects. Table 19 illustrates the list of courses the TCs I met took in the NCOE.

Table 19: Courses Offered at the NCOE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional area:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Educational Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sociology in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational Measurement and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Guidance and Counseling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Courses Offered at the NCOE
5. Elements of Education, School Organization and Classroom Management and Educational Technology
6. Educational Practice

**Specialization area:**

**Major**
7. Reading and Writing
8. Listening and Speaking
9. Methodology and Structure of English
10. English Literature

**Minor**
11. Library and Information 1
12. Library and Information 2
13. Computer Software and Hardware

**General**
14. Mother Tongue (Sinhala/Tamil)
   Second Language (Sinhala/Tamil)
15. Health and Personal Hygiene
   Physical Education and Hygiene
16. Aesthetic Education
   Sri Lankan Culture
   Life Competency
17. Library and Information Technology
   Computer Awareness

The biggest challenge the TCs said they faced was the language barrier. All the TCs had studied in their first language while in school. On the one hand, they had to learn the language and, on the other, they had to learn a new subject and terminology in that language. This was a challenge that was not be faced by TCs teaching other subjects.
I studied in the Tamil medium. Studying new subjects like psychology and guidance and counseling in English was difficult. The terminology was new. We have never heard those words before. We had to memorize new words, spellings, meanings, and how to write. It’s a lot of work. (Nilu)

Although the NCOE are expected to take a role in the implementation of the Education for Social Cohesion and Peace Programme (ESCP), the TCs did not talk about getting instruction in social cohesion and peace education in the formal curriculum. Similarly, the TCs did not talk about the instruction they received in the Second National Language (2NL), Sinhalese or Tamil. When I asked, most of the TCs said they wanted to teach students from their own linguistic background as they felt it was important to know the students’ first language, even though they were teaching English and the knowledge of the students’ first language was not necessary. However, none of them mentioned that they had, in fact, received instruction in a second language, Sinhalese or Tamil. Their second language learning experiences and the linguistic resources they had acquired didn’t seem to matter too much for the TCs. While many spoke of how they found subjects like psychology and sociology to be very useful when teaching in their diverse internship schools, they did not talk about their knowledge of another local language.

Assignments, Projects and Exams

Coursework is coupled with a series of assignments the TCs complete during their three years of study. The assignments ranged from written papers and reports to, presentations, debates, panel discussions, posters, and booklets. Many TCs stated they found the presentations interesting. They enjoyed finding material and preparing for presentations. They felt there was more scope for them to be innovative in presentations, whereas in written assignments they had to research and reproduce material on a certain topic. The TCs also found the presentations useful as they allowed them to speak in English in front of a class and thereby gradually lose their inhibitions surrounding the use of the English language. Overall, most of the instruction followed a transmission model (Cummins, 2009; Miller, 2007, 2010) for mastering traditional school subjects and adopting basic cultural values. Although the TCs did a series of assignments, at the end, they were assessed primarily on their marks in a year-end standardized examination.

However, there were instances of Transaction/Social Constructivist Pedagogy and Transformative Pedagogy (Cummins, 2009; Miller, 2007, 2010). The Community Outreach
Project and a series of projects during their block teaching and internships provided TCs space for transformative action that allowed them to change their communities. They completed the Community Outreach Project in their second year. In groups, they went into a less privileged, rural community where they undertook a project to improve the conditions of the local school. Usually, the TCs lived in that community and worked in collaboration with the parents and other members of that community. The TCs also completed various projects during the block teaching they did during the first two years and during their internships. I will discuss those assignments later on in Chapter 9. Similarly, some of the projects the TCs did during their internships (see Table 20 below) allowed them to undertake transformative action. However, the absence of explicit instruction in transformative pedagogy and its importance resulted in transformative action being a mere coincidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments and Projects</th>
<th>1st Year Coursework</th>
<th>2nd Year Coursework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One week school observation</td>
<td>One week block teaching</td>
<td>Two spells of one-week-long block teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child studies project</td>
<td>School profile project</td>
<td>Four skills project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community outreach project</td>
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Extracurricular Activities

A range of extracurricular activities are offered in the three colleges. Most of my discussions with the TCs about the time they spent in college involved their engagement in various extracurricular activities. Withya outlines the various activities they did throughout the week:

We did a lot of extracurricular activities. We liked it. On Monday, we had martial arts. Tuesdays, it was aesthetics, like drawing, dancing and music. Although we are Tamil, we had to do *Udarata* dancing. That was good. On Wednesdays, we had the Literary Union. Thursdays, we had agriculture. We cleaned the school and did gardening. Friday was the sports day. There was a “keep fit” program. We also did most sports like basketball, hockey, and badminton. (Withya)

While some TCs stated that there was an overemphasis on extracurricular activities, many appreciated the opportunities they had during their two residential years to engage in activities they had previously not been involved in. Overall, like Camal, many TCs found the extracurricular activities to be a relief from routine and academic work.

We did sports and organized events. We also celebrated cultural events. It was a good change from routine. The coursework was tough. Sports let us come out of our classes and interact with others. It was a big relief. It was good to run around and play. I felt very free. (Camal)

Extracurricular study of aesthetic subjects includes dancing, music and drawing. Dancing and music include genres of music and dancing from the different regions and ethnic backgrounds of
the country. For instance, the Tamil students in NC studied Bharatha dancing and Karnatik music, and TCs from CC studied Kandyan dancing and Eastern music.

A range of sports was offered in the colleges that all TCs were expected to take part in. The TCs are given formal instruction about various types of sports as well as the opportunity to play. Some of the games offered in the colleges include netball, volleyball, badminton, cricket, and football, as well as various track-and-field events. Waheed, who proved himself to be a good sportsman while in college, stated:

I hadn’t been in a playground until I came to the college. In college, I did the 1500 meter race, and I got third place. I did the marathon and got sixth place. I did long jump and broke the record of a senior. I played football, volleyball, cricket and everything. I also did martial arts. (Waheed)

Cultural events of all ethnic and religious backgrounds are celebrated in the three colleges. These events include all cultural and religious festival celebrated in Sri Lanka. The purpose of these celebrations is to make TCs from various communities aware of the rituals and celebrations of other communities such as the **Sinhalese and Tamil New Year**, **Thai Pongal**, **Deepavali**, **Ramadan**, and **Christmas**. Many TCs got to experience cultural and religious festivities of other cultures first-hand for the first time. The TCs got to experience the festivities and rituals and taste traditional foods associated with the events.

We celebrated all the religious and cultural festivals such as **Vesak**, **Thai Pongal**, **Ramadan** and **Christmas**. We got the chance to get together. We tasted food and we had fun. These are things I had only seen on television. It was good to experience them first-hand. (William)

As WC and CC were multicultural colleges, festivals of all ethnic and religious groups were celebrated in these schools. However, as NC was a predominantly a Tamil college, with a few Muslims, they did not celebrate or have the exposure to festivals celebrated by the Sinhalese community.

Each college has various clubs and societies. They range from sports clubs to various cultural and religious associations. These associations organize the various social, cultural and religious events the colleges hold. As the WC is exclusively an English teachers’ college, the various associations are also primarily related to enhancing knowledge of the English language and were
held in English. In CC, many clubs, except for the Sinhalese Literary Association and the Tamil Literary Association, were conducted in English, as the student population was multilingual. However in the NC, except for the English Union, the rest of the unions were conducted in Tamil, the mother tongue of the TCs. Table 21 gives a list of the various associations in the three colleges.

**Table 21: Student Clubs and Associations in the Three NCOE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>WC</th>
<th>NC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist Association</td>
<td>English Literary Association</td>
<td>Tamil Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Association</td>
<td>Buddhist Association</td>
<td>Hindu Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Association</td>
<td>Catholic Association</td>
<td>Christians’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Association (Sinhala)</td>
<td>Muslim Association</td>
<td>Muslims’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Association</td>
<td>Hindu Union</td>
<td>Sports Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Association</td>
<td>Library Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare Society</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life Skills Society</td>
<td>Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highlight of these clubs and societies is they are formed and led by the TCs themselves. In the interviews I conducted, many TCs discussed the various leadership roles they took in the student-led associations as the highlight of their college life.

I was the secretary of the English Association. I had to undertake a huge project. I had to do a language camp. I had to coordinate with all the TCs, get them to work, do paper work, organize, etc. I couldn’t even sleep well for about a month. It was a big task. We had a two-day English Camp. But it was a great success. I learned a lot from that. I gained a lot of leadership skills. (Chintha)

I was very involved in extracurricular activities. I was the president of the Welfare Society. I missed a lot of classes also. But I was able to achieve a lot. We made track kits for the entire college and dealt with electricity and water problems. (Waheed)

Notably, these TCs did not have such leadership opportunities prior to coming to the college.
As stated earlier, the purpose of the multitude of extracurricular activities is two-fold. On one hand, they give the TCs insights into the various cultural and religious events that take place in Sri Lanka, as well as events that are typically held in various schools. On the other, these events give the TCs first-hand experience of being involved in those events. All events that are typically held in local schools were also conducted in the colleges. These events include English days, sports days, literary events, and various competitions (debating, singing, music, art, etc.).

As I interviewed the TCs during their internships, many stated how their prior experiences from the college were helping them participate more actively in their respective schools. Their organizational skills helped them to integrate well and become active members of their internship school communities. Many schools that accepted interns expected this service from the TCs. As the TCs had to organize every aspect of these events, it helped them build their leadership and teamwork skills.

**Block Teaching Experience**

Studies on early field experience show how it increases the empathy and understanding of diverse learners and makes a positive impact on their students’ beliefs and attitudes toward them (Hones, 1997; Panago, et al., 1995; Wolffe, 1996). Prior to their one-year internship, the TCs have four such early field experiences. These are practice or “block teaching” teaching sessions, which consist of three, two-week practica carried out during the first two years of the program. In addition to allowing them to put the theoretical knowledge they have acquired into practice, this period allows them to identify the physical and human resources of the school as well as its specific school culture (Sri Lankan-German Development Corporation, n.d.). During the block teaching, TCs are assigned randomly to schools. Ten to twelve TCs are allocated to one school and each TC teaches two classes. Typically, practice teaching schools are less privileged schools located in the same district as the college. Chintha’s description of her block teaching schools captures the experiences of many TCs:

> Each block teaching school I went to during my first two years in the program was different. Pera Elementary School was a small school with few classrooms, but the students were good. Greenwood High School was a good boys’ school. The students are mischievous, but they are active and do their work well. Blossom School is a coed school. I did not enjoy working there at all. It was very hard to teach those
students. I even had to complain to the principal. Valley School was the worst school I have been to. It’s in a slum. The students are so weak and they don’t do any work at all. It’s their family background. Most parents don’t have work, or they are involved in illegal businesses. But I felt they appreciated what I did. (Chintha)

All TCs spoke about how their block teaching experience helped them grow as teachers. Their descriptions of their block teaching schools and their students highlighted how the experience was an eye-opener for them to the diverse schools that existed in Sri Lanka. Many TCs had grown up in secluded communities, attending schools with populations similar to their own social backgrounds. The block teaching experience gave them insight into school cultures that were different from their own. The experience also gave them a more realistic notion of what teaching entailed. What is important to note here is that, while the block teaching was an eye opener for TCs, in terms of making them aware of the range of public schools that existed in Sri Lanka, they were not able to recognize the social inequalities that were perpetuated through schooling and what teachers can do to change this trend. Instead, like Chintha, many TCs continued to hold what Ryan (1972), calls, ‘a blaming the victim’ attitudes. During each block teaching session, the TCs maintained a reflective journal and a portfolio and completed various projects. These included:

**Child Studies Project (Individual)** – The TCs follow several students and observe them throughout the school day from the time they arrive in school until they leave. They observe how the students engage in lessons as well as their interactions outside of class. The purpose of this assignment is to identify individual differences among students and the various factors that affect their behavior.

**School Profile Project (Group)** – The TCs research and create a profile of their internship school. They find out about the history of the school as well as its present situation, including information about the students, the staff, the resources and the facilities the school has.

**Four Skills Project (Individual)** – The TCs prepare a report on how the four main language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) can be improved in the grade they are teaching.
Commentary

During the first two years in the NCOE teacher education program, the TCs reside in the college they attend. This opportunity to live among TCs from other communities brought about several of the results noted in the literature. It fostered more opportunities for intergroup contact (Donnelly & Hughes, 2009), promoted living together (Sinclair, 2004), and fostered coexistence (Sampson, 2003) and a greater understanding of other communities. As Allport (1954) states, frequent interactions among people from different social and cultural groups enhances intergroup collaboration and understanding. Though there is no empirical evidence to suggest that increased social interactions and relationships among diverse groups will lead to peace, it is unlikely that integrated education will fare worse than segregated schools (Johnson and Stewart, 2007).

A residential program of this nature offers what Neuberger (2007) calls “democratic socialization,” where the TCs learn coexistence, cooperation and tolerance. The TCs get to live and work with other TCs from different sociocultural backgrounds in an environment where they are free to express and celebrate their cultural diversity. Moreover, hosting cultural festivals is a means of valuing one’s own cultural festivals as well as valuing the festivals of other cultural groups that TCs previously had little insight about. Similarly, the various extracurricular activities and experiences, such as early field base experience, allowed them to get first-hand experience of teaching diverse learners. For TCs who had come from segregated schooling backgrounds, living in residence at college provided a space to get to know and work with TCs from other cultural backgrounds. As WC and CC were more diverse, the TCs were exposed to more diversity. However, even after the war, the population in NC was primarily Tamil. As a result, NC did not provide its students the multicultural experience the other two colleges offered. In Chapter 8, I will discuss in detail the impact of this “democratic socialization” on the TCs. The integrated education offered at the NCOE is coupled with a strong cocurriculum and a symbolic curriculum (Gay, 2002).

However, the formal curriculum does not pay much attention to social cohesion or peace. Even the many Sri Lankan educational reforms for social cohesion and peace, or the fact that the TCs were getting instruction in the Second National Language (2NL), did not emerge in the TCs’ narratives. As Crossley (2000a) states, identity narratives are selective and include the
experiences that are significant to the narrator (Heikkinin, 1999). Thus the narrators use their agency to construct their narratives (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). The instruction the TCs received in relation to social cohesion or instruction in the 2NL did not emerge in the TCs’ narratives. If prospective teachers are to see themselves as agents of change, they need to first be made aware of their role and their agency to change the existing educational environment through transformative action. The formal, symbolic and societal curricula (Gay 2000, 2002) should seek to raise TCs’ awareness of their agency. Moreover, at every level, the curriculum needs to include a “cultural diversity knowledge base” (Gay, 2002) such as courses that can provide the TCs explicit knowledge about the characteristics of the various communities that exist in society. Courses such as multicultural education or peace education should be woven into this process. Instead, what is present in the NCOE is a strong “symbolic curriculum” that teaches about other cultures and coexistence implicitly. This approach does not get the TCs to openly talk about, discuss, negotiate or share their thoughts about cultural diversity and the various social and cultural inequalities that exist in Sri Lankan society.

Internships

In their third and final year, the TCs complete a one-year internship. According to the Guidelines for Internship for National Colleges of Education (n.d.), the overall aim of the internship is:

…to provide opportunities for prospective teachers to practice knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired during the two-year institutional period to become self-reliant professionals who will work with confidence and competence in their future teaching careers. (Sri Lanka-German Development Corporation, n.d.)

Research has shown how field experience is proven to help prospective teachers clarify their career goals and commitment to teaching diverse learners (see Blieszner & Artale, 2001; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Moyer & Husman, 2006; Peetsma, 2000) and enable them to establish informed and realistic notions of their teaching contexts (Gomez, et al., 2009). Many of the teachers I spoke to also revealed that the internship was the most important aspect of their program (Richardson-Koehler, 1998).

Because my participants were in the process of completing their internship year, my interviews were scheduled in the respective internship schools. All the interviews were completed during a school year from January to December 2012. During this time, I visited 19 schools spread across.
Three districts in three provinces. I visited a wide spectrum of diverse schools that gave me insights into the local school system. These schools included the most well-resourced schools that maintained high academic standing to less-resourced schools, inner city schools, rural schools, schools that attracted different linguistic and religious communities, and single sex and mixed schools. There was a close correlation between my participants and the schools they were working in. Because the TCs who consented to participating in the study were the more linguistically competent of their cohorts, their internship schools were also more affluent than many schools in Sri Lanka.

The TCs in CC and WC applied for a school of their choice from a list of schools that were affiliated to their colleges. In NC, the TCs were assigned to a school by the Internship Committee. In contrast to the situation in the other two colleges where several TCs got together and went to one school, in NC, only one TC was sent to a particular school.

During the internship, the TCs in all three colleges completed four projects and an action research. These projects included:

1. Cocurricular project
2. Community related project
3. Administrative project
4. Student support project

These assignments provide the TCs with an opportunity to undertake “transformative action” (Cummins, 2009). The TCs identify needs and gaps within their internship schools and conduct projects with the help of the students, staff, parents and the community. The purpose of this procedure is to make the TCs become more involved in all aspects of school life, such as curricular activities, cocurricular activities, and the school administration. As well, it is intended to help TCs develop relationships with other teachers, parents and the community. TCs who did their internships in the larger schools collaborated in events such as drama competitions, sports days, and English days that were organized in their internship schools. The TCs in the smaller schools, however, had the freedom to take the initiative to do projects of their own choice. Table 22 reveals some the projects the TCs in all three colleges chose and that rose from the needs of the individual internship schools.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-curricular Project</th>
<th>Community Related Project</th>
<th>Administrative Project</th>
<th>Student Support Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take scouts on a hike</td>
<td>Take students to a mosque</td>
<td>Maintain the school notice board</td>
<td>Prepare a notice board and a reading corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize a Japanese cultural festival</td>
<td>Organize a blood donation camp</td>
<td>Make costumes for drama competitions</td>
<td>Arrange an English resource room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize a Buddhist religious event</td>
<td>Prepare a <em>Vesak lantern</em> for a competition</td>
<td>Maintain the staff notice board</td>
<td>Writing program for Grade 7 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with debating competitions</td>
<td>Organize a drug abuse awareness program</td>
<td>Make props for the school drama competition</td>
<td>Hold English support classes for weak students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help organize the sports day</td>
<td>Clean a retirement home</td>
<td>Help update the library database</td>
<td>Lecture on using the school library effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist students to prepare for the morning assembly</td>
<td>Dengue awareness and prevention program</td>
<td>Maintain the school inventory</td>
<td>Workshop on inner peace and meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold a drama camp</td>
<td>Awareness program about risks of land mines</td>
<td>Display placards with proverbs</td>
<td>Organize a lecture on child abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with the school’s student magazine</td>
<td>Workshop on snake bites and first aid</td>
<td>Arrange the files in the school office</td>
<td>Organize a seminar on oral health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Visits and Interviews: Journal Entries

In the following section, I share my field notes and the photographs I took during my many school visits. I focus primarily on the school visits I made to interview my focal participants. As the participating TCs were doing their internships during the data collection, I conducted their interviews in their various internship schools. My many school visits added a rich layer of data that I had not initially anticipated: I developed insights into the actual schools my participants were teaching in. The purpose of providing detailed information and images of some of the schools I visited is, on one hand, to provide insights into what Sri Lankan schools are like. On the other, such information allows me to highlight the historical traditions these schools have maintained for centuries, traditions that have resulted in the maintenance of ethnolinguistic and religious stratification and the existing status quo.

Contrary to the common understanding among Sri Lankan educators that public education provides equal opportunities, I found that the status of the schools, their student populations and the TCs they attract are evidence that schools “are agents of reproduction rather than change” (Pennycook, 2001, p. 121). Schooling is a process of reproduction of the same societal structures and capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 2007). While on the one hand the ethnic and linguistic stratification of schools ensures that Sri Lankan students are segregated, on the other hand, academically stronger schools that attract students from more affluent families and better teachers ensure the reproduction of the existing status quo. My journal entries and the photographs that accompany them serve to provide a detailed description of the local school system.

**February 6, 2012**

My first interview is with Cheryl. She is teaching in the elementary section of Kandy Buddhist School, a leading Buddhist school in Sri Lanka for boys that has classes from Grades 1 to 13. The school was built in 1887 and many of my own cousins and uncles studied in this school. It is
common knowledge that this school and several other Buddhist schools were built by an American named Henry Steel Olcott who converted to Buddhism and worked toward reviving Buddhism in Sri Lanka during the British colonial period. Building schools for Buddhist children was one way of reviving Buddhism against the British missionaries who were in the process of religiously converting Sri Lankans. This history of Kandy Buddhist School is important today as, over 125 years later, this school still attracts Sinhala Buddhist boys.

Kandy Buddhist School is very rich in physical and human resources. It is located on a small hill, and the school property is spread out over a very vast area. Many children from affluent Buddhist families come to this school. However, this school is not exclusively for the rich. It admits low-income students from the surrounding areas as well. The elementary section is located at the very bottom of the hill and consists of several large buildings and a small playground. Although the principal is aware of my visit, I first speak to him to get permission before doing any interviews. This ritual of consulting with principals initially is one I follow in all the 19 schools I visit for interviews.

Cheryl takes me to the school library, a moderately sized room lined with shelves of books, papers and students' work. The walls are covered with students' artwork. This is a relatively quiet place in an otherwise busy and noisy school. Cheryl is a Sinhala Catholic who comes from a mixed-religion family. Her mother is a Catholic and her father is Buddhist. She has studied in a Catholic convent school. When asked if she finds it challenging to teach in an exclusively Buddhist school, she says that she
is exposed to Buddhism through her father and she is familiar with the Buddhist culture. She states that the good English education she got from her convent school enabled her to get into a good school for her internship.

February 8, 2012

This was my second day in St. Andrew's College. Yesterday, I interviewed Careema and Chintha in the secondary school of St. Andrew's. Today, I am visiting the elementary school to interview Chaman and Cala. All four TCs at St. Andrew's had agreed to be a part of the study. All four of them spoke English very fluently. That is the reason they have been assigned to St. Andrew's.

St. Andrew's is an elite private school for boys founded by Anglican missionaries in 1872 to maintain the traditions of British schooling. Although an Anglican school, St. Andrew's attracts students from all ethnic and religious backgrounds. Classes are conducted in Sinhala, Tamil and English mediums. All four major religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam – are also taught. The common feature that binds the students in this school together is their social and economic background. They are all from very affluent upper-class families. Similarly, the TCs at St. Andrew's are multiethnic. Chintha is Sinhala Buddhist, Cala and Careema are Muslim and Chaman is Malay. They all grew up in cities in middle-class homes.

On arrival at St. Andrew's, I meet the headmaster of the elementary school section, Mr. Silva. He is in his late thirties and is quite young to be
holding such a position. He, himself, had studied at St. Andrew’s. Cala comes to meet me in the headmaster’s office and takes me to the staff lounge. We pass old colonial buildings and nicely manicured gardens. The school premises look very beautiful. Cala is wearing a headscarf to match her sari. On our way to the teachers’ lounge, she says that the permanent staff is not allowed to wear the headscarf, but the TCs are allowed to do so as they are in the school for only one year. Usually, teachers who wear the scarf take it off during school hours and put it on as they leave the school.

Cala takes me to the teachers’ lounge, where I conduct the interviews. The teachers’ lounge is a large, spacious room with large tables spread throughout. The walls are lined with cupboards where the teachers keep their books and other materials. A few teachers grading students’ books and a small group of teachers are talking. Attached to the teachers’ lounge is a small kitchen. This is the only school where I saw such facilities. In many of the other schools that I visited, the teachers didn’t even have a proper place to keep their books.

February 9, 2012

Camal calls me this morning and asks me not to come for my interview at the scheduled time. He says that Riverside School, a small school just outside of Kandy where he is doing his internship, is getting ready for their sports day. He explains that the TCs have to help the staff and the students with the organization of the event. Camal and the six other TCs who are doing their internship with him have been asked to referee
an *Elle* match. Camal wants me to conduct my interview with him after school instead.

When I arrive at Riverside School at 2:00 p.m., Camal meets me at the front gate. Riverside is a small school that attracts children from its surrounding low-income neighborhood. There are students from all ethnic and religious backgrounds, but the medium of instruction is Sinhala and Buddhist rituals are observed. Camal tells me many teachers do not prefer to teach here but have stayed on due to its convenient location and ease of access. He says the students lack discipline and the motivation to learn. He explains that their parents are poor and uneducated and many of them are drug addicts and alcoholics. Most of their mothers were working in the Middle East as housemaids. As we walk into the school, Camal narrates an incident where a student attempted to hit a teacher after an argument in the playground.

The principal of Riverside seems very friendly and tells Camal that he can use the English room for our interview as there will be fewer interruptions there. Camal introduces me to the other TCs in Riverside School. He says all the TCs in the school are from rural villages and that they have chosen this school because they want to make a change in the lives of the students. As I walk through the school, I notice how the school buildings are densely located close to each other. There are students walking and running around. It is very noisy. The atmosphere is a stark contrast to what I saw in the two previous schools I visited earlier this week.

**February 10, 2012**
Choola and Cindy are teaching in Hindu School, a Tamil mixed-school located in a small town about 20 kilometers away from Kandy. At the entrance of the school, there is a statue of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, arts, wisdom and learning. This is a statue I see at the entrance of NC and all the Tamil schools I visit. The students at Hindu School are getting ready for the sports day, and there are groups of children all over the school, practicing for various events. Several buildings are spread out across the school grounds; some are big and some are small. They lack the grandeur of the St. Andrew's and Kandy Buddhist school buildings, being constructed of plain concrete. The poverty of the students is evident in their uniforms and shoes.

Choola and Cindy are Sinhala Buddhist. They are both from low-middle-class families. Cindy is from Kandy and had studied in a prominent Buddhist school. Choola is from a rural village in central Sri Lanka. It is rare to find TCs like Choola and Cindy who are working in schools that are linguistically and ethnically different from the ones they had attended as children. Choola and Cindy state that they chose this Tamil school as it is close to where they live. They could not afford to travel a lot for doing their internship, and Hindu School is a cheaper option.

Cindy comes to meet me at the gate and takes me to get permission from the principal to do our interview. We walk through poorly maintained and crowded, noisy hallways to reach the principal's office. He tells Cindy she can use the library to do our interview. Cindy leaves me near the staff lounge and goes in search of the librarian who has locked the library and stepped out. As I stand waiting, several teachers come and ask if they
can help me. They are all Tamil teachers. From the way I am wearing my sari, they can tell I am Sinhalese, so they speak to me in Sinhala and English. They say the librarian has gone to get some provisions for the school.

The regular school schedule is halted as preparations for the sports day are underway. Everybody seems very laid back and relaxed. Once Cindy finds the key, she takes me to the library for our interview.

**May 22, 2012**

Waruni and Wansha are at the Buddhist Girls’ School. This is considered one of the best girls’ schools in Sri Lanka. Located in the heart of Colombo, the Buddhist Girls’ School has excellent facilities and maintains very high academic standards. Children from very affluent families come to this school. Those who get the highest marks in the Grade 5 scholarship examination come from all over the island to attend this school.

As the name of the school suggests, this is a school for Sinhalese Buddhist girls. Built in 1917, this school has a long history. Similar to the Kandy Buddhist School for boys, this school was built to foster Buddhist education for girls during colonial times. To date, Buddhist Girls’ School continues to maintain this tradition. All the pictures on the school website depict Buddhism and Buddhist rituals. There are pictures of the school’s shrine and of students in their school uniform worshiping Buddha. Even the school emblem is a lamp that is offered to Buddha.
Buddhist Girls’ is a short drive from my home. I had called in advance and informed the principal that I would be coming to conduct interviews. I had also spoken to Waruni and Wansha ahead of time to see when they would be free. There are four TCs in this school. They are all female, Sinhalese and Buddhist. Once I reach the school, Wansha takes me to the reading room, a half-walled hall with lots of tables and chairs. Beautiful, well-maintained buildings and gardens are spread out across the school premises. Unlike the buildings at St. Andrew’s with their colonial architecture, the buildings in the Buddhist Girls’ School have been heavily influenced by Buddhist culture. Although this school is located in the heart of the city, I can’t help noticing the greenery. Amidst all the lush vegetation is an open Buddhist shrine.

My first interview is with Wansha. She says she, herself, studied in this school as a young girl and that this is the reason she wanted to do her internship here. In her application for internship schools, she had only signed up for Buddhist Girls’ instead of providing the three options asked for. Her friend Waruni had done the same. Wansha and Waruni are both Sinhalese Buddhists from middle-class families and they speak very good English. They tell me it is very prestigious to teach in a school of this nature.

May 24, 2012

William and Waheed are at Royal School, another big school for boys located in Colombo. It was founded in 1950, soon after Sri Lanka’s independence in 1948, to accommodate the children who graduated from the adjacent Regent Elementary School. As this school has an English
name, I had initially thought it was a Christian school. However, as I entered the school gates, I was confronted with a large Buddha statue. Later I discovered that the school emblem is a traditional Buddhist lamp. Although the school culture is Sinhalese Buddhist, there are students from other ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds as well. I walk past the Buddha statue, the playground and the school swimming pool to get to the main office.

I interview William first as Waheed is in a class. William takes me to the junior auditorium. It is a quiet room, a contrast to the noisy atmosphere outside. In addition to William and Waheed, there are four other female TCs doing their internships in this school. In between the two interviews, I go to the cafeteria with Waheed to get a snack. As we walk through the school buildings, I can’t help noticing how badly they are maintained. Windows are broken and paint peels off the building walls. The school has a very good reputation and many facilities, yet the maintenance is poor. Even the cafeteria is not very clean. This is a contrast to the cafeteria at Buddhist Girls’ School, which looked like the food court of an upscale mall.

Like the rest of the participants, Waheed and William, too, have requested this school for their internships. Neither of them live close by, but they felt that interning in a school of this nature in the capital city would help them improve themselves.

Both Waheed and William come from middle-class families. Waheed is from a town in central Sri Lanka. William is from a village south of Colombo. During the interviews, William and Waheed speak about how
the school and its students do not live up to their expectations. The students, they say, lack discipline and motivation to learn. The two TCs were having great difficulty managing their classes and getting their students to do their work. In this school, there is a greater emphasis on sports. Although Royal School is a big school, Waheed and William explain, the best students went to the adjacent Regent School, leaving the second best for Royal.

**May 15, 2012**

Like most of the TCs who agreed to take part in my study, Withya is also very proficient in English. She is a Tamil from a town in central Sri Lanka. She is doing her internship in Tamil Girls’ School, an elite Tamil school for girls. Similar to other bigger schools in Sri Lanka, this school also has a long history. It was founded in 1930 to preserve the Hindu religion, and Tamil language and culture during British colonial times. As Withya tells me during our interview, even today, affluent Tamil parents who want their daughters to get a sound Tamil education send their children here. There are four other TCs who are doing their internship at Hindu Girls’ School and they are also Tamil women.

Hindu Tamil Girls’ is located in Colombo. It is centrally located and is a very short drive from my home. The previous week I had visited Muslim Girls’ School, a school that is adjacent to Hindu Girls’ School, to interview Wafa. Like any big school in Colombo, both Hindu Girls’ School and Muslim Girls’ School are very well-resourced. There are large and well-maintained buildings and gardens. At the entrance of Hindu Girls’ School is a statue of the Hindu goddess Saraswati, and on the right hand
side of the entrance there is a Hindu Kovil that is being renovated. Withya later tells me the school had collected a lot of money from the students for the renovations.

As in every other school, I inform the principal first about the reason for my visit. At the entrance of the principal's office, I see several pairs of slippers and sandals. When entering the main office, people take off their shoes. This is done to show respect for the principal and it is a ritual I saw in other Tamil Hindu schools. I interview Withya in the art room. It is on the fourth floor in a middle-school building.

May 20, 2012

Waseem and Waleed are at Muslim Central School. It is in Colombo 12, a part of the city I have not previously visited. As I get closer to this predominantly Muslim area, I notice how the cityscape changes. This is a part of the old Colombo city. The old buildings are run down. The neighborhood is very crowded, with lots of moving vehicles, carts, bicycles and people. Vendors are setting up their mobile stalls. The road that leads to the school is so narrow that two vehicles can barely pass each other. On either side of the road are houses adjoining each other. The front doors of the houses open to the main road. On the sides of the narrow streets, pedestrians navigate their way without sidewalks. As I drive by, I see people brushing their teeth and washing at the public taps along the side of the narrow, crowded road. Some are sitting on the front doorsteps of the houses, looking outside at the road. It is a densely populated, low-income neighborhood. The boys in the neighborhood go to the school at which Waseem and Waleed teach. Neither Waseem nor
Waleed had initially consented to taking part in my study. As I continued to interview the TCs of WC, their names recurred in many of the interviews. In their conversations with me about their experiences with diversity, many TCs spoke about Waseem and Waleed, two TCs who were from two small Muslim villages in eastern Sri Lanka. Their strict religious beliefs and experiences surprised many. They said their first insights into Islam came from Waleed, who took hours to teach others about his religion. Many referred to him as a “very nice guy.”

Muslim Central School is a Tamil-medium Muslim school for boys. I learn from Waseem and Waleed that many children work after school. Hardly anybody from this school goes to university. Many of them drop out at various stages in their secondary school years and take up jobs.

The junior and the upper schools of Muslim Central are on either side of the narrow road leading through Colombo 12. The junior school where I do the interviews is small. The main building of the school has the name of a well-known Muslim politician written across it in large letters. Waleed tells me that most of the newer buildings were donations by Muslim politicians.

We have the interviews in the English Lab. As we climb the stairs to the fourth floor, I notice how the classrooms are a stark contrast to the disorganized and poorly kept surroundings. The junior classes look very well-organized. They are decorated and the students and the teachers seem very much engaged in their work. Waleed tells me the teachers in the junior section are very dedicated. However, in the senior school, he
explains, neither the teachers, the parents nor the students are dedicated. Many students end up taking low-level jobs.

There are three TCs other than Waseem and Waleed in this school. They are all Muslim men. Several other TCs who I interviewed said the Muslims from the east strongly requested being placed for their internships at this particular Muslim school.

**May 22, 2012**

*Weena is another TC who did not initially consent to participating in my study. Interestingly, the TCs who did agree to participate initially were doing their internships in the best schools in Colombo. In my attempt to diversify the pool of participants, Weena's name was mentioned. She eventually agreed to take part. Weena is a Sinhala Buddhist from a village in southern Sri Lanka and is doing her internship in City School in Colombo 12, very close to the Muslim Central School where Waseem and Waleed are interning.*

*As I have mentioned above, Colombo 12 is densely populated, low-income and multicultural. The majority population in this area are Muslim. The mosques, schools and businesses owned by Muslims are evidence of this demographic. Although City School attracts many Muslims and Tamils from the neighborhood, it is a Sinhala Buddhist school. Weena says there are only four or five Sinhala Buddhist students in each class. The mediums of instruction are Sinhala and English. Even the Tamil and Muslim students who attend study in Sinhala. Although Buddhism is the "official" school religion, other religions are also taught.*
The inside of the school is a contrast to the chaos of its surrounding neighborhood. Although the school buildings are old, the school is very calm, clean and organized. There are lots of trees and plants on the school grounds. The students seem very well-dressed. When I inquire, Weena says the school management and the teachers work hard to maintain certain standards.

Most of the parents, Weena says, are day laborers and housemaids. They are not educated. Weena explains that many City School students have jobs after school. She tells me she finds it hard to control the students and get them to work on their studies.

**June 27, 2012 (morning)**

This is my third day in Jaffna. As I am here for a short visit, I schedule two to three interviews per day. My father, who had once worked with the NCOE, joins me. As only one TC is assigned to each school, my 10 participants are in 10 different schools. Thaya, one of the Teacher Educators, comes with us to show us the route to get to Hindu St. Joseph’s School where I interview Nagula. Thaya leads the way on his bike. On the way, he shows us the route to St. Peter’s, where I am scheduled to interview Neela that afternoon.

What I notice upon arriving at St. Joseph’s is its grandeur. The school gate alone is impressive. There are several old colonial-style school buildings on the school property. Even amid a three-decade long war, I see that schools such as St. Joseph’s have been able to sustain themselves. St. Joseph’s has a reputation of being one of the good
schools in Colombo. The principal of St. Joseph’s is a Catholic priest. When I comment on the beauty of the school, he takes me on a brief tour. Then he instructs Nagula to take me to the English Lab for our interview, explaining that there would be fewer disturbances there.

The English Lab is on the fourth floor of the main building of St. Joseph’s. The classrooms in that building are spacious and the sea breeze blows refreshingly through their large windows. The hallway outside the classrooms is at least 15 feet wide. When I searched the internet for historical details about the school, I discovered St. Joseph’s was founded by Catholic missionaries in 1850. It was a private school for boys.

During our interview, Nagula says that about 80 per cent of St. Joseph’s students are Catholic. As Jaffna is a Tamil town, most of the schools in Jaffna are also Tamil. The linguistic diversity that is present in many other parts of the country is not present in Jaffna. As St. Joseph’s is close to the coast, lots of children from fishing families come to this school.

Halfway through the interview, we are sent snacks and tea. Nagula says that the school football team is getting ready to go for a match in Colombo. There is a lot of emphasis on sports at St. Joseph’s.

**June 27, 2012 (afternoon)**

This afternoon, I interview Neela at St. Peter’s School. She is a Tamil from the eastern part of Sri Lanka. When I ask her whether she was assigned to this school because she is a Christian, she says she was
assigned to this school as it was close to where she had rented out a room with four other TCs.

St. Peter’s is a Christian school located about ten minutes away by car from St. Joseph’s. However, St. Peter’s and St. Joseph’s have little in common. The poverty of St. Peter’s is evident right from the point of entrance to the school. There are only a few buildings and they are cramped on the school compound. They look very old and run down. Most of the school furniture is in similar condition. There is hardly any room for the students to run or play. As we talk, Neela says this school was built by a Christian priest during the time of British colonial rule. It was seen as a place to admit poor children who couldn’t get into the better schools like St. Joseph’s due to their parents’ occupations and social status. To this date, St. Peter’s continues to cater to the poor.

At the entrance of St. Peter’s, I meet a teacher. When I tell him I am there to see Neela, he takes me right into her classroom. As we approach, he calls her name loudly as if I was visiting their home. I am surprised at this gesture. Usually Sri Lankan schools are very formal. But the informality of the school makes me feel welcome. When I tell Neela and the teacher that I can wait until she finishes her class, I am taken to the principal’s office to wait. The principal says I can take as long as I want with Neela and that he will ask the class teacher to take over Neela’s lesson.

The reception I get in Jaffna schools is very warm. In most schools, halfway through the interviews we were sent snacks and tea. When I mention this to Neela, she says that education is highly respected in
Jaffna, and anybody who does research is welcomed. The schools value their teachers taking part in research. She says there is a saying in Jaffna that, if you land in Jaffna from a parachute, the chances are that you will either land on a temple or a school. There is a lot of emphasis in Jaffna on education and religion.

June 28, 2012 (morning)

From the few telephone conversations I have had with Neth prior to visiting Jaffna, I know she is a very quiet person. She does not have the linguistic confidence of many of the other participants in my study. Unlike the other TCs, who are from middle-class backgrounds, Neth's background is working class. She says she is the first person in her family to go into higher education and is the first teacher in the family.

Neth is doing her internship at Gateway School. A mixed school, Gateway is located in a village outside of Jaffna. The road that leads to the school is very narrow and our car is hardly able to drive along it. I had been told earlier that Gateway is a small school that attracts children from the surrounding village. Unlike some of the bigger schools in Jaffna, Gateway is not a school in high demand. The better students leave this school when they get the chance. What catches my attention when I enter the school is its cleanliness. It is very well maintained. There are half-walled buildings and trees spread out over the school grounds. Fruits and vegetables are grown in garden patches behind the buildings. The number of students is less in the higher grades. I am told many either went to better schools or dropped out.
Hindu Girls’ School where Nilu is doing her internship is another prominent school. Many parents seek to send their children here as Hindu Girls’ maintains high academic standards. Similar to Kandy Buddhist School, built as a Buddhist alternative to the Christian missionary schools, Hindu Girls’ School was founded in 1886 during the period of British rule to revive Hindu education. To this date, this school maintains strict Hindu traditions. Nilu says that only vegetarian food is allowed inside the school premises and all the students are Hindu.

Nilu herself had studied in Hindu Girls’ School. She is very proud to be back in her old school. She is very proficient and articulate in English. That could be one of the reasons she was sent to one of the best schools in Jaffna.

As is the case in all the Hindu schools I visit, there is a statue of goddess Saraswati at the entrance of Hindu Girls. In the school interior, there is a Hindu kovil and a large prayer room. Nilu takes me to the fifth floor of a large building. The entire fifth floor consists of six fully equipped computer labs. This display of technology is something I have not seen in the other schools I have visited. Although some schools had a single computer lab, none had six labs. Nilu says the school has a very strong alumni association and its members make generous donations for the upkeep of their former school. The six computer labs are one result of these donations. Due to the war, many graduates of Hindu Girls’ School had left the country. But due to the high academic standards the school
maintained, many went to the best universities around the world and held very good jobs.

Commentary

The journal entries and the photographs in this chapter provide a bird’s eye view of a wide spectrum of Sri Lankan schools. The historical details of the schools reveal that most of them have long histories that go back to colonial times, and that many schools were established primarily as a means to foster certain religious cultures. This process started with the British missionaries establishing English-medium Catholic schools to train English-speaking officials to work in the lower rungs of the colonial administration. In reaction to this colonial approach, Sri Lankan nationalists who felt the local linguistic and religious cultures were eroding due to colonial influence, established Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim schools as a means of reviving local cultures. Centuries after this practice began, and decades after Sri Lanka gained independence, and even after the end of a civil war, Sri Lankan schools continue to remain segregated along the same religious, linguistic, ethnic and class divides. When TCs go into these schools for their internships, they don’t simply become members of that school community, but endorse a certain culture.

If social cohesion were a priority in teacher education, the internship experience would be an ideal opportunity to provide teachers a fully immersed teaching experience in a school environment different from their own. If the teachers had a greater responsibility and an awareness of that responsibility to work toward social justice, they would have taken the chance to teach in an environment that they are not familiar with. Instead, they chose to work within their comfort zones. This situation could have been more effective if it was a prerequisite for teachers to teach in linguistically and ethnically different schools. Studies have shown that working with CLD learners have helped TCs to develop positive attitudes and beliefs about teaching diverse learners (Pagano et al., 1995; Wolfse, 1996). Such experiences help them to get hands-on experience about what it is like to teach students different from themselves. However, sending TCs to work in settings with cultures different from their own backgrounds requires more specific instructions in
strategies and a space for TCs to share and reflect on their experiences (Proctor, et al., 2001). Such an experience can also get TCs to rethink their career goals and commitments (Gomez, et al. (2009).

Discussion: Teacher Education as a Space for Growth and Intercultural Awareness

The overview I have provided of the program offered at the NCOE gives a clear idea of how it is designed to help new teachers become socialized into the teaching profession. As much of the research on post-conflict reconciliation indicates, the program at the NCOE provides an ethnically tolerant climate (Bush & Salterelli, 2000) where teachers get to interact with others from diverse backgrounds. As Steiner-Khamsi (2003) points out, working toward the social integration of ethnically segregated communities plays a crucial role in reconciliation. Though not explicitly built into the program, the different components of the program—such as various curricular and extracurricular activities—help new teachers grow and develop greater awareness of Sri Lankan society and the school system. Many TCs claim that they learned a great deal about other Sri Lankan communities during the program.

However, it is important to point out that although the program provides very fertile ground to foster deep-rooted understandings of inclusiveness, the opportunities for intercultural awareness are very implicit. This implicitness is very much tied to a Sri Lankan culture that avoids rather than addresses issues of war (Walker, 2004). As I will discuss in Chapter 8, even in the presence of children who were war victims, had lost their parents, become handicapped or had been displaced due to the war, teachers did not even acknowledge the war. If teachers are to foster greater social cohesion, first the TCs need the be made aware of their role. Then there needs to be explicit instruction and programs in areas such as human rights education, citizenship education, and intercultural and peace education that aim to foster social cohesion (Smith, 2005). Moreover, the NCOE program does not include what Gay (2000, 2002) calls a culturally diverse knowledge base, i.e., there is no formal curriculum that focuses explicitly on the treatment of diversity and promoting inclusivity. Nor is there a space for TCs to discuss their own and their communities’ grievances as they occur in the present and as they have
been experienced in the past. As Tawil and Harley (2004) point out, teachers themselves can be living and working in one or the other part of communities in conflict and therefore might find it difficult to challenge the values of their communities. This absence of challenge might result in the TCs leaving the program with very romantic notions of the “other” as opposed to cultivating deep understandings of the other communities, their experiences of Sri Lanka’s shared history and the war, and how that history continues to shape their lives today.

Based on my observations, interviews, and analysis, I believe the strength of the NCOE program lies in its “symbolic curriculum” (Gay, 1995, 2002). Though not explicitly, these practices and artifacts nevertheless teach students certain knowledge, skills, morals and values. As Gay (2002) suggests, over time, students come to value what is present around them and devalue what is absent. Interestingly, even in the relatively Tamil-homogenous NC, there were religious and linguistic signs of the Sinhalese presence.

As the research on teacher education programs in different post-conflict contexts shows, education has a unique capacity to provide opportunities for post-conflict societies to dampen the impact of the conflict they have endured (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). For these transformations to become a truly effective and concrete social reality, however, teachers need explicit instruction that is built into every aspect of their program. Courses in subjects such as peace and citizenship education need to occupy a position that is higher up on the teacher education agenda (Davies, 2005b). The manner in which post-conflict states manage, deliberate and execute transformative initiatives is crucial in changing the fragile social conditions that are the legacy of conflict situations (Davies, 2009; Paulson, 2011e).

In the following two chapters, I will discuss how experiences of diversity and changing notions of the concept of diversity itself illustrate how Sri Lankan Teacher Candidates have or have not changed their diversity and inclusivity attitudes, motivations, and practices during the course of the NCOE program.
Chapter 8: Moving On: TCs’ Changing Perceptions About and Experiences of Living and Working with the “Other”

Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of Teacher Candidates’ (TCs) perceptions about and experiences of living and working with diverse Sri Lankan “others” from different ethnolinguistic, socioeconomic, regional and religious communities. It is important to understand teachers’ perceptions, firstly, because perceptions and experiences form a large part of the “teaching selves” of teachers (Kumaravaduwelu, 2012). Teaching selves, as transformative intellectuals, cannot be developed in isolation. Teachers need the critical knowledge they gain by interacting with other cultural value-systems which can enrich and transform their lives and teaching practices. As Vygotsky (1986) argued, identity and agency are socially constructed and socially shared notions; therefore, teaching selves are forged through constant contact and engagement with others who share their professional space and the perceptions they form through their interactions.

From a SJTE perspective, it is important to explore teachers’ experiences, beliefs, attitudes and values as a means of assisting them to create caring and equitable classroom environments (Hawkins, 2011; Zeichner, 2011). A deeper understanding of TCs’ perceptions of others is important as it affects the learning environments they create for their students. That is why SJTE programs help prospective teachers and students alike identify and confront their beliefs about society, education and the social conditions of schooling (Lister & Zeichner, 1990). One of my aims is to assess to what extent the post-conflict teacher education program in Sri Lanka’s NCOE can be considered to adhere to the goals and principles of SJTE and provide transformative learning opportunities for their learners.

One specific theme I attempt to weave into the chapter is the significance of critical reflection or critical consciousness, which is a key tenet of transformative approaches to pedagogy such as Social Justice Teacher Education and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. If teachers are to be transformative practitioners, they need to develop a strong critical
consciousness that can help them look critically at the status quo. Such a critical gaze can assist them to lessen the inequalities and injustices that exist in their school systems and beyond.

In the first section, I look at data I generated from all participants to highlight their perceptions of diversity in Sri Lankan society and in schools. Excerpts from TCs’ narratives are used specifically to reveal their perceptions of diversity in the wider Sri Lankan society. The Mind Maps TCs produced at my request (see Chapter 5) are used to uncover their perceptions of diversity in Sri Lankan schools.

In the second section of the chapter, I use further excerpts from focal participants’ narratives to give deeper understandings of TCs’ experiences with diversity as they live, work, and interact with others in the context of the NCOE campuses. The question of how TCs’ perceptions of the “other” change or don’t change as a result of their experiences and interpretations of a multicultural environment during their NCOE program is the topic of section three.

In section four, I turn specifically to focus on the group of TCs I met with in Northern College. As I have explained elsewhere in this dissertation, Northern College is located in the northern part of Sri Lanka, an area that was cut off from the rest of the country and affected in particular ways during the civil war. My aim in this section is to draw attention to the unique perceptions and experiences TCs familiar with this region have of others as a result of the legacy of war. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the importance of critical reflection in teacher education.

TCs’ Perceptions of Diversity

Diversity based interactions happen on a day-to-day basis in multicultural societies. However, these interactions are not always equal, of course, nor do those who participate in these interactions have equal power. Social justice teacher education asserts the importance of exploring teachers’ perceptions, beliefs and attitudes regarding diversity and multicultural “others”. This understanding is crucial in assisting teacher learners to address and bridge the inequalities they encounter in their own classes (Hawkins, 2011b).
The TCs in my study encountered social and cultural diversity throughout their NCOE program. This fact was reflected in the interviews I conducted with them. TCs’ narratives were sprinkled frequently with terms associated with diversity such as religion, ethnicity, and language. These terms carried varying meanings, however, depending on the contexts the individual TCs were discussing and their own particular interpretations of the words. Understanding, through their narratives, the various assumptions the TCs were making about “others” was an important part of my attempt to understand how they formed opinions about and interacted with others. Most importantly, the narratives provided insights into how the TCs would interact with their own students and plan lessons and instruction in their own teaching contexts. Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE) emphasises the importance of TCs recognizing the diversity of students in order to assist them. This is particularly true in relation to students who come from backgrounds different from that of the TC him or herself.

Diversity in Sri Lankan Society

When I asked TCs what diversity meant for them in Sri Lankan society generally, they identified diversity primarily from a categorical perspective (Plaine, 1990). Diversity was identified as differences in ethnicity, religion, language, region and social class. At one level, their identifiers aligned closely to the identities they perceived for themselves in the Identity Portraits they created (see Chapter 6). At another level, they were a reflection of the identity categories that historically have divided Sri Lanka.

Cheryl, who was doing her internship in a Sinhalese Buddhist boys’ school, stated that diversity did not exist in her school environment as all students were Sinhalese Buddhist boys. Although she spoke about students’ socioeconomic backgrounds and their parents’ occupations as having an impact on student behavior and engagement in schoolwork, the fact that she perceived all the students as sharing a similar ethnicity, religion and language meant that, for her, there were no other differences.

In this school, I don’t experience that much diversity. All the boys are Sinhalese Buddhist. They are the same. But there are big differences in their family backgrounds. That affects their behavior and how well they work. Some students come from very affluent families and they do well. Their
parents are well-educated. But some others come from the surrounding poor
neighborhoods and it’s difficult to teach them. (Cheryl)

Similarly, Wafa, who came from a predominantly Muslim area in the eastern part of Sri
Lanka, identified religion and ethnicity as primary determiners of social diversity.

In my village in Kathankudi, there was no diversity. We are all Muslim. In
my internship school there is no diversity. All students are Muslim. But I did
experience diversity when I was in WC. There were people from different
ethnic, religious and linguistic groups from different parts of Sri Lanka.
(Wafa)

Neha, from NC, grew up in a Tamil town in northern Sri Lanka. She also identified
diversity in a manner similar to Cheryl and Wafa. However, Neha stated the only
differences she saw among the Tamil people were in their religion. In her experience,
they, the Tamils, were either Hindu or Christian. There were also caste differences which,
Neha said, they didn’t talk about.

In schools and society in Jaffna we have Hindus and Christians. There is no
other diversity. We are all Tamil. The caste system is also there in some
societies, but we don’t talk about it. (Neha)

Later on in her interview, Neha talked about more subtle variations in the language
varieties spoken among speakers who shared the same Tamil language.

In college, all the students spoke Tamil. There were Tamils and some
Muslims. Urban and rural people talk very differently. People from the east,
also, they speak differently. They say we are talking the wrong way and they
are talking correct Tamil. But some words they use don’t exist in Tamil.
There are rich and poor also. (Neha)

Neha recognizes that there is a difference in the Tamil spoken by different ethnic groups
and in different regions. This difference, though acknowledged, is, however, seen more
from a “deficiency orientation” (Sleeter & Grant, 1988) where the difference is viewed in
a negative light.

Waheed, a Muslim, who was socialized as a Sinhalese, views regional differences as a
primary determiner of difference. Although a Muslim, he was not accepted by the larger
Muslim community in WC who were mainly from the eastern parts of Sri Lanka. He talks
about how different the Muslims in the East were.
Muslims from the East are very different. They are very traditional. Usually women wear saris, *shalwar kameez* and frocks, but those women cover their body from head to toe. They come to classes like that. They even wear socks with the sari. Diversity of the provinces is a big thing. It’s more than Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. I can’t understand what some TCs from the East are saying. Their Tamil is different. The pronunciation is different. It’s there even in English. Their attitudes and how they behave is very different from others. How they face problems, how they move with friends, those things are different. (Waheed)

TCs’ concentration on religious, ethnic and linguistic markers as identifiers of the differences they saw in their communities can be explained in two ways. On the one hand, they selected these categories because they reflect how Sri Lankan society and the education system are primarily stratified. On the other hand, most of the TCs came from family backgrounds where they fell clearly into one of these categories. TCs like Waheed above were an exception. Waheed was a Muslim, but was socialized and educated as a Sinhalese Buddhist by his mother who had converted to Islam after her marriage to Waheed’s father. Waheed spoke constantly of how this experience had made him a misfit in society. But he also recognized that this experience had broadened his view of diversity. Unlike the others, Waheed saw subtle differences among people, differences that made them either belong to and be accepted or be excluded from certain communities.

**Diversity in Sri Lankan Schools**

Along with researching TCs’ perceptions of diversity in Sri Lankan society as a whole, I also wanted to know their perceptions of diversity in Sri Lankan schools. For this purpose, I asked the TCs to draw a Mind Map depicting what social and cultural diversity in local schools meant for them. Table 23 gives an overview of the various diversity categories the TCs in the three NCOE colleges identified in this task. The list shows that the TCs have a broad understanding of scholastic diversity with differences falling specifically into four sets of features: 1) features of schools; 2) features of parents; 3) features of students; and 4) features of teachers.
### Table 23: Diversity in Sri Lankan Schools

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>WC</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>NC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (Sinhala, Tamil Muslim, other)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of instruction (Sinhala/Tamil/ English)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language (monolingual/ bilingual/trilingual)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion (Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, etc.)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of school (Private/gov./semi gov./missionary/international)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of school (1AB, etc.)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social status of school</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources available in the school</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/rural</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Girls/boys/mixed)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special schools (deaf, blind, special needs)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School uniform</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural/monocultural</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools that get foreign aid/alumni support</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Schools</td>
<td>WC</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ educational level</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ social status</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ occupation</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caste</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ behavior</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ attitudes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ knowledge of English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow/fast learners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students residing in hostels/home</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professions students enter into</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ curriculum</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher student ratio</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching methodologies used</td>
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As Table 23 indicates, “features of schools” accounted for the majority of the differences TCs identified as being associated with diversity in Sri Lankan schools. The differences included social constructs such as the religion(s), language(s), and ethnicity(ies) represented in the schools; the type of schools, such as government, semi-government, private or international; the physical resources the schools had; the region the schools were located in (urban or rural); and the gender of the students.

While most of the TC participants situated schools within more visible and mainstream categories, a few identified the concept of diversity in schools as pertaining to schools set up for deaf, blind, or special needs students. Some even included schools that were popular for sports.

In the “features of parents” category, parents were differentiated primarily according to their social status. Their occupation, education level and whether they were members of single- or two-parent households was also identified as a parental diversity marker by a few TCs.

“Features of students” were separated mainly according to students’ psychological differences, such as differences in behaviour, knowledge, and attitudes, whether they were fast or slow learners, and their knowledge of English.

Only one TC identified “features of teachers.” She pointed out differences in the quality of the curriculum teachers followed, the number of teachers in the school and the teaching methodologies teachers used.

Overall, when the TCs spoke about diversity in Sri Lankan schools, they mainly aligned diversity with individual and categorical differences associated with different schools, students, parents and/or teachers. As with their perceptions of diversity in Sri Lankan society, their dominant perception of diversity in Sri Lankan schools was categorical. Figures 21, 22 and 23 show how three focal participants from the three colleges perceived diversity in Sri Lankan schools.
Figure 21: William’s Mind Map of Diversity in Sri Lankan Schools
Figure 22: Chinta’s Mind Map of Diversity in Sri Lankan Schools
Figure 23: Neth’s Mind Map of Diversity in Sri Lankan Schools
Commentary

The TCs’ notions of diversity in Sri Lankan schools fell along the ethnic, religious and linguistic lines they identified with themselves. As Cummins (2009, 2001) points out, teachers’ perceptions within educational systems generally are reflective of the larger power structures that operate in any given society. Many TCs’ self-perceptions, perceptions of their students and of the schools they would be working in in the future and, indeed, their definitions of diversity overall, are reflective of coercive relations of power in Sri Lanka that have and often continue to define each group through rigid distinctions and processes of differentiating. References to the types of alternative or collaborative relations of power that would affirm the existence of multiple diverse identities is not present in their narratives above. The “other” is seen by TCs not only as being distinct but, additionally, as being in opposition and contradiction to who they themselves are. In short, the TCs perceive their students and their schools through the same types of categories that have been historically and politically imposed on them.

Sri Lankan society is stratified primarily along ethnic, religious and linguistic lines. This stratification determines to a great extent how the TCs identified themselves as well as others. The TCs had clear-cut definitions of who the “other” is and is not. Through this defining process, they ensured (whether intentionally or not) that they continued to place other people’s identities into clear-cut categories. That is why, for example, Waseem above often felt out of place. From his perspective and that of others around him, he could only fully belong in one ethnic, religious and linguistic group. He did not have the opportunity to perceive and live his identity in multiple ways.

TCs’ Experiences of Living and Working with the “Other”

For many of the TCs, the NCOE Teacher Education Program (TEP) provided their first exposure to social and cultural diversity and their first opportunity to consider the many benefits and tensions of a multicultural environment. From a Social Justice Teacher Education point of view, teacher education programs need to create opportunities for teacher learners to interact with other cultures as opposed to simply studying about them. This experience of interacting and learning about other communities is important in helping them address social inequalities in multicultural
settings. Greater experiences and awareness can enable teachers to take on leadership roles and reconstruct the educational landscape they are working in in order to create greater equity in opportunities and outcomes (Zeichner, 2011). The program in the NCOE strives to provide exactly this experience.

As discussed in Chapter 6, most TCs came originally from socially and culturally segregated communities with little or no exposure to other local Sri Lankan communities. Some TCs, like those from NC, were aware and conscious of the fact that they had no contact with other communities, but the TCs from the other parts of Sri Lanka did not have this consciousness. Residing in the colleges for two years, doing practicums in various local schools and undertaking the year-long internship broadened their understanding of the multiculturalism that existed in Sri Lankan society. For many of them, the residence experience was an eye-opener to other cultures that co-existed in the same country and a window onto what it meant to live and work with others. In the following section, I draw on narratives of the focal participants to capture how diverse TCs both experienced and responded to the diversity they encountered in the NCOE program.

*William: “Living in the community was good”*

TCs in all three colleges spoke about their exposure to various cultures during the program. The TEP provided a meditational space that exposed them to diversity. William’s narrative captures how the program broadened his cultural horizons:

> Living in the community was good. We celebrated Sinhalese and Tamil New Year, Ramadan, Thai Pongal, Christmas and many more festivals. Even when other religious festivals are celebrated, we join in and help. Before that I didn’t know what Thai Pongal was or what food they make. I think we need the two residential years to learn all that….Then we also met different people. In the beginning, it was difficult to remember those names. We were not used to Muslim names like Sijaam, Aashik, Abdul. It was different for us. They also didn’t know how to pronounce our names. When they did, it was funny. They were my first Muslim friends. Before going to the college, I didn’t know Muslims went to the mosque on Fridays and prayed five times a day. It was interesting to learn about them. We were together for two years. They didn’t know Sinhala and we didn’t know Tamil. So we spoke in English. It was hard, but we improved our English….Now, I know a lot about other cultures. I think now I can adapt to any school environment. I have the ability to accept others and adjust. (William)
Here, William talks about how he collaborated with others and how that collaboration became a learning process for him and the other TCs. He values the opportunity he got to learn about other cultures and how he is better prepared to go into any school as a teacher.

**Withya: “Communities within the community”**

Although the program brought different local Sri Lankan communities together, as seen in the previous chapter, there were other types of divisions that sprang up among the TCs once they took up their residency in the colleges. These divisions took shape as the TCs identified and aligned themselves with various smaller campus communities or “cliques.” Membership in these groups was not based exclusively on the social diversity categories the TCs mostly identified with such as ethnicity, religion and language. Instead, these newly formed groups also were differentiated according to various factors such as the particular class backgrounds and hometown locations they came from, the particular hostels in which they lived on campus, and whether or not they spoke English. Withya identifies some of those divisions:

People from Ampara are in one clique. So are those from Colombo, Badulla and other towns. There were many cliques. Then there were people from cities and villages. They also don’t get along. The Muslims from the East don’t accept other Muslims. They don’t mingle with anybody….Then some students don’t speak in English. I think it [the college experience] is a good chance for us to practice our English. But the people who are good in English don’t speak to others. They talk to each other in English. Then students who come from the “difficult list” with very low marks for English don’t speak in English at all. They are very weak. They speak in Sinhala. (Withya)

In NC, where the majority of students were from the small Tamil towns around the college, there were a few TCs from the eastern part of Sri Lanka. Neela, Nadi and Nagula who were not from that area felt there was a strong divide between the in-station and out-station students. By in-station they meant students who were from Jaffna and by out-station they meant students who were from other parts of the country. In this context, it was the students from eastern Sri Lanka. In NC, where all the TCs were from the same linguistic background, they felt that the students who were from outside of that district were marginalized.

While some TCs saw the NCOE program as a space to learn about others, some withdrew deeper into segregation whether self- or externally imposed.
Camal: “Some of them are good”

Although many TCs claimed to have learned about other social and cultural groups, some also had reservations about the terms on which others could be accepted. One such line of thinking was expressed by Camal whose narrative reflected his acceptance of other social and cultural groups who accepted the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist culture he represented. While he indicated he appreciated the exposure he received from the Sri Lankan society, he also had his reservations:

I met various people from different parts of Sri Lanka. It was a good experience for us to stay with them. There were Tamils and Muslims. Sometimes we are okay with them. Sometimes we are not. We don’t accept their ways and they don’t accept our ways. Sometimes when we switch the TV on for *pirith*, the Muslims switched it off. There are some good Muslims too. They like to learn about our culture. (Camal)

Camal accepted others who wanted to know about his own culture. His assumption was that minorities should learn about the dominant culture. Similarly, Wansha, an upper-class Sinhalese girl, sympathized with rural TCs who did not possess good English skills but came to her for help. Their dependency on her for language support gave her a sense of superiority. She also stated that it gave TCs of minority backgrounds a sense of pride to return home and talk about their new friends who were from the dominant and more affluent cultures. “It’s a big thing for them to have Sinhalese friends,” she noted.

Both Camal’s and Wansha’s acceptance of others was based on how their own sense of superiority was accepted by others. They welcomed others who recognized them and accepted their dominant ways.

Waseem: “They need to respect our culture”

In Waseem’s narrative, he often spoke of how his Muslim culture was overlooked in the program. As an orthodox Muslim, he felt that the program expected minorities to conform to the dominant culture. As someone who thought it was his responsibility to preserve his culture for future generations, he felt the program was not helping him much. Instead, he perceived that the program fostered unequal expectations from different communities.
There were ethnic problems. That was a place where people from all cultures and backgrounds were present. We have to respect religions and virtues. For example, we Muslims can’t light lamps. Women can’t dance or sing in front of men. Women can’t be running, even in phys ed. They need to respect our religion. We can’t destroy our religion, our virtues and our culture. We have to save it and transfer it to the next generation as our previous generations did for us.

They [the Sinhalese] expect us to speak in Sinhalese, and when we do speak we don’t speak properly. We have a different accent. They feel insulted. But they don’t try to learn our language. That’s how it is. (Waseem)

Although Waseem had exposure to other cultures, he withdrew deeper into his own segregated culture.

_Waheed: “For them I am not muslim enough”_

While some campus communities were quite inclusive, many were exclusive and were formed around stricter rules of inclusion. Belonging to a particular ethnic, religious or linguistic group did not assure membership, but, instead, stricter adherence to certain types of conduct was important. Waheed, a Muslim by way of a mixed marriage between his parents, was not included in the community of Muslims who were primarily from the East. From their perspective, Waheed believed, he was not “Muslim enough.”

In college, we have Muslims from the East. They are very orthodox. They won’t take me into their group. For them, I am not Muslim enough. If I want to get accepted, I have to change. But I am not a strict Muslim. I don’t pray. I speak Sinhalese and I have Sinhalese friends. But I am not Sinhalese….I know a little of everything. On many occasions, the TCs identify themselves as Buddhists or Muslims. They see themselves in terms of their religion. The festivities kept the groups together….If I conformed and did what they wanted me to do, the Muslims will accept me. (Waheed)

This acceptance of others on conditions such as acceptance of a certain way of life or dependence was not exclusively visible among those of dominant cultures. It also existed strongly among minority groups such as the Muslims from the East who had a strong sense of community built heavily along religious lines. Muslims from other parts of the country, or Muslims who did not adhere to their norms, were excluded from their community.
Nilu: “Here in Jaffna, we are all Tamil”

Because of its historically and politically constructed ethnic and linguistic segregation, as well as its particular geographical location, NC in Jaffna continued to be a primarily Tamil college. Although by the time of my visit three years had passed since the war had ended, it was mainly Tamils from the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka as well as Muslims from eastern Sri Lanka who attended this college. As a result, the TCs in the NC had very little exposure to other Sri Lankan groups. Many TCs from NC stated that they were interested in meeting people from other communities and that they hoped to travel to other parts of the country since transportation to other parts of the country was now possible. Nilu’s statement gives an overview of the situation:

There are different kinds of people: Tamils, Hindus, Christians and Muslims. There are two separate types of Catholics: Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic. Also, there are TCs who were affected by the war in Vanni. They don’t have parents. One girl has no one. Her younger brother can’t walk. We help her. She has one sari. She is in the Hinduism course. Even our [college] president helps her. Most of the Muslims are very rich. When their parents come to see them, they have lots of parcels. But some don’t even get a chance to visit their parents. Some are far away, or they are ill and can’t visit. I also have no father. My mother is ill, so my brother comes. But men are not allowed to come in, so when I want to see him, I feel as if I am in a prison. I can see him near the gate. Some people’s relatives come from abroad. Some don’t have such relatives. Most of us help each other.

Once we had a debate with Western College. They came and stayed in our college. We spoke. Also when Western College students came on their annual trip, they stayed here. So we helped them. We didn’t know Sinhala, so we communicated in English. Other than that, we don’t get a chance to speak to Sinhala people. I like to communicate with others. (Nilu)

Getting students from the northern part of Sri Lanka to study in colleges in other provinces and vice versa could have promoted a greater understanding of the local communities. The TCs in the NC felt that they have had no opportunities to travel to other parts of the country or get to know those people. However, the TCs from the other colleges did not share such feelings. The absence of TCs from other parts of the country in NC made them more aware of how they were segregated from the rest of the country.
Cala: A space for social transgression

For TCs like Cala, who is from a traditional Muslim background, the college provided a space to engage in sports and other extracurricular activities she and other TCs in her community would otherwise not have had the chance to engage in.

When my juniors ask, I tell them they should dance and sing. Sometimes when they do those things, they get blamed by other Muslims. But I don’t want to stop them. The college is the only place we get to do all these things. Now we can’t put our track pants on to run. I have decided not to criticize others or stop them from [doing] what they want to do. (Cala)

Although in an earlier excerpt Waseem talks about how Muslim women should not dance, sing or run, Cala found the experience she had in CC liberating. For her, it was an experience she might otherwise not have had.

Chaman: “English Divided Us, And Bridged Us”

WC was exclusively for English teachers while the other two colleges, CC and NC, prepared teachers for other subjects as well. What was evident from the interviews and the observations I conducted was that the primary language that was used within the NCOE program was the first language of the TCs. In the NC, where there were only Tamil speakers, Tamil was used. In the WC and CC, both of which had a Sinhala-speaking majority, Sinhala was used alongside other minority languages. Although many TCs felt the need to use English outside of their classes, they also felt that the college environment was not conducive to speaking in English. They felt that they did not have enough opportunities to improve their language skills, although they felt that their use of the English language should not be confined to classrooms.

A handful of TCs who came from urban, middle-class families spoke English as a first language. They used it at home and with their friends. The majority of the TCs in CC did not come from English-speaking homes. Many are still learning English. Many didn’t use English. Some couldn’t talk well, some were shy, some didn’t talk because others laughed. Many of the trainees were more comfortable communicating in their first language. When we spoke in English, others laughed and passed comments. They said we were showing off. So I spoke in English with few others.

We spoke in English in class. We talked to our friends in Sinhala. There are lots of students who came from rural areas. Because of that we talked in Sinhala. (Chaman)
However, within the confines of the TEP, the English language played various roles. It was both a divider and a bridge. As English teachers, the TCs were skilled in the English language, the “Link Language” of the country. Within the college, English enabled speakers of different languages to communicate. English was used for various purposes by different TCs outside of the academic program. English was used primarily to communicate with others who did not share the same first language.

English was also used by TCs to communicate and learn from other TCs from different linguistic communities. Withya used English to learn about Islam from one of her colleagues.

   In our dorm, there were no Tamils and Muslims. But in class, I got to talk in English because there is a boy called Sijaam who doesn’t know Sinhala. He is Muslim and I am Roman Catholic and I like to learn about different religions. He and I always tried to talk in English. He explained about their religion. We had arguments. Because of that I got a chance to talk in English. (Withya)

Notably, many minority speakers spoke about the necessity to learn English. Although they were in an English language program, most of their interactions outside of classes took place in Sinhala.

*Neela: “In college, we were all equal”*

Although there were many differences among the TCs, the routine and the rules of the program as well as the uniforms TCs wore dictated a certain degree of uniformity and equality. In a context where economic divisions were strongly felt, and many came from less-privileged backgrounds, the basis of these measures were to ensure at least symbolic equality among TCs. All TCs lived together, ate the same food and wore the same uniforms at all occasions. Neela talked about how all TCs were equal:

   There are Tamils, Muslims and Christians. We see rich and the poor. But we don’t get a chance to show our wealth. We wore a uniform, we learned together, lived to together, and studied together. There were no chances to show off. (Neela)

This sense of equality built among the TCs a stronger sense of community and togetherness.
Commentary

The interview excerpts I have presented above show the variety of perceptions and experiences the TC participants in my study experienced during their two-year college residency. The range of emotions and perceptions the TCs shared are not unique to the NCOE or to Sri Lanka. Positive feelings of inclusion, pride, and a sense of belonging and acceptance as well negative feelings of rejection, marginalization and anger are common to any multicultural society. Moreover, these emotions, particularly negative exclusionary and prejudicial perceptions, will remain unless the TCs are provided a platform to share and reflect on them. It is through dialogue, sharing and collaboration that TCs can reflect on their perceptions and question their own beliefs and explore ways of broadening their minds.

My findings, as supported by the Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE) approach, suggest that the TCs’ perceptions and experiences of others and the emotions the TCs associated with these perceptions and experiences need to be utilized more explicitly as a resource within the NCOE program to foster greater intercultural awareness and empathy among new teachers as opposed to simply letting their experiences go unquestioned and unresolved. Although the TCs shared their experiences with me as a researcher, within the NCOE program itself, they did not have the space or the systematic opportunity to share their experiences and struggles with other culturally and linguistically diverse TCs. Thus they did not have the chance to address those issues. Many didn’t even think there was an issue to be discussed. Instead, they left the program with unresolved experiences. Some of these they perceived as good and as having broadened their outlook on life. But there were others which both they and I consider as having established misunderstandings and feelings of being distanced from some communities.

TCs’ Narratives of Changing Perceptions of the “Other”

Generating a list of how teachers who work toward social justice can create equitable and caring learning environments, Hawkins (2011b) points out the need to explore teachers’ beliefs, attitudes and values. Exploring teachers’ existing and changing perceptions is important. Hawkins tells us that if we understand how teachers’ experiences shape their outlook on diversity, it can be a process, which, in return, can shape the learning communities they create for their own learners.
The narratives of the TCs in my study show how experiences of living and working with Sri Lankan “others” also brought about changing perceptions of the communities of these “others.” While some TCs became more open-minded about diversity and accepted it, others felt that they were marginalized and discriminated against because of their “other” identities.

*Cala: “After coming to college, I changed my ideas”*

Cala, who came to CC from a Muslim town in central Sri Lanka, said she originally thought other people didn’t like Muslims. She was surprised, therefore, when she met TCs from other backgrounds who respected her religion and culture.

> There were seven of us in the dorm, and I was the only Muslim. I didn’t know any Sinhala. Not a single word. I used to cry. I have never known any Sinhalese, Tamils or Christians. I thought they didn’t like our religion. But after coming to the college, I changed my ideas. They respected our culture and ideas. I changed my views. When I prayed, if they were listening to music, they reduced the volume. I was surprised. They also wanted to know about my religion. (Cala)

Cala, who at first thought others didn’t like her religion and culture, changed her ideas after being with others. She realised that her preconceived notions were wrong. Similarly, many other TCs who had stereotyped other ethnic and religious communities changed their ideas after interacting with them.

*Withya: “Being a minority is not bad”*

Being a minority does not necessarily mean one is denied certain educational and linguistic rights and privileges. Withya, a Hindu Tamil, stated that her strong English skills were due to her schooling in a good school. She felt that her status as a Tamil Hindu and her upbringing was a benefit rather than a drawback for her.

> In college, there were students who didn’t like Tamils. They were sometimes humiliating me and my traditions. But I have not felt denied or discriminated because of my religion. Being a Hindu enabled me to go to one of the best schools in the country for my internship. This school does not accept Sinhalese people. You have to be a Tamil and a Hindu. Basically, it’s the biggest benefit I got. There were lots of people who wanted to get into good schools for their internship, but most of them were not able to get in. Speaking English well was also helpful to get into CC. I got into this profession because of English. It’s very competitive to get into this program. (Withya)
Similarly, Wafa felt that being a Muslim enabled her to do her internship in a prominent Muslim school.

Yes, I got this big school for my internship because I am a Muslim. Only Muslims are allowed to teach here. During block teaching, when we took buses, they gave us a seat. I am a Muslim and I was wearing a white sari, and they respected that. (Wafa)

As Withya and Wafa suggest, minority status does not always limit one’s opportunities. Instead, it can provide greater opportunities.

**Chintha: “I don't think discrimination is bad”**

The experience in the NCOE program also promoted nationalist sentiments among majority TCs such as Chintha, who felt the Sinhalese culture was being taken for granted and that Sinhalese, unlike other groups, were not united.

When I was in college, I thought, “It’s not good to discriminate.” But later, I thought I needed to change my ideas. Sinhalese have only this country. Tamils have Tamil Nadu [In India]. Muslims can go to Pakistan or Arabic countries. After I went to college, I realized that we needed to stand up as Sinhalese. They [minorities] are competing with us. They want to go beyond the Sinhalese. I don’t want to discriminate. But my experiences have taught me there needs to be discrimination.

These Muslims always sit in the front row. They want to take the lead on everything. They spoke only Tamil when they came here, but now they speak Sinhalese and English well. But they refuse to talk to us in Sinhalese. They pretend they don’t know. They are all covered and wear socks in this hot weather.

In the staffroom [at St. Andrew’s], the Muslim teachers were talking with Cala and Careema in Tamil and they only want to be friends with them and not me. But Sinhala teachers are not like that. They talk to everybody. They are not in cliques. They are friendly. Cala has lots of friends because there are lots of Tamil and Muslim teachers. Even out of the four trainees here, I am the only Sinhalese. The rest are Muslim. They have lots of personal conflicts among them, but they are together as Muslims. (Chintha)

Chintha’s experiences affirm a further changing perception among some TCs, namely, that those from the dominant groups need to have a stronger sense of community. This is a sentiment Chintha feels is very strong among the minorities.
Commentary

The college residential experience of living and working with others who belonged to different sociocultural groups gave TCs an opportunity to get to know about other Sri Lankan communities directly. It gave them a clear idea about other communities’ identities and what it was like to live and work with people from these communities. On the one hand, the TCs developed new relationships, collaborated with members of different communities, and got to know other cultures through the various cultural celebrations the communities organized. But on the other hand, this multicultural coexistence also created friction and was responsible for misunderstandings among the TCs. As a result of these various experiences, some positive, some negative, the TCs developed new self-identities as well as transformed their notions and perceptions of other communities. The TEP provided a fertile ground for the TCs to develop new knowledge and awareness of the kinds of diversity they would encounter in their prospective schools.

However, in my view, there was a main shortcoming. The TEP did not create a space for the TCs and the TEs to have a meaningful, ongoing dialogue about the differences between and among them, about the frictions that arose because of those differences, and about the causes of those differences. Without explicit acknowledgement of and attention to such differences, how could they be reconciled?

Northern College TCs’ Perceptions and Experiences of Life in the Aftermath of the War

During the war time, there was a heavy military presence in the government-controlled northern parts of Sri Lanka. At the same time, the LTTE was also operating in cities like Jaffna. Contrary to what I had expected, many TCs spoke of how the LTTE had actually kept law and order in the region and had helped preserve their culture in Jaffna.

Although the general understanding is that the end of a war is good for a community, the TCs who had grown up with the war had mixed feelings about how their lives have evolved since the end of the war. By the time the war was over, the Sri Lankan government had destroyed the LTTE. By the time I did my research, the military presence was also very insignificant. The two
parties that had officially and unofficially governed the area—the soldiers of the Sri Lankan army that represented the government and the LTTE—were not present. Although I expected my participants to be happy that the military, made up primarily of Sinhalese men, had withdrawn, they said that since they had grown up with the military patrolling their city, the presence of soldiers carrying guns did not trouble them. Indeed, they felt that the absence of the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army, the two forces that enforced the law, had created lawlessness.

People are experiencing freedom for the first time. What we have in Jaffna now is something new for us. Things used to be different. It wasn’t actually bad. Now our society is a mess. People don’t know how to react to this. There is the internet and people are seeing bad things on that. Even school students are watching bad films. We didn’t have electricity back then, but now we do. There are drugs coming in. We don’t even know from where. There are lots of thefts and robberies, rape, assault, drugs and alcohol. We hear of school girls having abortions. This is too much. Our people don’t know what to do. The LTTE didn’t let any of this happen. (Neth)

Nilu also expressed her doubts about the benefits of the end of the war:

We are happy the war is over, but we are afraid of thieves. There is a lot of crime now, but nobody knows who is committing them. We are happy the LTTE is not here any more. They took our money and threatened our parents when we didn’t have money to give. They even took young children as child soldiers. Some parents are still crying for their lost children. But when they [the LTTE] was here people were scared of them. Nobody committed any crimes because the LTTE would shoot you. Or they would drag you out of your house and hit you. They protected the women. Back then, men were scared to tease us and pass comments on the streets. But now it’s different. I wear a sari, so people know I am a teacher, but men tease me and pass comments. (Nilu)

The sense that the LTTE had helped preserve the Tamil culture in the northern region was echoed by several of the participants in NC. They felt the freedom that had come with the end of the war had not helped strengthen but rather had destroyed their culture.

Several of the TCs also felt they were not ready for the massive development projects that were taking place.

We are used to getting about on bicycles. Our roads are narrow, so we can’t have many vehicles on them. But now there is a lot of road construction. There are tourists and business people coming to Jaffna. There are lots of vehicles on the roads. Because of that, there is a lot of traffic and a lot of road accidents. Did you know that Thaya Sir [a teacher educator] was hit by a big lorry when he was turning into NC a
couple of months ago? He was unconscious for days. We are still not used to riding our bicycles with all these fast vehicles. They are big and it’s not safe to be on our bicycles. Nilu has a scooter. That is safer, I think. There is a lot of pollution. People in Jaffna now have more money, but we have lost our lifestyle and culture. (Nalini)

However, despite their various misgivings, all TCs acknowledged the freedom of mobility they had as a result of the return of peace to Sri Lanka. The TCs from the NC felt that they had the freedom to travel to parts of the country they had previously not been able to visit. Neela, who was from eastern Sri Lanka, stated the reason she came to NC was because the war was over.

I was able to come to NC because the war is over. If not, my parents would not have let me come. We couldn’t even come here during the war. Now coming to Jaffna is easy. It’s also safe to live here. Now there are lots of trainees from the eastern and north central Provinces. They say they are also going to reopen the railway to Jaffna. Then more people from other parts of the country will come to NC. (Neela)

Just as the topic of the war, the causes of the war, and of how different segments of the community experienced it are left out of the NCOE program and the general discourse, its aftermath and what people felt about being in a post-conflict nation is left out of the teacher education program. As most of the TCs in NC reveal, the end of the war is not necessarily a good thing, especially in a context that is not prepared socially and politically to move forward. However, as Davies (2005a, 2010) discusses, conflict needs to be addressed in classrooms. War can be approached negatively through a hate curriculum, a defence curriculum, stereotyping and allegiance, an attitude that seeing war is routine, and through omission. Alternatively, war can be approached positively through tolerance, conflict resolution, education for humanitarian law, dialogue and encounter, and active challenge to violence (Davies, 2010). The TCs in NC have experienced the war first-hand. Whether they are aware of this or not, their professional practice is, to a great degree, shaped by these experiences.

Discussion: The Role of Critical Reflection in Building Teaching Selves Based on New Experiences and Perceptions

While research points consistently toward the benefits of education in post-conflict reconciliation (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000), the wrong kind of education has the potential to aggravate tensions between different ethnic groups. It can play a role in driving a wedge between people instead of uniting them (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005a, 2005b, 2010; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). If education continues to reinforce the wider social and political structures that were a part of the
conflict (Davies, 2010), education proves to be counter-productive as a peace initiative. As discussed in Chapter 7, the teacher education program at the NCOE does offer a well-intended multicultural experience and many TCs stated the benefits of this mode of pedagogy.

However, what is lacking in this attempt to teach future teachers about peaceful coexistence is the space to recognize and overcome prejudices within the individual, and between individuals and communities (Nocolai, 2009). Although research (e.g., Johnson & Stewart, 2007; Allport, 1954) points out how increased interaction among people from different groups can promote intergroup understandings, the above discussion shows that interaction without reflection cannot foster greater understanding, but instead perpetuates negative stereotypes.

The findings in this chapter reveal how TCs bring a range of conceptions of diversity to the teacher education program. The experiences within the program prompt further responses to diversity. Yet they are left in mid-air, unquestioned and unresolved. While this experience is an eye-opener for some and makes them more aware of differences, a situation which they view as something positive, others withdraw deeper into their own comfort zones, where they view diversity as a threat. This experience does not make most TCs develop the knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes that help them to have the kinds of positive understandings of others that can enable them to be active participants in the wider community. Although the program at the NCOE provides a strong symbolic curriculum (Gay, 2002) in the form of multicultural coexistence, the celebration of cultural and religious events and getting TCs to do their block teaching in diverse school settings, there is no space for critical reflection.

Transformative approaches to pedagogy such as Social Justice Teacher Education (Cochran-Smith, 1995, 1999, 2004; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner, 2009, 2011) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Ladson-Billing, 1995b) also highlight the role of critical consciousness and critical reflection in empowering teachers. Giroux (2009) stresses the importance of critical reflection in teaching and learning and the need for honest learning environments where teachers and students can reflect critically on their experiences through interaction.

Critical reflection can contribute to a more realistic and broad worldview (Bar-Tal, 2002). Teachers need to reflect critically on how ethnic conflict has shaped their day-to-day lives and their personal and professional identities, as well as the learning environments they create for
their learners. Although the NCOE provides an excellent multicultural experience which the TCs value greatly, there is not space for critical reflection where the TCs and the TEs reflect on and discuss their experiences and perceptions. As a result, the TCs leave the program with unarticulated notions of diversity that might not necessarily broaden their worldviews. In the wake of a war, teacher education needs to encourage teachers to reflect critically on taboo topics such as the war, discrimination, violence, and differences. Teachers need to be able to build on their own as well as others’ experiences to develop inclusive and broadminded teaching selves. Ignoring these elements can lead to reductive and stereotypical practices (Howard, 2003; Cochran-Smith, et al., 2009b). For teacher education to work toward social justice in a post-conflict situation, there needs to be greater collaboration and dialogue about these issues, including reflection on why these issues arise, and how they can be resolved in a manner that develops greater intercultural awareness among prospective teachers. As Hawkins (2011a) states, this type of social justice teacher education needs to be based, firstly, on the premise that recognizes teachers as agents of social change. Secondly, it needs to recognize the tensions of working within larger societal and institutional power structures.
Chapter 9:
Becoming Teachers: Perceptions, Responsibilities and Hope

Introduction

In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, I examined Teacher Candidate’s (TCs’) identities, their experiences in the NCOE program, and their experiences and perceptions of diversity as they live and work with Sri Lankan others. In this chapter, I look at TCs’ perceptions of their roles and responsibilities toward teaching students from diverse backgrounds.

I start the chapter by focusing on TCs’ responses to different picture prompts I presented to them. I interpret these responses as an indication of TCs’ perceptions of teaching diverse students in diverse classroom settings. In order to better understand how their perceptions translate into their teaching practice, I then focus in the second section on the correlations between the TCs and their selection of schools for their year-long internships. The third section deals specifically with the question of why the TCs chose the particular internship schools they did.

The fourth section of the chapter centers on a discussion of the teaching culture in the internship schools, particularly the culture of silence that is maintained among teachers and students alike within the NCOE program and the local school system about teaching in the aftermath of a war. Section five offers a more positive note, focusing on how the TCs took collaborative transformative action to transform the conditions in their internship schools and the practical implications of those projects. This chapter, which is also the final findings chapter of the dissertation, ends by talking about how teachers can be agents of social and cultural change in post-conflict reconciliation processes.

Again, in this chapter, as in Chapter 8 previously, I bring in the theme of Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE). Another related theme the chapter considers is Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). CRP is also geared toward creating classroom climates that are conducive to learning for students from diverse backgrounds. In particular, CRP emphasizes the notion of “caring,” the importance of having high expectations of all learners (Gay, 2002) and the need for developing critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995b).
These tenets of SJTE and CRP are important to keep in mind in this chapter as they will assist in developing our understanding of how TCs perceive their roles and responsibilities toward teaching students from diverse communities.

Responding to Pictures

In his framework of coercive and collaborative relations of power, Cummins (2001) discusses the importance of the “role definitions” of educators. By this, he means the “mindset of expectations, assumptions and goals that educators bring to the task of educating culturally and linguistically diverse learners” (p. 19). Cummins argues that the mindset teachers bring to their classes and the learning environments they create for their students can either promote students’ academic engagement or impede it. Understanding identity negotiations are important as societal power relations express themselves in the classroom through the process of identity negotiation. The power structures and power relations that operate in the wider society are manifested in the classrooms. The relations of power in the wider society, Cummins argues, range from coercive to collaborative in varying degrees and they influence both the ways in which educators define their roles and the types of structures that are established in the educational system. Cummins’ perspective is useful in helping us understand, first, how NCOE TCs’ role definitions were either an endorsement of the status quo or an attempt to challenge it, and second, whether their role definitions either empowered or disempowered them.

Student A and Student B

One method I used to get a deeper understanding of TCs’ perceptions of teaching diverse learners was to present them with the following two pictures, titled “Student A” and “Student B.”
As Figure 24 shows, Student A appears to come from a wealthy family and looks happy. Student B, on the other hand, appears less privileged. She does not have the smiling, happy face of Student A. After I showed the TCs these two pictures, I then asked them a series of questions to see how they thought the two students would succeed in their future lives and to find out which student the TCs would prefer to teach if given the choice.

**Cala: “Student success is all about their family background”**

Most of the TCs in the three colleges felt that Student A would succeed in school and beyond. Student A seemed to them as someone who was from a good family background, had strong family support for education, had access to learning resources and a good learning environment, and had exposure to educational opportunities and good teachers. All these were factors they considered would ensure her success. Some TCs also felt that Student A was more intrinsically and extrinsically motivated.

In contrast, the TCs perceived that Student B did not have any of the benefits or motivations of Student A. They concluded, therefore, that Student B would not have many opportunities to succeed in school.

According to A’s appearance, I think she comes from a good family. She must be going to a good school. There is a lot of competition in such schools. When they are learning, they try to gain something. They know they have to win competitions. They
are also intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. She will become a doctor or a lawyer. But with B, it’s different. Their parents, their family background is not good. They don’t want to get more education. They just want to grow up. They just want to get some knowledge about how to write or count. They go behind their parents and do their jobs. B won’t have much exposure nor any motivation. She won’t have many facilities like A. She won’t have many chances to succeed. (Cala)

Cala went on to explain her view that “society” would not support the education of Student B.

In our society, it’s very difficult for people like B to succeed. She will follow her family line. Her parents will get her married. She will end up becoming a housemaid or doing some other low-level job. Students follow their parents. Farmers’ children will be farmers and doctors’ children will be doctors. (Cala)

Cala’s responses are indicative of how power relations in the wider society can effect how teachers define students’ success (Cummins, 2001). However, a few TCs, such as Chintha, felt that wealth for Student A or poverty for Student B would not necessarily bring about their respective success or failure. Chintha expressed the idea that free education can open doors for poor students and change their futures.

Having resources doesn’t necessarily mean they will succeed. Students from rural areas could be determined and hard-working. They could also get encouragement from their families. They might not have the same opportunities or the resources, but free education can help. They need proper guidance. If you look at students who go to university, there are lots of students from very rural and poor families. You can’t judge people by their appearance. I used to get discriminated because of my name “McShane.” My great grandfather was a Eurasian. I am Sinhalese Buddhist. But people think I am Christian. They just make judgments. (Chintha)

Chintha’s own experiences of discrimination gave her an insight quite different from that of her peers.

_Neth: “It’s our responsibility to teach the poor”_

While the majority of TCs had a clear idea about which student in the pictures would succeed and why, they also had preferences about who they would want to teach in the future and why. Although many TCs were confident that Student A would succeed in school, they stated that they would prefer to teach Student B. They felt that Student A had all the facilities, resources and the support she needed. They considered that Student B would be more in need of their help. Neth’s narrative brings out a perspective that was echoed by many other TCs in all three NCOE.
I prefer to teach Student B because we have to teach only them. They don’t have enough facilities. They don’t have good teachers, money, or books. Their parents are poor. We have to teach them. Student A has all the facilities. They don’t have to get knowledge from the school; they can get it from another place. I think it’s better to teach Student B.

I prefer to teach the poor kids because they don’t have everything. They don’t have the background knowledge of what the world is like and what kinds of opportunities they have, so we have to bring them into the outer world. They are stagnating. We have to give a wider perspective about the world and the English language. They don’t have that. Our duty is to bring them to that point and show them what the world is like. Whereas A has everything. They get the help they need even if we don’t give that in school.

I grew up in a poor family, but it’s because of free education and the help of good teachers I was able to get out of that. Now I am a teacher and I am respected. (Neth)

Neth also drew on her experiences to state that teachers can make a difference in the lives of the students and change the status quo and its reproduction. For her, teachers can change the way in which education perpetuates the existing modes of students’ success. However, despite Neth’s good intentions, it is possible that Neth’s perception of the poor student and her need to help her arose from romantic notions of poor students as being innocent and helpless and waiting to be saved. Neth did not really see Student B as someone with her own potential or agency.

TCs like Chintha felt that as a young teacher it was her duty to teach less-privileged students.

I choose to teach students in the rural areas. Teaching is a service and not a job. My father passed away last year, and I realized that money is not everything. We have a social responsibility. During block teaching, I went to some very rural schools. Their conditions are poor, but the students are very keen to learn. Even when we went to our community project, the people in that village helped us a lot. It was a very remote village. I have never been to a place like that. There was no proper road going to that village, so the villagers came to take us in their bullock carts. They fed us and looked after us well, while we painted, cleaned and renovated the village school. They don’t have running water, so we had to get water from a well. But they appreciated what we did to their school. They know the value of education. On our last day there, they held a ceremony to thank us. (Chintha)

Some other TCs such as Weena, Wasana and Nilu emphasized the point that teachers find it satisfying and rewarding to teach poor children.
There was also a division among the TCs about how easy or difficult it would be to teach the two students represented in the pictures. They stated that teaching Student A would be easy as she has the knowledge and discipline to learn. On the other hand, they thought it would be hard to teach Student B.

It will be easy to teach Student A. They will know the language anyway. It will be difficult to teach poor students. It’s too much work. Student A could be a gifted learner, and I can gain from her. I can also learn. With Student B, I have to give more. With Student A, I have to study and learn and search for more information. Through that I can develop myself. (Nilu)

There were a few other TCs who felt, like Nilu, that it would be personally more rewarding to teach better students such as Student A. Like her, they believed that teaching Student A would be a learning experience for themselves.

William: “Change is in the hands of the teachers”

While the TCs had varying yet clear notions of how social factors shaped student success and their own teaching preferences, a few also spoke of the role of teachers in changing this situation. They identified the teachers’ agency and felt that teachers can help less-privileged students. They felt teachers needed to understand the students and their needs, care for them and tell them about the value of education. Such practices, they considered, would help students overcome social barriers.

Student B needs a good teacher who understands her. The teacher can help her to overcome barriers. She can become anything she wants to be. However, changing the course of the students’ lives is in the hands of the teachers. We can take them to the top of the world. A lot has to do with our dedication. (William)

Overall, all TCs saw the power of education to change students’ lives. While some were of the opinion that students did not have a way of getting out of the social conditions they were born into, a few others asserted that teachers alone can change students’ lives.

While the TCs had mixed ideas about the kind of student they wanted to teach, many recognized the role of teachers in making a difference in students’ lives. Yet, their own commitment to being that teacher was not prevalent in many TCs’ narratives.
Classroom A and Classroom B

In addition to the above pictures of Student A and Student B, I also presented the TCs with the following pictures of two contrasting classrooms. I did so in order to find out which classroom the TCs would prefer to teach in. I worked from the assumption that TCs’ willingness to teach in varying conditions would serve as a further indicator of their commitment to teach diverse learners and would prompt them to consider the correlations between different types of classroom environment and student success.

Classroom A in Figure 25 has a chalkboard and the students sit in rows facing it. The walls and the furniture indicate that this classroom is located in a less-resourced school. In Classroom B, on the other hand, the students who are fewer in number than Classroom A, sit around a table, giving them more space for interaction. The students in Classroom B are well-dressed and it seems they are paying attention to the teacher. Classroom B also has more resources, including access to computer technology, and is well-decorated.
**Chaman: “Classroom setup does affect students’ success”**

The majority of the TCs felt that the classroom resources, the seating arrangement, and the relatively small number of students in Classroom B would definitely make it a more conducive learning environment. They concurred that the students in Classroom B would have greater chances of learning and greater success. In contrast, they felt that Classroom A did not have the type of atmosphere nor the resources that could enhance learning. Although most of the TCs had themselves come from school settings like that shown in Classroom A, many felt that the presence of resources, and especially the computer technology shown in Classroom B, was important for the promotion of learning.

Classroom A is in a rural area because there are few facilities. Students are not dressed well. Their background is very poor. There are simple teaching and learning facilities. Classroom B is a very comfortable classroom. Maybe it’s not in Sri Lanka. Maybe it’s an international school or a private school. The students are seated comfortably. There is a laptop. There are good teaching and learning materials and a good learning environment. There are separate places to keep things.

In Classroom A, students will take a longer time to catch the lesson. They have to spend more time to learn. If the teacher is teaching about the earth, they have to draw the earth on the blackboard. In Classroom B, they can go to the internet and get everything in a practical way. It’s easy. No need to waste time. (Chaman)

Wafa, adding another dimension, spoke of how even the arrangement of classroom furniture can promote or hinder learning. She envisioned the learning that might be taking place in the two classroom settings.

In Classroom A, the students on the right can’t even see the board. The blackboard should be placed in a suitable place. There are no visual aids or posters. In Classroom B, there are posters, and the students can get something from that. They can read words. All the students can see the board. The grouping is good for collaborative learning. You don’t get that in A. They are separated. There should be self-learning and peer learning. In B, there are [both] peer learning and self-learning. In A, they don’t have a chance to talk to others. The peer learning won’t happen there. (Wafa)

While looking at the classroom pictures, the TCs also made judgements about the students and their family backgrounds and predicted how successful the students would or would not be. Chintha, for example, felt that the students in Classroom B were from good families and therefore would succeed.
Students in B will do well. That’s because of their language. Their parents also are wealthy. They can help their students easily. In A, the parents might not be educated. They might have their problems as well. (Chintha)

However, William held the view that, irrespective of the classroom setting and the furniture, if the teachers are dedicated, the students will learn.

I went to a school with classrooms like A. But it’s not about the classroom or the furniture. Learning is much more than that. You don’t need many resources to teach effectively. My old Sinhalese teacher used to take us outside and we learned under a Siyambala tree. She got us to carry the blackboard outside. So it’s not that bad to have a blackboard that is on a stand like in A. We can take it anywhere. We sat in a circle. The teacher sat with us and we had discussions. I can still recall what I learned in that class. My Sinhalese teacher was very dedicated. (William)

Questions of this nature got the TCs to reflect on their own learning experiences. This process of reflection helped them make judgments that did not always align with traditional narratives of student success. They were able to identify how teachers can change the classroom dynamics through a simple act like taking the students and the blackboard outside.

**Nilu: “The old talk-and-chalk method is boring”**

Although when looking at the pictures of Student A and Student B, many TCs stated that they preferred to teach students from less-privileged backgrounds, when looking at the classroom pictures, the majority of the TCs stated that they preferred to teach in a well-resourced classroom like that represented by Classroom B. They said it would be easier to teach in a classroom where they had access to computer technology and the internet. They also felt that teaching in Classroom B would be exciting and a novel experience.

It would be easier to teach in B. We can adapt the technology and use new strategies to teach. It’s very easy. We can download material from the internet. For example, when we are teaching about jobs we can download material and I can show it to the students. But in A, it’s difficult to do something interesting like that. Here [in A], it’s very difficult to teach these students. (Nilu)

Like Nilu, Nalini also stated that she would feel good teaching in Classroom B. Wasana commented that many teachers would prefer not to go to Classroom A because it would be difficult to teach there. She said teachers in Classroom A would have to face many difficulties in
delivering the curriculum. Like Wansha, some TCs felt that teaching in Classroom B would offer more opportunity for professional growth:

With these facilities, I can improve myself. It will benefit my professional development. I can’t learn much by being in Classroom A. It would be hard to teach there. (Wansha)

Chintha and William had a different perspective, however. They both stated that they wanted to teach in Classroom A. Chintha said that she wanted to do a service for the less-privileged and that teaching in the type of setting that Classroom A represented would be her way of paying back for the state-funded free education she had received. William spoke about how teachers can make rural classrooms and teaching more enjoyable by taking the students outside.

There were also some TCs who, like Neriya, felt that in either location, a teacher’s primary goal should be to make the class student-centered and teach. Nagula agreed, arguing that it was her responsibility to provide the kind of support her students needed, irrespective of whether she was teaching in a well-resourced or poorly resourced classroom.

Withya went on to talk about the instruction she and her peers had received in WC on teaching in very poorly resourced classrooms. She spoke of how they were taught to prepare interesting yet low-cost teaching aids to make their classes interesting.

In WC, we have learned about so many different kinds of visual aids. For instance, if we don’t have a blackboard, we can use the flannel board or a flip chart in class. We can make many interesting visual aids. Technology alone can’t do wonders. We can prepare lots of interesting things without spending a lot of money. (Withya)

Waheed: “We need a simple lesson for Classroom A”

After they spoke about their impressions of the two classrooms, I then asked the TCs how they would prepare lessons for the two different settings. Many thought the students in Classroom B should be given more challenging tasks, while those in Classroom A should be given less challenging tasks. The underlying assumption was that the students in the well-resourced classroom were better academically and thus deserved more sophisticated and challenging instruction, whereas instruction for the students in the poorly resourced classroom needed to start at a lower level.
I will plan the lesson for Classroom A in a simple way. If I speak in English, I will speak in simple English. They may not know things. We have to start at a low level. But in Classroom B, I will do extra activities. I can download activities from the internet, and they may have their own laptops to work with too. We can do something at a very advanced level. I will also do drama and start student clubs. I can guide them. I think this school will support me. It will help me to grow. (Waheed)

Like Waheed, some other TCs felt Classroom B offered all the resources they would need to make teaching effective. TCs who were passionate about using computer technology stated that they would use the technology to make learning fun and more effective.

There were also some TCs like Wafa who did not feel the need to dilute their instruction for Classroom A’s students, but who spoke of how they could deliver the curriculum using the available resources.

I’ll do it the same way in both classes. I won’t do anything differently. In A class, I want to use pictures and visual aids and make the lesson. In B, I can use the projector. I can use technology. They have facilities. (Wafa)

Commentary

As discussed in chapter 4, Teacher cognition (Borg, 2003) and personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1986, 1992; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986) sheds light on how teachers’ understandings, beliefs, experiences and perceptions impact their personal choices and the pedagogical choices they make. The TC participants of my study shared a range of perceptions about teaching two different types of students and about teaching in two different types of classroom settings. Although many TCs did not come from families with high socioeconomic backgrounds, they felt that Student A, who appeared to be from a wealthy family, and students in Classroom B, which was well equipped and resourced, would be more successful in school. Their perceptions in this respect, therefore, more or less reflected their belief in the existing status quo. In other words, they projected the typical view of the wider Sri Lankan society that wealthier students by default would succeed in school, whereas the poor students would continue to be failures.

However, based on their own personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1986, 1992; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986), TCs like William, Neth and Chintha saw how teachers can make a difference. First, they recognized that it is the teacher’s responsibility to help less-privileged students;
secondly, they identified the teacher’s agency to bring about change. They recognized their own agency as teachers to create an interpersonal space within which learning can take place (Cummins, 2009). They also acknowledged that this would require much more energy and said they would even sacrifice the opportunity to teach in a well-resourced school with more possibilities for professional advancement. Although the TCs’ thoughts about their responsibilities toward diverse learners were not well articulated, what was hopeful was their underlying belief that teachers can make a difference in the lives of less-privileged students and thereby challenge the existing power structures.

Selection of Internship Schools

My personal journal entries in Chapter 7 gave a glimpse of the range of schools in which the TCs did their internships. As I indicated, the histories of some of the bigger schools date back to colonial times. The founding principles on which some of those schools were established have been sustained up to the present, even though decades have passed since Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 and years have gone by since the end of the civil war.

Schools that were established by Christian missionaries to spread Christianity, and the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim schools that were later built as alternatives to the missionary schools to revive local religions and cultures, continue in the same vein today. Even though the majority of Sri Lankan children attend public schools, children from different ethnic, linguistic, religious and social backgrounds go to ethnically and religiously segregated schools. Thus, amidst claims that public educational institutions are democratic and thereby a great social equalizer, the structure of Sri Lankan schools, as in many others parts of the world, show how they are social institutions that sustain and legitimate the existing status quo (McLaren, 1986). The existing patterns of economic, societal, cultural and linguistic capital are sustained and reproduced through the school system. As I will now discuss, the TCs’ choice of schools for their internships contributes a new layer to our understanding of the reproduction process Bourdieu, 1986).

In CC and WC, there were two to five TCs undertaking their internships in the same school, but in NC, which had only 20 English TCs in my focal cohort, only one TC was assigned to a school. Table 24 depicts the social and cultural backgrounds of the TCs who attended WC and the schools in which they chose to do their internships.
In WC, there was a very close link between the TCs’ backgrounds and the internship schools they chose. As these were future English language teachers, it was not necessary for them to know their students’ first language in order to teach them. In the Sri Lankan Constitution, English is referred to formally as a “Link Language” since it is the language that is meant to link the different linguistic communities of the country. However, the Sinhala Buddhist TCs (Weena, William, Wanya, Wansha and Waruni) went to Sinhala Buddhist schools, the Muslim TCs

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<th>Language</th>
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<td>4. Wafa</td>
<td>Muslim Girls’ School</td>
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<td>5. Waseem</td>
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<td>11. Waruni</td>
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<td>12. Withya</td>
<td>Tamil Girls’ School</td>
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(Waleed, Waseem and Wafa) went to Muslim schools, and the one Hindu Tamil TC (Withya) went to a Hindu Tamil school.

Except for a few minor exceptions, all TCs chose schools in which the language, ethnicity, religion and social status of the schools was similar to their own. Wasa and Wasana, who were Catholic, chose to teach in Horizon School, an elite Buddhist school for girls. What connected them to the school was their English language proficiency and social status. Similar to Cala, Careema, Chaman and Chintha, four non-Christians who taught in an elite Christian school, Wasa and Wasana had the linguistic confidence to teach in an elite Buddhist school.

One exception to this pattern was Waheed, a Muslim who taught in a prominent Sinhala Buddhist school. Although he was not always comfortable with his mixed identity, he did have the possibility to cross at least some of the social and cultural boundaries that existed in society.

As Table 25 reveals, of the three college sites, CC displayed a greater diversity in the TCs’ backgrounds and their choice of schools. None of the four TCs who were at the elite private Christian school, St. Andrew’s, were Christian. Chala, Careema and Chaman are Muslim and Chintha is Buddhist. Cheryl, a Christian, was interning in a Buddhist school. However, all of these TCs were urban and middle-class, just like the students of their internship schools. They all possessed very strong English language skills and had the linguistic confidence to function in a good school.

The two biggest exceptions were Cindy and Choola, two Sinhala Buddhist women who chose to intern in a less-resourced Tamil school, Hindu School. Cindy and Choola represented the only instance where TCs taught in a school where the school language was not their first language. When I inquired why they chose the Tamil school, they stated that Hindu School was close to their homes so they could walk to it and thus they did not have to spend money on transportation. Both Cindy and Choola came from single-parent households and both had household responsibilities such as caring for parents, grandparents, younger siblings, and doing various household chores. Their financial status did not allow them to go to a different school for their internship.
Camal, on the other hand, selected a school with students whose backgrounds were very similar to his own. The main challenge he faced when he taught in his inner-city school were cultural differences. He was from a rural village and the students’ behavior and their family backgrounds surprised him.

In the case of all the TCs from CC, there was a close correlation between the TCs’ social class and that of the student population in the school they taught in.

Table 25: Correlations between CC TCs’ Backgrounds and Their Selected Internship Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name of the school</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cala</td>
<td>St. Andrew’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careema</td>
<td>St. Andrew’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaman</td>
<td>St. Andrew’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinth</td>
<td>a St. Andrew’s</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl</td>
<td>Kandy Buddhist School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Hindu School</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choola</td>
<td>Hindu School</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camal</td>
<td>Riverside School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NC is located in a predominantly Tamil-speaking part of Sri Lanka. As a result, all the internship schools for NC TCs were Tamil-medium schools. There were distinctions in religion (Christianity and Hinduism) and in the social class of the students. With a few exceptions, all the TCs were assigned to schools that matched the TCs’ own backgrounds. Nagu, Nalini and Neha, three Tamil TCs, were assigned to elite Christian schools, but their social class was similar to that of their students. Nalini, who had studied in Jaffna Ladies School, a leading private girls’ school, was sent to the same school for her internship. Similarly, Nilu, another student who had
strong language skills, was sent to her alma mater, Hindu Girls’ School. As Table 26 reveals, there was a very close link between the TCs’ language, ethnicity and social class and that of their internship school.

Table 26: Correlations between NC TCs’ Backgrounds and Their Selected Internship Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name of the school</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Neela</td>
<td>St. Peter’s School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nagu</td>
<td>Tamil Mixed School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nalini</td>
<td>St. Mary’s School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Neriya</td>
<td>Central Park School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nagula</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Neha</td>
<td>St. Michael’s School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nadi</td>
<td>Tamil Boys’ School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Neth</td>
<td>Gateway School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Nilu</td>
<td>Hindu Girls’ School</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In CC and WC, the proximity of the school to the TCs’ residences was one of many factors considered when schools were assigned. The colleges assigned the more proficient TCs to the better schools. As a result, these TCs did not get an opportunity to work in a community that was different from their own. Instead, they were working with the same teachers who taught them in school.

A Teacher Educator in NC stated that they assigned schools to the TCs depending on where they lived, and they assigned schools that were close to the TCs’ residences. This selection process was echoed by the TCs from NC who said that they were, in fact, assigned to schools close to
their homes. While it was obvious that the TCs were interning in schools close to their residences, there was a very close alliance between the students’ language proficiency, their family background, the school they had previously attended and their internship school.

**Commentary**

As the TCs in my study were in the process of doing their internships as I conducted my interviews with them, I visited each TC in their respective school. What was evident to me was that there was a very close link between the TCs’ backgrounds and that of the school culture where they interned. The TCs who possessed better language skills and were from urban areas were interning in better schools; the TCs whose language skills were not that strong were in less-privileged schools. Moreover, TCs were in schools that had student populations with backgrounds that were similar to the TCs’ own linguistic, religious and ethnic groups. Except for a few TCs, most of the TCs returned to do their internships in schools that were very similar to the schools they had attended as children.

The TCs’ choice of internship schools can be understood as highlighting yet another example of how the existing status quo of society is reproduced in the education system. The TCs with social, cultural and linguistic capital that is of greater value return to school communities that are similar to their own (Bourdieu, 1986). Moreover, ethnic, linguistic and religious divisions are perpetuated by the TCs’ choice of internship schools.

The constitutional status of the English language in Sri Lanka is that of a “Link Language.” Therefore, in a post-conflict situation such as exists currently in Sri Lanka, English language teachers should be able to function as role models, cultural brokers, and cultural agents (Gay, 1993; Goodwin, 2000) who represent the cultural other. They should be able to expose the students to diverse ideas, ways of thinking, and ways of acting and being in the world that the students might not be otherwise familiar with.

As the next section shows further, however, the TCs in my study were not always in a position to assume the kinds of roles or take on the kinds of responsibilities listed above. Rather than fully and actively embrace the SJTE and CRP models and thus avail themselves of opportunities to teach in and to diversity, many TCs chose to return for their internships to school settings they
were already familiar with. They could do so because the schools themselves are segregated in a manner that allowed them this choice.

Why Choose School X?

The majority of the TCs in the three colleges either chose their placement themselves or were chosen by their Teacher Educators for their internship placement in schools populated by students with backgrounds similar to their own. Many stated that, even for their teaching assignments after graduation, they would prefer to work in schools where the students’ backgrounds would match their own. The two main issues the TCs felt were important were: 1) interning (and later working) in a school where the medium of instruction was their own first language; and 2) their familiarity with the school culture, which to them meant the school’s religion and ethnicity.

These preferences can be interpreted as being primarily due to the lack of a cultural diversity knowledge base among the TCs. As Gay (2002) argues, in order to promote greater cultural awareness, teacher education programs need to develop a cultural knowledge base in their curricula that provides new teachers with explicit knowledge about the characteristics of the various groups that exist in society. As I have already discussed in Chapter 7 [and 8, the Teacher Education Program in the NCOE in Sri Lanka offers a rich cultural immersion experience, yet it fails to provide explicit instruction about cultural issues. Moreover, it does not provide a space for discussion about the value of cultural immersion experiences. Nor does it discuss TCs’ agency to make a change and how they can be active agents in the country’s reconciliation process. The TCs do not have a sense of how strategically positioned they are as English teachers to work with other cultures. In this regard, it is important to look closely at the reasons why the TCs chose their particular internship schools.

**Withya: “You have to know the students’ first language”**

The majority of the TCs, except Cindy and Choola, did their internships in schools where the language of instruction was their own first language. As discussed in Chapter 2, in Sri Lanka, a person’s first language closely aligns with their ethnicity and religion. For example, the majority of Sinhalese-language schools attract Sinhalese Buddhist students and the school culture is
centered around Buddhism. Although presumably the English language teachers among the TCs should not have a problem teaching in any linguistic school environment, many had strong preferences about teaching in a school that functioned in their first language.

The main reason for TCs concerns with language was they felt that they needed to use the L1 of the students in their teaching. In the absence of a common language, some TCs had experienced difficulty in teaching students with low English proficiency.

Withya, who taught in Sinhalese schools for her block teaching component, spoke of the difficulty of teaching the students although she spoke Sinhalese.

Teaching Sinhalese students was not easy. When I did my block teaching in Sinhalese schools, the students were very weak. They couldn’t understand anything I said in English. I speak Sinhalese well, but when I spoke in Sinhalese, they laughed at my Tamil accent. When I spoke in English, they couldn’t understand me. That’s a big problem. It’s hard to make them understand. It’s hard to get them to do tasks. If you have to explain a word like “enthusiasm,” knowing the L1 helps. (Withya)

Cheryl, on the other hand, felt that a teacher needs to know more than the L1 of the students. They also need to know the students’ culture. If not, Cheryl claimed, there can be barriers between the teachers and the students. Tanya also felt that it was hard to know and understand students who are from a culture different from that of the teacher.

Chaman, who had a very successful block teaching experience in a low proficiency class, stated an alternative view. She held that the language barrier can be eliminated with the use of visuals and gestures.

I speak all languages fluently. But I don’t think we need to use the students’ L1. You can use visuals and good teaching aids to get the message across. But it’s a lot of hard work. You have to prepare a lot for each lesson. You have to make lots of teaching aids. You can’t go to class empty handed. But it is very rewarding. That is how I got the best marks for the block teaching from my class. (Withya)

Like Chaman, Wanya also felt that good use of visuals could eliminate the language barrier. But, she also acknowledged, it required “a lot of hard work on the part of the teacher. But when you teach in a school that spoke your first language, teaching was much easier.”
William, however, felt that there is a limit to the use of non-verbal cues such as visuals and gestures. He was concerned that the inability of the students to comprehend the lesson could make them hate the English language.

What seemed evident to me from the TCs’ comments was that, while they often referred to the language barrier as a problem, TCs felt it was simply easier to teach students from their own communities. Although they said that teaching students from different linguistic backgrounds meant more work, they may have actually been expressing their reservations about teaching diverse cultural groups.

Chinthia: “Good teachers go to good schools”

During my numerous school visits for interviews, it was evident that the TCs’ relative English language proficiency, which was tied to their social class, and the schools they did their internships in were correlated. TCs who had strong English language skills were located in better internship schools. This pattern held in all three colleges. Cala, Careema, Chaman and Chinthia, the best students in CC, were at St. Andrew’s, an elite private school. Wansha, Nalini and Nilu, who also had strong English language skills, were doing their internships in their old alma maters.

Similarly, TCs who did not possess strong English language skills were doing their internships in smaller schools. In a discussion about their experiences of discrimination, Nagu, who was from a poor rural community in Jaffna and was doing her internship in a small rural school, stated that if she had gone to a good school and was from the city, she might have got a better internship school.

When asked about why the better TCs were in the better internship schools, the Teacher Educators from all three NCOE stated that the TCs were assigned schools that were close to their residences in order to prevent a long commute. Tanya, a TE from CC, stated that it was important for CC to maintain its reputation, and therefore they sent the better students to better schools. She said where TCs were placed for their internships was important for sustaining strong bonds between the NCOE and the local schools. Tanya, a TE from WC, stated that in making placements they gave prominence to the TCs’ own choices. She said that many good
TCs preferred to go to better schools because they saw it as a learning opportunity. Tanya was of the opinion that TCs who possessed weak English skills opted to be in environments where they would feel comfortable.

**Waseem: “We need to preserve our culture”**

As I have indicated several times throughout this dissertation, the school culture in many Sri Lankan schools is centered around religion, language and ethnicity. The student population of each school consists mainly of students who share the particular religious, linguistic and ethnic background on which each school focuses. In cases where students from other religious, linguistic or ethnic backgrounds do attend, they are expected to follow the culture and rituals of the school.

The City School, the school where Weena did her internship, is a Sinhalese Buddhist school located in a predominantly Muslim inner-city neighborhood. As a result, there was a large Muslim student population this school. Irrespective of the student population, and the backgrounds of the students, the school culture remained Buddhist. The languages of instruction were Sinhalese and English and the morning rituals were Buddhist. During these rituals, the non-Buddhist students observed their own religion in silence. As the primary language of instruction was Sinhalese, the majority of the teachers in the school were Sinhalese.

The example of the City School is evidence of the strong linguistic, religious and ethnic culture that prevails in Sri Lankan schools. I found in my interviews that the TCs take the particular school culture into account very seriously when choosing schools for their internships.

Many TCs said they wanted to be placed in a school where they would feel they could fit in. For them, being accepted by the fulltime teachers in that school was important. They had seen during their own school years and during their block teaching that teachers were often divided into cliques. They recognized that becoming full members of the cliques or the wider community of teachers in a given school involved their being accepted.

According to Tina, a Teacher Educator from CC, some schools actually had specific requirements about the kind of TCs who were sent to their schools for their internships. Many of
the prominent Sinhalese Buddhist schools only took Sinhalese Buddhist interns. Similarly, Muslim schools took only Muslim TCs into their schools.

In the discussions I had with TCs about their choice of internship schools, Muslim TCs stated that they chose Muslim and Tamil schools because they were closed during Ramadan and on Fridays they were closed early for Friday prayers. Female Muslim TCs stated that in Muslim schools they felt free to wear the headscarf. Although Waleed and Waseem stated that they were “assigned” to Muslim Central School, their supervisor from WC stated that they had “strongly requested” a Muslim school. Although Waseem initially denied that he had asked to be in a Muslim school, later on in my interview with him he stated, “I am very proud of myself for serving my own community.”

Minority Muslim and Tamil TCs in WC and CC stated that senior teachers in their internship schools had warned them against going to Sinhalese schools as they might be discriminated against in Sinhalese schools. They advised the TCs that it would be safer for them to be with their own community. They also suggested that TCs had a role to play in cultural preservation.

The notion of teachers as cultural ambassadors whose responsibility it was to preserve their own culture was also echoed by majority Sinhalese Buddhist TCs. Wansha, who was back in her old school for her internship, was proud she was there. She felt that teachers at Buddhist Girls’ School “need to be able to uphold Buddhist values. And a teacher from another culture cannot do that.”

**Nagula “There was family pressure to get into a good school”**

As many TCs’ narratives revealed, and as I pointed out in Chapter 6, TCs’ families had a tremendous impact on their professional choices. Many TCs chose the teaching profession because of their families. They either had parents who wanted them to be teachers, or they thought the security of a guaranteed job would enable them to support their families. Familial pressure was felt even in the TCs’ choices of internship schools. Nagula, in a discussion about the stress of teaching in a big school, stated that while she would have preferred a smaller school, family pressure had caused her to go into a big school.
According to Tom, a Teacher Educator at WC, many parents of female TCs view a good internship school as a means of furthering their marital options. This perspective proved to be correct in Waruni’s case. Waruni, who was doing her internship in a leading girls’ school, stated that she received a marriage proposal from a man through another teacher at Buddhist Girls’ School and that she was engaged to be married to him. Similarly, other female TCs in the more prominent schools stated that they had received marriage proposals from prospective husbands through other teachers.

Commentary

Although the TCs stated that they learned a lot about other cultures and established relationships with other TCs from diverse backgrounds while in the process of doing their internships, what was apparent in the internship schools the TCs either self-selected or were assigned to was, once more, a reproduction of the existing status quo (Bourdieu, 1986). What was most obvious was that the academically good TCs who possessed good language skills went into good schools; those with poor language skills went to less-privileged schools. Although all TCs gave different reasons for their internship school choices, the reality was that they all went to schools that were compatible with their own family backgrounds and experiences. When I asked why the TCs chose to go to certain schools, many expressed their concerns about going to schools where they could “fit in.”

The lack of explicit instruction and open discussion that promotes critical reflection (Giroux, 2009) about the value of diversity and how the estrangement of cultural groups can lead to mistrust, discrimination and violence results in TCs going back to work in their own communities. While many speak of the benefits of the cultural immersion experience, there is no space within the program for them to see the connection between that experience and their roles and responsibilities as teachers. What is also lacking among these teachers are certain attitudes. In a discussion about social justice for peace Weldon (2010) discusses the importance of mutual understanding between opposing communities. Teacher education programs need to create classroom environments that help their candidates to foster attitudes and mindsets that are inclusive of other communities. Giroux’s (1992) notion of “border pedagogy” encourages teachers to reterritorialize their own ethnic borders to include rather then exclude others. Though
the NCOE program implicitly attempts to foster inclusive attitudes, it does not necessarily work. Instead, for some students, it is a process that results in forming stereotypes of the “other.”

The dominant themes among TCs of interning in a school that speaks their first language, teachers with good English language skills going to the better schools, and interning in a particular school as a means of preserving one’s own culture are all indicative of how the TCs are agents not of change but of reproduction. While they believe they are doing a service to their communities, this misconception is a result of their lack of awareness of how they, as English language teachers, can become agents of change.

As I discussed earlier, while many TCs spoke of the positive impact of their immersion experience, some also spoke of the tensions they experienced. These experiences should be seen as resources that can help TCs to see the beauty and the tensions that exist in a multicultural society and how these experiences can be utilized to foster greater understanding of multicultural others.

A Culture of Silence: “No, We Don’t Talk about the War”

My road trip to Jaffna and my stay there gave me first-hand insight into the levels of destruction the war had caused for the northern region of the country. I knew that the war had stunted economic growth and infrastructure development in the region. However, on the road to Jaffna and in many parts of Jaffna itself, there were now signs of road and infrastructure construction. The remains of buildings and trees that had been destroyed by bombing and gunfire and indeed anything that reminded people of the fighting were removed. All military constructions and barricades and all physical remains of the LTTE de facto state were gone.

As I discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, talking about the war needs to be at the forefront of the educational agenda in post-conflict nations. Davies (2005a) proposes a model for understanding how war is taught or not in educational setting. Her ten-approach cycle offers active and passive approaches that can address war in either a negative or a positive manner. It also presents a way of looking into how war can be addressed in classes in a manner that gets the students to reflect critically and take action. What is present in Sri Lankan schools and the wider society are omission and the non-discussion of the war, tolerance of the war and its effects and an
understanding that the war and its aftermath are routine just a part of the routine of life that does not require any special acknowledgement or treatment.

As Jaffna city was under the control of the Sri Lankan government during the war, the TCs who lived in the city at that time did not live in the war zone. However, victims of the war were present in their classes. There were students who had lost their parents, their family members, their houses and their belongings. Some of them didn’t know where their parents were. Some who had been caught in the crossfire or the shelling had lost their limbs or their eyesight. They had either been sent to schools in Jaffna by their relatives or certain schools kept them in their hostels and looked after them. Neela, who came to NC from the eastern and northern parts of Sri Lanka, stated her surprise at having war-affected children in her classes.

Before the war, I had never been to Jaffna. When I came here, I realized that 99% of the students have a sad story. They had missing relatives, dead parents, or had been displaced from their homes. Some were forced to join the LTTE as child soldiers. (Neela)

These circumstances were not something Neela had experienced herself, nor had she discussed them or studied about them while in the NCOE program. She went into her practicum unaware of her students’ war-related backgrounds and the ways their lives had been touched by war.

Neha’s comment about the student war victims in her school captures the situation experienced in many schools and reaffirms the TCs’ lack of preparedness to deal with such a situation.

Ours is a Christian school. We have students affected by the war. Our Principal is a Father [a priest], and he has taken children from Vanni and is looking after them. Most of them don’t have any family. Their situation is pathetic. The students don’t do any work. When I ask them to bring things, they don’t. I scolded them. But later, I found out from another teacher they are war victims. I knew the problem. I handled them gently and gave them stationery. (Neha)

In most of my interviews with the TCs from Jaffna, it was evident to me that the war and its effects were not openly discussed or acknowledged. Neha, for example, although a native of Jaffna, didn’t know which students in her class were victims of war. It was by chance that a

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11 Vanni was the stronghold of the LTTE de facto state. That is also where the last stage of the battle between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army that defeated the LTTE took place. As a result of heavy fighting in Vanni, there was a lot of destruction in that area.
colleague of hers told her about her students. Victims of war were present in most Jaffna schools as students. Many of the TCs, however, felt that it was not correct to talk openly about the war and its effects. Neth stated that she didn’t talk to students about the war and what the students were going through because the students felt sad. Neha spoke of one student in particular:

One student in my class needs a lot of attention and love. He takes so much of my time. He tells me everything. Even his dreams. If I don’t listen to him, he disturbs the whole class. His parents were killed during the war. I feel sorry for him, but I am not in a position to listen to him. I don’t know what to tell him, so I told him to talk to his hostel teachers. (Neha)

The TCs’ lack of awareness of their students’ war-affected backgrounds and their inability to help them was due to the fact that war is not openly spoken about in Jaffna as such discussions are believed to hurt and upset people who have suffered war’s effects or been victimized by it. Thevan, a Teacher Educator in NC also stated that war was a topic they did not discuss in their classes as it is not considered appropriate or necessary. He felt there was no need to create unnecessary problems or talk about things that make people upset.

NC followed the same curriculum that was followed in all other NCOE teachers’ colleges. NC was not the only college that was in an area that was directly affected by the war. However, war, its impact and how new teachers should deal with such topics is not considered a part of the curriculum. Thus, for most of their NCOE program, a culture of silence hung over the TCs when it came to talking about that aspect of Sri Lanka’s past.

One exception, however, was the community outreach project the TCs completed during their internships. Several students conducted projects that were unique in the way they specifically addressed the living conditions in Jaffna in the aftermath of the war. These included workshops and seminars on land mine safety, on how to evacuate a building in the case of disaster, how to give first aid, how to conduct mediation, and how to provide counseling for resilience. In addition, there were lectures and talks on issues such as child abuse and children’s rights. These latter topics were particularly relevant as many children were taken as child soldiers by the LTTE during the war.
Commentary

Another important topic that is overlooked in the TEP is the war and TCs’ own experiences with it. This includes both personal experiences as well as the experiences of their students. Most TCs in NC had students who were affected by the war in numerous ways. Yet, they either felt they were not equipped to address those issues or that it was not right to address issues that might hurt students. However, literature on post-conflict reconciliation and peace education highlights the need to discuss conflict in school. Davies’ (2005a) ten approaches to teaching about conflict is an example. What is present in the NCOE is a tolerant or routine acceptance of war, such that discussion about it can be easily omitted in the TEP (Davies, 2006) (See Figure 6 in Chapter 4 for Davies’ (2006) ten approaches to teaching about conflict.) In the wake of an ethnic conflict, teacher education needs to encourage teachers to critically reflect on taboo topics such as ethnicity, discrimination and violence in the classroom. Moreover, teachers need to be made aware of and sensitive to which ethnic aspects to take into account or ignore in order to avoid reductive or stereotypical practices (Howard, 2003; Cochran Smith et al., 2009b).

In order for education programs to usher in reconciliation in the aftermath of a war, they first need to recognize and acknowledge the existence of war, its causes and its unequal effects on people. Second, there needs to be an open platform in which to discuss and share experiences of war and what it meant or did not mean for different Sri Lankan communities. Thirdly, teachers need to be equipped with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to address the war in their school communities. Avoiding the topic of the war with the assumption that it will hurt someone is a very temporary and, ultimately, unsatisfactory solution.

Hope in Collaborative Transformative Action

Although as seen above most of the TCs chose to return to schools for their internships that they felt were compatible with their own backgrounds, they were creative in their approaches and thus were able to make significant contributions to their school communities while they were there as interns. As I explained earlier in Chapter 7, during their internships, the TCs completed four projects and conducted an action research. The TCs were expected to identify needs and gaps within their internship schools and conduct projects with the help of the students, staff, parents and the community. The purpose of these tasks was to make the TCs become more involved in
all aspects of school life, including curricular and cocurricular activities and the school administration. They were also designed to help TCs develop relationships with other teachers, parents and the community at large. The projects the TCs completed show the measures the TCs took toward transforming their school communities. When the TCs had to do their internship projects, for example, many took the initiative and acted as “agents of change” (Hawkins, 2011a). They identified gaps in their school communities and took active steps to make their communities better places for their students. They did so by making connections with the larger community and building on resources they could get from the parents and other social agents (Hawkins, 2011b).

The discussion of transformative pedagogy found in Cummins (2009, 2004), Skourtou, Kourtis Kazoullis & Cummins (2006), and Cummins, Early & Stille (2011) is also relevant here. According to these authors, transformative pedagogy is an orientation to pedagogy that encourages students to engage with materials and undertake discussions with the purpose of identifying the types of social action they can take to change their own and others’ social realities. Transformative pedagogy, they note, is attentive especially to issues of equity and justice; it thus enables students to challenge existing power relations in society. While most of the instruction in the NCOE followed the transmission approach (Cummins, 2009; Miller and Seller 1990), assignments such as the projects the TC did during their internships provided them opportunities for transformative pedagogy. However, the lack of a clear transformative and social justice agenda in the assignments resulted in some TCs taking action that continued to reproduce the existing status quo.

Chintha: “We were the first to help that school”

Social Justice Teacher Education aims to permeate classroom walls in order to reach out to families, community members, community organizations and other donors. It attempts to bridge schools and communities in order that the larger community will help improve the conditions of the schools. Teachers can participate in such bridging by collaborating with the communities their school is located in (Hawkins, 2011b; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Zeichner, 2011). The TCs in the three NCOE took several collaborative actions to reach out to the communities surrounding their colleges. Chintha spoke of how the community outreach project she did in the second year of her program was an eye-opener:
I have never been to such a rural place. There were no proper roads and motor vehicles could not go there. People used carts. We spent a week there. We took everything with us. We even took kerosene lamps because they didn’t have electricity. We had to use a well to get water. We were the first to help that school. It was in a very bad condition. Very run down. We cleaned, painted and renovated. We put out placards and beautified the school. The village people came to help us. They gave us food. It was one week of very hard work. (Chintha)

When the TCs planned and designed their community outreach projects, it was their responsibility to find schools that might need assistance and to determine the kind of assistance that the TCs could help them with. The work the TCs did in these communities ranged from painting school buildings and furniture, to renovating classrooms, mending fences, making and hanging signs and directions in the school, and growing vegetable patches. The TCs inquired about the assistance the communities needed and they took all the necessary equipment with them. During the week they spent in the communities, they worked with the help of the local community. Some TCs stated that the local people as a way of showing their appreciation provided food and snacks.

WC had a partnership with a school adjoining their college. It was a less-privileged school with the majority of students coming from very low-income families. The TCs of WC identified ways in which they could help the school in different ways and volunteered their services.

We helped Methodist School. It’s a poor school near WC. We conducted free extra English classes for the students in that school. We volunteered and took turns and conducted classes in the evenings. It was a very rewarding experience. We also prepared students from that school for provincial speech and drama competitions. They won’t win, but at least they will take part in them. (Waruni)

Similarly, other TCs stated that when under-resourced local schools had events or needed resources, they would help out. Some instances of outreach work the TCs were involved in included helping neighborhood schools when they had English events such as English Days, English drama competitions, and creative writing competitions. Some TCs also went out to hold extra classes before students in those schools sat for their standardized state exams. All three research sites were located outside of cities and their surrounding neighborhoods were often rural and poor.
In addition to the voluntary outreach work the TCs did, there were also components built into the curriculum that provided them the space to make change. For the community outreach project, some TCs did projects where they reached out to the communities outside of their college and internship schools. Waruni and Wasana, for instance, organized a project for the teachers and students of their internship school to spend a day in a retirement home.

This is a very good school. It’s a rich school and the students do very well here. So there is nothing we can do for the school. Besides, the school’s social committee is very influential and very strong. We can’t go in and say, “Let’s do this and that for the school.” All we can do was help out in whatever they have. So we planned to help out the Mal Home for the Elderly. We planned to spend a day there. We organized the Grade 8s and their parents also joined. Some teachers also joined in. We cleaned, prepared food for them, ate with them and spent time with them.

(Withya)

What the TCs did to help the school communities was shaped largely by the socioeconomic setting they were working in. What is interesting is how the TCs identified what they could do to serve their communities and how they used their agency to bring about change.

**Waseem: “Poverty is the biggest barrier to learning”**

The notions of teacher cognition and personal practical knowledge (PPK) sheds light on teachers’ beliefs, experiences and perceptions of diversity, the teaching of diverse learners and how these beliefs and experiences impact their teaching theories. Clandinin (1986) and Clandinin and Connelly (1986) use the term “personal practical knowledge” (PPK) to characterize teachers’ experiential knowledge. Notions of teacher cognition and PPK are important concepts in teacher learning that help us analyze the unobservable dimensions of teaching (Clandinin, 1992).

Waseem, whose father was killed along with his four uncles when he was just two years old, said, “Poverty is the biggest barrier to learning,” when he was talking about the students’ support for the project he was doing in his internship school. As someone who had had experiences of poverty as a child, Waseem was aware of how poverty can disrupt one’s education. Many of his students in the Muslim inner-city school he was interning at did not have stationery or proper uniforms and many came to class hungry.

Many of my students come to class without pens, pencils and books. Some wear uniforms that are too small for them. Some don’t have shoes or are wearing torn
shoes. Many of them are hungry and can’t concentrate. At first, I scolded them when they didn’t have notebooks and asked them to get them from the shop. But I realized there was no point. They couldn’t afford that. Sometimes when I know a student is hungry, I give them money to buy something. But I am also poor, so I can’t do that too often.

One day, one boy came to school very dirty. I told him that he needs to wear a clean uniform. He cried. I couldn’t understand. Later I found out that he cleaned tables in a canteen and served tea after school. He only had one uniform. (Waseem).

In response to these conditions, Waseem set up a stationery bank and a food corner to support students in need. This center was funded and resources were provided by past pupils of the school, well-wishers and local politicians.

Neth, another TC who did her internship in a less-privileged school and who came from a background similar to that of her students, collaborated on a project her school had mounted to provide school children breakfast.

Here in this school there is a free breakfast program. That is because many students come to school without breakfast. So the teachers contribute a small amount of money to get breakfast for the students. Even teachers are not that rich, but we make that sacrifice. (Neth)

As many students in Neth’s school were coming to school without breakfast, the teachers had started a breakfast program where they donated money to ensure students ate breakfast. Neela collaborated on a project in her internship school where a few teachers collected funds from outside donors to buy sports equipment, sports clothes and shoes for students who needed them.

The students in this school are poor. But they are good in sports. They also like sports. I think when children have problems at home, sports can help them to take their minds off their troubles. These students can’t afford sports equipment. Some don’t even have shoes. I am on the school welfare committee. We have organized a program with an NGO and we are getting help to get sports equipment. Lots of students are benefiting from that. (Neela)

Both Neth and Neela used their agency and cooperated with the teachers in their host communities in these projects. They saw how their involvement and commitment could make a difference in the lives of their students.

Camal and several other TCs who were doing their internships in the same school, conducted an English camp for students in a less-privileged school. Many students in WC, such as Waheed,
Wanya, Wasa, Wasana, Wansha and Waruni, held after-school English classes for students who needed extra help but could not afford it. These projects the TCs undertook were not mandatory, but they initiated or cooperated in projects that addressed certain needs in their school communities.

**Camal:** “We have to start the prevention of dengue here, at home”

Some TCs also took initiatives to create awareness about various issues in their school communities. The above statement by Camal captures his belief that dengue, a mosquito borne disease that was rampant in Sri Lanka at the time of data collection and had killed dozens of people, especially young children, can be prevented by taking certain measures at home.

Me and the other trainees in this school organized a dengue awareness project. It was all about what we can do and how to prevent the spread of dengue. It was for students, teachers and parents. We got people from the health department to talk. They spoke about very simple things we can do to stop the spread of mosquitoes. After the lecture, we all cleaned the school compound and took measures to destroy anything that could support mosquito breeding. Everybody was outside cleaning. (Camal)

Although this school is close to the Kandy town, this is a village. Many people are very uneducated. These people don’t know some of the most simple and common things about dengue prevention. Some people are practically breeding mosquitoes in their backyards.

Many other TCs did projects in which they tried to make their school communities aware of a variety of issues by hosting seminars, workshops and lectures. Table 27 provides a list of some projects that the TCs in the three colleges completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Projects/Workshops/Seminars</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social issues</td>
<td>Drug abuse and awareness</td>
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<td>Child abuse</td>
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<td>Children’s rights</td>
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<td>Counseling for teenagers</td>
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Environmental issues  Exhibition on pollution
Natural disasters  Cyclone awareness
Disaster  Safety during a flood
Disaster  Fire safety
Disaster  Evacuating a building in a disaster
Health  Dengue prevention
Health  Seminar on oral health
Health  First aid for snake bites
Health  Giving first aid and CPU
War  Landmine safety
Spirituality  Meditation for inner peace

Waheed: “We need to care for the students. Some need a lot of personal attention”

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy identifies “caring” as a crucial element in making classrooms conducive to learning for all students (Gay, 2002). Some TCs identified problems their students were having and reached out to help them. When I was visiting Waheed’s internship school, for example, a parent came to talk to him. Later Waheed spoke of how he had helped this parent’s son, a child who was having difficulty adjusting to the school.

Did you see that boy who came to me with his mother in the canteen? He has some speaking problem. He stammers. He was ignored in class. Teachers say he is making fun of teachers. It’s a big stammer. I just went to him. When I see him, his eyes, he has something to say, but he can’t. I didn’t tell anyone, but I told him, I will help him, that I can stay after school. I got him and did some classes and gave simple things. Most of the time I spoke to him, I treated him like my brother. We talked a lot. He said lots of things, like his mother doesn’t like him. He said both his mother and father don’t like him. The brother always calls him “gothaya.” He was mentally very upset. It was his main problem. I just kept talking to him. I just gave him what
he wanted: attention. After three to four weeks, his parents said his stammering was better. They appreciated what I did. He was sick for a couple of days. This is the first time I met his mother. She wanted to talk to me. (Waheed)

Wasa, who spoke of the importance of being a counselor to her teenaged students, highlighted the importance of connecting with the students and showing them that teachers care about their personal problems. She felt there was a disconnect between the students and the teachers in the affluent school she was in and, along with her colleagues, Wanya and Wasana, she organized counseling camps for the teachers and the senior-intermediate- and high-school-aged students in her internship school. Similarly, Nilu and Neth spoke of giving their lunches to students who came to school without any food. Nalini spoke of giving her less-privileged student stationery. Though they were isolated and random incidents, they highlight that fact that the TCs care and they have the potential to create culturally caring communities in their individual classrooms as well as their school communities.

**Cala: “Some students misunderstand the headscarf”**

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2002) identifies the significance of what Cortes (2000) calls the societal curriculum. This includes the knowledge, ideas, and impressions about various social and cultural groups that are portrayed in the mass media. The messages transmitted by the mass media are too influential for teachers to overlook in their classes. Therefore, culturally responsive teaching includes a critical analysis of the manner in which various ethnic groups are represented in the mass media and the ways popular culture can be challenged and altered. As a result of living in a country that had been at war for decades, many TCs had little interaction with other communities. For many TCs of the NCOE, the teachers’ college was their first cultural immersion experience in diversity. Although they had heard of other social and cultural groups, the college gave them their first experience of interacting, learning and living with other social and cultural groups.

Cala and Chaman, two Muslim TCs who taught in an elite private Catholic school, experienced how students in their elementary classes misunderstood why they wore the headscarf.

Here the boys are very suspicious of the headscarf. That’s because they don’t know why we wear it. I think they think we are terrorists or bad people. This is a Catholic school. So the Muslim teachers on the full-time staff are not allowed the wear the
scarf. They take it off when they come into the school and put it on when they leave. We, the trainees, are allowed to wear the scarf because we are here for just one year. So the boys are not used to teachers with headscarves. That is why Chaman and I took the students to the mosque. They had to know it’s not a bad place. (Cala)

Both Cala and Chaman said the students were very keen to learn more.

Similarly, several other TCs helped during various religious events to promote cultural awareness and responsiveness among students.

**Nilu: “The war is not completely over”**

What was unique about some of the projects the participants in the NC did was that they took measures to address the issues their schools faced in the aftermath of a civil war. The TCs had grown up amidst the war and saw the challenges their school communities faced at its end. Many TCs had students who were displaced, injured, traumatized and/or orphaned by the war. Many TCs stated that their program had not provided them with the skills or the knowledge to deal with these students and did not know where they needed to direct them. As pointed out earlier, there seemed to be a culture of silence where the topic of the war was concerned.

As new teachers, the TCs were struggling to keep up with their teaching and other responsibilities. However, some TCs did take transformative action to address some of the issues they encountered. A couple of students conducted community outreach projects in which they were able to solicit assistance from non-government and community organizations to help their schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 28: Projects Related to Dealing with the Aftermath of the War</th>
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<td><strong>Nagu</strong></td>
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<td>Nagula</td>
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<td>Neha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neela, Neth, Nilu</td>
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<td>Neha</td>
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<td>Nadi</td>
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As Table 28 reveals, such projects were unique to the NC. The NC TCs identified problems that were unique to their own contexts and took measures to address some of those issues.

**Commentary**

The various projects the TCs undertook highlight how they used their agency to transform their school communities. They identified gaps in their school communities and took transformative action (Cummins, 2009) to change the educational conditions and social realities of their students and their communities. This required them to reach out beyond the confines of the classrooms to families, community members and various community organizations (Hawkins, 2011). By reaching out to the wider community and interacting with them, the TCs created what Cummins (2001) and Cummins, Early & Stille (2011) call an intercultural space.

The social realities in the different internship schools that are located in different provinces and cities varied. Therefore, it was the TCs’ responsibility to find out what they could do to transform the schools they were placed in and what resources they could tap into. Although the TEP offered at the NCOE does not provide courses that attempt to get the students to look critically at the inequalities that exist in Sri Lankan society or question existing Sri Lankan power relations, such as a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy or Social Justice Teacher Education model would require, there are, at least, assignments built into the curriculum in the NCOE that enable students to identify areas for improvement and take action to transform those situations. However, whether the TCs undertake transformative action is entirely an individualistic choice.
The projects the TCs are expected to complete during their internships, in particular, identify the responsibility of teachers to serve as agents of social change. These projects are aimed toward getting new teachers involved in the school communities and getting them to identify ways in which they can contribute to lessening the inequalities that exist in the school system. The new teachers are also expected to attempt to bridge the gap between their schools and the wider community and utilize resources that are available in the community. The underlying premise of these assignments is very closely tied to SJTE (Hawkins, 2011a; Zeichner, 2011). How the TCs take action also depends heavily on the attitudes and idealisms they have about their responsibilities toward their students (Weldon, 2010).

Discussion: The Centrality of Inclusive Attitudes and Transformative Action

Henry Giroux (1988) views teachers as transformative intellectuals who have the potential to make changes in the lives of the students they work with. His argument is based on the premise that it is through the intellectual engagement of teachers that social change can take place. This chapter has added another dimension to what it means for a teacher to be a transformative intellectual during a time of reconciliation. This chapter highlights the importance of inclusive attitudes and idealism (Weldon, 2010) and the centrality of transformative action (Cummins, 2009) in making teachers transformative intellectuals.

The TCs’ choice of internship schools, the narrative data generated through their interviews and their responses to picture prompts as highlighted in this chapter brings out their unarticulated notions of what is involved in teaching and potentially transforming learners who are from backgrounds different from their own. Their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities toward such learners are not always clearly articulated and defined, however. On the one hand, they felt that it was their responsibility to teach less-privileged students. Yet they were not willing to teach in less-privileged settings, nor did they believe that the students in such settings could succeed in school. During the course of their three-year program, the TCs had not been exposed to a curriculum designed explicitly to raise their own or their students’ critical awareness (Clarke & Morgan, 2011). As a result, the TCs did not have a space to form the kind of strong role definition that would give them a deep and abiding sense of responsibility toward others or a full
sense of agency to transform their classrooms and function as cultural brokers to other communities.

Yet there is hope. The TCs, when presented with the challenge of taking action to transform their classes and schools, were very innovative. Although they returned to their own communities to do their internships, they took active roles to transform those communities. This is evidence that they have the will and the potential to identify gaps, think of ways to solve their own schools’ problems, and get the larger community to also take part in solving those problems. I believe that if the NCOE Teacher Education Program would provide the TCs a space in which to create stronger “role definitions” (Cummins, 2001) for themselves, they would be able to develop a mindset where they could better assume their responsibility to teach learners from diverse backgrounds.
Chapter 10: 
Conclusion And Recommendations: The End Of A Journey Or A New Beginning?

The End of a Journey

The final stages of my doctoral journey involved the writing of this final or “So what?” chapter during January and February of 2015. By this time, all the participating TCs in my study had taken up full-time teaching positions in various parts of Sri Lanka, and many were teaching in rural or less-privileged schools. In this chapter, I first summarize the findings in response to the research questions. I then provide a brief discussion of the historical, cultural and structural barriers to moving towards transformative approaches to pedagogy. This is followed by a discussion of what transformative action may be feasible within the given parameters in the colleges of education. The ideal situation is also described and connected to the key themes that emerged including identity, program, curricula, instruction, community, attitudes, and focus. Each thematic section highlights how transformative pedagogy - pedagogy that aims to lessen social inequalities and address the power relations in society - could play a significant role in post-conflict reconciliation. The manner in which these various aspects of transformative pedagogy can help teachers become transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) and active agents of change in a time of post-conflict reconciliation are explained. I conclude my dissertation by considering the limitations of the study and future directions for research.

The Findings: A Summary

*Who are Teacher Candidates in Sri Lankan English language teacher education programs?*

Sri Lankan TCs in the NCOE belong to all ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural groups and come various geographical regions. Though most of the TCs were women, there were a few male participants as well. Thus the TC population at the NCOE was representative of the Sri Lankan community. Most TCs in southern Sri Lanka lived in places with varying degrees of sociocultural diversity, yet like the TCs from the north who lived in the Tamil society due to the war, most TCs had led culturally segregated lives with little exposure to other communities. Irrespective of their background, TCs highlighted religion, ethnicity, language and familial ties
as core features in their Identity Portraits. This suggests that if TCs were to develop inclusive identities, they could do so based on these common identity features.

**What are Teacher Candidates’ experiences within the teacher education program?**

For many of the participating TCs, the teacher education program was their first exposure to Sri Lankan diversity. For TCs who had studied in linguistically, religiously and ethnically segregated schools, living in the NCOE provided them an opportunity to live and work with others TCs for 2 years. Moreover, the heavy symbolic curriculum that consisted of celebrating various Sri Lankan cultural events helped them to become more aware of the other cultures. The formal curriculum does not offer courses related to multicultural education, social cohesion or social justice or citizenship education. While most the TCs stated that they found learning about other cultures very positive as a result of their two years in residence, they returned to their more or less segregated lives during the third year of the program for their internship.

**What are Teacher Candidates' perceptions and experiences with diversity?**

In the absence of any explicit instruction of the value of diversity or opportunities to discuss the hidden curriculum at the colleges of education, the TCs in the three colleges expressed a range of perceptions about other communities. While some TCs valued the experience of living in residence because it gave them the opportunity to learn about others, or the freedom that their families had not previously offered, some others formed stereotypes and misconceptions. TCs also spoke of how the experience of living together helped them to change their perceptions of others. A crucial finding that is relevant to this study on post conflict teacher education is what the TCs in the north of Sri Lanka felt about the official end of the war. Most the TCs and the TEs in the Northern College stated that the end of the war did not necessarily have a positive impact on their community. They believed that the freedom that replaced war had in fact created anarchy. While the teacher education program offered the promise of learning about other cultures, the lack of opportunities for critical reflection and open discussion about their experiences and perceptions often resulted in misunderstandings.
How do Teacher Candidates perceive their roles and responsibilities toward “the other”?

TCs were asked to respond to photos of different students and classrooms in an attempt to reveal their perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities of “the other”. They provided a range of responses about student success and what kind of students would most likely be successful in school. Many TCs identified the role of teachers in making a change in students’ lives. The TCs also showed their potential to bring about change during their internship through their community projects. Many TCs attempted to identify the unmet needs in their school communities and created collaborative projects around these. Again data collected from TCs in the Northern College differed in that they did not feel prepared to work with students who were war victims during their internship because the war was never addressed during their two years of coursework.

Barriers in Moving Ahead

The findings of the study show the potential for teacher education to bring Sri Lankan communities together as well as the difficulties in doing so. Centuries of colonial history and decades of civil war have estranged Sri Lankans. As a result, different Sri Lankan communities have become increasingly insular. In fact, many Sri Lankans do not perceive themselves first and foremost not as Sri Lankans, but would prefer to describe themselves according to their religion, ethnicity or language. As long as Sri Lankans don’t see themselves as belonging to a unified community inclusive of various ethnicities, religions and languages, it will be difficult for new teachers, who are live in these insular communities, to see themselves as agents of change.

The segregated school system that gained momentum during colonial rule, strengthened its grip on Sri Lankan society as Sri Lanka gained independence and transitioned to war. Schools take pride in developing in their students’ strong linguistic, ethnic and religious values. However, this model of education has perpetuated and strengthened social divisions as well as the insular communities in which most Sri Lankans live. This makes it very difficult for teacher candidates to elect for an internship in a community other than their own.

Although there have been and continue to be educational policies geared towards bringing about social cohesion and national unity through education, these policies have not been very effective
as teacher educators and teachers candidates are generally not aware of these policies or their roles and responsibilities in executing them. The policy information does not seem to trickle down to the practitioners who are doing the work at the grassroots levels. In such a climate it is difficult for teachers to recognize their unique position as cultural brokers.

This raises the question, how ready are Sri Lankans for transformative pedagogy? New teachers are generally prepared to teach students similar to themselves in a school system where the main aim of education is to prepare students to sit for very high stakes competitive examinations. When the focus of teaching is to finish the syllabus and prepare students for exams, is there time for critical reflection and transformative pedagogy? Also in educational system that values tradition, how receptive would teachers and students be of pedagogies that question the status quo? When identities are bound by religion, language and ethnicity, how is it possible to get new teachers to redraw the boundaries of their identities, so they form inclusive Sri Lankan identities? In the following section I discuss inroads into the existing program at the NCOE that could be starting points for transformation. Then I focus on the ideal conception of the teacher as a transformative intellectual.

**Transformative Pedagogy in a Post-conflict Context**

Cummins (2009) as well as Miller and Seller (1990) consider the notion of transformative pedagogy to bring social justice and equity issues to teacher education. They do so by addressing questions of how power operates in society and what can be done to reduce social inequalities. Their work demonstrates how a greater emphasis on transformative pedagogy in teacher education can, in fact, assist new teachers in developing the kinds of skills, knowledge, experiences and attitudes that will allow them to become agents who are transformative intellectuals.

**The Possible**

Before I move into the discussing an ideal conception of the teacher as a transformative intellectual, I will first discuss possibilities within the existing program at the NCOE. The following figure illustrates three areas within the program at the NCOE that might accommodate transformative pedagogies:
Residency and extra-curricular activities: The students live in a socially and culturally diverse environment and celebrate cultural festivities. They would be aware of this diversity as well as the purpose of their two-year cultural immersion experience. The TCs could maintain a reflective journal on their experiences, the tensions they perceive and what they believe they are learning as a result. Students could join clubs where they could share their culture as well their reflections on the cultural immersion experiences. There would be carefully monitoring of these experiences.

Course work: The courses that offer potential for transformation and inclusive pedagogies could integrate tasks and assignments to help TCs develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to become transformative practitioners. These include the Sociology of Education, Methodology, Education Practice and Second National Language. Instead of taking a banking approach to teaching these courses, the teacher educators could make these courses more student centered. Teacher educators should also attempt to make the content as meaningful and relevant as possible by making connections to the daily lives of their TCs and their prospective students. This might result in TCs who possess a sense of responsibility towards teaching diverse students.

Internship and Block Teaching: The process of matching TCs and schools for the internship could be such that there would opportunities for TCs to work outside their insular communities. All TCs would be encouraged to work in an internship school a culturally and socially diverse student body. A mandatory action research project and at least one of the four projects they complete during the internship could be explicitly geared towards taking collaborative transformative action. By the time the TCs complete their internship, they might have developed the professional confidence and maturity to work in a school beyond their own community.
Figure 26: Possibilities for Transformative Action

For TCs to become transformative intellectuals, several elements of the colleges of teachers would need to change with the full support of teacher educators as models of transformational pedagogy. The teacher educators would need to guide TCs in learning that being a language teacher goes far beyond teaching the mechanics of the language. Language teachers can teach thematically to address a number of important issues around national identity and citizenship.

The Ideal:

Building on the findings of the study I now discuss the ideal circumstances for colleges of education in Sri Lanka to prepare language teachers who are transformative intellectuals.

**Identity: From Solitudes Toward Inclusive Teaching Selves**

Charles Taylor (1993), writing about the Canadian political and constitutional crisis that rose with the secessionist nationalism in Quebec in the 1970s, states:

The “two solitudes” [French and English Canada] of Hugh MacLennan are still a fundamental reality in Canada; the ways that the two groups envisage their predicament, their problems, and their common country are so different that it is
hard to find a common language. They are like two photographs of the same object taken from such different points of view that they cannot be superimposed. (p. 24)

Here, Taylor is referring to Hugh MacLennan’s 1945 novel *Two Solitudes* that chronicles both the difficulties in communication and the solidarity between an Anglophone Canadian and a Francophone Canadian and their struggle to reconcile their differences. Although its historical and political circumstances are very different, Sri Lanka at the aftermath of its war has some similarities with the Canada Taylor describes. Although there doesn’t seem to be any animosity or mistrust among the TCs I observed from different Sri Lankan communities, they seem to remain in a state of solitude, asserting identities that distinguish themselves from the “other.”

The identities that emerged from my TC participants’ narratives and their Identity Portraits are a reflection of the deep social divides that fractured the Sri Lankan social fabric and paved the way to a quarter-century long and bloody ethnic civil war. As Orjuela (2008) argues:

> Ethnic conflict,” understood one dimensionally as “the” Sinhala-Tamil conflict, has become a master narrative through which historical and contemporary conflicts are interpreted as well as a mindset in which stereotypes and fear of the “other” are bread. (Orjuela, 2008, p.6)

The reality of the “peace” Sri Lankans are now experiencing is a result of the victory of military power. The roots of the ethnic conflict and the grievances of the minorities are yet to be acknowledged.

However, “identity work” (Clarke, 2009) geared toward helping prospective teachers build more inclusive, non-extremist and shared identities can be a first step in building social cohesion in education. Teachers’ sociocultural, experiential and perceived identities need to be viewed as a resource that can help in building inclusive identities. While many TCs led culturally segregated lives, went to segregated schools and were either a part of the war or completely removed from it, put together, the experiences of the entire pool of teacher candidates provide a rich resource the teacher education can tap into. Teacher education for social cohesion needs first to help teachers develop a clear sense of their identities. Then, the diverse identities of the diverse teachers—constituted by their sociocultural identities, their experiences and perceptions of who they are or who they want to be—need to be shared.
This sharing can be an eye opener for TCs who have lead very sheltered lives. Through collaboration, dialogues, and reflection, TCs can work toward creating, empowering and legitimizing a new, inclusive national identity. This national identity, on the one hand, should value the TCs’ own sociocultural identities. But, on the other, it needs to include a range of other identities that will help TCs build more inclusive teaching selves (Kumaravedivelu, 2013). These teaching selves need to have the awareness and the strength to challenge contemporary realities and the status quo. They need to be aware of their own agency to transform and challenge the identities that are assigned to them by social, national and global realities.

**Program: A Whole Program Approach to Social Cohesion**

In a discussion of post-apartheid South Africa, Weldon (2010) states that a country emerging out of ethnic conflict needs to “signal a new society, with new values, that stand in stark contrast with the old” (p. 353). This contrast needs to spread and be reflected in all spheres of the post-conflict nation, including teacher education reform. Curricular reforms aimed toward social cohesion, however, cannot be limited to mere add-ons introduced through independent courses (Goodwin, 1997). Rather, they need to be infused throughout the entire teacher education program. Moreover, the commitment to building social cohesion needs to be incorporated into programs at an institutional level. Social cohesion cannot remain on the margins of programs but must be actively present in their formal and symbolic curricula as well as their curricular and extracurricular activities. The entire teacher education community needs to endorse and pursue social cohesion.

However, for an approach to social cohesion to materialise fully beyond the boundaries of a teacher education program, it needs to be a part of a “complex matrix of educational initiatives” (Smith, 2005, p. 386). Teacher education program reform needs to be tied to the larger reconciliation processes the country is undergoing. This should include new curricula that demonstrate a clear and broad understanding of what it means to be a nation (Shah, 2010) and that is grounded in the recognition of the importance of social cohesion and building a unified national identity (Tawil & Harley, 2004). As Tawil and Harley (2004) state, curriculum reforms that aim to bring about radical changes are often the results of a “violent process of deconstruction and reconstruction of social relations and structures (p. 9) and they should create a forum for various social groups to interact and learn about each other (Heyneman, 2001).
process of building social cohesion through program reform requires dialogue, debate, and, most importantly, time (Earnest, 2003; Murray, 2008) and thus it cannot be done overnight. It requires time and a deep commitment from all communities and stakeholders.

**Curricula: That Raises Teachers’ Critical Awareness**

In a discussion about Social Justice Teacher Education, Clarke and Morgan (2011) argue for the importance of adopting a curriculum that raises teachers’ critical awareness of discrimination and inequalities. They argue that it is through such a curriculum that teachers can transform their teaching and shape the opportunities they create for their learners within and beyond the school. Clarke and Morgan go on to further discuss how knowledge should not be presented as “objective and atomized” or as “something that can be transmitted unchanged and parcel-like from one direct individual mind to another” (p. 66). Instead, they point out, the “partial, situated and dialogic nature of knowledge” (p. 66) needs to be recognized as does the idea that knowledge is always co-constructed through the interactions that happen among students and teachers as well as within the larger community. Moreover, these authors emphasize, a curriculum that aims to raise critical awareness and transform the existing system needs to do just that. It cannot be prescriptive such that teachers follow it like a script. It is their critical awareness of social inequalities and injustices that will help prospective teachers form inclusive learning environments for their learners.

Another aspect of curricular reform is concerned with the textbooks and other instructional materials used in teacher education. New books and materials that promote diversity and social cohesion and help broaden TCs’ knowledge needs to replace old books and materials. The new materials should both affirm and question the backgrounds and the histories of all communities (Giroux, 1992) and be based on the experiences and values of all Sri Lankans. What is represented in instructional materials and the manner in which it is presented needs to be culturally inclusive.

What is lacking in the present teacher education program in the Sri Lankan NCOE is open discussion and dialogue about how the different Sri Lankan communities experienced the war and how their lives have changed since the war ended. Controversial topics that have destroyed the social fabric of the country are not addressed in this program. For example, I observed during
my fieldwork that the topic of the war was avoided, even in classes where victims of the war were present. The new curriculum needs to create a space where taboo topics that have historically disrupted the country’s history are brought to the table. Perhaps a framework such as Davies (2005b) Approaches to Teaching about War can be used to move Sri Lankan educators from passive to more active approaches to talking about war. Davies’ framework would help teacher educators and teacher candidates to approach the topic gradually. As much of the literature suggests, any intervention or reform needs to be based on local values, beliefs and experiences (Brown, 2009; Hart, 2011).

What is important in all of this is to recognize and therefore provide the skills and the knowledge necessary for teachers to develop and assert their agency as transformative intellectuals who can both distinguish and challenge discrimination and prejudices and replace them with more inclusive and peaceful values.

**Instruction: Moving from the Implicit to the Explicit**

As Davies (2005b) stresses, peace and citizenship education needs to move to a level higher up on the teacher education agenda. She feels such education is not getting the attention it needs. If a post-conflict nation is to ensure that there is lasting peace, it is important that its [present and] future citizens enjoy inclusive and non-extremist national identities and have a greater respect for other communities. To make this kind of transformation, prospective teachers need to be well prepared. First, they need to be made aware of their crucial role in reconciliation processes. They need to understand that they are, in fact, transformative intellectuals and theorizers who are engaging in an intellectual endeavor (Motha, 2014). They need to be aware of their agency as well as their responsibility.

Secondly, teacher education needs to equip teachers with the skills, knowledge and the responsibility to be transformative intellectuals. While the present teacher education program in the NCOE offers many opportunities, there needs to be more explicit instruction and discussion around the war, its causes, how it impacted different Sri Lankan communities, what the end of the war means to diverse groups of Sri Lankans (for not all Sri Lankans felt the war’s ending had a positive impact), and how the country can move forward. These initiatives need also to make teachers aware of their role in the reconciliation process. Teachers need to know that teaching
English, the Link Language, is not only about teaching the mechanics of the language, but also about bridging communities. Thirdly, policy initiatives and various programs for social cohesion need to be publicized more widely. Teacher Educators and Teacher Candidates need to know the education reforms the country has proposed and their role in implementing them. After all, they are the ones who will be doing the implementing (Weldon, 2010). As discussed in Chapter 3, the government of Sri Lanka, along with non-governmental organizations and foreign donor agencies, has taken many initiatives toward social cohesion. Yet, the TCs in my study were either unaware of them or did not consider them important enough to be shared through their narratives.

**Community: An Inclusive and Diverse Space**

The importance of community is emphasized in every aspect of Social Justice Teacher Education (SJTE). In order to make new teachers aware of the realities of communities different from their own, they need to be given a cultural immersion experience where they live in a culturally different community (Hawkins, 2011). SJTE literature (Villegas & Lucas, 2004), as well as literature on teacher preparation in post-conflict times (UNESCO, 204), highlights the need for diversity sensitive recruitment of teachers. The authors of this literature argue that teachers need to be representative of all communities as well as show their commitment to teaching learners from diverse communities. If teacher education is to prepare teachers who are willing and able to work in diverse settings, they need exposure to diversity.

The program at the NCOE provides exactly this kind of immersed multicultural experience. The TCs in the NCOE are socially and culturally diverse and bring in a range of identities and experience to their colleges. Yet, what is missing from this experience is structure, careful monitoring and a discussion both about the value of diversity and the experiences with diversity they are offered. In the absence of an open discussion about diversity and what it means to work and live with people who are different from one’s self, many TCs form misunderstandings and negative stereotypes, a result which proves counterproductive.

As discussed in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, the TCs in the NCOE focused on a range of rich and diverse experiences and identities in their narratives and Identity Portraits. They articulated their experiences, identities, perceptions, prejudices and expectations because they were given a
platform in which to do so. Most of the TCs’ narratives as well as other expressive media used in my study were filled with emotions indicating that what the TCs shared mattered to them. Therefore, teacher education needs to use these methods of diversity expression to create a strong sense of community among TCs. This community should be inclusive and provide a safe place for TCs. Simply putting people from diverse communities in one place cannot forge a sense of community. Instead, it needs to be built on trust, mutual understanding and respect for each other. For this kind of community building to happen, teachers first need to talk openly about their differences. These talks can take the form of open discussions or even escalate into heated debates and arguments, but what is important is that TCs feel that they can openly share their views and, at the same time, hear the views of others. Together, through discussion, TCs need to resolve their differences and think of ways to move forward. Such processes take time and may even involve deep emotions; however, a sense of community and mutual understanding cannot be fostered as long as prejudices and differences are not addressed.

If teachers are to be active agents of change, they need to be given the opportunity to be a part of an inclusive, multicultural community where diversity is something they encounter on a regular basis and where they learn to work with diversity in a positive manner. TCs should feel a sense of belonging and be accepting of diverse others. A sense of community does not simply involve learning about others; it involves forging relationships as well.

**Attitudes: Developing Inclusive Attitudes**

For TCs to develop inclusive identities, for new program and curricular changes to materialize and for strong, inclusive communities to be created, TCs’ attitudes matter. For teacher education programs to realize their agenda for social cohesion, TEs and TCs alike need to develop certain attitudes. Attitudinal changes are crucial for any real change to take place. In post-conflict reconciliation contexts especially, teachers having inclusive mindsets is key. Teachers need to develop mutual understanding with members from other communities. These empathetic attitudes help TCs to develop more inclusive and hybrid identities. They also help teachers develop certain idealisms and a sense of optimism about the future different from the view of the future they experienced during the time of conflict. Developing a sense of civic consciousness helps teachers create learning environments that, in turn, help students foster inclusive mindsets as well. Such changes in the mindsets and attitudes of teachers and students are the first step in
bringing about large-scale social change. With attitudinal changes teachers, come to see their role in sharing civic responsibilities, working toward social justice and addressing inequity in education and beyond.

Focus: The War Can’t be Absent from Post-conflict Reconciliation

If teacher preparation is to help new teachers take an active role in the reconciliation process, the cause of the problem behind the process, i.e., the war, cannot be absent from discussion. Instead, the war needs to take center stage in education for social cohesion. Currently, the war, its causes, how it affected the different Sri Lankan communities, what the end of the war meant for different communities and what it will mean to Sri Lankans as a whole in the future needs to be discussed. As I explained in Chapter 2, the war in Sri Lanka was brought to a halt, not through negotiations or a peace process, but through the exertion of military power by the Sri Lankan government against the LTTE. This means the real causes of the war, which can be ascribed to the grievances of minorities, are yet to be addressed. While the government’s military victory over the LTTE might appear to have signalled the end of a war, as long as the causes of the war are not addressed, peace will likely only be short-lived. There is always the possibility for violence or even another war to emerge. While many Sri Lankans are happy that the military checkpoints no longer exist, that there is freedom to travel to any part of the country, that they don’t experience bomb explosions in public spaces, and the de facto LTTE state and their mechanism has been destroyed, the majority of Sri Lankans are unaware of what the minority Tamils in the country feel and experience. As most of the TCs from the NC stated, the end of the war did not necessarily mean the beginning of a new era. They did not see how the end of the war radically benefitted them. Thus, the war and its end mean different things for different communities. The traditional narratives of the end of a war bringing peace and new beginnings do not apply to all Sri Lankan communities.

That is the very reason why teacher education for social cohesion and reconciliation needs to talk directly about the war. While some TCs in the NCOE program, like Waseem, had their family members killed, or, like Nagual, became internally displaced persons within their own country for a decade, many others know of the war only through television news. If teachers are to be active agents of change, they need to know more explicitly about the war and how their own
community and those of others were affected by it. Reconciliation cannot be addressed in isolation from the war.

A New Beginning: Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals in Post-Conflict Reconciliation

This study has been based on the premise that teachers are transformative intellectuals and that teaching is an intellectual practice (Auerbach, 1995; Benesch, 2001; Giroux, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; McLaren, 1995; Motha, 2014; Pennycook, 2001, Simon, 1987). It is through intellectual engagement of teachers that social change can take place. Thus, this study has been concerned with teachers’ agency and the power teachers have to make changes. While the program offered at the NCOE primarily followed a transmission orientation to pedagogy, it is important to note that it does offer at least a few opportunities for transformative action. Examinations of teacher narratives as well as observational visits to colleges in three Sri Lankan regions have been helpful in shaping my understanding of how the existing NCOE program can be revised in order to provide greater scope for transformative action that can help teachers become active agents of change. Drawing on the findings of this dissertation, Figure 27 provides an overview of the different aspects of teacher preparation that can assist teachers to become well-informed, critical intellectuals who are willing and able to make a change in bridging previously estranged communities.
The findings of this study highlight the need for new teachers to create new and inclusive teaching selves that, on the one hand, recognize their agency to bring about change and, on the other hand, recognize their responsibility to do so. The NCOE program needs to help new teachers build inclusive, non-extremist identities that can help them pave the way for a new, multicultural society. Then, the teacher education program needs to take a whole program approach to social cohesion, where peace and reconciliation is built into every aspect of the curriculum. Moreover, the curriculum needs to have a stronger focus on raising teachers’ awareness of social inequalities and injustices. Such a focus can help teachers identify, question and address those inequalities. Also, creating a strong sense of community where teachers feel safe to share their ideas, experiences and perceptions can help them to get a better understanding.
of social diversity and forge stronger relationships with diverse others. As a step in this direction, teachers need to develop inclusive attitudes that help them embrace diversity in a positive manner. Finally, the topic of the war needs to take the forefront of the discussion of social cohesion.

Limitations of the Study

Now, I will discuss some of the limitations of the study. The first limitation is posed by the change in the focus that occurred partway through the study. I originally designed this study to understand how Sri Lankan English language teachers learn to teach culturally and linguistically diverse learners from a Vygotskyan sociocultural perspective. However, when I went to Sri Lanka for my data collection, the war had ended and the country was in a post-conflict situation. In response to the data and the socio-political climate of my research sites, I shifted my focus to teacher preparation for post-conflict reconciliation. This also resulted in revisiting and changing my conceptual framework from sociocultural theory to transformative orientations to pedagogy. This shift in focus meant that the interview questions were not geared towards this new focus and that some important questions linked to this new focus went unanswered.

Moreover, by this time I had retuned to Toronto, and the TCs had graduated from their programs and had taken up teaching appointments in different parts of the country, and it was not possible for me to reconnect with them to ask clarifying questions. This resulted in not being able to pursue some areas that pertain to the new dissertation focus. During the data analysis and writing phases that took place in Toronto, there were many occasions when I wanted to reconnect with participant to get clarifications and further details about their narratives, but my participants were, for the most part, not connected to the Internet.

Another limitation was posed by my own identity as a woman who belonged to the dominant Sinhalese community. Their perspective of the Sinhalese community would have shaped the manner in which the TCs who belonged to minority communities, particularly the Tamil participants from the NC, responded to me. Moreover, if I had allowed the TCs to respond in their mother tongue, the quality of the answers might have been richer. However, I did not encourage this as I was not conversant in Tamil.
As an outsider to Jaffna who was separated from the rest of the country during the war, on many occasions during my visit to NC, I felt that I was a tourist who had travelled back in time. I found life in Jaffna and my participants’ narratives exotic. I felt they were much more interesting and that I was learning new information during each interview. Whereas the narratives of many others participants did not necessarily present information that was new to me. My limited exposure to certain Sri Lankan communities could have shaped the manner in which I analyzed and presented my data. I took measures to reduce the biases, by first maintaining an electronic identity text via Voice Thread that documented my journey and the tensions I faced as a researcher. It helped me to look at my role as a researcher more critically, by distancing myself from the data by looking at it after a laps of time, and continuing the data analysis after returning to Toronto. I am uncertain how well I addressed the biases my own identity could have posed on my analysis.

Future Directions

To take this study a step forward, I would further explore possible areas for transformation within the current parameters of the program. Such a study designed to uncover what change is possible could provide practical insights into the complexity of moving from a conservative to a transformational orientation to teacher education in a period of post-war reconciliation. Moreover, as a member of an action research initiative led by Professor Antoinette Gagné, of OISE, University of Toronto, I would like to work with novice Sri Lankan teachers who have graduated from the program at the NCOE, to explore with them how they might begin to work as transformative intellectuals in their school communities. Many new graduates of the NCOE, like the participants in this study, get teaching assignments in rural and less privileged communities in Sri Lanka where the power of transformative pedagogy could bring positive change.

The findings of the study have implications beyond Sri Lanka. Many countries around the world experience different kinds of conflict. These findings can be useful for countries that are transitioning to a post-conflict state, or are home to people fleeing war. This study has highlighted first the importance of pre-service teacher preparation for social cohesion and how new teachers can take active roles in that transformation. Moreover, this study highlighted the importance of identity, experiences and perceptions in teacher growth.
References


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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent letter to the Presidents of the three National Colleges of Education (NCOE)

Dear (name of the President of the NCOE)

I am a PhD candidate in Second Language Education at the University of Toronto, Canada. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Antoinette Gagné. I am conducting a qualitative research study the preparation of Sri Lankan English language teacher candidates to teach socially and culturally diverse learners as part of the requirements of my doctoral dissertation. The study is titled: “Preparing English language teachers to teach socially and culturally diverse learners: An analysis of teacher identities, experiences and expectations in three teacher education programs in Sri Lanka”. I hope this study will lead to the reconceptualization of teacher education programs and help shape policy initiatives on the curriculum of teacher education programs.

Based on what we have already discussed, I am writing to formally request permission to gather data in your College. The participants of this study will primarily be English language teacher candidates in their second or third year of studies. The study will also include teacher educators and administrators. By drawing on teacher candidates’ (TCs) experiences, perceptions and expectations about English language teacher preparation for diversity, my doctoral inquiry examines how Sri Lankan teachers can be prepared to teach students from culturally and socially diverse backgrounds. In particular, I aim to understand the participants’ own English language learning experiences, their perceptions of diversity as seen in local schools, the role of diversity in teacher preparation, and their expectations of the large numbers of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who fail English examinations even after 13 years of formal instruction.

Having already received permission from the University of Toronto, I am now requesting your permission to conduct this study in your institution. This study will not include any third parties. Instead I will be distributing and collecting all the forms and conducting the interviews. The participants of the study will include teacher candidates, teacher educators and administrators. The research would include four methods of data collection over one year: questionnaires, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and observations. This year would be spread out through two academic years and would be in two phases from. During the first phase (January-March, 2012):

- Potential participants will fill in background profile questionnaires
- Teacher candidates, teacher educators, administrators and graduates will be interviewed
- Classroom observations of participating teacher educators
- Analyze documents

During the second phase (April-June, 2012), I will follow the teacher candidates to their practicum sites and they will be:

- interviewed

If necessary, I will conduct follow-up interviews with all the participants if I feel it is necessary.

If you accept that I conduct this study in your College, you may rest assured that privacy will be protected at all times. The raw data gathered through this study will be kept confidential, known only to me and my supervisor. In addition, a summary of the research will also be made available upon request. Be also assured that the identity of the College, and all the participants will be kept confidential in any subsequent presentations or publications. Each participant’s name will be replaced by a pseudonym. Moreover, I will take great care to assure that each participant’s identity will not be revealed in any other fashion, such as through background information. All data and tape recordings will be kept in locked files accessible only to me and will be destroyed ten years after the end of the study.
I hope that you will agree to let me conduct this study at your College as it may prove beneficial to
teacher candidates, teacher educators, and administrators in the future. Also, this one-to-one interaction
will benefit your College in that it will act as a catalyst for the reflective growth process and the
participants will receive a bookstore gift certificate upon completion of their involvement with the
research.

If you accept, I will proceed in recruiting participants. I will make all the necessary arrangements that will
include seeking participants and their permission. It is understood that the participants may ask me to stop
my study at any time, without giving a reason.

Please complete the attached consent form and return it to me. I would greatly appreciate your
cooperation. If you would like to receive more information about the study, please contact me in person,
by telephone, or through e-mail. You may also contact the project supervisor, Dr. Antoinette Gagné at
antoinette.gagne@utoronto.ca. Finally, you can contact the University of Toronto Office of Research
Ethics at 416-946-3273 if you have questions about the rights of participants in this study.

Sincerely,

Sreemali Herath
Ph.D. Candidate,
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Phone:
e-mail: XXXXX.XXXX@utoronto.ca
Consent Form  
(to be signed by the President of the National College of Education)

Title of the Research:  “Preparing English language teachers to teach socially and culturally diverse learners: An analysis of teacher identities, experiences and expectations in three teacher education programs in Sri Lanka”

Name of the Researcher:  Sreemali Herath

Institutional Affiliation:  Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Please complete, sign, and return to the researcher.

Please check one of the two boxes.

☐ I, ______________________________, give permission for the study described in the attached letter to be carried on in ______________________________ (name of the NCOE).

☐ I, ______________________________, do not wish to give permission for the study described in the attached letter to be carried out in ______________________________ (name of the NCOE).

Signature of school’s president: ______________________________________________________

Name (please print): ______________________________________________________________

Date: _____________________
Appendix B: Information letter for teacher candidates

(To be printed on a departmental letterhead)

Dear Teacher Candidate,

Would you be willing to participate in a study exploring how Sri Lankan English language teachers can be prepared to teach socially and culturally diverse learners? Particularly this study focuses on diverse teacher candidates’ perceptions, expectations and experiences in relation to teaching diverse learners.

Background information
I am a PhD candidate in Second Language Education at the University of Toronto, Canada. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Antoinette Gagné. I am conducting a qualitative research study on the experiences of Sri Lankan English language teacher candidates as part of the requirements of my doctoral dissertation. The study is titled: “Preparing English language teachers to teach socially and culturally diverse learners: An analysis of teacher identities, experiences and expectations in three teacher education programs in Sri Lanka”. I am requesting your corporation as a voluntary participation in this study, which I hope will lead to the reconceptualization of teacher education programs and help shape policy initiatives on the curriculum of teacher education programs.

Your involvement
I am seeking English language teacher candidates in all three National Colleges of Education (NCOE) that prepare English teachers in Sri Lanka who are currently in their second year. As a part of my study I will conduct two interviews that would last for approximately 60 minutes. The first interview will take place when you are in your second year of teacher preparation and the second interview will take place in the first part of your third year during your practicum. Therefore if you are willing to take part in the study, you should be willing to continue your participation during your practicum. In addition to the two interviews, you will also be asked to complete a background profile questionnaire. I will also request you to share with me assignments and lesson plans if you desire. The interviews would be scheduled at your convenience and will be audio-taped.

Confidentiality
All the information that you provide will be fully confidential and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. I will ask you to provide a pseudonym instead of your real name, which I will constantly use in writing up the results of the research, so people reading my research notes or thesis will not be able to identify you. Moreover, I will conceal any personal information that might identify you. I will write up the results of this research for a thesis, and later perhaps consider publication as an article in a journal or book for teacher candidates and teacher educators. No one beyond myself and my supervisor will know that you are a participant. This will allow you the opportunity to edit out any information that you feel would be too sensitive or that you feel would serve to identify.

Benefits
You will be given an honorarium for your participation. You will receive a gift card from a local book store that you can use in your own studies. You will also be provided with a summary of the research findings upon the completion of the study. An electronic copy of the summary of the research findings
will also be sent to all participants via email. A hard copy of the summary of the research findings will be mailed to participants upon request. In addition, participants may benefit from sharing their experiences in the teacher education program and consequently contribute to a better understanding of the teacher preparation for diversity.

I am writing to invite you to assist me by agreeing to participate in this study. If you are interested and willing to volunteer and have questions, please contact me or my supervisor at the email address listed below. We will gladly explain the research in more detail and respond to any related concerns. Finally, you can contact the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics at 416-946-3273 if you have any questions about the rights of participants in this study.

In closing, allow me to reiterate that you are under no obligation to agree to participate in this study. However, if you choose to do so, you will be free to raise questions and concerns at any time throughout the study and you may withdraw at any time if you choose. Thank you for your consideration.

Sreemali Herath
Phone: XXXX-XXXX Email: XXX.XXX@utoronto.ca

Dr. Antoinette Gagné Email: XXX.XXX@utoronto.ca
Appendix C: Consent form for teacher candidates

(To be printed on a departmental letterhead)

I, __________________________________ agree to take part in your study entitled: “Preparing English language teachers to teach socially and culturally diverse learners: An analysis of teacher identities, experiences and expectations in three teacher education programs in Sri Lanka”. I understand that I am under no obligation to agree to participate in this study.

I understand that my participation would involve two individual interviews, and responding to a background profile questionnaire. I can choose to share with you any extra documents such as my lessons plans and sample assignments. I understand that I will receive an honorarium for my participation. I will also be provided with a summary of her research findings upon completion to the study.

In understand that no one beyond the researcher and the supervisor will know that I am a participant and that, to help protect the anonymity, I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions, to stop the interview at any time and/or withdraw from the study at anytime. I understand that my specific answers and comments will be kept confidential. I understand that my name will not be identified in any report of presentation that may arise from the study. I understand that only the principal investigator and her supervisor will have access to the information collected during the study.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature: ______________________________
Date: _________________________________

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me or my supervisor at:

Sreemali Herath
Phone: XXX-XXXX Email: XXX.XXX@utoronto.ca

Dr. Antoinette Gagné Email: XXX.XXX@utoronto.ca
Appendix D Recruitment flyer

Are you in your second year? Would you like to share your experiences, perceptions and expectations in relation to teaching diverse learners? Consider taking part in this case study!!!!

You are invited to take part in a study that explores how Sri Lankan English language teacher candidates can be prepared to teach socially and culturally diverse learners.

This study will consist of two phases: the first phase will take place during your second year and the second phase will take place during your practicum. You will be required to fill in a background profile questionnaire, take part in semi-structured interviews, and share lesson plans and other teaching material.

If you do participate, you will be compensated with a gift voucher worth Rs.1000/ upon completion.

If you are interested and want to know more about the study come and meet me. I’ll be in the College library on the following days _________at ____________

Sreemali Herath
Sreemali.herath@utoronto.ca
XXX-XXX
Appendix E: Background Profile Questionnaire for Teacher Candidates

Please provide the following information:

Name:
Pseudonym to be used:
Name of the teachers’ college:
Year of study:
Gender: Male Female
Age: 18-20 21-25 26-30 31+
Ethnicity:

Please identify the languages you know and your perceived proficiency in each language (for example on a scale of 1-10 where might you position your level of proficiency?) what are your current usages of these language? (For example, at home, at work, with friends etc)

First language: Proficiency: Current usage:
Second language: Proficiency: Current usage:
Other languages: Proficiency: Current usage:
Other languages: Proficiency: Current usage:

Do you consider yourself to be a native speaker of Sri Lankan English?

Location of schooling:
Primary:
Secondary:

Parents’ occupations:

Home town:
Appendix F: Information letter for teacher educators
(To be printed on a departmental letterhead)

Dear Teacher Educator,
Would you be willing to participate in a study exploring how Sri Lankan English language teachers can be prepared to teach socially and culturally diverse learners? The study focuses on diverse teacher candidates’ and teacher educators’ perceptions of their sociocultural identities, and expectations and experiences in relation to teaching diverse learners.

Background information
I am a PhD candidate in Second Language Education at the University of Toronto, Canada. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Antoinette Gagné. I am conducting a qualitative research study on the experiences of Sri Lankan English language teacher candidates and teacher educators as part of the requirements of my doctoral dissertation. The study is titled: “Preparing English language teachers to teach socially and culturally diverse learners: An analysis of teacher identities, experiences and expectations in three teacher education programs in Sri Lanka”. I am requesting your corporation as a voluntary participation in this study, which I hope will lead to the reconceptualization of teacher education programs and help shape policy initiatives on the curriculum of teacher education programs.

Your involvement
I am seeking English language teacher educators from all three National Colleges of Education (NCOE) that prepare English teachers in Sri Lanka. As a part of my study I will conduct an interview that would last for approximately 60 minutes. In addition to the interview, you will also be asked to complete a background profile questionnaire. Finally, I would like to visit and observe some of your classes. I will have impromptu follow-up interviews after the observations. I will also request you to share with me assignments and lesson plans if you desire. The interviews and the observations will be scheduled at your convenience and will be audio-taped.

Confidentiality
All the information that you provide will be fully confidential and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. I will ask you to provide a pseudonym instead of your real name, which I will constantly use in writing up the results of the research, so people reading my report will not be able to identify you. Moreover, I will conceal any personal information that might identify you. I will write up the results of this research for a thesis, and later perhaps consider publication as an article in a journal or book for teacher candidates and teacher educators. No one beyond myself and my supervisor will know that you are a participant.

Benefits
You will be given an honorarium for your participation. You will receive a gift card from a local book store that you can use in your own teaching. You will also be provided with a summary of the research findings upon the completion of the study. An electronic copy of the summary of the research findings will also be sent to all participants via email. A hard copy of the summary of the research findings will be mailed to participants upon request. In addition, participants may benefit from sharing their experiences in the teacher education program and consequently contribute to a better understanding of the teacher preparation for diversity.
I am writing to invite you to assist me by agreeing to participate in this study. If you are interested, willing to volunteer and have questions, please contact me or my supervisor at the email addresses listed below. We will gladly explain the research in more detail and respond to any related concerns. Finally, you can contact the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics at 416-946-3273 if you have any questions about the rights of participants in this study.

In closing, allow me to reiterate that you are under no obligation to agree to participate in this study. However, if you choose to do so, you will be free to raise questions and concerns at any time throughout the study and you may withdraw at any time if you choose. Thank you for your consideration.

Sreemali Herath
Phone: XXX-XXX Email: XXX.XXX@utoronto.ca

Dr. Antoinette Gagné Email: XXX.XXX@utoronto.ca
Appendix G: Consent form for teacher educators

I, __________________________________ agree to take part in your study entitled: “Preparing English language teachers to teach socially and culturally diverse learners: An analysis of teacher identities, experiences and expectations in three teacher education programs in Sri Lanka”. I understand that I am under no obligation to agree to participate in this study.

I understand that my participation would involve an individual interview, responding to a background profile questionnaire, class observations and impromptu follow-up interviews after class observations. I can choose to share with you any extra documents such as my lesson plans and sample assignments. I understand that I will receive an honorarium for my participation. I will also be provided with a summary of the research findings upon completion to the study.

I understand that no one beyond the researcher and the supervisor will know that I am a participant and that, I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions, to stop the interview at any time and/or withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that my specific answers and comments will be kept confidential. I understand that my name will not be identified in any report of presentation that may arise from the study. I understand that only the principal investigator and her supervisor will have access to the information collected during the study.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature: ______________________________
Date: _________________________________

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me or my supervisor at:

Sreemali Herath
Phone: XXX-XXX Email: XXX.XXX@utoronto.ca

Dr. Antoinette Gagné Email: antoinette.gagne@utoronto.ca
Appendix H: Background Profile Questionnaire for Teacher Educators

Please provide the following information:
Name:
Pseudonym to be used:
Name of the teachers’ college:
Position/rank:

Gender:  Male  Female
Age: 26-30  31-35  36-40  41-45  50+
Ethnicity:

Please identify the languages you know and your perceived proficiency in each language (for example on a scale of 1-10 where might you position your level of proficiency?) what are your current usages of these languages? (For example, at home, at work, with friends etc)

First language:    Proficiency:    Current usage:
Second language:    Proficiency:    Current usage:
Other language:    Proficiency:    Current usage:
Other language:    Proficiency:    Current usage:

Do you consider yourself to be a native speaker of Sri Lankan English?
Home town:

Highest academic degree conferred.
 Teachers’ College:   Years:   Institution:   Focus:
 Bachelor of   Years:   Institution:   Focus:
 Master of   Years:   Institution:   Focus:
 Ph. D. In   Years:   Institution:   Focus:

Please list your work history and related job duties:
Appendix I: First interview schedule for Teacher candidates

Background and language learning experiences:
1. Why did you decide to become an English teacher?
2. How did you learn English?
3. What has your own language learning experiences taught you about teaching and learning English in Sri Lanka?
4. What do you think of the status of the English language in Sri Lanka?
5. What is your perception about your identity as a speaker/teacher/teacher educator of English? Can you draw a concept map of how you perceive your identity?

Experiences within the program:
1. Can you tell me about the courses you took in the first and second years in the program? What aspects of these courses/assignments did you find challenging? Did you have a choice in course selection? What support did you receive to overcome these challenges? The kind of feedback you received for the various assignments you did?
2. Are you finding the program challenging in any way? If yes, why?
3. Can you explain the most positive experience in the program? And the worst experience?
4. What kinds of extracurricular activities are offered in this college?
5. Do you get to meet and interact with other teacher candidates from other social, ethnic and religious groups? If so in what contexts?
6. Do you think the program has prepared you well to teach in local schools and most importantly to teach all kinds of students and in particular the type of students who will be in your classes during the practicum?
7. Have you learned teaching strategies in your courses that you think will be useful during your practicum? If yes, what are they?

Experiences and perceptions of diversity:
1. What does the term diversity mean to you?
2. What do you think about diversity in your teachers college and the local schools? Do you think the teacher candidates, the instructors and administrators in your college are representative of the Sri Lankan school system?
3. (the participants will be presented two pictures of students) How do you think these two students will succeed in school? What would they become in the future?
4. (Participants will be presented pictures of differently resourced classrooms). Where do you think these two classes are located? How do you think the students in these classes will succeed? Which class would you like to teach in? Why? How would you plan your lessons if you were teaching in these two classes?
5. What do you think about the success or failure of certain groups of students where English language is concerned?
6. What do you think about the training you get in relation to teaching socially and culturally diverse learners? Do you think you are well prepared to teach all kinds of students you will have in your classes?
7. Do you think your teachers’ college should explicitly teach you how to teach socially and culturally diverse learners?

Roles and responsibilities towards socially and culturally diverse learners

1. What are your expectations of your future learners?
2. What are your perceptions about the high failure rate for English among Sri Lankan students?
3. What are your fears and expectations of yourself in relation to teaching students from various sociocultural (rural) backgrounds in the future?
Appendix J: Second interview schedule for teacher candidates

Practicum experience:
13. What is your perception of diversity? Has it changed from the time you were taking course work? Can you design a concept map that reflects your perception of diversity?
14. Can you tell me about your practicum experience? What were the three most important things you learnt from this experience?
15. Do you feel prepared to teach?
16. Did the school setting and your experience match your expectations? What surprised you?
17. What kind of support did you receive from the host teacher? How did you respond to the feedback you received? How did the feedback influence you?
18. What kind of support did you receive from your teachers’ college professor during the practicum? How did you respond to the feedback you received? How did the feedback influence you?
19. If you did not receive sufficient support, what kind of support would you like to see within the teacher education framework?
20. What challenges do you face when teaching students from various backgrounds?
21. What do you do to overcome these challenges?
22. Do you think your initial perceptions about diversity and teaching diverse learners changed after your practicum? If so how?
23. What do you think your teacher education program should do to prepare you for this?
24. How do you think your own language learning experiences shaped your teaching?
25. How do you think your own life experiences shape your teaching?
26. In a scale of 1-10 where would you position your instructional ability to meet the needs of students from various social and cultural backgrounds? Give reasons.
27. How do you think you have changed as a result of the program?
Appendix K: Teacher educator interview schedule

Background and language learning experiences:
13. Why did you decide to become a teacher educator?
14. How did you learn English?
15. How has this learning experience shaped your understanding of preparing English language teachers?
16. What is your perception of the status of the English language in Sri Lanka?
17. What is your perception about your identity as a speaker/teacher/teacher educator of English?

Experiences and perceptions of diversity:
7. What does the term diversity mean to you?
8. What do you think about diversity in your teachers college and the local schools? Do you think it presents the diversity that is seen in Sri Lankan schools?
9. (Show two pictures of students). How do you think these two students will succeed in school? What would they become in the future?
10. What do you think about the role of teacher education programs in preparing their candidates to teach socially and culturally diverse learners?
11. What do you think about the success or failure of certain groups of students where English language is concerned?
12. What do you think about the training teacher candidates are given in relations to teaching socially and culturally diverse learners?

Experiences teaching in the program:
9. Can you tell me about the course/s you are teaching?
   a. Did you design this course?
10. Is the diversity you’re your students a factor that you take into account when you teach this class? If yes, what do you do?
11. Do you think the teacher candidates find the program challenging in any way? If yes, why?
12. Can you explain some of the most difficult challenges you have encountered in your teaching?

Roles and responsibilities towards socially and culturally diverse learners
1. What are your expectations of your learners (the TCs)?
2. What are your fears and expectations in relation to teaching students (TCs) from various sociocultural (rural) backgrounds in the future?
3. What are your perceptions about the high failure rate for English among Sri Lankan students?
Appendix L: Picture descriptions of two learners
(The participants will be provided coloured pictures)

1. How do you think these two students will succeed in school?
2. Why? What would they become in the future?
3. Which student would you prefer to teach? Why?
Appendix M: Picture descriptions of two classrooms
(The participants will be provided coloured pictures)

1. Where do you think these two classes are located?
2. How do you think the students in these classes will succeed?
3. Which class would you like to teach in? Why?
4. How would you plan your lessons if you were teaching in these two classes?
Appendix N: Identity Portrait

Use the following outline to define your social and cultural identity. Use words, pictures, symbols, colours or any things else you think will best assist you to illustrate your identity.
Appendix O: Projects completed during the internship

Name:
Name of the NCOE:
Internship school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the project</th>
<th>What you did</th>
<th>Group/pair/individual</th>
<th>Date completed/planning to complete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community related project</td>
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<td>Administrative project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student support project</td>
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**Action research**

Topic:
Brief description of your research project:
Appendix P: Information about Block Teaching Schools and Students

Name:
Name of the NCOE:
Name of internship school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (Month/year)</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Name of the school &amp; location</th>
<th>Girls’/Boys’/Mixed</th>
<th>How would you describe the school and the students?</th>
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Appendix Q: Mind map of diversity in Sri Lankan schools

What does diversity in Sri Lankan schools mean to you? Complete the following mind map using words, symbols, pictures etc. you think are most effective to conveying your ideas.
Appendix R: Semi-structured classroom observation guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Start time:</th>
<th>End time:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of NCOE:</td>
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<td>Instructor:</td>
<td>Course title:</td>
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<td>Focus of the lesson:</td>
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<td>Number of students:</td>
<td>Male:</td>
<td>Female:</td>
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<td>Language of instruction:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language spoken/used in the classroom:</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observable behavior: Instances when issues pertaining to diversity are directly or indirectly mentioned in the class. How do the teacher educator and the teacher candidates respond?</th>
<th>How could this data be interpreted in relation to the research questions?</th>
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Appendix S: Field notes chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>What do I see?</th>
<th>What do I hear?</th>
<th>What am I thinking?</th>
<th>How does this connect to my theoretical framework and research questions?</th>
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### Appendix T: Symbolic Curriculum Observation Guide

Date: 
Name of the NCOE:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Artefact</th>
<th>Where it was located?</th>
<th>How it was organized?</th>
<th>How can this data be used in relation to the research questions?</th>
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