

Minority-World Preservice Teachers' Understanding Of Contextually Appropriate Practice While Working In Majority-World Early Childhood Contexts

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Abstract

International field experiences in Kenya and Nepal supplied data for two collaborative ethnographic research projects that analyze, using the concept of contextually appropriate practice (CAP), how minority-world early childhood preservice teachers define “quality” practices. The term minorityworld is used for educators who come from wealthier regions of the globe, which constitutes a small percentage of the world population, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. The term majority-world has replaced the term third world, as this term constructs a discourse about third-world countries being less developed. Fifteen preservice teachers from a predominantly White university in the United States served as the participants. Two Kenyan and Nepali teachers also participated to gain an emic perspective of quality practices from local community members. Data were collected through participation observation by the researchers, written ethnographic field notes, individual interviews, group discussions, and reflective journals. CAP was used to inform the data collection and analyze in two ways. First, it was used to guide the questions during the interviews and discussion groups. Second, the tenets of CAP were used to determine themes when coding the data. The findings reveal that U.S. preservice teachers are most likely to exert a “privileged position” by assuming that quality in Kenya and Nepal could be “fixed” by adopting Euro-Western policies and pedagogies, which perpetuates neo-colonialism in the education sector. The history of marginalization, coupled with Euro-Western influences and domination, silenced and oppressed local forms of educating young children in Kenya and Nepal. It is critical to provide preservice teachers with opportunities to expand their views of quality, especially in collaboration with adults from the local teaching community, so that they can provide feedback and mentoring about contextually appropriate practices for majority-world children.

Keywords: Contextually appropriate practice; international field experiences; majority-world; minority-world; preservice educators; quality care and education

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