Displacement
Planet Earth:
Plurilingual Education
and Identity for 21st
Century Schools

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13.

'Mystery' of an Uzbek Girl: Displaced Self and Moments of Transformation

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Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house wall, which molds and develops men.
(W. E. B. Du Bois, 1903).

This chapter explores the development of the author’s cultural identity and displaced self. Using Mystery reflexive, qualitative first-person narrative to bring epiphanies to the autobiographical present and frame her autoethnographic journey, the author interrogates important moments of personal transformation that shape the development of her cultural identity. She employs W. E. B. Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness, whereby she examines the evolution of her bicultural identity and personal transformation in Uzbek, Russian, and American communities. Khasilova concludes the chapter by discussing how a careful, deep, in-depth examination of her own cultural identity informs and shapes her pedagogy and research. She provides recommendations for teachers seeking to transform school culture into constructive learning communities and implications for students who are displaced.

In today’s globalized and interconnected world, scholars are increasingly interested in studying cultural and social interactions (Adams, 1998; Howard, 2006; McIntyre, 2002; McMillon, 2009; McVee, 2004; Tochon, 2009; Tochon & Harrison, 2017). According to Banks (2006), in today’s world we need “leaders, educators, and classroom teachers who can bridge impermeable cultural, ethnic borders, envision new possibilities, and engage in personal transformation and visionary action” (Banks, 2006, p. xi). By challenging ourselves as leaders and educators we discover the unknown that opens up worlds of opportunity for students and others (Howard, 2006; McVee, 2004; Myles & Cheng, 2003). We can best meet this challenge by engaging in deep, critical self-reflection of our personal cultural and linguistic identities (Goodman & Jackson, 2012, Tochon, 2009, Tochon & Harrison, 2017).
My goal in this paper is to engage in deep critical self-reflection about the evolution of my own bicultural identity as a person and a scholar (Brock et al., 2017; Howe & Khasilova, 2017; Tochon, 2009). I am from Uzbekistan in Central Asia, but was born in the former Soviet Union, now the Russian Federation. I finished high school in Uzbekistan in 2003, earned a bachelor’s degree in humanities from Smolensk University for Humanities, Smolensk, Russia in 2009. In 2011 I earned a master’s degree in the United States, then in fall 2016, I began a PhD in literacy education at the University of Wyoming. I lived three periods of my life in different cultures and communities, including Uzbek, Russian, American, and Although I was born in Russia and now live in the USA, I am still ethnically an Uzbek, who is bi- and multicultural, who thinks, lives, and experiences life as an Uzbek with a Western mindset.

I quote Du Bois (1903) to show his notion of Blacks “having to look at themselves through the eyes of others-whites” (Du Bois, 1903, p.8). I use Du Bois’ concept of double consciousness (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015; Black, 2012; Falcon, 2008; Sawyer, 2005; Smith, 2003) to frame and interpret cultural transformations of mine across cultures and periods of my life: childhood in Uzbekistan, teenage years in Russia, and adulthood in America. For Du Bois, double consciousness means Blacks’ views of themselves and of Whites are not reflected through and by a broader American society and mainstream culture. Du Bois (1903) used the notion of double consciousness to explain struggle when people displace themselves and to explore how people and scholars share values such as an awareness of, concern for, and refusal of the self that occurs during transformation of identity. I employ his notion in my work to explore my displaced self in different cultures and communities (Bochner, 1997; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000).

To set the context for the present work, I begin with an introduction and overview of the term culture to explain the evolution my identity. In defining culture, I draw on McVee and Boyd (2016) and Steward’s (1955) theory of cultural change. Second, I review and define W. E. B. Du Bois’ (1903) notion of double-consciousness to explore my bicultural identity and to understand the notion of double consciousness in depth. I review literature that discusses the conceptual background of my paper and Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness. Third, I outline methodology and details of my work drawing on Denzin’s (2014) qualitative method Mystory. I use Mystory as a reflexive and personal tale situated in my experience (Brock et al., 2017; Howe & Khasilova, 2017; Denzin, 2003; 2014). In consideration of Du Bois’ work I have been able to think and write about my own identity and to share my bicultural and displaced self and lived experiences. I present vignettes, personal narrative, and short dialogue that reveal the evolution of my identity and personal transformation across cultures. In the final section, I address the question, “Where do I go from here?” I suggest perspectives for understanding the role that careful and thoughtful self-critique plays, and its importance to pedagogy and research.

Background

Culture and society determine individual personalities and consciousness (Rosaldo, 1993, p.23).

I was born in Russia, but lived in Uzbekistan from 1987 until I graduated from high school in 2003. In 2005 I entered Smolensk University for Humanities in Russia. During my undergraduate program, I travelled to Germany, France, Spain, Morocco, Poland, Belarus, Egypt, and Central Asian countries, and met people with diverse backgrounds. While there, I interacted with people from different social, racial, cultural, sexual, and religious backgrounds; although I am Muslim, I feel comfortable among Christians, Jews, individuals of other religious groups. When I graduated in 2009 from University, I sought educational paths abroad to earn master’s and doctoral degrees. In 2011 I moved to Wyoming and applied to a graduate program.

I have examined thoughtfully the notion of culture, having lived in contexts that shaped my own evolving identity. Culture may be conceptualized in many ways. Rosaldo (1989) suggests that, at its core, culture refers to communication, patterns of interacting, behavior, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, and religion. Scholars including McVee and Boyd (2016) define culture as people’s way of life including their values, beliefs, and traditions (McMillon, 2009; McVee & Boyd, 2016; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Steward, 1955). Uzbek culture is characterized as sensitive, hospitable, and reliable (Kamp, 2006). Religion is another important aspect of Uzbek culture; approximately 90% are Sunni Muslims. Uzbeks appreciate hospitality, the sacredness of family, helping the poor, and respect for elders and children (Adams, 1998; Nazarov & Sino, 1993). Whereas my bicultural, cross-cultural experiences have built on and helped to shape my Uzbek cultural identity, cross-cultural experiences can create tension within and between people (Evans & Nixon, 2015; Goodman & Jackson, 2012).
Evans (2014) asserts that when cultures come into contact, they may “rub each other the wrong way” (p.12). For this reason, cross-cultural interactions can be tricky business. When positive and effective, cross-cultural interactions can promote self-understanding as well as understanding of others (McVee & Boyd, 2016).

My bicultural experiences situate my identities within cultures of which I have been a part (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). In such a context, bicultural identity refers to a feeling of belonging to a particular group or groups (Rosaldo, 1993). Since cultural identity includes sets of social norms and behaviors as well as a person’s feelings of belongingness, my own cultural identity is complex and displaced, nuanced given my different lived experiences (Smith, 2008, Howe, Khasilova, 2017). I draw on the work of Du Bois (1903) as I consider my own bicultural identity. I first introduce Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness; second, I articulate how other scholars have drawn from Du Bois.

Theoretical Framework

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness: an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois, 1903, p.45).

I use the concept of double consciousness to frame the present work. Originally, Du Bois (1903) explained the term double consciousness to address issues related to the power of White stereotypes in Black life and the internal conflict in the African-American individual, between what was “African” and what was “American.” The quote shows that he himself experienced the feeling of twoness. In his book, Du Bois explains that the term double consciousness occurs when a person shares an awareness of and concern for the negation of the self that occurs when the self is not recognized by other people and other communities. Since Du Bois was an African American, he always felt his twoness; he was Black and he was not seen as American by White Americans (Gooding-Williams, 2009).

What is W. E. B. Du Bois’ Notion of Double Consciousness?

Reviewing Du Bois’ concept, we see that double consciousness can apply to any group in a less-dominant position of power (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015; Boston, 1999; Sawyer, 2005; Smith, 2003). Moreover, double consciousness is the feeling that one’s identity is divided into several parts, making it difficult or impossible to have one unified identity. For instance, in The Souls of Black Folk, Du Bois (1903) explores double consciousness as identity split into two parts with respect to race; since American Blacks live in a society where they are devalued and judged, they see themselves as “American” and separately as “African-American” (Black, 2012; Boston, 1999). For Du Bois, having to look at oneself through the eyes of others means that the self is seen as “less than.”

Other Scholars’ Views of Double Consciousness

Double consciousness was a concept that Du Bois explored in 1903. The term has become popular in the United States and other countries (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015; Bazian, 2013; Boston, 1999; Falcon, 2008). In subsections that follow, I explain two categories of studies that illustrate how scholars have used Du Bois’ ideas in their work. The first set of studies addresses internal and external selves, referring to how minorities view themselves as well as their conception(s) as to how others view them. The second set of studies reflects on the self-conscious individual exploration of ways that minority people view themselves.

Twoness: Internal and External Selves

Du Bois (1903) uses the notion of split consciousness to explore ways in which individuals or groups are forced to identify themselves in two social worlds and to view themselves as both insiders and outsiders in the same social position. For instance, Abdul-Jabbar (2015) uses Du Bois’ notion of split-or double consciousness to examine Islam as it exists today. He explores how the notion of double consciousness represents ways Arabs from different countries and cultures tend to perceive and negotiate their complex identities in the diaspora (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015). Abdul-Jabbar (2015) employs double-consciousness to illustrate how Arab Muslims can feel a sense of displacement and anxiety expressed by “the upheavals of the recent political scene” around the world (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015, p. 60).

Furthermore, Abdul-Jabbar (2015) shows how many Muslim Americans experience “this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others” (Du Bois, 1903, p.12). Muslim Americans experience
internal/external tension in seeing themselves as both Americans and Muslims, and their perceptions of different ways that White American Christians see them as “other.” The group of people tries to reconcile two cultures that compose their identities.

Similarly, Cook (2013) analyzes Du Bois’ (1903) theoretical framework and revisits Du Bois’ Afrocentric perspective in relation to the current political and social thought of African-Americans. In a literature review, Cook (2013) reveals that twoness in the sense of internal and external selves occurs “in a culturally rich education and in an internal remaking of governing bodies as a recovery strategy from double consciousness” (Cook, 2013, p. 2). He clarifies that Du Bois (1903) suggests that a careful study of historical events worldwide would help to reduce the level of stress that racist practices create (Cook, 2013).

The Self-Conscious Individual: How Minority People View Themselves

In contrast, Wells (2002) used Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness to explore the complexity of difference. Wells (2002) examines twoness in self-conscious individuals in the example of two stories about double consciousness where they would become, eventually, stories about the public sphere. Similarly, Falcon (2008) furthers the scope of double consciousness by applying it to gender within Latina/Latino-American communities to explain twoness as self-conscious individuality. The author examines how individuals who are neither male African-American nor Chicana suffer similar racial and gender struggles in academia.

In conclusion, the notion of double consciousness originally referred to African Americans’ culturally problematized process of self-identity. Seeing themselves through their own individual and black perspectives while simultaneously through the perspective of dominant white culture, the definition of double consciousness is not fully revealed. The concept should be developed, examined, and defined thoroughly and clearly. In search of answers that may help to reverse negative effects of double consciousness, I use the term displaced self to represent and to interrogate my bicultural identity and personal transformation by using the qualitative genre Mystory (Denzin, 2008) to further explore my personal and cultural transformation. The difference between my focus and Du Bois’ is my adoption of double consciousness to explore and analyze my identity by extending the theory to many groups, whereas Du Bois focuses his analysis on American Blacks. I use the term double consciousness not only to explore my identity in all three cultures, but to examine my displaced self and belongingness to a place, to look at my feelings toward myself as an outsider, and at my culture and identity in three geographic locations. We have to remember that identity is not just shaped and formed, but is itself a shaping and forming influence (Evans & Nixon, 2015; Goodman & Jackson, 2012).

Overview of Methodology

Drawing on the work of Denzin (2008; 2014), I frame this work as Mystory. According to Denzin (2014), Mystory offers an opportunity to present a rich, detailed description of my lived experience through personal short stories, dialogues, poems, and vignettes (Denzin, 2014; Howe & Khasilova, 2017). I collect crucial events from my life in which my lived experience worked in tandem to examine the cultural phenomenon of my own identity development (Atkinson, 2007; Badley, 2015; Bochner, 1997; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Cresswell, 2013; McVee & Boyd, 2016). My goal in the present study is to explore the evolution of my own bicultural identity and personal transformation.

In the following section I use autoethnography, including my personal autobiographical accounts, similar to Mystory (Denzin, 1997; 2003; Chawla, 2008). As Denzin (2009) identified, ethnography is the observer’s account of a culture, but “autoethnography is self-written and personal” (Denzin, 2009, from his online blog). Mystories are reflexive, critical, multimedia tales and retellings (Chawla, 2008). As Denzin (2014) describes, each Mystory begins with the writer’s biography; mysteries connect epiphatic moments, turning-point experiences, and times of personal trouble—Turner’s liminal experiences” (Denzin, 2014; Denzin, 2009, column 3, online website http://www.icosifune.com/2009/02/norman-denzin-performance-ethnography/). Interesting, Denzin (2014) explains that mystory is fundamentally subjective and embodied by exploring liminal spaces lying outside the realm of cultural systems of structure (Denzin, 2014; Badley, 2015).

What follows is a presentation and discussion of several mysteries, or autoethnographic accounts, themselves made into poetic structures (Chawla, 2008). Denzin (2014) arranges these biographical accounts into dialogues and poems. In doing so, he invites the reader to read aloud and to view the accounts as a shared cultural history. Mystories are conducted in a way in a way that is liminal, open, and unresolved, so that “they would not be falsely presented as being completed or answered.”
(Denzin, 2009, blog online). Chawla (2008) states that the beauty of mysteries is that they allow readers to ask, Whose story is this? Who has authority over it? Who does the telling? (Chawla, 2008).

The vast cultural, lingual, religious, and political differences of my background inform my researcher journal. I have been journaling for 15 years, recording memories and personal events of my life (Atkinson, 2007; Adams & Holman, 2008; Howe & Khasilova, 2017). I wrote my journals on every special occasion. I analyzed three journal entries for the present work. First, I compiled data sources and analyzed it by coding specific themes (Creswell, 2013). I generated common themes by looking at my life events and their importance in my transformation. The themes were examined for their relationship to each other. I arrived at common definitions of terms by combining the biographical life events *Mystery* with themed vignettes and short stories that convey the sting of memory (Denzin, 2014; Howe & Khasilova, 2017) interwoven with the notion of the Du Bois lenses, as “triangulation, or combination of biographical methods, insures that performance, process, analysis, history, and structure receive fair and thorough consideration in any inquiry” (Denzin, 2014, p. 130). Finally, embedded in these themes are personal and professional responses delivered through vignettes and short stories.

**Results**

Here, I move from the present to the past, going backward to revisit my transformation. I focus on my academic life to examine events in my life. I start with the exploration of *My Evolving Identity As An American and An Academic*, where I start with the question *Where am I Am Now?*

**My Evolving Identity As an American and an Academic: Where Am I Now?**

I sit in the living room, talking with my mom about my course writings. The room is big and full of my books about writing and languages. My mom is cooking delicious soup and asking me about my reflective essay on a Thursday afternoon. The reason she is interested in my paper is because I ask her about my school and her experience with teaching high school students in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. I share with her McMillon’s (2000) “Why Does Joshua ‘Hate School...but Love Sunday School?” She asks me about Joshua's story and we discuss our school systems in Russia and Uzbekistan. During our discussion I realize that our school experiences were different from Joshua's. My schooling was different but focused more on being a global citizen. We discuss my writing experience in the literacy graduate course and I share how hard it was and how different from classes and schools I had taken.

**Mom:** D, I think you are thinking differently now and focusing more on how to couch your ideas within literature, which is great.

**D:** Why mom, why do you think I am thinking differently?

**Mom:** When you were in Russia and doing your undergraduate studies, you were trying only to get your diploma and learn languages.

**D:** I think you are right. Before, my goal was only to master foreign languages. As for being schooled in Russia and Uzbekistan, I thought that with respect to scholars, we have to summarize their ideas and report findings. Do you agree?

**Mom:** Being in academia and writing a scholarly tone is not easy, but if you understand writing styles and how to couch your work within literature, you can show how you understand your topic, and examine specific questions that interest you.

**D:** Mom, I feel I am getting there. Dr. C chose the right direction for me. I followed her comments and I tried to remember specific points. I also noticed her teaching style was different from my professors in Russia and Uzbekistan. The class helped me think deeply, analyze, synthesize main ideas, and improve my writing. In addition, Dr. C followed up and met with me when she felt she needed help. She always allowed me to clarify the task.

**Mom:** Glad to hear! Keep doing what you are doing!

I used the qualitative genre *mystery* (Denzin, 2014) to examine the dialogue. I invite the reader to read the dialogue aloud and to see it as shared cultural history (Denzin, 2014). For this reason, I leave my question open to the reader. In the above *mystery*, I used Du Bois’ (1903) notion of *double consciousness* to interrogate my identity as an academic writer. Finding a writing voice can be difficult, especially when you come from a different background with an emphasis on oral skills. I believe a writer's voice is unique (Cummins, 1981). In the event I describe, one can see that I look at myself through the eyes of an academic writer who is open to critique. In my development as an academic, I now view learning as leading to different curricular decisions, relationships among teachers and students, pedagogical approaches, and indeed, educational outcomes (McVee & Boyd, 2016; Nieto, 2010). In addition, as a novice researcher, I am able to explore not only my academic identity, but also to observe and examine the pedagogical style of my advisor. As McVee (2011) and other scholars note, “teacher educators need to assist novice teachers in explorations of both the
macro-level and the micro-level issues" (McVee, 2011, p. 5).

I believe Nieto’s observation is insightful: “Relationships among teachers and students are more important ingredients in successful schools” (Nieto, 2010, p. 32). Similarly, Howard (2006) highlights that “educators can effectively contribute to the process of social transformation” (Howard, 2006, p. 10), as happened when I accepted Dr. C’s comments and recommendations as a new learning opportunity. The course helped graduate students examine their own identity and pedagogical assumptions regarding race and cultural differences. I found the seminar effective in understanding and exploring my own identity development as a researcher and educator, because I examined my thinking and cultural background over the semester (Howard, 2006; McVee & Boyd, 2016; McVee, 2011; McMillon, 2009; Ubaydullaeva, 2015). I have begun looking at myself from a different perspective in order to understand my transformation to academia, as it overlaps with the concept of double consciousness.

Conversations with visiting scholar Dr. G

I talked with Dr. G on a Monday. I thanked her for her visit and presentation.

D: G, I wanted to share with you some ideas, but I have not decided how to frame my work.

Dr. G: Ok, tell me about your ideas.

D: In this paper I would like to share about my schooling and my bicultural life. I came from Uzbekistan and lived in Russia before coming to the United States. I have been schooled in different places and different cultures. I think that helped me to be who I am today.

Dr. G: Tell me more.

D: I changed after my dad passed away. As a first child in my family, I had to help my mom with financial obligations. I applied to university to obtain my bachelor’s degree. In Russia my beliefs were changed by being exposed to a different culture and by working closely with professionals who loved their jobs. For instance, I experienced being in student government organizations, debate groups, exchange programs, and study abroad. I gained much experience. Then I moved to the US with my husband, where I became more independent and looked at life through diverse perspectives.

Dr. G: Why not write about those transitions in your life? You might start your stories backward, discussing “Where I am now” and “Where do I go from here?” Then you could share your situation in Russia; for example, “Rebellious Uzbek girl in Russia,” and when your dad passed away may be “Daddy is gone.”

D: Yes, I always dreamed of writing a book about my bicultural life, and I cannot believe I can couch it in literature about my life. How could I frame my work? I was thinking about culture and consciousness.

Dr. G: You could frame it by using Du Bois’ concept of “double consciousness.” You could find his definition and read some of his work.

This event is significant in my development as an academic because we engaged in mutually respectful dialogue. Together we developed the structure for my paper. According to McVee and Boyd (2016), “Dialogue is talk that requires participants to engage actively in speaking, thinking, and listening” (McVee & Boyd, 2016, p. 45). A mentor not only acted as a reflective listener, but she appeared to respect my thoughts and I learned that we only learn “about talk and listening when we explore examples of talk” (McVee & Boyd, 2016, p. 68).

The above event is significant in my development as an academic because I can understand my own learning. It led to changes in relationships among families, teachers and students; to gaining new pedagogical approaches; and to greater expectations of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995; McVee & Boyd, 2016; Nieto, 2010; Tochon, 2009; Tochon & Harrison, 2017). Every scholar I met provided me with wonderful insights about my future as an educator and researcher. I realized what and how I can contribute to culturally relevant pedagogy and multiculturalism. Finally, as an educator and researcher, I understand that I should examine and explore my bicultural and linguistic identity to contribute to my field. As Miller and McVee (2012) asserts, we as teacher educators must examine our own lives and our own practices, whether such study is from the inside out or the inside in (Miller & McVee, 2012).

Double Consciousness: Uzbek and Russian Identities

Schoolhouses do not teach themselves - piles of brick and mortar and machinery do not send out men. It is the trained, living human soul, cultivated and strengthened by long study and thought, that breathes the real breath of life into boys and girls and makes them human, whether they be black or white, Greek, Russian or American. W. E. B. Du Bois (1903)
Toward Global Citizenship Education

In this section I explore my bicultural identity by relating two events of my undergraduate education in Russia and high school in Uzbekistan and how I challenged myself to go further.

It is 8:00 am. I am rushing to school with friends. The weather is warm, trees are green and blossoming, birds are singing, and my teacher Ms. Shibaeva in Fergana, Uzbekistan, is greeting us in front of the school door. Girls are standing in the front line and boys in the second line. We are gathering before English class. We are singing a state anthem, and as a representative and “klaasskam” (leader) from 10A class, I am raising the Uzbek flag. Ten minutes later, we greet our principle and listen to news about our school. As soon as “lineyka” (gathering) is done, my classmates and I run to our English class.

Ms. Shibaeva greets everyone and we stand up and say: “Good morning teacher.” She replies, “Good morning students. Please sit down.” Suddenly, one of my classmates A screams and laughs at the new girl N. Ms. Shibaeva stops class, becomes serious, makes A speak about the situation, and apologize.

This event from high school taught me to see my friends through the eyes of a teacher. To understand what we were doing and how we were behaving, Ms. Shibaeva took the initiative to talk directly with a child about his behavior (McMillon, 2000). As McVee and Boyd (2016) state, “teachers are still important in guiding, shaping, scaffolding, challenging, exhorting, responding, and critiquing” (McVee & Boyd, 2016, p.6). Today I am thankful and fortunate that I had teachers like Ms. Shibaeva, who “affirmed and honored who we are, [and] believed that we are capable of doing great things” (Nieto, 2010, p.33). As Nieto (2010) mentioned, Ms. Shibaeva taught us to become moral human beings; to care for others, the environment, and the earth; to be generous; to think beyond our own limited self-interests; and finally to become involved in civic life (Nieto, 2010). The vignette aligns with the quote, “Teaching means discarding the functional view of education with a more visionary and utopian one” (p.33) that I find important. I think such priorities are the true purpose of schools and these priorities prepare and set students to independent life.

Rebellious Uzbek Girl in Russia

Moving to Russia from Uzbekistan was a hard decision to make; however, I knew I would excel there in education. By age 16, I was convinced that it would be hard for me to apply to school and live in a new society; however, I applied to the foreign languages department of the local university in eastern Russia, where I could study, travel, and work. Everything seemed different and new to me, although I could speak Russian and had friends in Russia. I had a hard time adjusting to Russian culture and community. I experienced a feeling of being displaced in a specialized academic setting (Rampton, 1990).

Monday morning. Eastern Russia. November. The trees are covered with snow, very cold, roads are icy, and my hair is frozen. I am wearing a warm “dublenka” sheep coat and running to my English Speaking class. At 8:30 am I start my first class with Ms. K, who is teaching the class. The students introduce themselves and share where they are from. The class consists of 12 female students. We start a new topic about introductions and our families, and we learn 40 new vocabulary words to describe our families and their appearances. We read texts and retell the story. My first challenge is translating new vocabulary from Russian into Uzbek, because some words did not have similar meanings and I have a hard time learning them. Most students in this class are native speakers of Russian and they never have problems thinking in another language; I know I have to learn lot to be at the their level. I use my nights to translate Russian words into Uzbek and learn new vocabulary in English.

In the vignette, I understood and examined my study through the lens of double consciousness by using Mystory as a methodological approach. First, drawing upon from the definition of Du Bois, one can see that double consciousness is a worldview: how we hear, see, think, touch, feel, and share a collective consciousness and interpretation (Du Bois, 1903; Evans, 2014; Smith 2003). Even though some patterns of interaction and reaction were different for me, I became accustomed with norms of life and academia. I believe double consciousness helps understand how our shared culture and our partnership overlaps with our primary cultures (Bruce & Dickson, 1992; Smith, 2008).

I call this topic Rebellious Uzbek Girl in Russia because I left home to study in Russia, not knowing what was waiting for me there. I delved into learning, travelling, and exploring biculturalism. I conclude my analysis with McVee and Boyd’s (2016) statement, “Learning the importance of having a hope and how important it is to apply interpretations of this word to the school environment is crucial” (McVee & Boyd, 2016, p.102).

Discussion

Education must not simply teach work - it must teach Life. W. E. B.

Du Bois (1903)
Given my background and bicultural experience, I would likely not be here today sharing and exploring my cultural identity. I can definitely say that according to traditional educational literature, my family, home, society and community prepared me for academic life (Howard, 2006; Myles & Cheng, 2003; Nieto, 1999; 2010). My parents were well educated and my grandparents were doctors who lived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan during the 1990s. My family played a big role in my life and in my education. I was spoiled being around my relatives, grandparents, and my parents, who cared about and loved spending time with me. My Aunt Dildora also played a huge role in my childhood, giving me "cultural capital" (Nieto, 2010, p.2; Panfilova Daragan, 1971). For example, my aunt made sure I read every day, visited museums, attended the circus, tried different activities such as drawing, dancing, and playing the piano. Since I am from a bilingual family, my family spoke both Russian and Uzbek at home. In addition, I was always busy with learning foreign languages. My aunt was a smart and independent lady who was open-minded and was different from all of us. She travelled all over the world and I follow her example by exploring my identity.

Best Practices

Educators and researchers need to consider the impact of teachers’ attitudes toward cultural capital that students bring to the educational arena (Brock, 2006; McVee, 2011; Nieto, 2010). Educators can change the lives of their students just by caring for them, making an effort to be open, to think about cultural humility, commit to challenging stereotypes, and let students explore their own identities. Students benefit from many things, including the personalities of other students and the values of the cultural context in which they were brought up (Nieto, 2009; 2010).

- Teachers should keep in mind that learning leads to different curricular decisions; it changes relationships among teachers and students, pedagogical approaches and indeed, educational outcomes.
- Relationships among teachers and students are crucial ingredients for success in schools.
- Engagement in mutually respectful dialogue enhances cultural understanding.
- Role of a mentor as a "reflective listener" can benefit students. Listening to students may provide a forum for self-reflection both teacher and student.

- Educators can honor students' experiences by allowing them to explore issues of personal and social identities in nonthreatening space. By valuing students' identities, educators can help students change their lives.
- Creating a safe social and emotional space is important. Students feel valued, cared for, and respected in safe zones.
- It is crucial that educators help students learn from each other's varied experiences and perspectives. Peer interaction, activities, and evaluation can help them learn from each other.

It is critically important to create a learning environment where educators can draw proficiently on students' experiences to enrich classes and curriculum. From my own stories I learned that every person in my life brought some light that helped shape who I am. My learning experience played a major role in shaping my personality. As an educator and researcher, I encourage every educator to respect students' identities, to treat students equally, and to build relationships with them to be that candle light in their life passage.

Implications for Students

This study strongly suggests that students should be exposed to other cultures and be ready to adjust new system and country. Students who are forcibly displaced should be active, innovative, and creative to explore and share their identities. It would be important to be ready for changes, new standards, new rules, and new patterns of speech, lack of acceptance or misunderstanding, and attending new content integration. In addition, acculturation is critical and students should join learners’ clubs or students’ support groups. It is important to be involved in academic engagement and be motivated to build positive relationships with their teachers at school.

Conclusion

Using Du Bois's notion of double consciousness and examining one's transformation through this lens accounts for the wide scope of education and anthropology (Levin et al., 2013). No concept can provide all the answers to the existing problems of education because these problems are not just about learning but about “society's ideology” (Nieto, 2010, p.18). In Mystery, the notion of double consciousness lends researchers and scholars different insights. Choosing tools for examining
ourselves is important; looking at moments of transformation through the double consciousness lens helps me examine changes in my life from childhood. I framed this work as *Mystery* to collect and analyze crucial events in my life (Pennington & Brock, 2012; McVee & Boyd, 2016; Cresswell, 2013) and to explore who I am culturally and linguistically. I developed an academic identity and learned how to deal with students of different backgrounds. Developments in my bicultural identity have imposed a profoundly conflicting and tension-inducing effect on relations between my Uzbek, Russian, and American social and academic displaced selves. In closing, I believe that learning builds on experience “based on the idea that it is an innately human endeavor accessible to all people” (Nieto, 2010, p.7). Teaching in turn becomes much more complex when learning is based on the idea that “all students have the ability to think a reason” (p.7).

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References


