



Name: Swati Mehta

Hometowns: Chicago, IL and Augusta, GA

Program and degree: Lynch School of Education; Curriculum & Instruction: Language, Literacy, Learning; Ph.D.

Year: Third Year

Undergraduate institution: University of Georgia

How I found my way to Boston College: Since I began teacher education, I always wanted to be back in an academic context and pursue research and teaching through doctoral work. When my husband, Darshan, began applying for his medical fellowship in integrative medicine, I was teaching for a small charter school in Chicago. My principal at Passages Charter School, Dr. Sally Ewing, and my mentors at Teachers College (where I had done my Masters work) inspired me to consider furthering my education. I never thought of my destiny with Boston College. However, when Darshan's fellowship worked out in Boston and the Diversity Fellowship was offered to me by Boston College, it was hard to say no!

Summary of my research, teaching, service at Boston College:

How I define being a representative of diversity: Being a representative of diversity, to me, means recognizing how various socio-cultural identities are positioned by myself and others, negotiated by myself and others, and given power by myself and others. This happens through the language used to describe "representation" in various social contexts. This way of looking at diversity means that I don't actually believe I, nor anyone, has a singular representation of diversity

How I define the word diversity: I feel that the "language of diversity" in the United States often positions a viewpoint of dominant structures. As a result, the language of diversity in education can sometimes imply, "let's celebrate differences" since "differences" are measured from the dominant perspective. To me, however, diversity is more complicated than rituals, food, clothing, etc. ...or race, language, and class, etc. To me, diversity needs to include divergent viewpoints, divergent interpretations, and divergent perspectives. Thus, diversity needs to include giving power and sanctioned space for divergent voices, even if this means disagreeing!

What I hope to do with my fellowship: With this fellowship, I hope to continue to develop scholarship in language, culture, and education as a professor. Through research, teaching, and service in an academic context, I hope to model the mentoring I have received at the Lynch School of Education. I also hope that through this fellowship I will continue to advocate and organize opportunities for immigrant young people and teachers through work in local schools where the majority of the population. Finally, I hope to one day support the creation of a center on education in my birthplace, Pune, India.

My Favorite Quote: "Confusion is the coolest way to be" (Past student)