Multicultural Teacher Education through Aesthetic Inquiry

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The history of the United States is one of immigrants from many backgrounds and regions of the world coming together to form a diverse yet contentious democracy. The history of American education documents how diverse forces have clashed and impaired the American experiment of public education (Tyack, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002; Katz, 1971). As David Tyack reminds us in *Seeking Common Ground: Public Schools in a Diverse Society* (2003), assimilation formed the keystone of educational policy for European immigrants, but exclusion and segregation were the basic themes of the education for people of color. By the 1950s some schools were following a color-blind, "sameness in treatment" approach that the civil rights movement sought to overturn through the re-examination of old race, ethnic and gender conceptions (Tyack, 2003).

Multicultural education as a response to continuing inequities in education may be traced back to the decades of social upheaval in the last half of the twentieth century. Here we examine the antecedents of multicultural education beginning with courses on Black and Chicano history and its evolvement into a comprehensive, research-based reform movement that continues to unfold. But as Tyack (2003) points out:

> It is easier to devise fashionable slogans about diversity in education than to develop coherent and just policies in schools. The historical conflicts, compromises, retreats, advances, contradictions, and triumphs evident in the schools' encounter with social diversity persist into the present and pose an intellectual as well as a practical

challenge to those who seek social justice today. (p. 70)

Antecedents of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is an ambiguous term but is essentially tied to the principle of educational equality. In this paper the term is used to describe a comprehensive school reform movement as well as an evolving curriculum framework for preparing teachers. Multicultural education emerged from the civil rights struggles of the 1960s but is rooted in the earlier work of W. E. B. DuBois and also Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. In the U.S. it has evolved through continuous struggle, a struggle that began with the creation of ethnic studies programs in universities during the decade of social unrest.

In the early 1960s the proponents of ethnic studies challenged societal assimilation and attacked racism and the Eurocentric curriculum in institutions of higher education. Activists in colleges and universities who led the movement demanded the addition of ethnic studies courses to better serve the needs of minority students. Courses on Mexican Americans, Blacks, American Indians and other ethnic groups focused on the historical knowledge and cultural uniqueness of groups, and the students who enrolled in those classes were largely members of those same groups. Zimmerman (2002) recounts the lesser known militant actions by high school students for Black History courses. By the late 1960s students had rallied, boycotted classes, and demanded and won separate classes in Kalamazoo, Michigan; Plainfield, New Jersey; Erie, Pennsylvania; Evanston, Illinois and other districts. According to Zimmerman:

The largest demonstration for black history classes occurred in Philadelphia,

> where thirty-five hundred students rallied outside the Board of Education headquarters. School officials later admitted that they had been caught unaware by the protest, which culminated in a violent melee with local police. "The voices of students were heard loud and clear on college campuses at least four years ago [but] most of us in basic education failed to read the signals clearly," said the city's school superintendent, Mark Shedd, "and bang, the student rebellion has crept downward in age group." Like black university students, it seemed, black high schoolers wanted courses that were "relevant" to their "needs"—especially in history. (p. 120)

Chicano high school students in East Los Angeles desiring a better education also walked-out of high schools in 1968. Among the students' demands heard throughout the Southwest were bilingual education, Mexican and Mexican American history courses, an end to the use of corporal punishment for speaking Spanish, and the hiring of Mexican-American teachers and counselors (National Latino Communications Center, 1996).

Although the movement of separate Black and Chicano History in American schools subsided in the late 1970s, American education had been altered forever. The door was opened to more ethnic and cultural groups clamoring for space in the curriculum. Meanwhile Whites were generally off the hook to pursue a traditional Eurocentric curriculum as long as separate Black and Chicano courses were offered as electives. Basically they often led an unexamined life, at least in terms of White privilege and institutionalized prejudice.

As a national cadre of new scholars from traditionally marginalized groups

developed, they brought an innovative voice and presented a serious critique to the Western cannon. When those scholars from various ethnic minority groups engaged in dialogue about their group experiences, they produced a new curricular paradigm. As a result of their efforts, multiculturalists advanced the field when the proliferation of ethnic studies courses gave way to multiethnic education. A basic assumption of multiethnic education was that ethnic groups in the U.S. had both similar and different experiences that could be studied comparatively in order to generate useful concepts and theories about race, ethnicity and cultural pluralism. In the final analysis ethnic studies and multiethnic education produced little impact on educational policy and practice (Tyack, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002).

The concept of multicultural education, therefore, responded to the need for a coherent and collaborative challenge to the dominant curriculum. The new knowledge base, generated from multiethnic research in the social sciences and other disciplines, informed the challenge to the existing educational paradigm, especially regarding student achievement in terms of intelligence testing and test bias and learning differences. Moreover, many ethnic minority scholars advocated an education that would be multicultural in order to inform the continual struggle against institutionalized prejudice and to fulfill the promises of legislation such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Basically, the struggle to broaden the limited meaning of *equality*, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution but absent in U. S. social institutions, led to advocacy for a theory of multicultural education.

By the 1970s professional education associations that valued and acknowledged

society's diversity acted upon a commitment to social justice and educational equity through official position statements. Noteworthy for taking the lead to affirm equality in education was the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. The organization's position paper, *No One Model American* (AACTE, 1973), established the concept of multicultural education that would later become an integral part of the national accreditation process for colleges of teacher education. The short but powerful statement on multicultural education begins with the affirmation of diversity.

> Multicultural education is education which values cultural pluralism. Multicultural education rejects the view that schools should seek to melt away cultural differences or the view that schools should merely tolerate cultural pluralism. Instead, multicultural education affirms that schools should be oriented toward the cultural enrichment of all children and youth through programs rooted to the preservation and extension of cultural diversity as a fact of life in American society, and it affirms that this cultural diversity is a valuable resource that should be preserved and extended. It affirms that major education institutions should strive to preserve and enhance cultural pluralism. (p. 264)

With time, the importance of multicultural education was reflected in the official statements of other professional organizations. The National Council for the Social Studies also developed a much used program evaluation checklist for multicultural education, *Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education* (Banks, Cortes, Gay, Garcia, & Ochoa, 1992). With the continued evolvement of multicultural education came the formation of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), led

largely by the AACTE leadership who had authored *No One Model America*. NAME considered numerous definitions of multicultural education espoused by scholars, researchers and organizations over a 30 year period in generating its own meaning of the concept in 2003. The following is part of a definition rendered by NAME:

> Multicultural education is a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents, such as the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Constitutions of South Africa and the United States, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. It affirms our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society.
>
> It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice.
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> Multicultural education is a process that permeates all aspects of school practices, policies and organizations as a means to ensure the highest levels of academic achievement for all students. It helps students develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in organizations and institutions by providing the knowledge, dispositions, and skills for the redistribution of power and income among diverse groups. Thus, school

curriculum must directly address issues of racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, ablism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and xenophobia. (http://www.nameorg.org/resolutions/definition.html)

As the official statement of the National Association for Multicultural Education reflects, multiculturalism has been expanded to include equal treatment for any individual denied the benefits of an education based on race, color, national origin, sex, native language, age, economic status, lifestyle, religious preference or exceptionality. It is this inclusive conception of equity that currently guides educational practice in the United States.

Although many educators at all levels often espouse basic tenets of multicultural education theory, their curricular and pedagogical practices reveal a fundamental lack of understanding, if not open resistance, to the core goal of multiculturalism, which is opposition to an assimilationist, Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. Nieto (2004), an advocate of comprehensive educational reform, classifies the level of support for pluralism into four categories: *Tolerance, Acceptance, Respect, and Affirmation, Solidarity and Critique*. How to operationalize these levels of multicultural education in schools remains a challenge, especially at the most powerful level of support for diversity—*Affirmation, Solidarity and Critique*. Other multiculturalists such as Wilhelm (1994) and Gay (1995) have exposed the existing gap between multicultural theory and multicultural practice. According to Gay (1997) the goal of achieving educational equality for students of color remains elusive and unattainable. She reasons that students of color and poverty do not do as well in school as their middle class white counterparts

because of a misconception of *educational equality.* Treating individuals identically, she maintains, is inherently discriminatory. Thus to equate sameness of opportunity with educational equality ignores the "issue of quality of learning opportunity and how this has to be understood and acted on within the contexts of ethnic and cultural diversity" (p. 196).

An example of the effect of "sameness in opportunity" without attention to "quality of instructional opportunity" is observable in achievement results of Texas public school students. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) measures student achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science. The following results were reported for the 2005-2006 academic year from a total of 1,227 school districts, 7,956 campuses, and 4,505,572 students attending school. Of that total school population, Hispanics comprised 45.3%, African Americans 14.7 %, Whites 36.5%, and Other 3.5%. Only Whites saw a decease in number (-0.5%) from the previous year while African Americans increased by 6.8% and Hispanics by 4.0%. A startling 55.6% of all Texas students were classified as economically disadvantaged.

Hispanics and African Americans scored lower on all of the TAKS tests as compared to their White counterparts. Only 58% of Hispanics and 52% of African Americans met the TAKS standard for all tests taken while 81% of White students met the standard. Also, 50.7% of Hispanics and 66.2% of African Americans from the class of 2005 took a college entrance exam as compared to 70.7% of the White student population. More importantly, while 38.7% of Whites met the criterion of 1110 on the SAT or 24 on the ACT, only 8.1% of African Americans and 11.0% of Hispanics did so

(Texas Education Agency, 2006).

How might the disparity in academic performance between students of color and White students be reduced? Much research points to the cultural and linguistic dissonance that many students of color experience in U. S. public schools as significant factors. For example, Hispanic students, particularly recent immigrants, often experience both the surface (e.g., food, language, aesthetic) and deep (e.g., norms, beliefs, values, time/space relationships) culture of school as foreign to their home cultural beliefs and practices. Enculturation processes in the classroom many times conflict with those practices of the family and *barrio*. Students' cultural dissonance is aggravated by a teaching force ill prepared to understand, much less to appreciate and privilege, students' cultural knowledge and skills.

Numerous scholars have expanded upon multicultural education theory by advocating research on culturally responsive teaching as a valid knowledge base in teacher education programs (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Delpit, 1991; Gay, 1999; Grant, C. A., & Secada, W. G., 1990; Huber, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1990; Pewewardy, C. D., 1994; Shade, B. J., 1997; Smith, 1991; Zeichner, 1993). Culturally responsive pedagogy or teaching involves cultural synchronization or congruency, which is a process whereby the teacher privileges students' cultural capital as an integral part of the official curriculum. Valuing students' out-of-school knowledge and experiences enables educators to build bridges to unfamiliar knowledge and skills. Culturally responsive teaching is grounded in four premises: (a) Culture impacts how an individual learns; (b) Teachers must understand the home cultures of their students and

translate their understanding into curriculum and instructional practices; (c) As was mentioned previously, cultural incongruity between school and home cultures constitutes a learning barrier for many ethnic minority students and English Language Learners; (d) Educators who possess a knowledge base of the home cultures and of the mainstream or macro-culture can establish cultural congruity by culturally contextualizing the teaching-learning process (Smith, 1998).

An essential component in a teacher preparation program intending to promote equity for all learners is a knowledge base in culturally responsive curriculum development. For Smith (1998), a well-designed multicultural curriculum contains learning experiences and lessons that: (a) move the students from the "culturally familiar" or "culturally relevant" to the unfamiliar; (b) develop the students' ethnic identity from negative to positive, from "ethnic psychological captivity" to multiculturalism and globalism (Banks, 2001); (c) increase the students' interpersonal contacts and the quality of interracial and intercultural relationships with diverse persons; (d) increase the students' knowledge of their own culture and the cultures of others; (e) enable students to examine issues, concepts, themes, and human events through the multiple perspectives of different cultures; (f) enable students to apply multicultural knowledge to analyze and solve social problems and to live a multicultural lifestyle.

Challenges to Teacher Education

A major goal of multicultural education, grounded in critical race theory (Lynn & Adams, 2002; Yosso, 2002), is to prepare teachers to assume responsibility for challenging social injustice in education and to provide culturally responsive instruction

(Leavell, Cowart, & Wilhelm, 1999). Given this daunting task, it is important to point out that multicultural education in most teacher education programs is confined to a single course with far too many other topical components such as exceptionality, sexual orientation, and linguistic diversity. Still, researchers seek ways to prepare prospective teachers more effectively for culturally diverse schools.

Bell's (2002) study of White teachers addresses one of the challenges that a lack of socially diverse experience poses to teachers' professional development. She examines the way Whites learn to talk about race, frequently using a color-blind discourse in order to prevent a deeper engagement of racism. Bell interviewed teachers about race in order to explore both the overt and implicit knowledge they hold about racism. That is, Whites espouse views of themselves as color-blind individuals who do not discriminate against others. Their constructions, which Bell calls *sincere fictions*, ignore the reality of how racism operates in the U.S. Furthermore, Bell argues Whites do in fact possess knowledge about how racism functions, and beneath the color-blind rhetoric:

> . . . we can unearth implicit awareness of the truths about how racism operates in this society. Thus, sincere fictions may also on some level be quite insincere, operating as a cover for unacknowledged racism and as a self-deceptive screen that protects a status quo from which Whites as a group benefit. (p. 237)

Though researchers have generated effective strategies for teaching multicultural education courses to pre-service teachers (Weisman & Garza, 2002; Lawrence, 1997; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Clark, Nystrom, & Perez, 1996, Finney & Orr, 1995), results from Weisman and Garza (2000) support other research findings that many pre-

service teachers lack an understanding of how socio-political forces affect minority students' achievement.

One factor to understand that phenomenon is that most pre-service teachers throughout the U. S. come from fairly insulated, monolingual, mono-cultural backgrounds, so attention to interracial and intercultural interactions must be built into their preparation program. To illustrate, in Texas White teachers comprise 69.4% of the teaching force while Hispanics and Blacks only 20.1% and 9.1% respectively (Texas Education Agency, 2006). We strongly agree with Charles Williams (n.d.), Associate Director of Research at the National Education Association, who documents that teacher quality is the single most critical factor related to student learning. Because effective teaching is so essential, it is important to emphasize that today the average undergraduate teacher candidate is a 22 year-old, White, female who is no more diverse in background than her veteran teacher counterpart (Feistritzer, 1999). Most White teachers have had limited life experiences outside their own social class and cultural group. So the primary challenge confronting teacher educators is how to bridge the cultural knowledge gap between a largely monolingual, monocultural teaching force and a diverse student population. Such teachers demonstrate what Leistyna (1999) called "White ethnic unconsciousness," and therefore, commonly view the teaching-learning process and environment as objective and a-cultural. Their lack of understanding of themselves as cultural beings blinds them to their role as agents of cultural transmission of the dominant culture to new generations. These teachers often view students who fail to cross the cultural borders necessary to achieve success in their classrooms as deficient

intellectually, if not culturally.

The authors of this paper attempt to develop in their students an "oppositional consciousness" (Duarte & Smith, 2000) with which they can engage in a continuous critique of the various manifestations of racism and Eurocentrism in the U. S. society at large and in the schooling process, in particular. We believe multicultural education courses should provide students with opportunities to explore their biases toward and knowledge gaps about various groups and to develop solid knowledge bases (Smith, 1998), skills, and dispositions related to the education of children, with particular attention to their gender, ethnic and linguistic diversity, exceptionality, social class, and sexual orientation.

Through a myriad of experiences, including interviews with English Language Learners, cross-cultural and cross-economic class simulations, and participation in local cultural events, our pre-service teachers are encouraged to encounter "the Other" and to reflect deeply on their experiences for their own journey as well as for implications for their future work with their own students. Several goals, embedded in the authors' teaching, are intended to help teacher candidates: (a) discern the fine differences between effective teachers of traditionally marginalized students and successful teachers of White, middle-class students; (b) learn to identify policies and practices that perpetuate inequity and unfairness in the education system, particularly for so-called ethnic minority, poor, female, disabled, and gay and lesbian students and that result in meritocratic rather than democratic schooling; (c) reach an understanding of principles of nonsexist and culturally inclusive curriculum design; (d) develop an awareness of the vast linguistic diversity in

the United States and rid themselves of their biases toward language minority students and English dialect speakers; and (e) practice in applying principles and strategies for teaching academic content and English language arts skills to English Language Learners.

In the remainder of this paper we describe how we integrate the arts into our curriculum to examine with our students key concepts and issues of culture, institutionalized forms of prejudice and basic human rights. We believe arts-based class activities, when used in conjunction with standard multicultural education theory, can contribute to the reduction of students' defensiveness and lead them to engage in honest and thoughtful discussions about the impact of racism, classism and sexism on school practice. Aesthetic inquiry involving sympathetic characters, presented through diverse genres, can put a face on social injustice and lead students to greater reflective depths.

Education as Art and Aesthetic Inquiry

In *Framing Education as Art: The Octopus Has a Good Day*, Davis (2005) demystifies art as a subject that is too often associated with "magic." She dispels art as the "precious territory" of the few and the knowledge of the elite. Art, she argues, deserves a central place in education, suggesting that art is a "useful means for self-exploration and development" (p. 3). Art in various forms can add depth to our vision of the whole.

Knowledge occurs in unpredictable ways, and aesthetic inquiry offers one mode of exploration in curriculum studies. This approach to curricular inquiry is explained as an aesthetic rather than a practical response to an event (Vallance, 1991; Eisner, 1985). Integrating the creative arts into a course on multicultural education involves a desire on

part of the course instructor to provide students with unexpected views and reactions of multicultural perspectives and issues. According to Vallance (1991):

> Such reactions are essentially, aesthetic reactions. They may or may not influence subsequent practical decisions, but the point is that they need not immediately shape our decisions. . . . Aesthetic responses at their most natural are spontaneous, unplanned, usually enjoyable, and they invariably offer us an unexpected new perspective on something we already know. (p. 159)

As applied to multicultural education studies, aesthetic inquiry works best when it complements standard readings on multicultural education with artful portrayals to help students better understand the basic concepts of social diversity in a new way. One argument in support of arts-based education is found in another reality about the U.S. public. A high level of participation in the arts by adults has been tracked and reported from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) since 1982.

The NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPAA) (NEA, 2003) also asks about reading habits, and in 2002, 56 percent of respondents indicated they had read a book during the previous 12 months, about the same as in 1992. However, the percentage of respondents reading literature, defined as plays, poetry, short stories or novels, decreased by 8 percentage points from 1992 to 2002 (46 percent of 2002 respondents), a statistically significant drop.

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America (NEA, 2004) is a follow-up descriptive survey of national trends in adult literary reading based on the results of the National Endowment for the Arts SPPA 2000 reported above. The survey

asked respondents whether they had read any novels, short stories, plays, poetry in their leisure time (not for work or school) during the previous twelve months. Dana Gioia (2004), Chairman of the NEA, calls the news in the report dire:

> This comprehensive survey of American literary reading presents a detailed but bleak assessment of the decline of reading's role in the nation's culture. For the first time in modern history, less than half of the adult population now reads literature, and these trends reflect a larger decline in other sorts of reading. Anyone who loves literature or values the cultural, intellectual, and political importance of active and engaged literacy in American society will respond to this report with grave concern. . . . *Reading at Risk* merely documents and quantifies a huge cultural transformation that most Americans have already noted—our society's massive shift toward electronic media for entertainment and information. (p. vii)

Educators should be particularly concerned by what else is at stake here, for the report clearly demonstrates that literary readers are more active and involved in their communities. Therefore, a decline in reading parallels a larger retreat from participation in civic and cultural life as well as from volunteerism, philanthropy, and even political engagement. The realization of deteriorating reading habits has inspired more literary reading and other arts-based activities in our own classes on multicultural education in hopes that the transformative power of the arts and literature can contribute toward a deeper understanding of social diversity.

Pre-service Elementary Teachers Explore Diversity through Voices and Images: Ron Wilhelm

Early in my university career, I confronted a curricular dilemma. How might the great grandson of a second lieutenant in the 11th Calvary in Young's Texas Regiment of the Army of the Confederacy explore social diversity issues in university multicultural education courses filled with mostly White female, middle class students from backgrounds similar to my own? I decided to gather myriad voices of poets, particularly feminists such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherrie Moraga, Pat Mora, Nikki Giovanni, Diane Burns, and Pat Parker. Male voices of Benjamin Alire Saenz, Trinidad Sánchez, James Mardis, Langston Hughes and Wing Tek Lum joined them. Through their poetry, I encouraged my students to grapple at an emotional and intellectual level with complex concepts such as institutionalized and internalized prejudice, assimilation, acculturation, enculturation, and other issues related to cultural border crossing.

I call on the poets to voice the hard questions that often go unasked and unexamined in inter-cultural relations, particularly in teacher preparation courses, and I urge my students to engage in some intellectual and emotional cultural border crossing of their own to hear the experiences of traditionally marginalized groups. Nikki Giovanni's *Ego Tripping* (1991), Trinidad Sánchez's, *Why Am I So Brown?(1992)*, Monica Frazier's, *I Ain't Mad At Cha (1997)*, and Keith Walker's, *My Blackness* (1997) provide opportunities to discuss ethnic pride and a people's group-affirming alternative understandings, which the poets offer in counterhegemonic resistance to the dominant view of their peoples' histories and characters. My readings of Diane Burns's (1991) *Sure*

you can ask me a personal question and Pat Parker's (1990) *For the white person who wants to know how to be my friend* usually result in either muffled chuckles or embarrassed silence. Both Burns and Parker explore prejudice and stereotyping in inter-cultural relations with satire and offer students the opportunity to consider not only the feelings produced by stereotypical comments and images but also the creative choices a recipient can make in response to prejudice. Pat Mora's, *Legal Aliens* (1990a) and Gloria Anzaldúa's *To live in the Borderlands means you* (1987), along with Juanita Sánchez's *Ciprianita* (1991), James Mardis's *Invisible Man* (1997) present powerful images of the challenges faced by those who daily cross linguistic and cultural borders. On several occasions, after reading Mora's *Elena* (1990b), a poem about an immigrant mother's growing isolation from her family because she does not speak English, a Latino or Latina student will exclaim during our class discussion, "That's exactly what happened to my mother!" In closing the lesson on issues of immigration and second language acquisition, Cisco Houston's rendition of *Deportee* provides my students with a moving and poignant musical emphasis on the experiences and treatment of immigrant laborers in the U. S.

The content of most history and social studies textbooks used in U. S. schools is notoriously devoid of the histories of people's resistance to various forms of institutionalized oppression so I introduce social conflict through the folk music of artists such as Buffy Sainte-Marie, The Almanac Singers, The Weavers, Bob Dylan, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Pete Seeger, Cisco Houston, Judy Collins, and Woodie Guthrie. Songs that speak of the struggle for workers' rights, civil rights, and women's rights provide for my students a historical and emotional context in which to examine issues of classism and

racism, in particular. In one exercise, students listen to Dylan's *Playboys and Playgirl,* a song about social class differences, as they examine a copy of *Pyramid of Capitalism*, a poster of the International Workers of the World, issued by Nedeljkovich, Brasnich and Kumarich in 1911. Students then engage in a systematic analysis of the poster's image, which portrays various social and economic levels of capitalist society as layers in a cake. Together students examine the image for specific content, use of color and symbols, themes, and aesthetic. This introductory activity in a session on classism is followed by a simulation game, *Reversal of Fortune* (Groves, Warren & Witschger, 1996), in which students explore the structural constraints, produced by racism and classism, on the upward mobility of traditionally marginalized people. As students work during the activity to establish connections with each other to secure a prime job, they listen to Judy Collins' rendition of Turner's *Carry It On,* Pete Seeger's version of *Talking Union*, and The Weavers' recording of Reece's *Which Side Are You On,* songs about the need for workers to organize to fight for better working and living conditions.

In another activity, *Sets of Six*, used to emphasize institutionalized prejudice in school curriculum, I ask students to write the names of six men, women, African Americans, Latinos/as, American Indians, Asian Americans who have made positive contributions to U. S. culture and society and/or to the world. I accompany their thinking with American Indian artist Buffy Sainte-Marie's *Now that the Buffalo's Gone* and *My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying*. Both songs offer strong condemnation of the historic U. S. government's treatment of indigenous peoples. I then ask students to count the names they learned from their K-12 schooling, from their university courses, and from

media sources. Often the majority of the names they list were learned through various media sources rather than as part of an official school curriculum. Rarely are students able to list more than two or three names in the Latino/a, American Indian and Asian American categories. Then we discuss how the curricular silence about a people's contributions to society constitutes a form of institutionalized prejudice that they as future educators can and must work to overcome. To further emphasize the problem and to help them fill in some of their knowledge gaps about American Indians, I play Patrick Sky's version of *The Ballad of Ira Hayes.* Along with the song, I present a photographic montage about the Pima Indian hero of World War II, who is best remembered as one of the men who raised the U. S. flag on Iwo Jima. The ballad itself poignantly recounts Hayes' life of poverty on the reservation, his heroism, and his subsequent demise and death back in the racist poverty of his reservation.

Photographic images and folk music also play a primary role in a lesson on human rights. Using a set of images of refugee children from around the world (UNHCR, 2001), I ask the students to consider each image and to select a child who mirrors some aspect of their own childhood experience and who also opens a window into a cultural experience very different from their own (Flowers, 1998). As they view the images, I play Garland's *All I Want,* sung by The Almanac Singers. The lyrics declare the right to a simple life of dignity that sustains a family in contrast to the exorbitant lifestyle of the wealthy. Students then list the material, physical, and mental characteristics they want the child they selected to possess as an adult. Once they have created that list, I ask them to list the human and material resources needed in order for the refugee child they selected to grow

to be an adult with the characteristics they identified. After students compile that list, I distribute a copy of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child (DuPont, L., Foley, & Gagliardi, 1999) and ask them to read each article and to place the number of the appropriate articles beside each item on their resource list. As they think through their decisions, I play Woody Guthrie's *Pastures of Plenty*, a song about the life experiences and contributions to U. S. society of the migrant poor during the "Dust Bowl" days of the Great Depression. The lesson ends with Guthrie's *This Land is Your Land,* which announces the promise that the earth's resources belong to everyone, especially to the traditionally dispossessed.

Exploring the Arts to Teach about Diversity to Middle and High School Teachers: Gloria Contreras

I'm a Mexican American/Chicana with 30 years of experience teaching multicultural education courses to prospective high school teachers. For most of my students I am the only Latina professor they have encountered throughout their entire schooling. I have employed numerous strategies to provide my mostly White monocultural, monolingual students with the knowledge and competence needed to conduct culturally relevant instruction in multicultural settings. I have struggled to provide students who are resistant to multiculturalism, and even my well-intentioned teacher candidates, with an understanding and appreciation for the culture and language of non-mainstream students living in communities different from their own. Through the years I have integrated more of the arts into my teaching in order to develop my students'

critical understanding of the conditions that often lead to underachievement among minority youth.

Drama is a favorite form of literary reading that I've incorporated into my course of study to broaden students' worldviews about human diversity. Through plays we explore life from other people's perspectives, which allows students to develop empathy for people with different backgrounds and experiences. Allowing students to view life from an artist's perspective provides the opportunity to reflect and draw connections between disturbing factual knowledge from a course textbook and an artistic portrayal of a cultural condition.

Arthur Miller's 1960 powerful drama *A View from the Bridge* is unknown to most of my undergraduate students. This play by arguably the most influential playwright of the twentieth century is about an informer in a Brooklyn neighborhood of Longshoremen. The drama focuses on Eddie Carbone, the Italian protagonist, who precipitates his own death because of a sexual obsession over his own niece. Although denial lies at the heart of this work (Bigsby, 1997), the play serves as a vehicle to understanding the basic concept of multiculturalism. This activity is successful when the play is first read aloud in class by volunteer readers. However, it is essential that students complete the assigned reading on the foundations of multicultural education prior to a reading of the play in class. The foundations of multiculturalism include an introduction to diversity in the classroom; the evolution of multicultural education as well as multicultural competencies for teachers; the concepts of culture and cultural identity; theories of cultural pluralism in society; and equality and social justice in a democratic society. (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006).

Miller's play also leads into current immigration issues, especially problems revolving around Latino illegal immigration. It is important for students to recognize discrimination against past immigrants such as the Germans, Irish, Italians from a historical perspective and in the process to gain an understanding of challenges facing today's immigrants of color. Hopefully students might even gain empathy for Latino immigrants, both legal and illegal, from exposure to a classic such as *View from the Bridge*. It is imperative, however, that students acquire prior knowledge about race and ethnicity from the course textbook in order for this drama-based activity to succeed.

The Wrestling Season (Brooks, 2000) is a smart teen drama by Laurie Brooks in which eight high school teens wrestle with conflicts, peer pressure and betrayals that most teenagers experience. The play's title is a metaphor for the search for identity and the complex friendships that accompany adolescence. However, the play strikes a chord with anyone who has experienced high school, as viewers are reminded of how quickly rumors spread and how much gossip can hurt us. In this case the school's star wrestlers are caught up in a lie that they are homosexual lovers, although one of them, Luke, does grapple with such feelings.

A unique post performance forum led by a facilitator is designed to take the audience through five exercises that delve deeper into the play's characters and their emotions. Although the play stands on its own, the post performance forum enhances the audience's understanding of real lifelong concerns. However, the forum is crucial because as many instructors of multicultural education agree, homosexuality and homophobia can be more pedagogically challenging topics than race and ethnicity

(Wilhelm, Contreras & Herring, 2004). It is beneficial for students to complete standard background readings on gender from the assigned course text prior to reading the play aloud in class. Students readily volunteer to read the various roles in the play and afterwards engage more openly in an intelligent discussion of gender differences and identity; cultural influences on gender; sexual orientation; the women's movement; sexism and gender discrimination; and other educational implications (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006).

Music offers limitless possibilities for making connections to multicultural issues and perspectives. Folk music, popularized in the 1960s by groups such as the Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul, and Mary and Bob Dylan can still be powerful today because folk music expresses the most profound of human values (Bohlman, 1988).

Three music icons, folksingers Peter, Paul and Mary, are still performing and singing after having popularized anti-war songs some forty years ago. The trio is remembered for its performance at the 1963 march on Washington rally during which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. *In These Times* (2004), their most recent CD, celebrates diversity and articulates contemporary issues central to multicultural education today. A new song in this CD, "Jesus on the Wire," is a powerful rendition by Mary on the death of Matthew Shepard and "Invisible People," is an equally compelling tribute to indigenous people. The theme of homelessness underlies their rendition of "Wayfaring Stranger." The issue of human rights is reflected in "Have you Been to Jail for Justice" and a "Union Medley," pays tribute to workers' rights, but the song that touches everyone is "Don't Laugh at Me" with the following chorus line.

Don't laugh at me

Don't call me names

Don't get your pleasure from my pain

In God's eyes we're all the same

Someday we'll all have perfect wings

Don't laugh at me

On the very first class meeting of the semester, in order to explore diversity as a cause for celebration in conjunction with folk music, I lead an intensive experiential 3-6 hour session that consists of prejudice reduction exercises to help students express pride in the groups to which they belong and to learn from each other how groups other than their own experience mistreatment. Learning about the personal impact of specific incidents of discrimination from one another can result in meaningful attitudinal changes about diversity (Brown, n.d.). At the conclusion of this intensive introduction to multiculturalism, the class session ends on a musical note only, a playing of *In These Times.*

The use of folk art in the form of the popular Mexican game *Lotería*, provides a means for mainstream, monolingual teacher candidates to feel what English Language Learners experience in school. Cognition about a different linguistic group and bilingual education can become a multidimensional language learning experience through an affective activity that is new and fun. I revert to Spanish-only instruction in teaching students how to play *Lotería* with an opportunity to win prizes, including a game of *Lotería.*

Playing the game also leads more naturally into an exploration of language acquisition principles and bilingual or English as a Second Language programs. Prospective teachers better appreciate how conversational language ability, called Basic Interpersonal Conversation Skills by Cummins (1981; Thomas & Collier 1997), is mastered relatively quickly in one or two years. Yet, more complex Cognitive Academic Language Processes from the core subject areas take from five to seven years for English Language Learners to develop in order to compete academically with native English speakers. Mainstream teachers in the general classroom often make the mistake of thinking that English Language Learners, who fluently speak about social matters and simple concepts, have reached native-like proficiency in English. A game of *Lotería* serves as an introduction to more complex issues around bilingual education.

Literary classics tend to generate the greatest amount of positive feedback from teacher candidates. I balance the standard multicultural education textbook with at least one literary work. One novel that students highly praise is Rodolfo Anaya's classic *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972). The somewhat autobiographical novel takes place in rural New Mexico during the 1940s and is about a young Mexican American boy, Antonio Marez, and a curandera, Ultima, who comes to live with the family. Antonio is torn between his mother's desire that he become a priest and a wandering desire that stems from his father's side of the family. Antonio's preoccupation with the good and evil and life and death that surrounds him is tempered by the guidance that Ultima's indigenous worldview provides him. When he comes to understand the world around him, he learns to accept life and overcome his fear of change. Readers explore the Mexican and Native American

heritage of the Southwest through this cultural novel that frames the concepts of race, ethnicity, and conflict between the mainstream culture and minority cultures in the U.S. Additional background reading from the course text that reinforces discussion of *Bless Me, Ultima*, centers on religion and the influence of religion on education.

Film offers another popular arts-based medium for an enrichment of multicultural education classes, and the concept of socio-economic status is what I have successfully connected to this creative art. First, students complete extensive reading related to class structure, social stratification, class differences, the interaction of class with race, ethnicity and gender, and educational implications in the form of teacher expectations and tracking practices (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). Some students select to read Frank McCourt's first book *Angela's Ashes*, the Pulitzer winning bestseller about growing up wretchedly poor. This Irish teacher's boyhood memoir became a cinematic success in 1999, and prospective teachers are more likely to comprehend the effect of a stratified society by first exploring abject poverty from an Irish experience. A movie such as *Angela's Ashes* can be powerfully thought provoking to teacher candidates from a state such as Texas in which 55.6 percent of public school students were categorized as *economic disadvantaged* in 2005 to 2006 (Texas Education Agency, 2006).

One student's poignant commentary after reading the book and viewing the film was that "seeing extreme poverty from a child's point of view makes one realize how much middle class comforts are taken for granted and how important it is to understand the impact of poverty on children's school performance." The empathy that film is

capable of arousing exceeds any emotions that factual hard hitting textbook facts can induce.

Conclusion

In this article we examined the antecedents of multicultural education and its evolvement into comprehensive school reform movement that seeks to overturn racist and discriminating conceptions of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and exceptionality. The preparation of a largely white, female, and middle class teaching force so that they might apply multicultural education theory and research in the public school classroom continues to pose a daunting challenge to teacher educators. Resistance and attacks to principles of multicultural education come steadily from all levels of education, government, and society, and we have presented one way by which we confront the challenge. Using aesthetic inquiry in conjunction with multicultural education theory offers a means for stimulating more thoughtful discussion about the various forms of institutionalized prejudice. Art-based multicultural curriculum offers our students unique opportunities to cross cultural borders they otherwise ignore or consciously avoid in their daily lives. As they enter new cultural terrain through the arts, they have the opportunity to recognize their own cultural beliefs and practices and privileged social position in relation to that of the *Other*. By encountering voices and images that represent life experiences apparently different from their own, they may also encounter universal life struggles, needs and emotions that will enable them to build bridges between their students' diverse cultures and the culture of schooling. In addition, we use art in various forms to help our students realize their potential role as agents of anti-racist and anti-

sexist curricular change. We concur with Freire (2005) that cognition and emotion should never be dichotomized. Teachers should study, learn, teach, and know with their entire body. We hold that exploring diversity through aesthetic inquiry unites critical thinking with passion.

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