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Multicultural Teacher Education: Toward a Culturally Responsible Pedagogy

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Abstract

While the student population in the United States becomes culturally diverse, it is imperative to provide an empowering and equitable education for all students in the United States. Within the context of teacher preparation, one of the highest priorities is to help prospective teachers acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively with culturally diverse students. Schools, colleges, and departments of education must assume the responsibility of preparing all teachers, regardless of race, to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. While most teacher education programs acknowledge the importance of an increasing diversity among school pupils, reviews of the literature reveal that until recently relatively little attention in mainstream teacher education programs has been focused on preparing teachers for the children they will likely encounter (Grant & Secada, 1990; Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

This paper is an attempt to explore some of the issues and challenges that are embedded in teacher education in the United States. I propose that unless we endeavor to change the structure and ideology of mainstream education, to the benefit of some and to the detriment of others, internal contradiction will persist. Once the challenges are recognized, making changes is possible. With this in mind, the first section deals with issues of institutional and programmatic reform. The issues associated with politics will be discussed to unveil the obstacles. Second, I will discuss issues related to the recruitment of faculty and prospective teachers. This section highlights why and how to create a teaching force responsive to the increasing culturally diverse population. Then, curriculum and instruction of teacher education are examined to uncover the prevailing trend. In conclusion, some of the issues are revisited to highlight the critical components of an effective teacher education for diversity.

Multicultural education programs for teachers are more than special courses or special learning experiences grafted onto the standard program. The commitment to cultural pluralism must permeate all areas of the educational experience provided for prospective teachers.

American Association of College of Teacher Education

Introduction

According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (1998), one of every three students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools today is of racial/ethnic minority background. Demographers predict that students of color will make up about 46% of this country's school-age population by the year 2020 (Banks and Banks 1997). By the year 2035, this group is expected to constitute a majority of the elementary and secondary school student population. One in five children under eighteen years of age currently lives in poverty. The number of school-age children who speak a language other than English at home and have difficulty speaking English was 2.4 million in 1995, or 5% of all school-age children in the US (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 1998).

In sharp contrast to this diverse student body is the 'typical American teacher' who is a white woman with two children, teaching in a suburban elementary school (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). The current teaching force is 90 % Anglo, and the face of the future teaching population does not currently appear to be changing (Hadaway, 1993). How then can we deal with the increasing culturally diverse student body? Clearly, it is imperative to provide an empowering and equitable education for all students in the United States. Within the context of teacher preparation, one of the highest priorities is to help prospective teachers acquire the attitudes knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively with culturally diverse students. Schools, colleges, and departments of education must assume the responsibility of preparing all teachers, regardless of race, to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. While most teacher education programs acknowledge the importance of an increasing diversity among school pupils, reviews of the literature reveal that until recently relatively little attention in mainstream teacher education programs has been focused on preparing teachers for the children they will likely encounter (Grant & Secada, 1990; Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

This paper is an attempt to explore some of the issues and challenges that embedded in teacher education. I propose that unless we endeavor to change the structure and ideology of mainstream, to the benefit of some and to the detriment of others, internal contradiction will persist. Once the challenges are recognized, making changes is possible. With this in mind, the first section deals with issues of institutional and programmatic reform. The issues associated with politics will be discussed to unveil the obstacles. Second, I will discuss issues related to the recruitment of faculty and prospective teachers. This section highlights why and how to create a teaching force responsive to the increasing culturally diverse population. Then, curriculum and instruction of teacher education are examined to uncover the prevailing trend. In conclusion, some of the issues are revisited to highlight the critical components of an effective teacher education for diversity.

The Politics of Diversity

The changing demographics in the United States have demanded changes in teacher education preparation programs, as schools of education realize that tomorrow's teacher will be teaching a broader diversity of students than ever before in U.S. history. Teachers must be prepared in terms of philosophy, pedagogy and curriculum to deal with the challenges of an increasingly diverse population and actively to work on behalf of equity issues in their schools and communities (Holmes Group, 1990). Many teacher education programs have added courses in 'Multicultural Education' in order to address this need, and teacher education accreditation organizations have demanded that programs show how and where multicultural goals are accomplished in the program (Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999). When the issue of diversity is concerned, leaders of the institutions and the program developers have to deal with internal conflicts that make people uncomfortable. How well is an environment is constituted to accommodate itself to cultural diversity? Does the leadership support, in any way, and appreciate multiculturalism? Are individuals involved in the process willing to reflect and examine their belief systems toward race, gender, and religion and so forth? It is not possible that prospective teachers make a commitment to diversity without having them experience or learn about multiculturalism in an environment that is rapidly evolving as diverse context.

Affirming Diversity

It is not easy to identify the forms of institutional support for a multicultural environment. Some of the studies have explicitly clarified the institutional support that has direct impact on teacher education (see Villegas et al., 1995; Melnick & Zeichner, 1997). It is essential to explore the efforts of a larger institution that have indirectly and subtly affected teacher education programs. Clearly, most institutions of higher learning are gatekeepers for the status quo, and usually are reluctant to change. Any announced policy would have an impact on the education equity in a campus. Then, what issues should be recognized in order to diversify an institution? What progress has been made by other institutions approved to be useful for teacher education programs? And why is it so difficult to make change in an institution?

In a research project, entitled "Educating Teachers for Cultural Diversity," Melnick and Zeichner (1997) seek to highlight several exemplary teacher education programs, and to direct more substantive attention to issues of diversity in preservice teacher education programs. Among the institutions participating in the study, they uncovered four different approaches to dealing with the institutional aspects of teacher education for diversity:

1. Programs such as the Madison Plan at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and MSU IDEA at Michigan State University, which hire more new faculty of color in order to diversify their faculty composition.
2. Institution such as Multicultural Education Infusion Center at San Diego State University, which initiate systematic staff development for teacher education faculty to help them examine their own attitudes about diverse people and learn about various aspects of teacher education for diversity and ways to infuse it into their institutions and programs.

3. The partnership agreements between predominantly white teacher education institutions and other colleges or universities with significant numbers of faculty and students of color. Examples of these partnerships include the American Indian and Latino Immersion Project at Indiana University in Bloomington.
4. The creation of a consortium, where a group of institutions combine their resources to hire staff with expertise in teacher education for diversity to provide part of the teacher education program, usually field experiences and a few courses and seminars related to teaching diverse students. (p. 91)

In order to establish and sustain a successful teacher education program for diversity, institutional support is critical. Lack of clarity about multiculturalism and lack of diversity among faculty could hinder attempts to change teacher preparation programs (Price & Valli, 1998). Students would benefit from a diverse faculty who would be able to provide a variety of perspectives. Student teachers, with diverse cultural knowledge, will make sense of unexpected perspectives from their students, who come from various cultural backgrounds.

However, it is naïve to expect that just putting diverse people together will achieve some magical accord. Faculty of color usually face difficult decisions. Sometimes, they must decide to be either strict academics and advocate scholarship, or strict advocates and advocate community interests. On the one hand, their decisions are shaped by an academic culture that expects objective detachment. On the other hand, their communities need individuals who seek social action and political change (Garza, 1988). Therefore, a professional support network should be built to help faculty of color in teaching and research. The professional networks have to be cross-cultural and provide faculty of color the opportunity to air their opinions and complaints.

While most of us believe that diversifying faculty in teacher education increase the richness of cultural curriculum and pedagogy, some other issues might impede its feasibility. One of the problems is that the financial constraint in teacher preparation institutions makes diversifying faculty composition difficult, and, the “anti-affirmative action policies” have exacerbated this issue (Zeichner & Melnick, 1998). Current efforts toward downsizing often mean that issues of cultural diversity are given lower priority, if they are considered at all (Ladson-Billing, 1999). Moreover, what often happen in predominantly White institutions are the inhospitable environments for faculty of color, especially those who bring the issue of diversity up front. The leadership may be a part of the solution to these problems.

Leadership

A strong administrative leadership is essential for changing, in a positive way, an institutional culture, at all level of campus life. An institution with strong commitment to diversity seems to make diversity a top priority. The University of Michigan, for example, had created a truly multicultural university by focusing on (a) the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and student body and (b) the development of programs that would foster an inclusive campus community (Price & Valli, 1998).

Financial problems can certainly pose a barrier to change. Program retention or expansion is unlikely to occur when teacher education administrators are justifying the cost effectiveness of existing programs (Bergquist, 1978). The resource should be focused on preparing strong prospective teachers for teaching in diverse settings.

In addition, institutional leaders must recognize the potentially internal or external threat to diversity, and respond to it as soon and effectively as possible (Price & Valli, 1998). It is critical for an institution to support all its faculty, students, and staff, who are not afraid of being harassed or assaulted due to their appearance or ethnic background. Many leaders in higher institutions perceive that faculty of color fail to recognize the *mainstream interest*, and their commitment to the issue of diversity distract them from the responsibilities in education schools. It is important, therefore, for the leaders of institutions to examine their own beliefs and attitudes about diversity, and encourage other faculty to do so (Zeichner & Melnick, 1998). In other words, change requires leadership, risk-taking, solid planning, and the cultivation of a change-accepting environment.

Unmask the Academia

Nationally, 93 percent of the professors of education are white, and of that number, 70 percent are male (Grant, 1993). Since the issue of multiculturalism was addressed recently, it is reasonable to assume that the great majority of education faculty has had little formal instruction in multicultural education during their formative years of professional development. Regarding their initial attitude toward multicultural education Contreras (1988) explains:

Teacher educators continue to assume that teacher education students will pick up the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help them teach classes of socio-culturally diverse students without any direct instruction and planned experience. Moreover, teacher educators assume that most of the schools will continue to be monocultural and monosocial: therefore, there is no obligation to commit time and resources to preparing teacher to teach children who are at risk of being mis-educated and undereducated. (Contreras, 1988, p. 14)

One of the most persistent challenges is dealing with racism. Professors often commented that they were not racist because they believed in equal educational opportunity for all students. Most professors avoid issues of personal prejudice and institutional exclusion; they were reluctant to talk about their feelings, fearing they might be seen as close-minded (Hixson, 1991). Institutional culture as such might discourage and hinder the development of diversity within a teacher education program.

Hixson (1991) suggests that most teacher educators, like their students, have limited experience with other cultures. As a result, they might not be able to promote an understanding of diversity among their students who may be teaching in a culturally diverse setting. Teacher candidates come to teacher education with limited direct interracial and intercultural experience, with erroneous assumptions about diverse youngsters, and with limited expectations for the success of all learners (Melnick & Zeichner, 1997). As a teacher educator, are we brave enough

to challenge ourselves when we, or someone else, see the inaccuracies and gaps in the knowledge base that we've always taught about race, gender, and class?

Teacher educators need ample opportunities to examine issues they thought they understood, but had not examined from a real-life point of view. For example, many professors believed in equal educational opportunity and that all students should have a chance to follow their dreams. Professors also believed that many African American students encountered more obstacles, which led to lower admission and retention rates in college. Most professors believed that educational experience were enriched when the student population was diverse (Pang, Anderson, and Martuza, 1997). Dialogue can assist individuals to seek new ways to look at issues and help them clarify their own positions on complex social issues that impact their personal lives. Conversation of issues such as racism, sexism, classism, and other areas of difference are extremely crucial for change to occur. The focus for these changes needs to include the attitudes, knowledge, and practice of individual teacher education for it is only through deep reflection that change in institutions will occur.

Collaboration and Partnership

Preparing university students to teach in twenty-first century classrooms that will be more ethnically and culturally diverse requires a paradigm shift to collaboration among systems relevant to education. Best practices from schools, universities, communities, and industries establish benchmarks that these collaborative systems can be used to develop effective *teacher preparation* programs. When such collaboration exists, the educational systems become aligned in a seamless web of experiences, leading to knowledge, skills, and attitudes inherent in lifelong learning (Patrick & Reinhartz, 1999).

A partnership agreement can be arranged between predominantly white teacher education institutions and other colleges or universities with significant numbers of faculty and students of color. This approach was exemplified in the 1970s by the partnership between Louisiana Tech, a formerly white segregated institution, and Grambling State University, a historically black institution. The exchange of culture and experience enabled teacher educators to see things differently, and redesign teacher education in a culturally relevant way.

Another collaborative approach to preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms is the professional development school (PDS) model. The PDS serves as the teaching laboratory in which preservice teachers have opportunities to implement a variety of instructional strategies, materials, equipment, and technology in working with diverse populations. Although there is no single model, the key to a successful PDS is meaningful collaboration among all the participants. The nature and type of the collaborative construct among university faculty, classroom teachers, their students, district administrators, staff members, and the teacher education students will vary, "...but come together they must." (Goodlad, 1994, p. 9) Preservice teachers placed in field sites in a PDS have frequent opportunities to apply research-based theories of child development, curriculum, and instructional strategies in real school settings.

Despite the established partnership between university and professional development schools, current evidence shows that unequal power relationships still impede the collaborative work (Collins, 1998). Success of partnerships demands a commonly desired goal in the education of teachers, a commitment to shared responsibility, and an acknowledgement of shared expertise.

Expanding Cultural Diversity of Teacher Education

If teacher education of the future is to model the positive incorporation of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, its student bodies and faculty must become more culturally diverse. Apparently, members of most minority groups are not attending colleges and universities in numbers equal to their representation in society. They are less likely to be offered a higher position when competing with an equally prepared competitor. This section discusses issues about how specifically to recruit faculty and prospective teachers in teacher education program. What are the challenges that need to be dealt with? More emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of prospective teachers.

Recruitment of Faculty

As noted above, it is essential to diversify faculty, and staff. Strong recruitment is committed to competitive retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups, provide mentoring support, have explicit guidelines for affirmative action hiring, prepare and recruit their own graduates for tenure-track positions (Price & Valli, 1998). There are various ways of attracting applicants of color. An institution with commitment to diversifying its faculty and staff actively seeks potential candidates by sending out position announcement regularly, and searches for outside funding to support its faculty and staff.

Vanderbilt University (Price & Valli, 1998), for example, takes such a position on diversity recruitment. The guidelines for recruiting faculty begin with:

Vanderbilt University has a commitment to overcome any effects of past and present discrimination. Each of us shares the responsibility to recruit, support, assist, mentor, and thus retain the women, minorities, people with disabilities, and older individuals who wish to pursue their academic dreams and career goals at Vanderbilt. (p. 117)

In addition to recruiting diverse faculty and staff, institutions with strong diversity orientations provide incentives and rewards to campus units for diversifying their work forces, provide opportunities for faculty and staff to develop a deeper understanding of diversity, and use interviews to explore candidates' awareness of diversity issues. Questions such as which of your achievements in the area of diversity are you the most proud? How would you demonstrate your concern for equity and diversity if you were hired? In your opinion, what are the major problems women, minorities, and people with disability face on your campus? (Pierce, 1996) are able to understand the candidate's position. In addition to the recruiting process, a dialogue between faculty and staff within the program is important. Price & Valli (1998) point out that

Mills College (California) has regular faculty and staff workshops and dinner meetings to discuss ways to better address diversity issues.

The reluctance to offer tenured positions to minority faculty may be based on a deep commitment by all faculty to retain “their “ standards of academic excellence and their conviction that most members of minority groups do not possess the necessary qualifications (Gollnick, 1992). As a result, and given the composition of most search committees, that is, mainstream persons with their particular social networks, it is very difficult to attract a sufficient number of minority candidates with records comparable to those of mainstream candidates. This makes the job of search committees rather difficult, even when these committees show some willingness to consider a wide range of candidates (Pierce, 1996). When posting a position vacancy, some of the colleges and universities often highlight the need for, or strongly encourage, "minority" applicants. However, they rarely reference the importance, value, and more importantly, the meaningful contribution diverse *faculty* members can bring to their academic institutions.

For dealing with this issue, Zamboanga & Bingman (2001) suggest several principles of recruitment. First, colleges and universities may consider placing job announcements that explicitly stress the importance of diversity in higher education and emphasize the meaningful contribution that minority candidates can offer to their academic institutions. Second, job announcements that highlight the value of diversity could minimize negative biases directed at minority candidates. Perhaps shifting the focus from simply recruiting or "strongly encouraging minorities to apply" to emphasizing the importance and value of diversity might allow applicants to gain a better sense of the institutions' intentions and their conceptualization of diversity.

Recruitment of Prospective Teachers

Why we need diverse teachers?

Who are the future teachers? Do their life experiences, ascribed characteristics, and future goals serve to help them teach from a multicultural perspective? Most of the students in teacher-education programs are white and female. The hard truth includes: (1) Fewer than 15% of teacher education students would like to teach in urban schools; (2) Pre-service teachers want to teach students like themselves in communities that are familiar to them; (3) Preservice teachers are neither well prepared nor well disposed to teach ethnic and language minority students; (4) Preservice teachers have very little knowledge about different cultural groups in the United States and often have negative attitudes about cultural groups other than their own (Hanlon, 1999, p. 60). Figure 1 shows the enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools in 1986, 1993, and 1996. Figure 2 shows the distribution of public school teachers 1993-1994. The increasing culturally diverse student body and the predominantly white teacher population are placing greater demands on teacher preparation.

Table 1. Enrollment in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Race/Ethnicity, 1986, 1993, and 1996 (in percent)

Race/Ethnicity	1986	1993	1996
White, non-Hispanic	70.4	66.1	64.2
African American/Black	16.1	16.6	16.9
Hispanic	9.9	12.7	14.0
Asian/Pacific American	2.8	3.6	3.8
Native American /Alaskan Native	.9	1.1	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Snyder, T. (Ed.). (1998). *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Table 2. Public Elementary and Secondary School Teachers, by Race/Ethnicity, 1993-1994

Race/Ethnic Group	N	%
White (non-Hispanic)	2,216,605	87.0
Black (non-Hispanic)	188,371	7.0
Hispanic	108,744	4.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	27,510	-
Native American/Alaskan Native	20,064	-
TOTAL	2,561,294	100.0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Snyder and Hoffman **Digest of Education Statistics, 1995** Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993-94. Table 66, p. 77.

NOTE: "-" indicates less than 1 percent

In order to teach diverse students effectively, we need individuals who are prepared to take on a difficult task that requires continuous critical thought, action, and rethinking both individually, collaboratively with other teachers, and with the families and members of the communities in which they teach. In this sense, I agree with Haberman's (1991a) assertion that carefully selecting people at the outset for culturally diverse settings is far more effective than trying to change them afterwards.

The argument most frequently made for increasing the racial diversity of the teaching force is that a democratic society needs teachers of color to serve as role models for all students (Villegas & Clewell, 1998). While schools are not only the place where knowledge and skill are transmitted but also the place where values and social expectations are formed. The children of minority would believe that minorities are not deserved or good enough for professional work if racial minorities are under-represented in that area (Mercer & Mercer, 1986).

Another reason for increasing the diversity of the teacher force is that teachers of color are familiar with the culture of color. They would be able to understand what kind of difficulty children of color are confronting, and bridge the cultural gap between school and home. The cultural background of teachers of color may enable them to establish special relationship with students who come from non-dominant family (Villegas & Clewell, 1998).

The reasons for the lack of minority teacher were seldom addressed and deliberately investigated. Villegas & Clewell (1998) indicate that several factors may contribute to the underrepresentation of people of color in the teaching profession: first, the inadequate education many students of color receive in elementary and secondary schools limits the number who are eligible to go on to higher education in general and into teacher education programs in particular; second, the limited preparation of the overwhelming minority of teachers for working responsible with students who do not conform to White, middle class norms also deprives students of color of quality education; third, the inability of teacher education to attract college-bound students of color. People of color now have more opportunities for position in higher paying fields, which is not the case in teaching; fourth, the increased testing requirements keeps people of color from choosing teaching as a career.

The people we need

There is little argument that teachers of color who are strong adult models, individuals that make positive identification with education, self esteem and children, individuals who have had similar experiences and live in like communities are potentially the most powerful influences for students of color in schools. If we agree with this notion, are we hard working enough to attract minority individuals into teacher preparation program? Figure 3 answers this question.

Table 3. Teacher Education Enrollments by Race and Ethnicity, 1989, 1991, and 1995

Race/Ethnicity	1989	1991	1995
White, non-Hispanic	86.5	84.6	80.5
African American/Black	6.8	5.9	9.0
Hispanic	2.7	3.6	4.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.9	1.0	1.7
Native American/Alaskan Native	0.5	0.5	0.7
Other	2.7	3.3	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: AACTE, *Survey of Teacher Education Enrollments by Race/Ethnicity and Gender*, Fall 1989, 1991 and 1995.

Yet the statistics and predictions showed that even if the numbers of teachers of color increase they will not be anywhere close to the numbers needed given the composition of the K-12 school population now and in the future (Hanlon, 1999). This does not in any way suggest that attracting individuals of color into the teaching profession should not be a major objective of

teacher education programs or school districts; I believe that it should. I believe that this should be the case not only for the benefit of students of color but for the benefit of all students, those of color and white students. Experienced teachers of diverse backgrounds would enrich the educational experience of students who are living in a white culture only. All students would benefit from and experience with adults of diverse backgrounds.

Haberman and Post (1998) studied the preservice teachers enrolled in the teacher education program at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, found that the “best and the brightest” teachers for culturally diverse students are not young White females from small towns or suburbs with grades of A in student teaching and high grade point averages who “always wanted to be a teacher.” Rather, the profile of the “best and the brightest” teachers for culturally diverse students in urban setting includes demographic as well as personal attributes such as 1) Did not decide to teacher until after graduation from college; 2) Tried (succeeded) at several jobs or careers; 3) Is between 30 and 50 years of age; 4) Attended an urban high school; 5) Has raised several children, is a parent, or has had close, in-depth, meaningful relations with children and youth; 6) Currently lives in the city and plans to continue to do so; 7) Is preparing for a teaching position in an urban school system; 8) Doesn’t believe “kids are kids” but comprehends and appreciates how cultural forces impact human development; 9) Has had personal and continuing experiences with violence and of living “normally” in a violent community and city; 10) Has majored in just about anything at the university; 11) May or may not have an above-average grade point average; 12) Expects to visit the homes of the children; 13) Has some awareness of or personal experience with a range of health and human services available in the urban area; 14) Expects that the school bureaucracy will be irrational and intrusive; 15) Is likely not to be of Euro-American background but a person of color; 16) Is likely to be sensitive to, aware of, and working on one’s own racism, sexism, classism, or other prejudices. (p. 101)

Indeed, taken singly, each has no predictive validity. “They are cited here merely to provide the real-world alternative to ‘the best and the brightest’ stereotype that emphasized high GPA college youth and continues to emanate from blue-ribbon committees, national panels, private foundations, the Office of Education, and other fantasy factories” (Haberman & Post, 1998, p. 101). Why would people like to be a teacher? The reason for becoming a teacher varies. Kozol (1995) describes many like to teach because of a love of the subject matter, because of a moral vision of a just society, because of a belief in people being free and being able to govern themselves, or simply because of happy feelings being in the company of children.

Alternative route

Since there has been a shortage of qualified teachers in urban schools, alternative certification, I believe, should be employed to alleviate the shortage. It has been argued that good teaching is based primarily on subject matter knowledge and an enthusiasm for teaching; hence, opportunities should be provided to those people who are competent in subject matter knowledge and interested in teaching but who would not otherwise have the opportunity to go into teaching. Teacher education program can be diversified through recruiting para-educators, who have various cultural experiences, and could be a potential source of credentialed teachers. A promising approach is to help bilingual teaching assistants become credentialed teachers. In

many ways, para-educators have the potential to become the ideal teachers of LEP students. As native speakers of the students' languages, para-educators, in many cases, have the experience of acquiring English as a second language, and they are sensitive to differing cultural values and attitudes. After evaluating a number of career ladder programs, Villegas & Clewell (1998) have identified five strategies for teacher education institutions to successfully recruit paraprofessionals into teaching force:

■ Establish partnerships with school districts

The close collaboration with partner districts gives the teacher education program ready access to potential participants. Using their personnel information systems, school districts can easily generate lists of individuals who meet the program's overall criteria for participation. In a word, district involvement helps facilitate communication between the teacher education program and potential applicants and also sends a strong message to applicants that the district sees their investment of time and energy in the program as worthwhile.

■ Use multiple sources of information

Teacher education programs should be able to recognize the fuller picture of applicants' strengths. Other than the GPAs, supplement such as writing samples, performance on individual and/or group interview, evidence of commitment to teaching minorities, recommendations from school personnel, leadership qualities, motivation to succeed, level of maturity, experience teaching students in school and non-school settings, skills in a second language etc. the faculty committee then makes final selection decisions using the information generated through the review of application materials.

■ Provide academic and social and social support services

Teacher education needs strong academic advising and monitoring system to ensure that teacher candidates are following the proper course sequence and completing coursework in a timely fashion. Teacher education programs could initiate activities or events to create a sense of family that enables teacher candidates to stay with the program even through difficult times.

■ Modify the teacher education program

Teacher education programs may extend the student teaching period, thereby enabling participating paraprofessionals to fulfill the course requirement on a part-time basis with the support of district sponsored professional leaves. In addition, the course schedule and location could be modified. Some of the courses, for example, could be offered during evening hours, weekends, and summer sessions.

■ Secure tuition assistance

To successfully recruit paraprofessionals into teacher education, tuition assistance is essential. Without financial incentive, few paraprofessionals would be able to complete an undergraduate program of study. Many of them have responsibility for their families; therefore, the financial support is a critical reason staying in teacher education programs.

Meeting preservice teacher needs

Prospective teachers need a well-developed program to introduce them into the field of teaching. One of the biggest challenges a teacher faces is crafting pedagogical opportunities that will meet the needs and interests of all students. Furthermore, the goal of helping every teacher develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to teach a diverse student population becomes problematic for those who expect to teach children very much like themselves and who have little experience with children who are not (McDiarmid & Price, 1990). What, then, do preservice teachers need to become effective multicultural teachers in our pluralistic society?

First, prospective teachers have to become reflective. Reflective teachers are able to apply observational, empirical, and analytical skills to monitor, evaluate, and revise their own teaching practices (Irvine, 1990). Through teacher education, they develop awareness of their own cultural perspective, thus gaining insight into the cultural assumptions underlying their expectations, beliefs, and behavior.

Second, prospective teachers must appreciate the value of student diversity. They have to understand the relationship of human diversity, power, and inequality in schools and the consequences for the lives of students.

Third, prospective teachers need to be able to examine the nature of teaching, which include various dimensions and philosophies, knowing what and how these philosophical underpinnings influence their teaching. They have to be able to self-evaluate their own teaching practice, and use feedback from others.

Fourth, prospective teachers must learn the significance of language and culture of students. Diverse cultures should be incorporated into curriculum, enhancing understanding of various cultures among students. They have to be attentive to students, and be sensitive to students' needs and learning styles.

Prospective teachers need opportunities to deepen and broaden understanding of the teaching, the lives of students, and the knowledge base deemed important for teaching all children. Another critical experience for students in a teacher education program is teacher-student interaction. Preservice teachers need a trusting and egalitarian relationship with teacher educators and significant others during their teacher preparation. This relationship must be built on mutual respect and value the personal attributes, language background, and orientation of both the preservice teacher and the teacher educator (Dillard, 1997). Such experience is important because people who have had positive relationship with mentors in teacher preparation are more likely to establish a rapport with students (Sapon-Shevin & Zollers, 1999).

Curriculum and Instruction in Teacher Preparation Programs

Reforming the curriculum of the teacher education program is essential to preparing teacher for cultural diversity. It is my observation that the curricula of most teacher education programs are usually additive; ethnic heroes and cultures have been inserted into curricula without properly examining the meaning of these materials, and which have been developed largely through the eyes of mainstream scholars and historians (Banks & Banks, 1997). As a result, many programs failed to challenge and help prospective teachers self-examine their own beliefs about diversity.

Another problem is the dominant cultural “habit” of avoiding and “silencing” discussion of race and racism. Ladson-Billings (1994) states: “Discussions of race and racism in education are akin to the proverbial elephant in the parlor at tea time. Everyone maybe sitting there enjoying the tea but no one wants to acknowledge the presence of a huge problem. It is as if noticing and naming it, not the elephant itself, is the problem” (p.5). She claims that the teacher educator must find ways to create disharmony and dissonance in these habits that force personal introspection, critical reflection and provoke the formation of different realizations and attitudes.

What Studies Say about Curriculum Reform?

Zeichner and Hoeft (1996) offer details of the courses found in current teacher preparation programs. Courses on multiculturalism typically approach the instruction as either culture specific or as cultural general. Culture specific materials look for the trends and issues that can be attributed to particular races and genders, while the culture general approach attempts to prepare teachers to mold teaching strategies and techniques to the students regardless of that student’s culture. One danger discussed in the use of culture specific methods, for example, is the possibility that showing trends found in a particular ethnic group may reinforce stereotypes already held by the teacher candidate or perhaps instill new prejudices (Haberman, 1991b). Villegas & Clewell (1998) suggest that the culture general approach is a preferred method for considering diversity in the classroom.

Burstein and Caello (1989) described the various components of a course designed to help teachers develop awareness, knowledge, and skills for teaching diverse learners. They did not discuss the extent to which course activities were culturally responsive to the diverse backgrounds of course participants. For example, 38% of the teachers in this study prior to training explained minority students’ school performance from a cultural deficiency point of view and 50% understood it as a mismatch between the home culture and the school culture. Were these different understandings related to teachers’ ethnicity? This finding poses an important curricular question. How can these differences be translated into teacher education practice?

In order to help prospective teachers work effectively with Native American students, Kleinfeld (1998) developed the Teachers for Alaska Program (TFA), using curriculum blocks. Each block focused on the teaching of a subject (English, social studies, mathematics, science, and cultural studies) but also brought in the material and issues usually dealt with race, gender,

and power relationship. Prospective teachers are able to teach subject in a culturally responsible way. Based on his observation and evaluation, Kleinfeld found that many prospective teachers showed measurable improvement in cross-cultural teaching skills.

Meacham (2002) proposes a cross disciplined and departmental curriculum in Berkeley to restructure the teacher education program. The faculty committee, he suggests, determines which courses satisfy the requirement. Faculty members from many departments teach cultural relevant courses based upon a common framework. The courses focus on themes or issues in United States history, society, or culture; address theoretical or analytical issues relevant to understanding race, culture, and ethnicity in American society. I wonder what have been negotiated in the development of courses. It may not have been easy since all faculty, with various perspectives, expectation, and political persuasions, agree with the framework unanimously. What compromises were made? By whom and on what issues? However, successful curricular change, I believe, requires an intellectual rationale and it is best when that rationale is student-center.

Issues of Instruction

Uncertainty exists regarding where the educational issues of diversity should be addressed and by whom. Most institutions have met multicultural standards by instituting a single course often taught by untenured faculty or people of color. Professors relegated to teaching such courses are often seen as singular proponents for a particular racial, ethnic, or other group, and they in turn end up preaching to the converted, students who are interested in learning more about the race, ethnic, or gender find themselves fighting for resources with those who advocate a more holistic multicultural approach. All faculty, not just women or faculty of color, need to be a part of the effort to redress problems and issues associated with diversity.

It should be noted that teacher preparation has tremendous impact on professional practice, teacher learning, and student learning. There are various instructional strategies and experiences commonly used in teacher education (for example, analysis or preparation of cases, action research projects, teacher research or other forms of practitioner inquiry, technology, construction of portfolios, community immersion, biographical/autobiographical/narrative exploration, micro-teaching, use of videotaped lessons and classroom scenes, etc.). These strategies would not be effective if they are used by those who ignore the differences between students, are insensitive to cultural diversity, and students' needs. Simply put, the attitudes of educators and teachers need to be examined to validate culturally responsive instruction.

Hanlon (1999) asserts that students of color often feel that white faculty, staff, and students regard them as being less prepared, less deserving, the result of affirmative-action quotas. Many experience open hostility, racism, discrimination, and isolation. Consequently, students of color often withdraw into protective racial and ethnic conclaves. The dominant culture interprets this withdrawal as separatism, while students of color maintain it is basically a gathering in which they can learn about each other.

Young (1998) suggests that multicultural education for white teachers involves activities that would help them examine their privileged status and uncover the various strategies they use to avoid restructuring their thought about race and education. Minority teacher, she argues, bring life experiences that make them more likely to challenge racist institutions. Instead of helping them understand white privilege, multicultural teacher education should help them politicize their understandings of racism so that they can engage in the reconstruction of schooling.

Cultural Immersion

In the United States formal educational courses, observation and student teaching seem to dominate the format of teacher education programs. Student teaching is usually restricted to one or two semesters during the last year of the educational program. Courses offered to pre-service teachers seem to avoid issues relating to racism, ethnocentric practices, discrimination, inequality, interpersonal skills and a teacher's classroom behavior (as it relates to diversity). Moreover, teachers seem to be shielded from the reality of the classroom as most in-service is not done until the last semester in school.

The connection between teacher education, school culture, and the social context of communities is central in terms of teaching for change because teacher education reform depends on school reform and school reform depends on teacher education change. The teacher education program needs to be able to provide experiences for prospective teachers that foster a critical perspective to understand and act in relation to families and communities (Grinberg & Goldfarb, 1998). Such experience will provide the future teacher with the possibility of creating meaningful linkages between school, family, and community. Learning about the community's composition and its relationships with schools, both positive and negative, is imperative.

DeAcosta (1994) asserts that student teachers must spend time in the local community, "outside school doors" (p. 9), in order to understand and appreciate how various community organizations and agencies serve the families of the children in their elementary and secondary classroom (Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). Similarly, through his extensive work with American Indian education, Gilliland (1995) concludes, "Even though you may be an expert teacher, failure to learn the local culture can doom you to failure in the Indian community" (p. 18). She adds that community involvement is essential, enhancing mutual understanding.

By surveying 786 institutions, Gollnick (1992) reports that opportunities to participate in field with culturally diverse and exceptional populations remain limited. In urban area candidates are almost always able to take advantage of culturally diverse settings. Outside of urban areas, students tend to have less chance to experience diverse cultures, due to the low proportion of minorities in their service area.

Preservice teachers should be immersed in cultural learning; they should be exposed to various perspectives, which might challenge or even contrast to their beliefs and attitudes. Campuses such as State University of New York-Buffalo, Lewis and Clark College, Spelman College, and Haverford College etc. (see Price & Valli, 1998) have provided multidisciplinary

cultural courses, other resources, curriculum projects, and workshops, aimed at giving students a balanced understanding and appreciation of their own and other cultures.

The Prerequisites of Multicultural Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs must prepare all teachers, majority or minority, to provide quality education for all students. Olstad, Foster, and Wyman (1983) indicated that teachers' lacking multicultural education are inadequately prepared for the reality of a pluralistic society and tend to have low expectations for minority children. Teacher educators must ask themselves to what degree their teacher preparation programs (a) facilitate increased cultural self-awareness, (b) cultivate appreciation of diversity, (c) increase cultural competency, and (d) prepare teachers to work effectively with a variety of students and parents, to the extent that education programs achieve these ends, to that extent do they prepare culturally competent teachers? (p. 138)

Some argue that teacher education students should acquire the dispositions, attitudes, and knowledge in their liberal arts courses, but Melnick, Gomez, and Price (1990) report that they receive little, if anything, there. Neither are special "multicultural education" courses developed around presentations about particular racial and ethnic groups which facilitates in-depth student understanding. Even worse, these courses or programs, though initiated by the best intention of teacher educators, strengthen preservice teachers' beliefs that students of color and poverty cannot learn (McDiarmid & Price, 1990). Therefore, preservice multicultural education is a necessity. It is not a matter of individual preference, curricular appendage, or pedagogical whim. Neither should it be merely an added-on course after providing for the necessary knowledge and skills. Multicultural education is not simply an ethnic issue; it is everyone's issue, for teaching is a multicultural experience.

A teacher preparation program has to incorporate two important components: a theoretical element and a practical element (Barber, 1995; Davies & Ferguson, 1997; Drever & Cope, 1999). The theoretical element refers to the various dimensions of the craft of teaching that allow students to develop the ideas, knowledge, and dispositions that enrich the learning opportunities for all students. Teachers-to-be should be actually engaged in responsible teaching; be able to observe star teachers in action; have a mentor who is a star teacher coaching them; be part of a team; participate in a network coping with a highly bureaucratized system; be students of their communities; and continually be faced with problems that cause them to reshape their ideology.

Some scholars (for example see Zeichner et al., 1998; McCaleb, 1998; Gay, 1993; Dottin, 1984; Darling-Hammond et al., 1999) have identified some key elements for multicultural teacher education. Instead of giving the characteristics of an exemplary teacher education for diversity, I propose, based on the discussion above, the following components for consideration:

- The entire climate and culture of department, schools, or colleges of education and cooperating schools radiate a consistent, pervasive, and comprehensive appreciation for and promotion of cultural diversity. The commitment to multiculturalism is conveyed through lecture series, awards presentations, and criteria used to identify accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff deserving distinguished recognition

(Zeichner et al., 1998). Institutions must also continue to support faculty development programs to assist faculty members in gaining the knowledge and expertise to teach from multicultural perspectives (Bulter & Schmitz, 1992).

- Efforts to recruit more minority teachers will produce teacher education programs more reflective of diversity in the American population. Haberman (1991a) reviewing research on minority recruitment identifies a number of practices as particularly effective; start early, use peer contact, involve parents, use minority and mass media, access computer databases for student records etc. More faculty of color benefits all students by bringing perspectives other than of the dominant one. A well-developed teacher education program should foster a professional network in which all faculty, staff, and student are participated in and offer their contribution.
- Reflection should be encouraged in teacher preparation. Through reflections on prior experience, prospective teachers can focus on change, development and growth. The combination of reflection and reframe can bring prospective teachers to an understanding of their own biases as well as an understanding of cultural differences. Students are helped to develop a clearer sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities. Student teaching (1) provides opportunity for pre-service teachers to gain insight into their personal beliefs, as they relate to multiculturalism; (2) associates attitude to classroom performance; (3) articulates experiences pertaining to diversity.
- Students are helped to examine their attitudes toward other ethnocultural groups. Through reflections of prior experience, preservice teachers can focus on change, development and growth. Students learn critical thinking through discussion of mainstream ideology, and are taught about the dynamics of prejudice and racism and about how to deal with them in the classroom. Students are taught about the dynamics of privilege and economic oppression and about school practices that contribute to the reproduction of societal inequalities.
- Teacher education program should be able to provide various cultural materials for prospective teachers. They are given opportunity to understand and appreciate other cultures, and information about the characteristics and learning styles of various groups and individuals and are taught about the limitations of this information. In addition, students are taught various procedures by which they can gain information about the communities represented in their classrooms.
- Students are taught how to assess the relationships between the methods they use in the classroom and the preferred learning and interaction styles in their students' homes and communities. Students are taught how to use various instructional strategies and assessment procedures sensitive to cultural and linguistic variations and how to adapt classroom instruction and assessment to accommodate the cultural resources that their students bring to school.
- School and community field experiences in a variety of cultural settings that can provide all prospective teachers with opportunities to develop greater intercultural teaching competence are important (Zeichner, 1993). Students complete community field experiences with adults and/or children of other ethnocultural groups with guided

reflections. Students complete practicum and/or student teaching experiences in schools serving ethnic- and language-minority students. Students are encouraged to live and teach in diverse community.

A high quality teacher for the culturally diverse classroom is beyond what we usually expect for a good teacher does. He or she has appropriately high standards and expectations for their students. When their pupils do not initially master the materials, these teachers do not ascribe blame on external factors, such as the child's parents or previous teachers nor do they impute negative characteristics to the child, such as an inability or unwillingness to learn. Instead, they restructure the learning activities, assuming that the child has not yet mastered the instructional objectives.

Vavrus (2002) suggests that teacher education programs play a crucial role in determining teachers' attitudes toward diversity and the accommodation of that diversity within their teaching. a high quality teacher education for diversity should equip its preservice teacher with the abilities of "understanding students' cultural backgrounds, interests, skills, and abilities as they apply across a range of learning domains and /or subject areas; understanding students' motivations and their interests in specific class content; clarifying and articulating the performance outcomes expected of pupils; and planning instruction for individuals or groups of students" (Standards for Teacher Competence in the Educational Assessment of Students, 1989, p. 2).

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