Educating for Social Justice

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Published by the North America Chapter of World Council for Curriculum & Instruction
The Journal of Interdisciplinary Education is published by the North America Chapter of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction. An annual volume is published from papers submitted for publication.

The International office of WCCI is located in the Cross Cultural Studies Institute, Graduate Student, Alliant International University, San Diego, California, with Dr. Estela Matriano holding the position of Executive Director.

Every two years the WCCI holds an international conference. To date, fifteen conference meetings have been held in the following locations:

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NAC-WCCI has its North American Chapter Conference every two years; they occur during the odd years when the International conference is not being held. The last four conferences and its upcoming conference are listed below:

October 2003 - Nashville, TN
October 2005 - San Francisco, CA
October 2007 - Boston (Worcester), MA
July 2009 - Lethbridge, AB, Canada
October 2011 - Austin, TX
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most of the articles in this issue were selected from papers submitted to the Call for Papers on the theme, *Educating for Social Justice*. This was our first issue of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Education* that was not directly associated with a World Council for Curriculum and Instruction conference (hosted by the North American Chapter). As expected, the Call for Papers brought a variety of articles from educators of different disciplines, all of whom share a commitment to teaching multiculturalism, globalism, tolerance, conflict resolution, human rights, and ecological sustainability. As editor, I give special thanks to Dr. Tammy Shutt, our assistant editor, for the production of this volume. Tammy’s technical assistance in preparing the manuscript proved to be invaluable.

Roger W. Wiemers

Tammy R. Shutt
The papers in this issue of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Education* are linked through the theme of “Educating for Social Justice.” There is a concentration of thought on social justice issues that would affect education on multiple levels.

Social justice is a concept that involves providing equity, respecting cultural diversity, promoting justice for the oppressed, eliminating the marginalization of certain individuals and groups, and aiming toward an overarching goal of understanding each other which will instill societal hope. All of these phrases are admirable, if not, utterly necessary in a society as pluralistic as found in North America. Survival as nations and societies is dependent upon fast, even steps toward realistic social justice.

Yet, as a concept, it is not enough. Social justice must become a practice for there to be fruit that changes society. With this said, *educating for social justice* becomes the roots and trunk of a social justice tree that bears good fruit. According to Marshall and Oliva (2006), in their book *Leadership for Social Justice: Making Revolutions in Education*, “to move forward for social justice, educators need the strategies, revolutionary ones in some contexts, for rethinking school practices to better meet diverse students’ needs and the language to translate intellectual concepts into practice and experiential understandings” (p. 4). Institutions that train teachers and the schools they serve must be lighthouses for practices that honor every human being in an equitable manner, thus shining enlightening rays upon the future society. If nations need social justice to survive, then schools are the breeding grounds for practice. Our teachers must provide the nourishment for fruitful practice through planned lessons, exemplary habits, mentoring, and corrective action.

I like to get personal in my reflection on these essential concepts/practices discussed in the *JIE*, so I am going to tell a social justice story from my childhood.

Playing football in junior high was a passion. I loved it, though I was not the most athletic. However, junior high was far from a passion. I hated it, though football kept pulling me back. In Texas, I went to a junior high that predominantly served one
ethnic group. Gangs were formed, and I was on the outside. Many times, I found myself fighting 5-6 boys at one time, not out of choice, but necessity. When my little sister came to school, I hid pipes and chains in the tall grass outside the school yard in order to protect her from those gangs. Thank God, I never chose to use them. Hell was real between the ages of 12-14 for me.

Coach Martin recruited me to come out for summer practice sessions for high school football. I was excited for two reasons – football for one, and two, I was leaving junior high. We, the incoming players, all lined up that first day of practice, and Coach had the upper classmen select one player that they would mentor during three weeks of summer practice and the first three weeks of high school. Well, my name echoed out through that gym, and it sounded like I was actually saying “Oscar Mayer Wiemers.” Name recognition is something! The middle linebacker heard my name and he immediately chose me with the first choice. He was the biggest, blackest man I had ever seen (using terminology I may have used back then), and I was scared because of my experience back at junior high. Here we go again! However, things were different this time around because he was a perfect gentleman – he taught me, coached me, guided me, cared for me, and helped me become a different person, a better person. As a running back, I never wanted to meet him on the practice field, but off the field, I always looked forward to his mentorship. He provided me with social justice – equity and understanding. (By the way, he did not choose me because of the sound of my name, but because my older brother had been drum major and he recognized the name from games.)

This person I was thinking the “worst” about, was actually being a “better” human being to me. And, I became someone who respected and served others with different backgrounds because of a linebacker who served me. Coach Martin became a great teacher in my perfect hindsight. He was educating for social justice and I was a recipient.

You probably have a multitude of stories that you could tell that illustrate social justice from your personal lives and those shared around you. Though my story was inverse social justice to some degree (I was only a minority in the school, not in the society
at large), it serves as an example of how teacher practices can make an enormous difference in individual student lives. Changing lives is our goal in education! Right?

Roger W. Wiemers  
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In fitting with my illustrative story, the photo above is a great example of social justice in practice - triplets playing football together, though one has cerebral palsy. The teams, the coaches, the players, the fans, and the referees are all involved in the practice of giving justice/understanding where needed.
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Resisting the Binaries: Student Achievement and Social Justice as Complementary Discourses in Teacher Education

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Abstract

This article discusses two teacher education discourses which are often framed as oppositional. It suggests that student achievement and social justice discourses represent complementary, not opposing, outcomes of teacher education.

Introduction

Teacher education has increasingly come under attack (Ballou & Podursky, 1997, 1999, 2000; Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1999a & b). Criticisms have focused upon inadequate curricula, graduation standards and admission criteria, poor quality control and faculty who are disconnected from the real-world of teaching (Levine, 2006; Farkas & Duffet, 2010). Recently, policy makers have promoted the notion that teachers and teacher educators should be held accountable for the achievement outcomes of their students (Noell & Burns, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2009; National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010; First to the Top, 2010). Yet, many teacher educators appear to hold philosophically divergent goals to accountability, preferring the progressive outcomes of social justice to student achievement (Farkas & Duffet, 2010). This article examines this new discourse of student achievement for teachers and suggests that the discourse of student achievement and accountability is complementary, rather than oppositional, to the discourse of social justice in teacher education.
The Discourse of Student Achievement and Accountability

Teacher effectiveness as defined by the measure of student achievement is fast becoming a dominant discourse in education. According to this new discourse of teacher effectiveness, a major outcome for teachers should include measures of student achievement (Rockoff, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2005; Harris & Sass, 2008). Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation (2002), school districts have used student assessment scores to track and report areas of strength and weakness to the public. In March 2010, The U.S. Department of Education announced that two states, Tennessee and Delaware, won the first round of Race-to-the-Top grant money, an award based partially on the states’ proposed use of student achievement data in school reform. Both of these states had recently passed state legislation requiring student achievement data to be used in teacher and principal evaluations.

Tennessee and Delaware are not the only states to enact legislation aimed at changing the ways in which teachers are evaluated. In fact, Race to the Top defined “effective teachers” to mean “teachers whose students achieve acceptable rates (at least one level of an academic year) of student growth” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 12). Several states appear to have adopted that definition of the effective teacher as well. California, Maine, Nevada, Illinois, Michigan, Connecticut, Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, and Oklahoma all passed legislation in 2010 requiring or allowing optional uses of student achievement data in future teacher evaluations (Zinth, 2010; National Conference of State Legislatures, 2010).

The U.S. Department of Education and state legislators are not alone in promoting student achievement as a measureable outcome for teachers. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) proposed new goals for teacher education in 2010, including increased accountability and suggested using measures of student achievement data to assess
teacher candidates and teacher education programs. Eight states comprise the NCATE Alliance for Clinical Teacher Preparation: California, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee. Each of the states will be implementing massive reform in teacher education. NCATE’s 2010 call to action, *Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice*, promotes fostering collaborative relationships with school districts, longer residency programs for teacher educators, and “implementing accountability systems based on assessment measures of graduates’ and programs’ performance through value-added and other measures in state and district longitudinal data systems” (p. 25). The value added outcomes of teachers will be traced back to the teacher education institution which trained them in two states, Louisiana and Tennessee (Noell & Burns, 2006; First to the Top, 2010). The student achievement outcomes of teacher graduates will soon comprise a significant measure of teacher education institutions in those states. The accountability push is also coming from private citizens. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supports the notion of raising student achievement by supporting good teachers and firing those who are not. The Gates’ initiative will be spending $290 million in Tampa, Pittsburgh, Memphis, and Los Angeles to support policies to judge teachers based upon student achievement (Bloomberg Businessweek, 2010).

**Views of Education Professors and Policy Makers: A Mismatch of Discourses?**

The discourse of student achievement and accountability as a valid outcome of teachers and teacher education institutions is helping to mold a new definition of teacher and teacher education effectiveness. But, do teacher educators agree with policy makers or with the public, in general? A recent study of 716 teacher educators at four-year colleges in the United States titled *Cracks in the Ivory Tower: The Views of Education Professors Circa 2010* (Farkas & Duffet, 2010) suggested that
professors of education do not value the accountability goals of school districts and choose social justice as the most valued outcome of teacher education. Are the social justice goals of professors of education and the accountability needs of the school district at odds with each other? Is the major philosophical discourse of the majority of education professors nationwide unaligned with the accountability discourse of school districts as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTTT) in states that won that competition in 2010?

According to Farkas and Duffet (2010) who investigated the policy views of education professors nationwide, “only 24 percent [of professors of education] believe it absolutely essential to produce teachers who understand how to work with the state’s standards, tests and accountability systems” (p. 4). Only 30% of university professors support financial incentives for “teachers whose students routinely score higher than other students on standardized tests” (p. 10). The authors suggested that while professors of education instill a love of learning and value student engagement with their students, they fail to address the realities of accountability in the K-12 arena with the very people who will be held accountable in those systems. Only 24% of education professors who took the survey felt it was absolutely essential to produce “teachers who understand how to work with the state’s standards, tests and accountability systems” (p. 14). Teacher education professors tend not to support No Child Left Behind and only 10% would renew the current law “as is” or “with minimal changes” (p. 41).

When identifying the philosophies that drove their instruction, 68% of education professors chose “being a change agent who will reshape education by bringing new ideas and approaches to the public schools” (Farkas & Duffet, 2010, p. 22). Only 26% of professors chose “work effectively with the realities of today’s public schools—e.g. state mandates, limited budgets, beleaguered administrators” (Farkas & Duffet, 2010, p.22) as a philosophy that drove their work. Eighty four percent of teacher
educators believe that the correct role of teachers is to be “a facilitator of learning” not a “conveyor of knowledge” (Farkas & Duffet, 2010, p. 9).

With such a disconnect between education professor views about their guiding philosophies and a new discourse aimed at student achievement measures, it appears that the goals of policy makers and teacher educators are at odds. What are legitimate outcomes for teacher education programs? The question of outcomes attempts to define the performance goals of teacher education—what should teacher candidates be able to know and do (Cochran-Smith, 2001)? While the “outcomes question” is important, it appears to be framed as oppositional—one discourse must win while the other is made invalid.

Linguist George Lakoff popularized the notion of using frames to think about political issues. He suggested that people come to understand issues by applying a conceptual frame, often without consciously being aware of the process (Lakoff, 2004; 2003). Lakoff suggested that frames are often unexamined and are part of our taken-for-granted assumptions about the ways we think about particular issues. For example, love relationships are often framed in two ways: as a business partnership or as two complementary parts creating one whole. Whether the relationship is working, or is seen as unsuccessful, will depend upon the frame that is applied, usually without conscious acknowledgement of the frame used as the metric (Lakoff & Grady, 1998). Each time a frame is used, it reinforces various views we have about an issue and, perhaps, reduces the issue to that particular frame being presented (Scheufele, 2004). Frames are mental structures used to think about words. For example, the villain is bad; the hero is good. Using a frame shapes our cognitive structures (Lakoff, 2004). Frames appear to be neutral and true, without acknowledging the power interests that will be served and those interests excluded when using the frame.
Discourses tend to be presented within frames. Discourses are attempts at framing truth by shaping how we think about issues. Discourse refers to the regulative and productive ways in which power is connected with “truths” in society. Foucault (1988) used a regime of truth to suggest that truth could never be found outside of power relations. Societies determine regimes of truth by determining which discourses are allowed to name truth and which are not. Discourses are attempts at these truths. They are often framed in opposition to another discourse, such that there is a struggle to truths (Gore, 1993).

A discourse,
is a system of rules regulating the flow of power (both positive and juridical) which serves a function of promoting interests in a battle of power and desires . . . imagine a series of circles each of which constitutes a discourse. One could name them psychoanalytic discourse, discourse of sexuality, incarceration discourse, prisoner’s discourse, university discourse, and so on. No discourse stands alone and no discourse is complete. (Brown, 2000, p. 34)

The way that discourses are framed impacts how we perceive them and how we view them in relation to other notions of truth. The discourses of student achievement and social justice in teacher education have been framed in opposition to each other. But, where is the power in this frame? Who benefits from this framing of teacher educators? The Thomas B. Fordham Institute’s website (n.d.) describes Farkas and Duffet’s (2010) research in the following way:

The Fordham Institute’s new national survey of education school professors finds that, even as the U.S. grows more practical and demanding when it comes to K-12 education, most of the professoriate simply isn’t there. They see themselves more as philosophers and agents of social change, not as master craftsmen sharing tradecraft. They also resist some promising reforms such as tying teacher pay to student test scores. Still, education
professors are reform-minded in some areas, including tougher policies for awarding tenure to teachers and final incentives for those who teach in tough neighborhoods.

(para. 1)

In this synopsis of the research, we begin to see the framing of the discourses of teacher educators as polarized groups, a frame which is more fully developed within the analysis of the data. This frame suggests that one discourse promotes valid educational reform and the other resists it. Farkas and Duffet (2010) found that professors of teachers tend to value social justice and are “often at odds with today’s dominant policy trends and educational practices” (p. 14). They suggest that there are two types of teacher educators and that they have competing world views: the Reformers and the Defenders. The Reformers agree with the statement, “that the teacher education system needs fundamental overhaul of many changes (i.e. rejecting the view that the U.S. system of university-based teacher education works very well and needs only minor tinkering” (p. 46). The Defenders are “mostly content with traditional teacher training and schools of education as they are” (p. 46). The use of the frame “Reformers” suggests a group of professors who are discontented with teacher education and the status quo. These professors strongly favor “holding teacher education programs more accountable for the quality of the teachers they graduate” (p. 48) The use of the frame “Defenders” suggests a larger group of professors happy with the status quo in teacher education. These professors believe that “teacher education programs are often unfairly blamed for the problems facing public education (p. 48). Using these frames reinforces the view that Reformer professors value accountability and Defender professors view more traditional notions of teacher education, including views on social justice, at the exclusion of the other discourse.

Are the Reformers the heroes and the Defenders the villains in this Lakoffian frame? It appears they have been framed as such. Research on both sides of the political spectrum may be framed
in this way, appearing neutral and value free. Taken-for-granted assumptions about the values inherent in the frame are implicit, but unclaimed. Teacher educators are framed within one of two discourses and in doing so, the frame itself becomes regulative and tacit. The dichotomous frame Reformer or Defender becomes understood as the truth so obviously that it need not be stated explicitly (Brookfield, 1995).

**Resisting the Binaries Between Discourses**

The discourse of student achievement and the discourse of social justice appear to be framed in opposition to each other in the question of what represents a valid outcome of teacher education. Yet, this outcomes question, “which truth is true,” is unproductive in that both of the discourses are aimed at valid outcomes of teacher education. The privileging of one discourse over another furthers a hierarchical model in which one discourse must contend with denouncing the other discourse in order to be dominant (Foucault, 1980). Is the Reformer/Defender frame accurate or does it create a false binary, one that creates an unnatural chasm between the two discourses?

Creating a binary between those teacher educators who value social justice and those who value accountability as outcomes of their work furthers the notion of a singular solution to the goals of teacher education by villainizing the other discourse. Social justice and student achievement outcomes are not mutually exclusive. Both social justice and student achievement are desired outcomes of teacher education and each outcome goal is complementary to the other, rather than competing. Is the outcome of teacher education student achievement OR social justice? A better question concerning outcome goals might be, can teacher education be framed to support BOTH discourses? By resisting the tendency to frame the discourses of teacher education outcomes as binaries—one discourse may prevail only
at the expense of the other—it becomes apparent that the two goals are both valid and may even validate the other.

Viewed this way, student achievement and social justice are not oppositional discourses in teacher education. In fact, social justice is a logical outcome of student achievement. Teachers may be the single most important factor in student achievement (Rivkin, et al., 2005; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). New value added measures being used to evaluate educators suggest that teachers may affect the achievement outcomes of their students regardless of the students’ socio-economic or cultural backgrounds (Sanders & Horn, 1994; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). According to Rivkin, Hanuschek and Kain (2005) effective teachers are the most important school-based factor influencing school achievement—more important than class size, school size, afterschool program quality, or which school a student attends. And, according to Haycock and Hanuschek (2010),

An analysis of data from Los Angeles found that the impact of individual teachers is so great that providing top-quartile teachers rather than bottom quartile teachers for four years in a row would be enough to completely close the achievement gap between white and African American students. (p. 49)

Clearly, social justice outcomes are directly tied to student achievement outcomes. The goal of social justice in teacher education is to promote the learning of basic skills, complex thinking and reasoning skills, as well as critical thinking and inquiry for all students (Cochran-Smith, et al, 2009). The goal of student achievement as a discourse of teacher education is synonymous. Both discourses promote student learning. The discourse of student achievement elevates the discourse of social justice.

This analysis is not meant to suggest that there are no differences between the discourses of teacher education. Yet, those differences need not be viewed in an either/or continuum of
choice. While teacher educators may be leery of student achievement measures being used for teacher outcomes for various reasons (McCaffrey, D. Koretz, D. Lockwood, J. & Hamilton, L., 2004; Braun, H. 2005; National Association of State Boards of Education, 2005) this reticence does not constitute an outright dismissal of the discourse and to frame it as so is disingenuous. Can teacher educators value both student achievement and social justice as outcomes of their work? The answer is a resounding, “Yes!”

Conclusion

A complementary framework of teacher education outcomes which includes both discourses represents a more productive and unified way to frame teacher education outcomes. The discourses may be viewed as interdependent, not oppositional, outcomes for teacher education. There is more common ground between the student achievement/accountability discourse and the social justice discourses than is acknowledged because the frame itself serves to govern how we think about them. It is improbable to believe that the Defenders do not support student achievement. It is equally inconceivable to assume that the Reformers who promote the use of student achievement as a goal necessarily discount social justice as a legitimate outcome for teachers. The problem is in the way the discourses are framed, as singular outcomes, with one surviving only at the expense of the other. They are framed as binaries when, in fact, these frames of discourses complement and promote the existence of the other discourse—they interrelate. To understand both discourses as such, it is necessary to reframe them.

Frame transformation involves a process of redefinition (Snow, et al., 1986) Teacher education discourses may be reframed as interrelated and complementary, rather than as competing. Consider teacher educators saying, “I value social justice, which is why I also support student achievement as an outcome for teachers.” Or, “Student achievement is central to teacher education, which is why social justice is so important.”
Reformers and Defenders professors of teacher education programs may have more common outcome goals than have been suggested in the framework of binary discourses. Theorizing them as interdependent discourses in a new frame of teacher education requires a more complex way of thinking, one that promotes inquiry as a necessary process of making meaning, and the ability to think about issues in a non-dualistic way. The framing of competing discourses for teacher education can be replaced and transformed into a frame that represents the interrelatedness and complementary value of both discourses. Teacher education can pair both student achievement and social justice discourses as desirable outcomes. Resisting the binaries requires the courage to step out of the either/or continuum and into the spaces between.

*The author would like to thank Dr. Tammy Shutt for her helpful comments.

References


Assessment Policies for English Language Learners: A Question of Accountability

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Introduction

Contemporary American education reflects the escalating number of students who come from non-English speaking circumstances. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2011a), Office of English Language Acquisition (OLEA), within many school districts in our nation, the English Language Learner (ELL) population is the fastest growing, representing more than half of all students initially entering at the kindergarten level (see definitions section at the end of this article). Broad definitions of language minority statutes estimate numbers that range from 10 million to 5.5 million LEP students or roughly 22% of all school age children (U.S. Department of Education, 2011b). New No Child Left Behind regulations demand flexibility and accountability for Limited English Proficient Students. As a result, the U.S. Department of Education issued a new Title I regulation that will help recently arrived ELL students learn English and other subjects while giving states and local school districts flexibility on assessment and accountability under NCLB. Yet, against the backdrop of divergent political differences regarding immigration, with the evolution of federal policy from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into Title VII of the Bilingual Education Act, and ultimately the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, ELL students are mandated to meet standards that, by definition, they cannot meet. This puts forth a convincing reason to analyze assessment policies and accountability standards with which English language learners are identified and subsequently classified.
Most statutes define English language learners or ELLs in the following ways: (a) an individual with an inability to speak and understand English, referring not only to a total lack of English language, but also to a limited proficiency in the language; (b) coming from an environment where a language other than English is dominant, or the native language is a language other than English; or (c) a situation where a language other than English has had a significant impact on an individual’s level of English language proficiency.

Limited English Proficiency is defined by the OELA as having substantial difficulty when speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language such that an individual has limited opportunity to learn successfully in the classroom where the language of the instruction is English or to participate fully in American society (Zehler, 2003). Definitions such as these suggest that students who have limited English proficiency are those who, by some measure, have insufficient English language capabilities to succeed in an all-English classroom environment. According to OLEA, while acronyms that describe the population have changed, the core definition remains unchanged in its intent.

There is a probable undercount of students with this status, as the ELL student population in the United States is estimated to have increased 72% between 1992 and 2002. Spanish is currently the most prevalent language, accounting for 3 out of 4, or 76.9%, of all ELL students in Grades K-12. Also rapidly increasing are African and Asian languages. The nearly 5.5 million ELL students, as reported by the State Department of Education, are in large urban school districts, often with a 40% attrition rate and often with unattractive physical plants. HR 1804, Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994), included goals that by the year 2000 all children will start school ready to learn, all adults will be literate, all students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement, and all teachers will have access to high quality training to prepare all students for the next century.
de Casal & Armstrong

(U.S. Department of Education, 1998). OELA's mission is to include various elements of school reform in programs created to aid the language minority agenda. These include a focus on high academic standards, school accountability reinforced by data, professional development, family literacy, early reading, and partnerships between parents and the communities. However, according to the National Education Goals Panel (NEPG), recent data suggests that 40% of U.S. teachers have had ELL students in their classroom. Of these teachers only 29% have received any training or certification, 93% of such teachers are identified as non-Hispanic whites, and only 42% speak the native language of their ELL students. A mere 10% are certified in bilingual education and 8% in English as a second language education. The issue is not just language or language skills, but one of adequate and appropriate education for bilingual student in an arena where the national shortage of teachers is estimated at nearly 200,000. Prospective bilingual and ESL teachers need to create challenging learning environments for language-minority students (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

ELL students differ from the norming population for a variety of reasons, some of which are especially subtle. The effects will be reiterated in all areas of the student’s education, particularly in assessments, where there is a lack of reliable, unbiased testing instruments to test ELL students’ in academic content achievement in student’s primary languages. Since the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, English language learners have become an expanding focus of apprehension as educators struggle to execute instructional approaches and programs to ensure academic achievement for these students. As a result, an imminent disaster looms. Among the environmental and cultural factors that pose overwhelming challenges are politically driven educational reform, matters of non-compliance, failing urban schools, immigration rights, and significant teacher shortages. Such factors may well lead to probable analysis and subsequent change of current best practices for educators of English language learners.
The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how current assessment policies fail to meet the burgeoning needs of linguistically different learners in the United States, as the nation struggles to find solutions to the flood of immigrants and subsequently, Spanish speaking students in the classroom. The first section of this article will chronicle the evolution of federal policy to the NCLB Act and its current status, as it pertains to ELLs. This article also demonstrates current practices and considerations regarding accountability and assessment. Finally, this work will analyze the implications of current assessment policies on ELL students, and ultimately link legislative policy to legal issues in ELL assessment policies.

**Case Law**

**Evolution of Federal Policy**

The legal rationale for providing equitable access to learning is that the rights of linguistically diverse students in public school settings in the United States are protected by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, the federal legislation found in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974. Title VI requires compliance throughout a school district if any activity in the school district is supported through federal funds. In addition, discrimination against linguistically diverse students can potentially be considered a form of national origin discrimination under Title VI (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Nonetheless, according to Crawford (2004), technically the United States has never had a deliberately planned out a comprehensive language policy that is national in scale. Crawford asserts that the U.S. language policies have been ad hoc responses to immediate needs or political pressures, which means they have often been contradictory and inadequate to cope with changing times.

For much of our nation’s history, laxity has predominated in conditions of language policy. Both bilingual education and
discrimination of other languages have flourished at different times in U.S. history. In the 19th century bilingual schools in German, French, Spanish, Norwegian, and Cherokee gained popularity as discrimination against these same groups developed as a result of World War I, and repression of colonized groups (Crawford, 2000).

In *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923), Robert Meyer was found guilty of violating a 1919 statute that mandated English-only instruction in all public and private schools. This was during a period of anti-German xenophobia in the U.S., which allowed foreign language instruction only after the student had reached Grade 8. Meyer was guilty of teaching a Bible story in German to a 10-year-old, and subsequently, the Nebraska Supreme court upheld the conviction. However, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the decision in a seven-to-two vote. In summary, the determination was made based on whether the statute as understood and applied, unreasonably infringed on the rights guaranteed to the defendant in the Fourteenth Amendment: “No state…shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law” (National Archives, n.d.). In essence, it was determined that the mere knowledge of the German language cannot be reasonably looked upon as harmful, but is commonly regarded as desirable and helpful. In the original allegation, it was said the German teaching violated a statute that had an intent to promote civic development by inhibiting training and education of “immature tongues before they have mastered the mother tongue of all children reared in this state” (*Meyer v. Nebraska*, 1923). However, in conclusion of the case, the statute as applied was considered illogical and without reasonable association to protecting the health, morals, or understanding of the average child. The court determined the student’s right to acquire knowledge, the parent’s right to control the education of their child, and a teacher’s right to practice their profession. However, the Court was unable to delineate a prohibition on language discrimination, and it left intact a state mandate for English as the means of instruction.
The Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, altered the way language-minority students are taught in the United States. Its intent was to promote equal access and funding to curriculum, to train educators, and to cultivate achievement among all students, as well as recognize the unique educational disadvantages that language minority students face.

In 1974, the class action suit, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), was brought by non-English speaking Chinese students against the school board responsible for the operation of San Francisco Unified School District, in search of relief against the disparate educational opportunities which are alleged to violate, *inter alia*, the Fourteenth Amendment. In other words, it was a civil rights issue, where the inability to speak and understand the language of instruction excluded the minority student group from effective participation in the educational program offered by the school district. Up until this point, immigrant children arriving in U.S. schools, with little or no English, faced so called sink or swim instruction. According to the U.S. Supreme Court, this is a violation of their civil rights, and the *Lau* decision remains the major precedent regarding educational rights of language minorities. Children are guaranteed an opportunity to “meaningful education” regardless of their language background. In the Lau decision, the district must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by the non-English Chinese speaking students in the district. According to Justice William O. Douglas, to require anything less, that is, to continue to blaming the children for their language deficiency as the San Francisco school board had done, would make a mockery of public education. The Court did stop short of ordering bilingual education as the only remedy for discrimination. The Lau Remedies evolved from a document designed to describe appropriate educational steps that would satisfy the Supreme Court's Lau mandate (Crawford, 1996). Subsequently in 1981, the department determined the remedies were interfering and arduous and so were withdrawn and replaced with what was

This decision of the nation's highest Court was almost immediately followed by Congressional action reaffirming the right of language-minority students to equal educational opportunity. Passed within weeks of the Lau decision, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) imposed on state and local education agencies a confirmatory obligation to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers confronting language-minority students.

In a Federal Court Case, *Serna v. Portales* (1974), the court established that Spanish surnamed citizens did not reach the same achievement levels as their non-Spanish surnamed counterparts. Hence, the Court ordered the Portales School District to devise and put into action a bilingual/bicultural program. Federal civil rights authorities did take this to the next step with the *Lau remedies*. The Lau remedies evolved from a document designed to describe appropriate educational steps that would satisfy the Supreme Court's Lau mandate (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1977).

These cases were essentially involving Hispanic and Asian students, but in *Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School Children v. Ann Arbor School District* (1979), a federal court judge ordered special assistance for speakers of Black English. *The Lau Remedies* placed a new burden of proof on the federal government. By mandating bilingual instruction versus encouraging school districts to simply try the assistance, the legislation produced increased pressure to require conclusive evidence of the pedagogical benefits. Consequently, the political paradox of bilingual education remains. If these measures had not been forced upon school districts rather than simply asking them to implement a marginal experiment, some of the most successful instructional models for ELLs might not have been expanded upon into current practices today (Crawford, 1998a).
According to the melting pot myth (Foley, 1945), anyone who immigrates to the U.S. must conform to our ways, and the idea of voting in any language other than English is civilly offensive to many Americans. However, in 1975, bilingual ballots were authorized by the 1975 amendments to the Voting Rights Act, and are the most emblematically charged elements of language policy. As argued by Altarriba and Heredia (2008), literacy tests were historically used to disenfranchise linguistic minorities (p. 223). The new bilingual voting rights were not an entitlement bestowed on all Americans, but a compensatory measure which addresses historically excluded Hispanics, Asian Americans, and American Indians from accessing the political process.

Meanwhile, the Federal Courts developed flexible, non-intrusive standards for assessing a school district’s compliance under the EEOA. In Castaneda v. Pickard (1981) the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered a three-part analysis for determining whether a school district has taken the appropriate actions to overcome the language barriers confronting language-minority students. The three tests are to determine: (a) whether the school system is providing a program structured by educational research theory that is recognized as sound by a number of experts in the field, or is at least seen as a legitimate experimental instructional strategy; (b) whether the programs, resources, personnel, and practices actually used by the school system are reasonably designed to execute effectively the educational theory adopted by the school; and (c) whether the school’s program succeeds, after a justifiable trial period, to produce results representing that the language barriers confronting students are actually being overcome.

Three Court decisions that followed Castaneda v. Pickard (1981) reveal the impact of that case on subsequent rulings regarding the legal responsibilities of educational agencies serving English language learners. In the Supreme Court case, Plyler v. Doe (1982), the court ruled that undocumented (alien) students cannot be denied access to schools, and schools are not agents for enforcing immigration laws. In Keyes v. School District No. 1
(1973), the Court employed the three-part Castaneda test to evaluate Denver's programs for language-minority students under the Equal Educational Opportunity Act. The Court found that Denver had failed the test’s second component. Specifically, the school district had not adequately implemented the program it had chosen to meet the needs of its language-minority students.

In another case, the Court ruled in *Gomez v. Illinois* (1987) that a state education agency can be sued for failure to take the appropriate action required by the Equal Educational Opportunity Act. The Court ruled that educational agencies must comply with the three-part Castaneda test. In both *Keyes v. School District 1* and *Gomez v. Illinois*, the Courts strongly stressed the accountability of state and local education agencies to allocate the resources necessary for effective implementation of their planned programs.

In November 1997, anti-bilingual activists in California had collected enough petitions from registered voters to qualify for the primary ballot. According to Crawford (1999), it began with a group of discontented Spanish-speaking parents who removed their children from school to protest that their children had not been taught English (p. 312). The campaign, known as Proposition 227, was lead by a Republican candidate for Governor named Ron Unz, who through a confusing and poorly drafted initiative, attempted to end bilingual education in California. At a minimum, the initiative would outlaw the use of languages other than English to instruct any student in California public schools, a restriction that reverts back to *Meyer v. Nebraska*. The focus on “English for the Children” purportedly avoided rhetoric of ethnic intolerance, while promoting principles of equal opportunity, parental choice, and research-based pedagogical efficacy (García, & Curry-Rodríguez, 2000). However, the dismantling of successful two-way bilingual programs already in place, and unproven pedagogical approaches, violated children’s civil rights as guaranteed by *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), which is to receive effective assistance in
overcoming language barriers that obstruct their access to the curriculum. Proposition 227 would allow civil lawsuits to enforce English-only mandates and hold teachers personally liable when using another language in their classroom (Crawford, 1998b). Proposition 227, approved by voters in June 1998, eliminated most bilingual education programs and replaced them with 1-year English immersion programs in California public schools. Its goal was to teach English more quickly to students who in the past could spend years in bilingual education (California State Department of Education, 2000).

The initiative was adjudicated in both state and federal court settings, with the courts finding that Proposition 227 is properly aligned with federal and state rulings associated with the education of ELL students. It is likely that the political and educational effects of Proposition 227 will have substantive influence on the future of bilingual education policy and its practice within and outside the state of California. Opponents of the policy, supported by documentation of utilizing the components, have pointed out that the proposition is completely out of alignment with recent federal policy. In their view, effective classroom practices and new theoretical formulations for these same students are essential (Gándara, Larson, Mehan, & Rumberger, 1998, 2006).

The debate regarding the education of limited ELL or ELL students in the U.S. has focused on the instructional use of the students’ native language. Dialogue of this matter has included cross-disciplinary discourse involving psychology, linguistics, sociology, politics, and education (Baker, 1990; Baker & de Kanter, 1983; Cummins, 1979; García, 1983; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Stanford Working Group on Federal Education Programs for Limited-English-Proficient Students, 1993; Troike, 1981).
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Policies as They Concern Limited English Proficient Children

Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 1994 as part of the Improving America’s Schools Act (1994). In 2001, it was restructured to provide for an increased state role and was eliminated as part of the larger scope of school reform measures, now known as No Child Left Behind. Proposed by the Bush administration, it passed with little controversy, and with widespread bipartisan support. Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, federal funds continue to maintain the education of English language learners, but the money is spent in different ways than those funded under Title VII. New accountability provisions, such as the number of students reclassified as fluent in English each year, discourage the use of native language instruction. Now annual English assessments are established and mandated with measurable achievement objectives, and failure to show academic progress in English will be punished. The word bilingual has been expunged from the law, except in one provision that strikes the name of the federal office of Bilingual Education and Minority Affairs (OBEMLA) to be renamed, the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited-English-Proficient Students (OELALEAALEPS).

Under Title VII, The English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, provides for help and assistance to limited English proficient children, including immigrant children, to achieve high levels of academic comprehension in the English language. Limited English proficient children are mandated to meet the same “challenging state academic content as all children are expected to make” (Title VII, § 1111[b]1).

This act provides assistance and funding for state and local educational agencies to develop high-quality instructional
programming designed to prepare ELL students to enter an all-English classroom, as well as assistance to establish, implement, and sustain English language development for limited English proficient children, with reading as a critical focal point. Promoting parental and community participation in language instruction programs and developing highly qualified educators are integral to measurable proficient outcomes. Of critical significance is the purpose to “streamline instruction education programs into a program carried out through formula grant...to help limited English proficient children, while meeting challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards” (No Child left Behind Act, 2002, § 3102).

Invariably, the intent of the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, is to hold state and local educational agencies accountable for increases in English proficiency. Limited English proficient children are required to demonstrate improvement in English proficiency and achieve adequate yearly progress in core academic content knowledge, as described in section 1111(b)(2)(B). NCLB requires states to develop annual measurable achievement objectives for ELL students and mandates all students, including English language learners, meet annual measurable objectives in reading and math. Annual testing and reporting of student progress is required under NCLB.

The last section of NCLB, provides flexibility for state and local educational agencies to implement language instructional programs with scientifically based research on teaching limited English proficient children, as well as provide professional development for highly qualified teachers in the classroom where ELL students are being taught. The ultimate vision is that, given that annual achievement benchmarks are met, in the school year 2013-2014, 100% of public schools must have made Adequate Yearly Progress toward having all students meet or exceed
standards in reading and math, irrespective of language or special education needs.

Assessment of Limited English Proficient Students
Current Role and Parameters

The role of assessment is significant, in that there are at least three modes of formal assessment that are compulsory for ELL students in most school districts. An initial assessment of language proficiency and academic skills and abilities is essential as a student enters a new educational setting. Students bring a vast array of diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds, as well as significant cultural filters, which need to be assimilated into appropriate placement, instruction, or services. Ongoing assessment of student learning is a means to provide constant feedback of the effectiveness of instruction, and indicate areas in which modification in teaching strategies or methods are deemed necessary.

Finally, ELL students are required to participate in high-stakes testing programs (Abedi & Dietel, 2004), a way to make schools, districts, and state educational agencies accountable for their instructive progress. In addition to schools meeting Adequate Yearly Progress, the school district must also guarantee that students who are transitioned out of ELL programs are monitored appropriately, ensuring students continue to meet standards.

ELL program design elements include: access to the same facilities and testing environment as the overall student population; adequate and quality instructional materials; peer integration support; as well as qualified and trained staff, sufficient in number, to address the varying degrees of ability and languages of students in the classroom. Finally, parental notification of all ELL students is required, regarding notice of testing options, school activities, participation in ELLL programs, or district special programs.
Under the No Child Left Behind Act, all schools must show satisfactory yearly progress in making sure that all students achieve academic proficiency, to close the achievement gap (Abedi, 2004). The intent, “every child counts,” requires schools to include the academic achievement of all students, irrespective of language proficiency or special needs. In 2004, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced new policies to help English Language Learners (U.S. State Department of Education, 2004). The new flexibility allows Limited English Proficient students, during their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools, to have the choice of taking the reading/language arts content assessment, in addition to taking the English language proficiency assessment. They must take the mathematics content assessment, and are allowed accommodations. Of note, states may, but would not be required to, include results from the mathematics, or, if given, the reading/language arts assessment in their AYP calculations (U.S. State Department of Education, 2004), as mandated by the accountability requirements under NCLB.

Once an ELL student has been perceived to have attained English language proficiency, they exit the subgroup. These students are deemed more challenging for districts to demonstrate improvements after they leave the ELL program. The other new flexibility would, for AYP calculations, allow states up to 2 years before they must include the data from these students. As an alternative for states, this gives the state flexibility to permit schools and local education agencies (LEA) to receive credit for improving English proficiency from year to year. According to Paige, this new policy is designed to ensure that all our nation’s children get the quality education they deserve, regardless of their origins, and schools continue to get the assessment information they need to target their efforts and help all children get to grade level in reading and math (U.S. State Department of Education, 2004).

Subsequently, the new U.S. Department of Education (2006a) Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings announced the Final
Limited English Proficiency Regulations. The new Title I Regulation was proposed to help newly arrived ELL students acquire English and learn other subjects, while giving states and local school districts even greater discretion on accountability and assessment while continuing to hold them accountable under No Child Left Behind. Specifically, the Title I regulation defines a “recently arrived ELL student” as a student who has attended schools in the United States for 12 months or less. It allows states to exempt recently arrived ELL students from one administration of the state’s reading/language arts assessment (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1998). However, the number of students exempted must be reported for this reason. The regulation permits states to not count in AYP calculations recently arrived ELL students, for the math and or reading/language arts assessments (if taken). Of note, in response to concerns that schools, states, and districts get credit for the progress of ELL students, the new rules include policy options for states.

According to No Child Left Behind regulations, ELL is a classification or subgroup of students, which alters as students gain language proficiency. The final regulations regarding flexibility and assessment permits states to use former ELL student within the ELL category when making AYP determinations for up to 2 years after they no longer meet the state definition of Limited English Proficient student.

Through Title I and Title III, the No Child Left Behind Act provides more than $13 billion a year for LEP students who attend U.S. public schools and speak one of 440 different languages (Abedi, 2004). In 2006, the Department of Education initiated an ELL Partnership to provide states with technical assistance and resources to make content assessments more appropriate and accessible to ELL students (U.S. Department of Education, 2006a).
The No Child Left Behind Act has made the issue of closing the achievement gap, including the one between Hispanic and ELL students and their peers, of the utmost national priority. As part of this endeavor, all students in Grades 3 through 8, and once in high school, must take annual assessments, with scores disaggregated by student group so no child is left behind. Students are allowed individual or group accommodations, from the basics, such as directions read-aloud to assessments provided in the students’ native language.

Finally, the No Child Left Behind Act is promoted by the Department of Education as assistance for all families. New information and options are available to parents so they can make informed decisions about the education of their children. Detailed and easy-to-read, annual report cards, detailing student assessment results, are made public, and families with children in chronically underperforming schools now have options, including free tutoring and/or transfer to another public school.

**Discussion: Reason and Practicality**

Imagine a crowded classroom, in which you are a 9-year-old student taking your first annual, mandatory standardized test. You have been warned to stay seated, silent, and isolated from each other, while bubbling in pages of a test you find confusing, and mostly incomprehensible. Your total test time is 5 hours over the next 2 days and no matter your age or developmental endurance, you must participate. This is so called “test English,” the kind imposed by teachers, textbooks, and standardized tests. You are making progress with social use of English, the kind you use on the playground, but you do not use words such as “lull,” “jolt,” or “dreary” there. Your shoes feel too tight and you are thirsty, but you are not allowed to get up from your seat. Your teacher is staring at you, and seems irritated because you cannot possibly sit up straight for long, and your mind wanders to the events of the evening before. Music and shouting from the nearby apartment kept you from sleeping very well, and
your baby sister got most of the banana for breakfast this
morning. At first, you felt like you wanted to do well, and you
had practiced over the last few months at finding the main idea in
stories, and writing what your teacher called, “constructed
responses” over and over. In ESL class, you had a little extra
time to understand, but you still feel dumb anyway. You wonder,
“How do you know which bubble to color in, and why can’t I use
the eraser on my pencil?” You are starting to feel despair. You
can’t pronounce the words, and isn’t that a word that has three
different meanings, but sounds the same? You ask, “Can’t I stop
now?” Your teacher says “no,” and when boredom finally sets in,
you decide to fill in any bubble and just guess.

Perhaps the laws would be different if politicians had to spend
their days accordingly, attempting to perform on high pressure
tests, in which they did not comprehend the majority of the
written language, within rigid time lines, and with regimented
rules they barely understood in the spoken language. While the
intent of the law is a lofty and noble, unfortunately its approach
to school accountability is overly rigid, punitive, and has no
sound scientific research base. According to Crawford (2004), it
appears it is doing more harm than good for students who are
being left behind right now, in particular English language
learners. The law does little to tackle the most formidable
barriers to ELL students’ achievement: inequities in resources,
qualified, trained ELL teachers, poor or inadequate teaching
materials, substandard building facilities, and poorly designed
programs that lack research based instructional methods.

To succeed in school, ELL students must master core academic
subject matter assigned to all students at the same grade level,
and at the same time they need to achieve fluency in the English
language. According to Abedi and Dietel (2004), CRESST
research, supported by the National Assessment Progress test
results, some challenges for English language learners simply
have not appreciably changed over time. Historically, state
standardized tests indicate that ELL students’ performance is
20% to 30% below the norming population, and shows little improvement over several years. CRESST studies have also shown numerous times that English language learners perform “substantially lower” on language arts tests than they do on science and mathematics tests. In controlled studies measuring accommodation effects, it is substantiated that adapting and simplifying the language of test items, consistently produced performance improvement in ELL students without reducing the rigor of the test (Abedi & Dietel, 2004). The lack of reliability and test validity, as well as differences in languages and dialects, speaks to the implication that state tests are created essentially for native English speakers. As a matter of practicality, the use of state assessments may be unethical and/or illegal and not defensible. Test publishers provide evidence that ELL scores are valid and comparable to those of monolingual students.

Of significant weight is the question of unpredictability of ELL students as a subgroup. Rather, ELL is a classification, not a demographic group per se, because it changes from year to year. As some ELL students attain proficiency and exit the subgroup, new students, at varying levels of proficiency enter the same system, producing test scores worsened simply because they just have entered the program.

At the end of every second fiscal year, any LEA, or Local Educational Agency receiving Title II funds must provide an evaluation of its programs, which must be used for school improvement purposes (U.S. Department of Education, 2006b). This report must include progress of ELL students toward attaining English proficiency and meeting state academic standards, the scope of programs and activities provided for ELL students, and specific data, numbers and percentages of ELL students who achieve English proficiency by the end of each school year. An LEA that fails to make progress toward its annual measurable achievement objectives must send a special notification to parents of ELL students within 30 days.
Title III clearly indicates that the Department of Education “shall neither mandate nor preclude the use of a particular curricular or pedagogical approach to educating ELL children” (§ G). Leaving such decisions to states and school districts allows for a wide variety of differing interpretations. In considering the requisite to connect program design and professional development to scientifically based research, perhaps with a broad definition such as this, certain pedagogies could be rejected as unscientific. Indeed, No Child Left Behind relates a specific definition, featuring meticulous experimental procedures that have been used in relatively few studies to evaluate ELL students.

A nationwide study done by Harvard University’s Civil Rights Project analyzing data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) concludes that No Child Left Behind is failing to close racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps, and has had no significant impact on reading and mathematics achievement since it’s inception (Lee & Orfield, 2006). Rationally, if trends continue, only 25% to 35% of all students will meet the proficiency target in reading by 2014, and 30% to 64% will meet the math target. The law mandates 100% proficiency by then. With the added effect of giving failing grades to schools who have a higher percentage of students who do not pass the standardized test due to language or learning problems, the approach appears counterproductive to which the very ideals to which the NCLB aspires.

The NCLB’s definition of core academic subjects includes the arts, but many schools are cutting out these and other programs, such as recess and sports, in favor of the so-called kill-and-drill approach to learning skills to prepare students for higher test scores in math and language skills (Menken, 2006). Teachers now must focus on “barometer” students who are on the cusp, and may have the potential to save or fail the school in achieving Adequate Yearly Progress. Thus, students on either side of the bubble are less likely to receive adequate attention, ever-widening the achievement gap.
Finally, ELL students need “reasonable accommodations” according to the NCLB. However, neither “reasonable” nor “accommodations” are specifically defined, leaving state and district accommodation policies to vary widely. Some may provide valuable assistance to the ELL student in a testing situation, but more often than not, they do not address linguistic needs. Testing in the student’s native language is allowed for up to 5 years, but the NCLB does not encourage this practice, citing that it is provided “to the extent practical.” It is a linguistically sound concept that exact translation of test items is not possible, and at the same time have a valid test. The alternative, to construct new tests, is expensive and time consuming, neither of which characteristics NCLB allows for.

There are two instances in which accommodations can be made for testing ELL students. In the first, teachers and specialists have determined that their language proficiency is inadequate for testing without accommodations. The second case, in which accommodations are warranted, is when ELL students have separate educational needs. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 protects all students with special educational needs, and has laid the foundation for suitable accommodations for ELL students. There is an assortment of available accommodations, which are allowable depending on the individual student’s thoroughly documented special circumstance or need. Test proctors can provide extended time for testing, read the test instructions aloud, read the writing and mathematics items aloud, scribe for a student whose inability to legibly write interferes with test taking, provide extra breaks, or provide testing environments with fewer students and distractions. Research has established that accommodations do help students with special needs (Thompson, Blount, & Thurlow, 2002), and are intended as a way to level the playing field between students with and without special needs. It is the states’ responsibility to determine which students’ will be allowed accommodations.
Practical Federal Policy and Reasonable Expectations

To address the original premise, the following question remains: Are current assessment policies failing to meet the burgeoning needs of linguistically different learners in the United States, as the nation struggles to find solutions to the flood of immigrants and subsequently, students in the classroom?

Ruíz (1995) points out some assumptions and implications in ways of framing current language matters and the subsequent language policies that follow. “Language-as-problem” emphasizes language liability as a social problem, such as limited proficiency in the dominant language. From this viewpoint, policies that endeavor to ease LEP students into the mainstream by way of teaching English may enable students to advance in school. “Language-as-right” focuses on questions of social equality, or lack thereof. Do members of minority groups have unimpeded access to the educational system? Then it stands to reason that when language barriers are overcome, and by making academic English meaningful for LEP students, this will give them a chance to succeed. Finally, language-as-resource takes a human investment approach. According to Ruíz, stressing the social value of language by preserving minority languages and promoting fluency in two languages, encourages ethnic tolerance and allows us to meet national needs by embracing cultural diversity.

Ensuring that ELL students are not marginalized requires special efforts, because their rights and their access to appropriate instructional programs, suggests the need for critical attention and adjustment. Since 1990, the ELL student population has increased by 95%, while the total school age population has only increased 12% (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003). Further, growth in the Hispanic population accounts for an astounding 50% of overall population growth in the United States since the year 2000 and by 2050 the total population of Hispanics will be at least 103 million (Hispanic
Family Learning Institute, 2007). It appears that No Child Left Behind sets arbitrary and unrealistic targets for ELL student achievement, by narrowing curriculum, encouraging disproportionate amounts of test preparation time, throwing out previously scientifically based research practices for those which have not been tried or tested over time, and setting the stage for virtually all schools that serve ELLs to be labeled as failures. For the general population of students, it makes sense to set benchmarks for student achievement and then test the progress of students against these benchmarks. However, for ELL students particularly, it is unreasonable, unfair, and inequitable to measure them against the general population of students.

Without valid, reliable, culturally responsive assessments for ELL students, data that is yielded will be inaccurate and lack the summative information legislators and policy makers demand. In most cases, a single test that is incomprehensible to ELL students does not measure what they know.

There are some predictable and some less expected barriers to the accountability system of NCLB. Defining the subgroup itself is highly problematic, as there are multiple factors that are included in this definition, such as socioeconomic status, cultural and linguistic background, level of English proficiency, and amount of previous education experience. As students progress out of the subgroup, by nature of their language proficiency, new LEP students enter. Therefore, to hold schools accountable for failing to achieve what has not been proven possible, hardly makes sense. Consider the amount of time it is estimated for children to acquire English, particularly the academic language needed to navigate schooling. Research has substantiated that it takes 4 to 7 years to achieve grade level academic performance in English (Hakuta et al., 2000). The pace of acquisition varies widely, from 1 year to 6.5 years, according to several other studies (Crawford, 2004), so scientific research suggests that when it comes to acquiring English, there is no standard. Assessment results reveal little about the quality of education.
offered to LEP students. Yet, schools are ultimately held accountable for their demographic profile of students.

It is realistic and essential to develop high-quality, valid, and reliable instruments to assess ELL students. We must find a solution to measure academic achievement and progress in English acquisition, without demoralizing children and setting unrealistic goals to meet. We need tracking information and placement information, and need a way to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses, as well as tracking long term trends and holding schools accountable. Assessment is appropriate for certain purposes, but not with the punitive consequences NCLB enforces.

All teachers need to advance their education and qualifications to continue to meet the demands of the requirements of NCLB. Scientifically based research is an additional mandate. Directing funding toward all teacher education programs, which focus meeting the educational needs of ELL students, is essential. Ever expanding numbers of ELL students in American classrooms suggests that all teachers become well versed in ELL methods of instruction and pedagogy. Integrating useful tools for successful English acquisition, benefits an entire class, both English speaking and non-English speaking children. The methods are based in increasing comprehensible input with multiple avenues of exploring and capturing meaning, in order to navigate school and community.

Exploration and redefinition of the concept of bilingual education remains a useful and proven option. “English only” is not a practical approach. Comprehensive programs of English language development, while vigorously developing all domains of language (reading, writing, listening, speaking), and addressing the various levels of English fluency in the classroom, is essential, as is high quality instruction and materials and an inclusive school environment. Administrators and teachers must come to understand assessment data, and how reliable and valid
they are for English language learners. The most effective schools make data based monitoring a regular part of professional development, dialogue, and planning. Uniform standards are needed for the identification of English language learners as well as the adaptation of a more accurate assessment system to accommodate students who are not proficient in English.

Parents of all backgrounds, cultures and nationalities need to be educated regarding their options as consumers and advocates regarding the education of their children. Engaging parents in the educational process is essential.

Finally, policies need to be developed to facilitate student success. An important step is investing in current and future educators by increasing their knowledge base, so what is known to be effective will be used to implement programs for English language learners. Another important step is programs that are not punitive or remedial. Policy makers must realize more resources are required to educate a student who is not English dominant and that it is in our nation’s best interest to allocate resources appropriately. A fresh look at assessment and academic achievement policies, with regard to English language learners, and current NCLB mandates, will help ensure the academic success of the burgeoning immigrant population, but an even further reaching effect, the social and economic welfare of our nation.

Definitions Section

- English language learner (ELL): ELLs had been known by the term limited English proficient or LEP before 2005.
• Lau remedies: Supreme Court's Lau mandate became known as Lau remedies that evolved into de facto compliance standards, which permitted undue federal influence over educational decisions that could and should be made by local and state educational powers that be (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1977).

• National Education Goals Panel (NEPG): The NEGP is an independent agency in the Executive Branch, is a unique bipartisan and intergovernmental body created in 1990 to assess and report on state and national progress toward achieving the National Education Goals set forth by HR 1804 Goals 2000: Educate America Act (103rd Congress, 1994).

• Office of English Language Acquisition (OLEA): The mission of the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA) is to: (a) provide national leadership to help ensure that English language learners and immigrant students attain English proficiency and achieve academically and, (b) assist in building the nation's capacity in critical foreign languages (U.S. Department of Education, 2011b).

• Proposition 227: A measure that passed overwhelmingly on June 2, 1998. It virtually outlawed bilingual education in California. This initiative measure was submitted to the people in accordance with the provisions of Article II, Section 8 of the Constitution, titled Legal Standing and Parental Enforcement (§ 320). As detailed in Article 2 (commencing with Section 305) and Article 3 (commencing with Section 310), all California school children have the right to be provided with an English language public education. If a California school child has been denied the option of an English language instructional curriculum in public school, the child's parent or legal guardian shall have legal standing to sue for enforcement of the provisions of this statute, and if
successful shall be awarded normal and customary attorney's fees and actual damages, but not punitive or consequential damages.

References


U.S. Department of Education. (2000). *The provision of an equal education opportunity to limited-English proficient students.* Retrieved from
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/eeolep/index.html


Preparing Students with Disabilities for a Future in a Technologically Complex Global Economy

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-driven innovations are responsible for much of the increasing technological complexity in our lives. Just as today’s jobs call for more than a secondary school diploma, the jobs of tomorrow will demand a technology-literate workforce if adults are to be competitive in the global economy. All young people, including students with disabilities, must acquire technological literacy if they are to be able to achieve their potential and make a living. Thirteen percent of our students in American public schools are identified as having either a physical, behavioral, or cognitive disability. Many of these students are in the regular classrooms. STEM teachers, because of the demands in the laboratory, have particular professional challenges. There is evidence that students with disabilities do not experience full inclusion in the STEM curriculum. However, new assistive technologies, instructional strategies, and professional development opportunities exist to improve teachers’ knowledge and understanding of how to better meet the need of student with disabilities. Thus, STEM teachers can maximize learning opportunities for all. This paper describes the state of STEM education for students with disabilities and summarizes recommendations made by STEM teachers who have successfully diversified their teaching approaches and classroom organization.
Introduction

Entrepreneurship and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-driven innovations are responsible for much of the increasing technological complexity in our lives. Just as today’s jobs call for more than a secondary school diploma, the jobs of tomorrow will demand a technology-literate workforce if adults are to be competitive in the global economy. All young people must acquire technological literacy and a just and full opportunity to learn science and mathematics if they are to be able to achieve their potential and make a living. Federal law defines student with disability:

According to 34 CFR 668.142 [Title 34 – Education; Subtitle B -- Regulations of the Offices of the Department of Education; Chapter VI -- Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education; Part 668 -- Student Assistance General Provisions; Subpart J -- Approval of Independently Administered Tests; Specification of Passing Score; Approval of State Process], the term disabled student means a student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

In the United States, by federal regulation, public schools are required to provide students with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities (LD), as well as those with physical disabilities (PD), full participation in all educational opportunities. However, there is evidence that, particularly in STEM courses, we are not providing students with disabilities
full access. This paper describes some of the obstacles faced by students with disabilities to full access in STEM courses and the concerns science teachers may have. It recommends planning, instruction and classroom management strategies designed to remove preventable obstacles to achievement.

**STEM and Students with Disabilities**

In recognition of the increasing need for a STEM-trained workforce, the National Research Council (2011) authored a new framework for science learning standards, asserting that science, technology, engineering and mathematics are intertwined disciplines within science courses. For this paper, which focuses on STEM learning, *STEM* and *science* are used interchangeably.

With new national standards, STEM disciplines will soon be integrated into instructional planning and delivery in all the nations’ public schools. The new national standards for science learning are expected to make increased demands on teachers to provide fresh approaches as they embed inquiry, engineering and technology, *STEM*, into science instruction. What are the implications for teachers of students with disabilities?

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCIS) reported that 13% of public school students (Table 1), or about six and one half million, had a disability and are benefiting from federally supported programs (2010). The United States Department of Education reported that more than half of all students with disabilities in public schools received instruction in regular education classes. Table 1 below, describes the categories of disabilities with percentages of the total school population with these disabilities. Table 2 indicates that number has increased to more than 58% (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). The majority of students with disabilities are included in regular classrooms. Are they full participants?
Table 1. Students 3-21 years old in federally supported programs for disabled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Disability</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All disabilities</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific learning disabilities</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech or language impairments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual disability</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional disturbance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairments</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic impairments</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health impairments2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual impairments</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf-blindness</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic brain injury</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental delay</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# rounds to zero

Table 2. Percentage distribution of students 6 to 21 years old served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, by educational environment and type of disability: Fall 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of disability</th>
<th>Regular school, time outside general class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students with disabilities</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific learning disabilities</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech or language impairments</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual disability</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional disturbance</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairments</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic impairments</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health impairments</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual impairments</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf-blindness</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic brain injury</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental delay</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Students with Disabilities in the Science Class

In 1994, Weisgarber reported on interviews carried out by the American Institute for Research that revealed that attitudes stemming from lack of teacher training were barring students’ full participation in STEM courses. Students with disabilities continue to report that they are unable to fully participate with their classmates in STEM classes (Rule, Stefanich, Haselhuhn, & Peiffer, 2009).
A survey of science classrooms in most schools would reveal that, while buildings have been modified to accommodate students with disabilities, unfortunately the modifications stop short of providing all the possible assistive technologies that would allow students to fully participate in science classes. Teachers may not feel qualified to deal with students with cognitive, sensory, or motor disabilities. They rarely have sufficient practical training to anticipate the needs. Differentiating instruction may be problematic. They may lack awareness of the available assistive technology. Another problem is the lack of suitable equipment.

According to Rule et al (2009), educators hold a strong belief that students with disabilities have the capacity to do well in STEM subjects, but teachers lack the practical knowledge of how to accommodate individual needs and to differentiate instruction. Students with vision and/or hearing impairments, mobility impairments, speech impairments, or physical height sufficient to reach laboratory benches are a concern for teachers underprepared to modify instruction or provide assistive technology. While highly qualified science teachers are well trained in the safe management of the laboratory they do have legitimate concerns about all students being safe in the lab. There is a shortage of well-qualified teachers (Ingersoll and Perda, 2009), further heightening the concern that science teachers may lack sufficient training to work with students with disabilities. Considering that many STEM teachers are teaching outside their area of licensure (U. S. Department of Education, 2004), it is no surprise that STEM teachers lack confidence in their ability to address special needs.

**Guidance for STEM Teachers**

A survey of science teachers’ attitudes including students with learning disabilities in the regular classroom, summarized by Biddle (2006), revealed that teachers with less positive attitudes toward inclusion, correlated with their resistance to using
accommodating strategies. Biddle reminded us that teacher’s attitudes should not be ignored, if students with disabilities are to be treated justly.

Professional development is critical if teachers are to be more positive in addressing the diverse student needs. Grumbine and Alden (2006) identified guiding principles for teachers to remember when planning inclusive instruction that:

- Learning is enhanced when teachers recognize and teach to diverse learning styles and strengths.
- Content learning is supported by explicit instruction in skills and strategies.
- Learning is facilitated when instruction and assessment are clearly organized.
- Learning is maximized when instructions and assessment are based on explicit objectives.
- Learning is improved when teachers provide consistent feedback.
- Learning is sustained when students develop self-knowledge.

If teachers adopt these guidelines, they should become more open to learning about or acquiring skills for assisting students with disabilities. Students with physical disabilities now have more reason than ever in the past to believe that STEM fields are open to them as career paths. Integral to STEM learning is the hands-on experience that includes inquiry. With new adaptive technologies and thoughtful classroom design, physical limitations should not prevent students from participating in lab.

Adaptive devices now make lab work within the reach of all those with physical disabilities. Assistive technology such as Braille markings make perception of measurements possible for even the students most visually challenged; even extended eyepieces for optical instruments are available now (Safer science, 2008), Computer-aided devices provide speech, light,
tactile and other assistance to those limited in these areas (Kumar and Wilson, 1997; Eden, and Heiman, 2011). Heights of lab benches, smaller or otherwise modified wheelchairs, make it possible for students to fully participate.

Watson and Johnston (2007) recommend that assistive technologies that aid students in note taking, in organization, in research and in writing will improve learning. Also, providing cognitive assistance (such as drill and practice, or tutorials) will benefit students.

**Accountability**

Students with disabilities are held to the same performance standards when assessed on state and national assessments, yet we are unsure that they have access to the required learning experiences. Thurlow (2010), in a recent presentation to the National Research Council, reminded the committee of the need for a principled approach to accountability for students with disabilities. They may be included in the classroom space, but may not have full access to the learning experiences that regular students have. Lack of access may still confound what can be expected of these students on assessments.

Teachers should plan carefully to include at least some of the following modifications during class time. Steele (2008), Shook, Hazelkorn, and Lozano (2011), and Duran, Duran, Haney, and Scheuermann (2011) made very practical suggestions that are also easily implemented. These strategies should benefit all students:

- Incorporation of group activities that include the student with disabilities.
- Explicit instruction in academic vocabulary, that incorporates strategies such as Collaborative Strategic Reading (Vaughn, Klinger, and Bryant, 2001; Shook, Hazelkorn, and Lozano, 2011).
• Use everyday examples to connect new science learning to student experiences.
• Provide study skill instruction, such as note taking; provide video, audio, or podcast reviews of big idea lessons, repeating instruction and directions for homework.
• Use advance organizers, graphic displays, and reference to themes.
• Provide chapter notes.
• Summarize frequently.
• Use class time to review and model the study process.
• Encourage students to read directions carefully.
• Modify the design of the *inquiry learning cycle* to include more time to explore and to elaborate on the topic.
• Re-design the space to maximize student access to equipment; incorporate *adaptive* equipment and supplies.

**Conclusion**

Thirteen percent of our students have been identified as having a disability (U. S. Department of Education, 2010). The percentage is likely to increase as the general school population is projected to increase by 5% during this decade (U. S. Department of Education, 2011).

The obstacles students with disabilities face can eliminate their option of a career in a STEM field. However, opportunities for careers in STEM-related fields are waiting, and promise intellectual and financial rewards for those who can overcome the challenges posed by a disability. Teachers well prepared to identify the students with disabilities, and to modify the lesson or the environment to remove obstacles to success, can make a significant contribution to these students’ futures. In a just world, STEM teachers will have access to the training they need to
overcome their doubts about managing instruction for students with disabilities, and students with disabilities will have full access to the STEM curriculum.

References


Social Justice through Service Learning: A Case for Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

College teaching presents a myriad of opportunities for broadening perspectives and creating environments conducive for change. While professors and students may agree that social justice is important, it is unclear the extent to which individuals are willing to or understand how to systematically practice social justice. Through service learning and structured intellectual discourse students explore theoretical concepts and consequently apply them in real life settings. Review of students’ in-class dialogue and comments from course activity revealed several themes. The themes included (1) a heightened awareness of social justice issues; (2) self-reflection as a way of identifying problems and seeking solutions to those problems and (3) the desire to promote positive social change. The authors offer a model of experiential learning realized through participation in service learning activities.

Introduction

College teaching presents a myriad of opportunities for broadening perspectives and creating environments conducive for change. Although the notion of the ideal (i.e. world, society, community, classroom etc.) is something toward which to strive, seldom if ever is it realized in the span of a semester or academic year(s). What is more realistic and perhaps more sobering is that each semester professors and students embark upon a journey that requires reflection, critical thinking and honest scrutiny. While professors and students may agree that social justice is
important, it is unclear the extent to which individuals are willing to understand how to systematically practice social justice.

Nieto and Bode (2008) define social justice as a philosophy that suggests that all individuals should be treated with respect and kindness. While the definition may be reduced down to the golden rule of do unto others as you would have them do unto you, it is more specific than that. Certainly the definition that is offered by Nieto and Bode is relevant within the context of education. Social justice as Nieto & Bode define it is “a philosophy, an approach, and actions that embody treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity and generosity” (p. 11). In terms of education, social justice is not just being nice to students or about giving them a pat on the back, but rather social justice is comprised of four components:

- It challenges, confronts and disrupts misconceptions, untruths and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, social class, gender and other social and human differences;
- It provides all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential;
- It draws on the talents and strengths that students bring to their education; and
- Its focus is on creating a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and supports agency for social change. (Nieto & Bode, 2010, p. 11-12)

Implicit in this definition is the concept of critical thinking. Hackman (2005) offers a definition of critical thinking that emphasizes examining information for varying perspectives, opening students’ minds to a wider expanse of experiences, and an evaluation of the effects of oppression and power. Apparent in this definition is the concept of deep versus superficial thought. Critical thinking requires contrast and comparison, analysis and evaluation and in the classroom setting, the willingness to be actively engaged in intellectual discourse. It requires that students and faculty confront value systems that may run
contrary to their own. It requires them to evaluate their own value systems. At times, it requires that they examine the beliefs that were passed on to them by loved ones and recognize that those beliefs may not hold constant and true for them.

In an effort to move toward understanding racism, sexism, ableism, etc. and their consequences for individuals as well as groups of people; Adler (1985) emphasized the use of primary sources including those that are a part of popular culture. In the multicultural education course, it is through the critical examination of various sources that students begin to view circumstances, situations and contexts as fluid. That is, as having various interpretations influenced by social norms, politics, law and even morality. Students’ sense of social responsibility, commitment to social action may be greatly impacted through the review and analysis of various sources (Adler, 1985).

Through the consistent evaluation of student feedback the authors assert that initially what is real or true for students is what fits neatly into the students’ values systems and experiences. It is a lack of knowledge regarding how others live in the world and the interpretations of those life experiences that provides avenues of discovery for students. This discovery, if coupled with the notion of forward movement may serve as catalyst for students and faculty to begin the process of engaging in the type of action which may lead to social change.

**Parameters of Intellectual Discourse**

As faculty and students strive to create and understand the parameters of intellectual discourse within the context of a particular course, the philosophy of social justice must be embraced. In a course like multicultural education that often focuses on issues that may be controversial to some, establishing the parameters of intellectual discourse is vital. However, indicating that we all must treat one another with respect and generosity is vague. What does it mean to treat one another with
respect within the context of intellectual discourse? How will the professor and class know definitively when someone in the class feels disrespected by comments made in class? The following is a list of suggestions that consistently emerged from instructor observation and student feedback:

- Students should be encouraged to speak in the “I”, that is speak from one’s own experience rather than speaking for others;
- Emphasis should be placed on acknowledging and/or understanding various worldviews;
- Class should be a safe space in which to talk but not a place to vent;
- All forms of reflection are not appropriate for class; painful personal reflections should take place in journals or in individual discussion(s) with the instructor;
- Focus should be on where we have been historically and personally with equal emphasis being placed on formulating a plan of action to take us where we think we want to be;
- Applying theoretical concepts in real life contexts should be realistically explored by students and instructor;
- The instructor should understand that he/she can and will learn with and from students;
- The learning process is reciprocal in nature and should be understood as such.

Once students begin to understand the parameters around intellectual discourse in the multicultural education class, the real dialogue begins. In the beginning the dialogue is simple and timid, characterized by kind platitudes and an obvious deference to political correctness. However, when students begin to embrace the importance of understanding the concept of worldview, the dialogue becomes more realistic. Its focus becomes the examination of peoples’ realities and life
experiences and the systems that contribute to those realities and life experiences. It is through this critical and analytical dialogue that students begin to understand the nature of the journey that we are all on, and eventually the focus shifts to discussing social action. Finally students and instructor create a plan of action that requires service of some kind to the local, national or global community.

**Social Justice and Service Learning**

The service learning component of the multicultural education course requires that the service experiences be linked to course objectives. The instructor works with students to make sure that the type of service experience selected is a good fit with the course objectives. Some students choose to work in afterschool programs with children from backgrounds that differ from theirs in terms of language, culture and/or socioeconomics. Other students choose to work with a specific population (e.g. the homeless, individuals with disabilities, immigrant populations) through agencies that provide direct service to these groups of people. The instructor can assign service learning placements based on student interests. However, helping students become more empowered regarding their possible contribution(s) to society requires allowing students to take responsibility for the part they can play in social action. By providing an opportunity for students to select and craft their own service learning experience the instructor may act as a facilitator; gently guiding students to service experiences that provide avenues for connecting course content to real life experience. Student voice is a powerful force that should be acknowledged and embraced in the classroom and within the service learning experience. Students’ reflection on course material and service learning experiences conveys to the instructor the talents, skills and dispositions that students bring to the learning endeavor. These reflections also indicate the way(s) in which students are connecting what they are learning in the service learning experience to what they are learning through the course.
materials, classroom discussions and activities. Ash and Clayton (2009) contend that “the purpose of the critical reflection component of service-learning is to help you generate, deepen, and document your learning so that you can build on it for:

- Continuous personal growth, throughout and beyond the service learning experience;
- Continuous improvement in the quality of your service and in your capacity for citizenship and change agency, throughout and beyond the service-learning experience;
- Continuous academic learning, throughout and beyond the service-learning experience” (pp. 2-3).

The authors structure three types of reflection in the multicultural education course that provide opportunities for students to process their experiences. Pre service reflection allows students to explore apprehensions and stereotypes they might have that could possibly adversely impact the service learning experience as well as knowledge and skills they have that may positively impact the service learning experience. This pre reflection occurs in small group discussion and through journaling. It happens before the service learning experience begins. In service reflection, occurs when the student is actually in the service learning environment. It requires that the student take mental note of situations and behaviors that are perplexing, troubling and/ or surprising within the service learning experience. Post service reflection begins with a written account of the mental notes taken within the context of in service reflection. Students connect perceived events and behaviors of in service reflections with the value systems, stereotypes, misconceptions that they hold and begin to look at the way(s) in which their life experience and beliefs influence the perceptions of others’ experiences. Written reflections with instructor created guiding questions can provide a space for students to begin a more structured way of thinking about how to connect what is being learned in the service learning experience with course concepts.
For example, in the Multicultural Education class through course discussion and journaling some students from middle class and affluent backgrounds worked with children who lived in impoverished neighborhoods. They indicated that they began to see that the children possessed talents and skills that were not readily apparent to them because of the preconceived notions they held regarding children from particular neighborhoods. The students further indicated that they really began to see the value of setting high expectations for all students. As they worked tutoring the children they continued to set the bar higher and higher and each time they raised the bar the children exceeded their expectations. One student commented “What would have happened if I didn’t raise the bar? The kids would have performed down to my expectations rather than up to them and that would have been horrible. Now I get it.” This scenario is memorable because the light bulb really came on for this student and the service learning experience was one of the catalysts for the student’s learning. Service learning can be the bridge between theory and practice. It can be a space in which students begin to see themselves making a difference in this world. It can also be a space in which students can begin to recognize and understand some of the injustices in society and how they can blindly be part of the injustices or choose not to do so.

Goodman et al. (2004) states, service learning combines didactic learning and practical service, and consists of six components of social justice identified as, (a) ongoing self-examination, (b) sharing power, (c) giving voice, (d) facilitating consciousness raising, (e) building on strengths, and (f) leaving clients with the tools for social change” (p. 789).

So what is the social justice challenge? Marshall and Oliva (2010) state that “we sometimes simply speak of equity or cultural diversity. Sometimes our conversations expand to the need for tolerance and respect for human rights and identity” (p. 5). The authors further assert “school leaders, professors, and
In that spirit, we made the decision to critically examine our own teaching of an educational graduate class, specifically with an emphasis on the desire to teach for social justice. We used student participation and contributions in a classroom activity to discover how students viewed social justice issues in relation to the content and teaching strategies employed in the course. We asked students about specific activities they found to be meaningful in terms of developing their perceptions and beliefs in regard to social justice. We wanted to know whether the students valued reflection as a tool which they could use while participating in a service learning project.

In - class discussion provided an avenue for students to share their service learning experiences and link what was happening in those experiences to course content. This also provided opportunity for the instructor to facilitate the kind of discussion that leads to critical thinking by posing questions that require students to problem solve and examine an issue from varying perspectives. The instructor helps students view the issue(s) through the lens of others to consider various course concepts in light of another’s views.

The in class activity “Coming Clean” is an anonymous activity. After each student has begun his or her service learning experience, the instructor brings the “Coming Clean” box to the class. The “Coming Clean” box is a decorated shoe box and top with space cut into the top of the box. Each student is given an instructor created comment sheet. At the end of class or during class break, students place comments in the box regarding course content, service learning, perceptions, value systems, stereotypes and experiences. The activity is anonymous in that students do not write their names or any identifying information on the comment sheet. The instructor takes the Coming Clean box home
and reviews each comment, deciding which comments to share in class. The comment review process involves the instructor 1) reading comments for relevance to course concepts; 2) reading comments for indication of student learning and growth; 3) selecting comments that may produce the greatest opportunities for student growth and understanding through course discussion and 4) crafting a set of open ended questions that will guide the discussion of selected comments during the following course meeting.

In reviewing comments submitted in the “Coming Clean” box several themes emerged. The themes included (1) a heightened awareness of social justice issues; (2) self-reflection as a way of identifying problems and seeking solutions to those problems and (3) the desire to promote positive social change.

The following section provides examples of the theme of heightened awareness as reported by the students:

**Student:** I didn’t realize that there were so many problems that our society needs to work on. I used to think that social justice was feeding the poor, helping those who need clothing, and in general, helping those who were in need. I never thought about students who were differently-abled, or anything…basically low socio-economic people. My family has always done charity work but that is not the same.

**Student:** Until this experience, it never occurred to me that real justice was way more than just race and culture. After working with students in a community, not my own, I have been thinking a lot. What would it be like to live in another country where my religious beliefs were not acknowledged or accepted? That is what these kids are going through. So now I am wondering if they came to my school, how would my faculty accept them and help them.

**Student:** I have a secret, I am gay. It has been a difficult journey being who I am. My family has never understood…so how can I expect society to? I cannot really be myself as I teach students.
Their families would not approve of their children being taught by someone who is gay, so I have to be very careful. I am a good teacher and understand others who do not fit in our current state of education. All I can do is hope for a change. I am not able to do this on my own but something needs to be done. It is our civic duty to embrace every individual.

**Student:** Did you know that schools are not funded the same way? I know there is a formula that each state uses, but I guess they are funded differently. There are differences in the types of resources they are given to work for a public school system and teach inner city kids. Our roof is leaking all of the time; we have a tall hurricane-style fence you know, like a prison. We waited for four months to receive textbooks for our students and the board didn’t send enough. Is it because our student population is 95% minorities? I have a friend who teaches in a school located in a nice neighborhood. Some of the parents got together and helped raise extra money to add on to their building. They had all of the resources they needed. The percentage of minority students is 25%. Coincidence? I don’t buy it. It is such an injustice to our students.

In the area of **self-reflection**, students said that through the classroom dialogue and their service in the community they believed they were more comfortable examining their own beliefs and assumptions:

**Student:** I have never believed I was better than others. But I am starting to think that my behaviors don’t match my beliefs. When I think about it and try to be honest, I guess my behaviors need to change. Everyone has a story. Mine is no better. It is just that I grew up in a great little town. We all held the same values: family, school and church. Everyone knew each other. We were all the same. It was hard when I moved away because being away from that environment, my values are tested every day. I think I have to re-evaluate who I am and decide what is really important in my life.

**Student:** I have been thinking about a student in one of my earlier classes. He was from Africa. It was difficult to understand
him sometimes because of his accent. I had seen pictures of Africa showing a lot of poverty, little villages with no fresh water or electricity. I assumed he was from one of those little villages. I felt sorry for him. He had not grown up like me and my friends. My teacher was talking about stereotypes one day. She asked this student to describe to the class what his house looked like. Then he asked, ‘the summer one or the main house?’ Wow. Blew me away. Stereotypes should not ever be used. People are different! The summer house. We don’t have a summer house. Awesome experience.

The third theme that emerged was the desire to promote positive social change.

**Student:** Our school district leaders need to go back to school. It is not a case of immigrants who can’t learn…it is a matter of how we should help them learn in meaningful ways. Our high school dropout rate is high. Our director of schools is not empathetic towards our immigrant students. He believes that families who don’t speak English should not move here. His outward philosophy dribbles down to the principals and teachers. It is a hard fight to implement programs for them to succeed. He just can’t see how bad this is. Or maybe he does and doesn’t care. We are supposed to be living in a democratic country. After taking this course I realize how important it is for me to help those students by giving them a voice. I have to help change this…be part of a solution.

**Student:** I can’t believe all the stuff I didn’t know. I thought I had way more answers than I actually do. Now I have many more questions. But what I do know now is that one person can make a difference. I am not afraid to try any more. I was so afraid of going to volunteer somewhere and making a mistake. But now I guess I know learning is full of mistakes. I still need to make the effort.

**Student:** Making a plan of action. I never thought of making a plan of action to help me figure out what problems I want to work on in society. I never thought of being hands on
involved with social problems. Before this class maybe I would have thought of it if I thought the problems had something to do with me. I am realizing that the problems have to do with everybody and working for everybody is a good thing.

Bell (1997) reminds us that social justice education is both a process and a goal. In the multicultural education class, it was clearly both. The process was one of transformation in each student, providing a safe emotional space, making meaning out of our discussions and activities, and finally self-reflection.

Following is a diagram of our model of scholarship and teaching based on our years of experience teaching and learning:
Discussion

Much of what we have learned about teaching and learning has been with and from our students. Conceptualizing learning as a reciprocal process has allowed us to actively embrace and examine what the experiences with our students have taught us about teaching, learning, service learning, social justice and ourselves. Transformation of self through experience has allowed us to actively engage our students along their paths of self discovery; while understanding that transformation may be a by-product of positively and/or negatively interacting with people, systems and/or ideas. The service learning component of the course serves as an impetus for learning through experience. Through the process of reflection, students integrate past experiences with new experiences thus actively participating in experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). It is the place in which students begin to really understand how others see them and how they see others. They grapple with what these observations mean for their lives and the lives of others. They begin to understand how their perceptions and behaviors affect their commitment to working for the greater good in society.

Providing a safe environment for students to learn and process what they are learning is vital to the integrity of the course. The classroom must be a safe space for students to discuss what they are learning. Establishing and consistently following rules for intellectual discourse is helpful to this end. Service learning placements must be physically safe for students. Although some service learning placements may be emotionally uncomfortable in the beginning, it is not unusual for students to learn through the experience that the discomfort they feel is a result of confronting perceptions that they hold regarding people, places and ideas.

Making meaning of student learning is directly related to self reflection and connecting concepts and ideas encountered in the service learning experience to course content. Reflection should
be structured so that students can begin to learn how to be actively engaged observers and participants. While there should be an opportunity for students to reflect upon what they think and feel, the instructor can and should play a role in facilitating reflection that is heavily dependent on critical thinking. Students should be encouraged to move beyond superficial observation and move toward observation that leads to the identification of concepts and issues that need deep exploration. This forward movement should be toward problem solving that takes into account varying perspectives and leads to shared decision making. Hopefully students will move toward realizing that their way of seeing and doing things is not necessarily the only and best way of doing things. Connecting with community in a greater sense requires that students begin to understand that although their value systems may seem right for them, these values systems may not be right for everyone. And that is ok.

In the end, it is through the experience in real life settings that students begin to understand there are many different ways to be in this world. Treating people with respect, fairness and generosity may first begin with trying to understand various ways of being. A call to action is requisite if there is any hope of living in a socially just world. This call to action resounds in every student voice that exclaims I think I am beginning to understand and I want to help.

“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something I can do.”

(E.E. Hale)

References


Inclusive Policies and Exclusive Practices - An Overview of School Education among Weaker Sectors in India

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Abstract
The Right to Education Act recently brought about by the Government of India is inclusive in nature entailing the right to equality in education, right to quality education and right to access to all educational institutions which have been the major concerns of the state since independence. In spite of several committees and commissions in India shouting for the equality, quality and access for all with regard to education, these goals are not achieved so far. Therefore, lack of educational equality, quality, access to all including poor infrastructure facilities obviously are the exclusionary practices of the central as well as the state governments.

According to the UNESCO Report on Education (2008), there are approximately 10 million street children and 400,000 girl sex workers in India. In Andhra Pradesh, there are no permanent teachers in 5,774 schools, only single teachers in 15,170 schools, no basic facilities in 22,901 primary schools, 21,973 upper primary schools and 23,852 high schools. There are no toilets in 30,171 schools, no playground in 54,924 schools, no building in 24,540 schools, no library in 70,661 schools and no potable water facility in 50,878 schools.

Shortage of teachers and poor infrastructure in schools obviously result in poor quality education. Lack of common curriculum is another exclusionary practice which results in variation in standards of educational quality among different sectors of the society. Privatization of education also has been widening the gap between upper castes and weaker sectors like SC, ST, OBC, Minorities and Women in India. As private institutions are profit oriented, the marginalized sectors are unable to get this private
education. In this context, the paper attempts to present an overview of school education among weaker sectors in India with respect to inclusive policies and exclusive practices.

**Introduction**

Education is one of the vital factors of development. It has great significance as access to education is emphasized as an important right according to Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the children, UNICEF. Being educated is an essential and valuable capability. In addition, getting educated is a crucial participatory process for children and equal access for all to this process allows participation in, and respect by society. In fact, many of the early calls for mass education in the 18th and 19th centuries viewed the inclusionary nature of the educational process, and the fostering of citizenship through education as more important than the skills one may acquire through education (Rothschild, 1998).

Conversely, education can be a source of exclusion for children and thus carry with it the intrinsic problems this involves. This is particularly the case if some children fail to meet the standard called for in the Convention of the Rights of Children towards ‘development of the child’s personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.’ It can also be exclusionary if the process of education fails to promote equal participation and access.

In addition, educational policies assure great importance in promoting social inclusion. However, educational policies themselves may instrumentally inculcate or establish social exclusion. (Klasen, 1999). The present inquiry intends to verify whether such situation prevails in post-independent India, especially with regard to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes generally referred to as the weaker sectors.
Illiteracy as Exclusion and Literacy as Inclusion

Inclusion is characterized by a society’s widely shared social experience and active participation, by a broad equality of opportunities and life chances for individuals, and by the achievement of a basic level of well-being for all citizens (Sen, 1999).

Illiteracy is a multifaceted process. Illiterate persons get excluded from vibrant social life and opportunities to change. Given that knowledge is power, lack of knowledge or of access to it forms a type of exclusion from understanding. Illiteracy prevents people, from knowing their legal and political rights, thereby excluding them from participating in decision-making. The vicious circle of social exclusion implies the two relations between cause and effect, which is why it is equally important to address the socio-economic factors that hinder access to education and to real-time communication means, including geographic location, structural norms and gender discrimination.

Educationally disadvantaged populations become more vulnerable to exploitation and get excluded from the main stream of life hence human resources of those groups are minimized. Educational differences are crucial in generating and sustaining social exclusion. Low educational achievement increases the risk of adult exclusion in many ways. Adults with low basic skills are five times as likely to be unemployed as those with average skills. (Sparkes, 1999).

It is a fact that poor literacy is a strong indicator of low political participation and poor education is connected with poor general health and depression. Low educational attainment is a key mechanism translating childhood disadvantage into poor social and economic outcomes in later life. But education is only part of the story, as childhood deprivation is associated with lower adult earnings regardless of educational performance. Education
becomes a means to overcome social exclusion of disadvantaged groups and it is a tool to reduce inequality in the society.

Education is one of the most important indicators to measure Human Development and it is essential for the development of the individual as well as society. Hence, the Jomtien World Conference on ‘Education for All’ (1990) set the goal of *education for all*.

**The Constitution of India as Inclusive Policy**

The Indian state has recognised the problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes arising out of exclusion and discrimination and has developed policies to overcome their problems. The Government of India’s approach to marginalized groups draws on provisions made in the Indian Constitution, which contains explicit state obligation towards protecting and promoting social, economic, political and cultural rights. The Constitution guarantees equality before the law (Article.14), positive discrimination in education (Article.15), representation in employment (Article.16), abolition of untouchability (Article.17) and protection of life and personal liberty (Article.21). Some of the constitutional provisions which aimed at positive discrimination are that, the Constitution emphasizes safe-guards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the ‘Special Provisions Relating to Certain Classes’ in Part XVI of the Indian Constitution. The Constitution also provides for the protection and promotion of their social, economic, educational, cultural and political interests to bridge the disparities and to bring SC and ST at par with other sectors of the society.

**Social Safeguards**

Equality before the Law: Article.14; Representation in Education: Article 15 (4); Representation in Employment: Article.16 (4); Abolition of Untouchability: Article 17; Right to
Education: Article 21-A; Provision for Free and Compulsory Education for Children: Article 45; Identification as Scheduled Tribes: Article 342.

**Economic Safeguards**
- Special financial assistance: Article 275 (1); Representation in Employment: Article 335; Promotion of Educational and Economic Interests: Article 46.

**Political Safeguards**
- Representation in Political institutions: Article 330 and 332.
- National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: Art 338
- National Commission for Other Backward Classes: Art 340
- Schedule-V (Scheduled area) Article 244(1):
- Schedule-VI (Tribal area): Article 244(2)

**Education Policies in India**

Education Policies in India are inclusive in nature entailing the right to equality, quality, and access to all educational institutions as the major concerns of the state. National Education Policy 1968, New Educational Policy 1986, Programme of Action (POA), 1992 and several other educational commissions and committees also shouted for equality, quality and access to all educational institutions and inclusive education for the nation development. However, these goals are not achieved so far. Therefore, lack of educational equality, quality, access to all including poor infrastructure facilities obviously are the exclusionary practices of the central as well as the state governments.

**Literacy of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes**

The literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are low, but also varies widely among different groups and regions. The literacy rate for Scheduled Tribes was 47.1 percent (male 59.17%, female 34%) and in case of Scheduled Castes the literacy rate was 54.6 percent (male 66.6%, female
41.9% in 2001 as per the 61st round of NSS. The literacy gap between STs and others is about 21.71 percentage points and the literacy gap between SCs and others is about 14.12 percentage points in 2001.

**Table 1: Comparative Literacy Rates, 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Rates</th>
<th>Literacy gap of SC/STs to others in percentage points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Male</td>
<td>66.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSS 61st Round Survey Report No. 517

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05

**Universalisation of Elementary Education and Disadvantaged sections**

Article 45 of the Constitution of India said that “the state shall endeavor to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete age of 14th years”.

Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years being the Constitutional commitment at the time of adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the aim was to achieve the goal of *Universalisation of Elementary Education* (UEE) by 1960, but the target date was shifted a number of times.
Since 1950, impressive progress has been made in spheres of elementary education. i.e., improvement of number of schools, number of teachers, enrollment, and other facilities in schools results some significant achievements. However, the learner's achievement across the country remained unsatisfactory and far below the expectations. The Government of India initiated a number of programmes and projects to attain the status of universal enrollment. Despite all these significant achievements, the goal of universal elementary education remains elusive and far a distant dream. (Mehta, 2000)

**Universal Access:** It means that elementary schooling is to be provided to all children between the age group 6-14 in the country and that a school should be within walking distance of one kilometer from the home of every child. However, many SC and ST villages do not have schools still today and a distance more than one or two kilometers is so difficult to walk in hilly and tribal areas. Access to private educational institutions is always not within the reach of depressed classes in urban and suburban areas. As private institutions are profit-oriented, the weaker sectors are unable to access education through private institutions.

**Universal Enrollment:** Universal Enrollment is the most important component of the Universalization of Primary Education. It means that all children between the age group 6-14 be enrolled by the primary schools. Considerable progress has been made so far as enrollment at primary and upper primary levels of education is concerned. Gross Enrollment Ratio at the primary level was 42.6 percent in 1950-51; which has now been increased to 98.2 percent in 2003-2004, among Scheduled Tribes it is 86.06 percent in 2003-2004. Primary school enrollment has come close to being universal. However, learning achievement, attendance rates, quality of education and retention remain major concern in general and particular to marginalised sections.
Out-Of-School Children: Out of School children enrollment that would have required the achievement of the goal of universal primary education by the year 2007 was worked out. It may be noted that under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the goal of universal primary enrollment was to be achieved by the year 2007.

In spite of several efforts made by the Government of India 13,459,734 children comprising 6.94 percent of the total children in the age group 6-13 are estimated out of school (SRI-IMRB Report, 2006). Among Scheduled Tribes the percentage of out of school children is 9.54, for Scheduled Castes it is 8.17 which show disparities clearly among the social groups that are socially disadvantaged. Out of school children are high in rural areas when compared to urban.

Table 2: Out–of-School Children aged 6-13 years: All India 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage out of school children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC children</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST children</td>
<td>10.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SRI-IMRB Survey, 2006

Universal Retention and Dropout Rate

After the enrollment of the student, school retention is most important in Universalization of Primary Education. Stagnation and dropout are the two major factors which affects the retention. Even though, we find significant increase in enrollment in primary schooling, retention is not satisfactory. Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05 found that 31.5 percent of the general students and 48.9 percent of Scheduled Tribe students
are dropping out before completing primary schooling. Only 37.8 percent are completing primary education according to RCHS-II, 2002-04.

**Table 3: Comparison of Dropout Rates among Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe with General Population at Primary Stage (I-V)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SC Children</th>
<th>ST Children</th>
<th>General Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-05

**Universal Achievement:** Universalization of enrollment alone cannot help in the success of universalization of elementary education. To make this programme a success it is important to assess the achievement of students. This can be possible only through the program of continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

NSSO (2005) found the difference among the children of various castes in the reading and writing skills, which is 52.4 percent, 58.2 percent, 62.8 percent and 72.0 percent in ST, SC, OBC and others respectively.
Table 4: Percentage of Children (6-14yrs) who can read and write (NSSO, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>percent of children who can read and write</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning achievement of SC and ST children at primary classes has shown lower levels of achievement compared to other children.

Quality of Education

The most important component of UEE is the Quality of Education that is measured in India in terms of learner's achievement. Even within the states that have almost attained universal access, enrollment, and retention, the quality of education is very poor. It is only in the recent past (during 1990's) that quality of education has received the attention of policy makers. It may be noted that India follows policy of no detention up to primary level. But in practice, divergent models are in existence across states.

It may however be noted that data on learner's achievement are not available on a regular basis. The official agency (Department of Education, MHRD) does not collect data on this aspect except that it disseminates statistics on examination results at secondary and plus-two levels. It is only in the recent past (1994) that achievement tests were conducted under the District Primary Education Programme through the Baseline Assessment Surveys (BAS). DPEP envisages improving learner's achievement by at least 25 percentage points over the project period ranging...
between 5-7 years. The non-DPEP states do not have this set of data. However, the NPE (1986) had given emphasis to learners' achievement and thereafter the Government of India specified the minimum levels of learning and initiated 16 projects to improve the learner's achievement. Under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, it is expected that districts will conduct *Baseline Assessment Surveys* to know the status of students and achievement both at the primary and upper primary levels of education.

**Resource Allocations**

Since the 1980s there has been a steady decline in the allocation of government funds for SC and ST development and welfare projects. There has in general been an inherent lack of interest and seriousness on the part of the planning and implementing machinery to achieve the objectives of the Constitution. The benefits secured by the SCs and STs do not appear commensurate with the funds spent so far.

**Table 5: Share of SCP and TSP in Budget Allocation for Elementary Education in Andhra Pradesh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Expenditure (Rs. in Millions)</th>
<th>% SCP</th>
<th>% TSP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>15691.9</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>16578.9</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>17260.0</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td>0.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>20103.2</td>
<td>0.395</td>
<td>0.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>21036.5</td>
<td>0.523</td>
<td>2.570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>30945.1</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td>1.642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>35763.2</td>
<td>1.344</td>
<td>1.934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Andhra Pradesh Human Development Report 2007
The budget allocations in the state, especially under the head of elementary education were negligible under SCP and TSP. At no point of time during the last seven years were the shares of SCP and TSP at the mandatory level, i.e. in proportion to the share of SCs and STs in the total population which were 15% and 7% respectively.

The data from the Ministry of HRD, Government of India, show a steady increase in the enrollment rate of Scheduled Caste children over the years. The provisional enrollment in 2004-05 was 98.8 percent, an increase of 18 percentage points from 1989-90 which stood at 80.8. However, with the rising enrollment was the persistent problem of drop outs with as many as 31.47% from among the 98.8% of Scheduled Caste children enrolled in Class 1 drop out by Class V. The drop out rate reaches 52.32% by Class VIII and 62.69% by Class X. About 8.17% Scheduled Caste children (numbering 3,104,866) in the 6-14 age group are currently estimated to be out of school compared to 3.73% of non SC/ST/OBC children. Among Scheduled Tribe children the drop out rate is 48.9% at primary stage and out of school children are estimated to be 9.54%.

Side by side with the increasing enrollment is also the persistent problem of out of school children and the widening inequalities between SC and ST and ‘other’ social groups in education both in numbers and in quality. The Ministry of education admits that reducing the drop outs among SC and ST remains a challenge.

**Social Exclusion and the Gender Gap in Education**

Double disadvantage: Girls in the marginalized groups trail not only the mainstream children but also the boys in the marginalized groups. Thus, these girls are “doubly disadvantaged.” They are disadvantaged as girls and, in addition they are disadvantaged because they come from impoverished families, tribal, ethnic, or linguistic “minority” communities, geographically remote settings, or lower castes. They are less
likely to participate in education and more likely to stay in school only briefly if they enroll at all (Lewis and Lockheed 2006).

**Programmes**

In India, there have been various schemes and programmes which have been introduced to bridge the gap between SC and ST children and other children in primary school. These programmes can be categorized into initiatives which focus on the supply side (i.e. making schools more accessible, improving quality or providing a supplementary service for ST children) and initiatives which promote greater demand for education (i.e. by providing incentives). Regarding supply side interventions, there are two basic approaches to addressing social exclusion in education, targeting excluded groups with supplementary service or focusing on universal improvements of the system.

“Universalistic approaches are essential to building a sense of social solidarity and citizenship.” (Kabeer, 2006, p. 14) Targeted programmes have generally served as a means of compensating for government weakness in delivering on universal services, and may actually be marginalizing those they are intending to reach if they result in labeling of particular groups and don’t act as a bridge to mainstream education services. Kabeer (2006) concluded that such approaches “need to go beyond ‘ameliorative’ approaches that address the symptoms of the problem to ‘transformative’ approaches that address its causes.”

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiated in 2001 (a time bound mission) with the objectives of ensuring universalization of primary education by 2007 and elementary education by 2010, bridging all social and gender gaps by 2010. The mission places special focus on education of girls as well as providing flexible education to school-less habitation and out of school children through education guarantee schemes and alternate
and innovative programmes to ensure that no child will be excluded from education.

Provisions particularly addressed to SC/ST children under SSA:

- Focus on girls especially belonging to SC/ST communities and minority groups.
- Free text books for girls, SC/ST students
- Special coaching/remedial classes for girls SC/ST children and a congenial learning environment
- Teachers sensitisation programme to promote equitable learning opportunities
- Community engagement and ownership of the school
- Special focus for innovative projects related to girls’ education, SC/ST children
- NPEGEL in blocks that have at least 5 percent SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy is below 10 percent in 1991 census.

**Glaring Gaps in Implementation of SSA**

The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG no.15, 2006), assessing SSA, 2004-05 has pointed out glaring gaps in the implementation of the programme. Various aspects of the implementation have come under scrutiny:

- Funds released for the programme by the Ministry and the state governments was far less than the outlays approved by the Project Approval Board.
- Rupees 110.30 crores (approximately 1100 million) that was a claim to have been reimbursed from foreign donors has not been followed up as on Dec. 2005
- 1.36 crores (approximately 14 million) children (40%) of the 3.40 crore ‘out of school children’ identified by the programme in April 2001 continued to be out of school in March 31st 2005, despite an expenditure of Rupees 11139.57 crores (or 111,330 million).
- While community ownership and involvement were to be the salient difference from previous programmes, the preparatory phase of community
involvement, micro-planning was very weak in many states.

• While Teacher-to-Student norm was supposed to be 1:40, it was as high as 1:93 also.
• While the programme promised EGS or A&IE in all school-less habitations, even with a small number of 15 eligible children who needed to be brought into the mainstream, 31,648 (9%) of the habitations continued to be without schools.
• Inadequate and delay in supply of text books
• Lack of facilities like compound walls, toilets and water.
• The provisions under A&IE have not been used in many places.

There is no doubt that these have impacted the outcomes of the programme. The biggest gap one finds on the ground is the implementation of the programme as the routine education programmes lacking the spirit of the mission.

**Education as Fundamental Right in India**

With the 86th Constitutional amendment (2002), Right to Education Act, came into effect from 1st April 2010, to make free and compulsory education a fundamental right for all children in the age group 6-14 years by inserting a new Article 21-A in Part III ("Fundamental Right") of the Constitution. Article 21-A of the Constitution says that "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine."

The present act has its history in the drafting of the Indian Constitution at the time of independence, but is more specifically to the Constitutional Amendment that included the Article 21A in the Indian Constitution making education a fundamental right.
Highlights of the Act

The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14 and specifies minimum norms in government schools. It requires all private schools to reserve 25% of seats to children from poor families (to be reimbursed by the state as part of the public-private partnership plan). School infrastructure (where there is a problem) were to be improved in three years, else school recognition would be cancelled. It also prohibits all unrecognized schools from practice, and makes provisions for no donation or capitation fees, and no interview of the child or parent for admission. The Act also provides that no child shall be held back, expelled, or required to pass a board examination until the completion of elementary education. There is also a provision for special training of school drop-outs to bring them up to par with students of the same age. The Act calls for a fixed student-teacher ratio. Financial burden will be shared by state and central government.

The Act provides for a special organization, the National Council for the Protection of Child Rights, an autonomous body set up in 2007, to monitor the implementation of the act, together with Commissions to be set up by the states.

Drawbacks

The act has been criticized for being hastily-drafted, not consulting many groups active in education, and not considering the quality of education. Many of the ideas are seen as continuing the policies of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of the last decade, and the World Bank funded District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) of the '90s, both of which, while having set up a number of schools in rural areas, have been criticized for being ineffective and corruption-ridden.

The quality of education provided by the government system remains in question. Many families resist sending their daughters
to distant schools. The government schools are riddled with absenteeism and mismanagement, and appointments are based on political convenience. Despite the allure of a free midday meal in the government schools, parents prefer to send their children to private schools. It only legitimizes the present multi-layered, inferior quality school education system where discrimination continues to prevail. Only two teachers per school and multi graded teaching will not give quality education in government primary schools. Despite the demand to upgrade single teacher schools, most of the schools in the rural and tribal areas are with a single teacher or without a teacher which ultimately affects the quality of education.

There is an avenue to provide inferior quality education to poor in public/private partnership schools through 25% reservation as separate sectors/classes may conduct for reserved categories to maintain low standards. The Constitution of India gives the representation on the basis of socially and educational backwardness, but not on the basis of economic backwardness. Strangely, this act gives reservation on the basis of economic backwardness.

The Act makes free and compulsory education a fundamental right to all children of India. However, in the actual enforcement, it only covers children between 6 to 14 years of age and it eliminates 0 to 5 years of age children from pre-primary education.

The UNO recognized the 0 to 18 years age group as children, but this right to education act has conveniently disowned children from not just pre-primary, but also secondary and intermediate education. Another drawback of this act is that there is no limitation on fees in private educational institutions. As private institutions are profit oriented, the weaker sectors are unable to get the private education. Privatization of education also has
been widening the gap between upper castes and weaker sectors like SC, ST, OBC, minorities and women in India.

Conclusion

The Right to Education Act brought about by the Government of India was expected to bring about inclusive growth, but still weaker sectors of the country are not able to reach equity, quality, and access to all educational institutions which have been the major concerns of the state since independence. Implementation of policies and programmes lack transparency and hence these groups have been lagging behind. In spite of various Committees and Commissions in India shouting for equality, quality and access to all with regard to education, these goals are not achieved so far. Therefore, lack of educational equality, quality, access to all including poor infrastructure facilities obviously are the exclusionary practices of the central as well as the state governments.

The shortage of teachers and poor infrastructure in schools obviously result in poor quality education. Lack of common curriculum is another exclusionary practice which results in variation in standards of educational quality among different sectors of the society. Privatization of education also has been widening the gap between upper castes and weaker sectors like SC, ST, OBC, minorities and women in India. Shortage and diversion of funds from TSP and SCP in general, and school education in particular, are the major obstacles for their educational development as well as inclusion. While education is regarded as a fundamental right of all Indian citizens, disparities continue among various castes and tribes. Scheduled Tribes, Schedule Castes, other Backward Castes and woman exhibit the lowest literacy rates of all.

Suggestions

- Sufficient funds should be allotted to TSP and SCP and diversion of these funds should be controlled.
Proper implementation of policies of the constitution of India should be required with transparency and commitment.

Reformative policies are not sufficient, hence transformative policies should be designed to include the weaker sectors.

Public/private partnerships should be revised and education at all levels should be under the control of the government.

Quality education, equity and access are the democratic rights of all citizens, hence it is the responsibility of the state to provide the same.

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Social Justice for Multiple Choice Examinations: Development of a Diagnostic Tool to Detect Student Problems with Language Variation

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Abstract

Differences in outcomes among ethnic groups have been found when comparing performance on multiple choice examinations, both within the United States and abroad. Detecting a reason for the discrepancy in scoring outcomes among ethnic groups, and identifying a potential solution is paramount, as minority groups are currently under-represented in many professions, including the healthcare field. These discrepancies in test outcomes can interfere with social justice on a broad scale. Cultural competency in the development of multiple choice testing instruments may affect student performance; but influences from a student’s cultural background could also affect his/her ability to understand and comprehend test items. The purpose of the pilot studies, conducted at Tennessee State University (TSU) with the physical therapy graduating class of 2008 (N=17), the class of 2009 (N=19), and the class of 2010 (N=22) was to determine if student performance in multiple choice testing would be affected by the construction of test items in relation to the tester’s cultural proclivities. A diagnostic tool was created to help determine if problems existed when questions were reworded in accordance with Southern Caucasian and Southern African American language variation. Differences were found in student test scores when questions were reworded, but these differences were more marked in the African American student group when compared to the Caucasian group (with an intercept of p=.000). This document outlines the creation of this tool and acts as a guide for academicians in the creation of their own discipline specific diagnostic tool.
It has been reported over the past 60 years by many different sources in the United States that students of color, as a group, tend to average lower scores on standardized testing instruments than Caucasian students (Eelis et al., 1951; Gould, 1974; Marco, 1988; Berlak, 2001; Johnson, Boyden, & Pittz, 2001). Problems related to testing are not limited to school-aged students, but also affect students in higher education and graduate school (Obiakor, 1992; Bosher, 2003; Utzman, Riddle, & Jewell, 2007). During a college doctoral physical therapy program, a student will take many multiple choice examinations, but the main obstacle for new physical therapist graduates prior to clinical practice is achieving a passing grade on the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE). A recent study by Utzman et al. (2007) found one factor that could help to predict success on the National Physical Therapy Examination was the student’s race or ethnicity. These authors found that there was an increased chance of difficulty when attempting to pass the NPTE if the student was non-white. This information is cause for concern.

It is well known that the level of cultural competency utilized when developing multiple choice testing instruments may affect student performance (Tellegen & Laros, 2004), but influences from a student’s cultural background could also play a part with respect to his/her ability to understand and comprehend test items, which may positively or negatively affect the student’s performance. Although many other variables are often involved when there are test score discrepancies between groups, this research has focused on language variation. If questions were re-worded more congruently with the ethnic language variation most frequently encountered by an individual, would that individual’s performance on the test improve? This was the primary focus of the study. The pilot studies were conducted at Tennessee State University (TSU) with the physical therapy graduating class of 2008 (N=17), the class of 2009 (N=19), and the class of 2010 (N=22). These studies were conducted to
determine if student performance in multiple choice testing would be affected by the construction of test items in relation to the tester’s cultural proclivities. A diagnostic tool was created to help determine if problems existed when questions were re-worded in accordance with southern Caucasian and southern African American language variation. Differences were found in student test scores when questions were reworded, but these differences were more marked in the African American student group when compared to the Caucasian group (with an intercept of $p=.000$). This document outlines the creation of this tool to aide academicians in other disciplines in the creation of their own diagnostic tool.

**Background Information**

The literature does not dispute the presence of differences between ethnic groups when comparing student success on multiple choice examinations (Sharma, 1986; Klein & Bolus, 1997; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Sackett, Hardison, & Cullen, 2004). According to Berlak (2001), when comparing groups of comparable income, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and children with English as a second language (ESL) did not perform as well in these examinations as English-Speaking, Caucasian children in the United States. Valencia and Suzuki (2001) contend that although many norm-referenced testing instruments use census data to create the norms, the end result shows a lower number of minorities, even in what may, at first, appear to be a large overall sample. Because of low representation, the authors contended that it may have been more difficult to take important differences, such as linguistic differences, into consideration. Identifying a reason for the discrepancy in scoring outcomes among ethnic groups, and finding a potential solution is paramount, as minority groups are currently under-represented in many fields including healthcare (Betancourt, 2002). According to Sackett et al.: “The test-score gap remains one of the most pressing societal issues of the day” (2004, p. 7).
The test-score gap in the results of standardized testing in the United States has been blamed on many possible variables, such as genetic differences; a controversy that was revisited, in part, from the work of Herrnstein and Murray (1994), environmental differences (Obiakor, 1992), or flawed testing (Mayfield and Reynolds, 1998). Influences from a student’s cultural background could also play a part with respect to his/her ability to understand and comprehend test items, which may bear positively or negatively on the student’s performance (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

This discrepancy in standardized testing outcomes becomes more of an issue when considering the underrepresentation of minorities employed as healthcare practitioners in the United States. The United States Census Bureau estimated that in 2009 African American residents made up 12.9% of the United States Population (US Census, 2010) but the percentage of African American physical therapists who were listed as members of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) in March of 2009 was only 1.99% (APTA, 2009). Although APTA membership does not accurately represent the actual percentage of black individuals who are practicing physical therapists, the difference in the percentages is still staggering.

**Language Variation**

The primary purpose of each item on a testing instrument is to obtain a response from the student that will allow the instructor to make an inference about the student’s knowledge or skill in a specific subject (Haladyna, 1997). The student must possess an understanding of each question prior to formulating the correct answer. Test items are therefore, often edited for clarity (Haladyna, 2004); but what is clear to one student may not necessarily be clear to another. Language and communication skills have been cited as contributors to student attrition (Bosher & Smalkoski, 2002; Bosher, 2003). The term, *linguistic/structural bias* refers to items that are complex, or
those written with poor grammar, lack of clarity or lack of consistency (Bosher, 2003). Bosher (2003) evaluated multiple choice items in nursing course examinations and found that the highest number of flaws (61%) were due to irrelevant difficulty, and 35% of the flaws were due to linguistic/structural bias (35%). Items with either type of flaw can be difficult to understand, and may result in differences between groups. Goldstein (1994) argued that differences observed between groups are a consequence of the type of assessment instrument used. The most common type of testing instrument used today is the multiple choice examination (Haladyna, 1997; Haladyna, 2004). When an assessment tool is designed with items that may be more familiar to one group than to another, the two groups may score differently on the assessment. This threatens the validity of the instrument. According to Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003), there is a large adult literacy gap between blacks and whites in the United States. Although both groups may have received the same high school education, more than twice the number of Blacks (when compared to whites) were found to be functionally illiterate by the National Center for Education Statistics. When the reading load becomes heavy, the test may actually begin to measure reading comprehension, as opposed to the subject of focus (Haladyna, 2004; Schellenberg, 2004).

**Justification**

There is a major underrepresentation of minorities working in health related, and other professions in the United States (Betancourt 2002). Some of this discrepancy in numbers between various groups may be due to difficulty passing multiple choice board examinations. English language variation of multiple choice questions might be one of the variables that could lead to these lower test scores. Valencia and Suzuki (2001) performed a meta-analysis of 43 studies that focused on language status and the potential for test bias. All of the studies chosen focused on language differences (such as Spanish versus English); but none
of these studies looked at language variations that exist within one idiom (English alone). These same authors evaluated 62 studies that focused on ethnic differences and the potential for test bias. An overwhelming percentage (76%) focused on African American children, but none focused on adult education, and none focused specifically on English language variation. Chang, Witt, Jones, et al. (2003) reported that the literature on this topic, especially the research that is related to differential validity, is extensive, but outdated. These authors strongly supported more current research in this arena. Knowing if a student is affected by language variation could help a professor to guide that student to study not just content, but also the language of the test. This could help improve test scores. If professors in undergraduate education have a diagnostic tool to determine which students have problems with language variation, they can better guide students to better prepare for high stakes testing. Compiling data from educators around the world will help to lay a foundation of collaboration as a function of sustainability for global educators.

Methods

The development of the testing instrument required a great deal of collaboration among the faculty members of the research team, the students, and experts in the field of linguistics. The testing instrument was developed according to guidelines set forth by Domholt (2005). The process began with drafting, followed by expert review, then the first revision, the pilot test, and the final revision.

Drafting

The first step of the drafting process, according to Domholt (2005), is to define the purpose for the testing instrument. The instrument’s purpose was to test a student’s tendency to answer questions differently when the questions were asked differently. Once the purpose was determined, the researchers decided upon a test
question format. The multiple choice format was chosen as this is the type most frequently used during high stakes testing. Questions were selected from Giles (2007) study guide for physical therapy board examination (after obtaining permission from Scott Giles, PT, DPT, MBA). Questions then needed to be reworded according to the language variant in question. Two focus groups of three students each, one group Caucasian, and the other African American, volunteered to re-write thirty questions, “as if they were asking their friends each question.”

**Expert Review**

The re-written questions were reviewed by the faculty research team to insure that the meaning of each question had not changed. The questions were then sent to the expert linguists for review. The linguists were: Walt Wolfram, PhD, William C. Friday Distinguished Professor of English Linguistics, North Carolina State University, Director of the North Carolina Language and Life Project, co-creator of the Interinstitutional Cooperative PhD English Linguistics Program at Duke University, and author of many books including, *American English: Dialects and Variation* (Wolfram, 1998); and Lisa Green, PhD, Professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and author of two books, including *African American English, A Linguistic Introduction* (Green, 2002). These experts reviewed each question to insure that the item did indeed reflect the language variant in question. Dr. Wolfram reviewed the questions re-written in the southern Caucasian language variant, and Dr. Green reviewed the questions re-written in the southern African American language variant. After the expert review, the questions were modified as per the linguist recommendations to more accurately reflect the language variation, and then sent back to the faculty to again insure that the meaning of the questions had not been changed. Each question was then checked as per Domholt (2005) for content validity by answering the following questions: (1) Were the major elements addressed? (2) Were the questions understandable within the limits of the dialect? (3) Were the terms defined satisfactorily? (4) Were the
questions formatted appropriately? After this review, a few of the questions needed to be modified slightly to insure content validity.

**First Revision**

The questions were then, returned to the linguists for a second check, to insure that the language variations intended remained. After questions were returned and again checked for content validity, the first revision was complete. IRB approval was then requested.

**Pilot Test**

The pilot study was initially given to the 19 students in the TSU Physical Therapy Class of 2008. The final item included a request for students to give feedback related to the testing instrument. After debriefing including a statement on the true intentions of the test, students were again asked for input related to the test. Over the past 2 years, the test has been given to 3 class cohorts, and the results have been used to diagnose potential problems in questions comprehension when items are re-worded based upon the two language variations.

**Final Revision**

The team now had 60 questions as originally written by Giles, with 30 rewritten for Caucasian, and 30 re-written for African American language variations. It was decided to mix the questions on two testing instruments to decrease the chance of the test-retest phenomenon. Test A consists of 30 questions as is, 15 of the Caucasian questions, and 15 of the African American questions. Test B consists of the opposite 30 questions as originally written, and the remaining rewritten questions:15 Caucasian, and 15 African American. The test is give on two different testing dates. Using controlled randomization, students are assigned to two groups with an equal number of Caucasians in each group, and an equal number of African Americans in each group. On the first day of testing, One group takes test A and the other takes test B. During the second day of testing, those who took test A, now take test B; and those who took test B, now take test A. This allows for a diagnostic on the first day of testing, and a group analysis that does not
include the test-retest phenomenon, also on day one. It also takes away the possibility that questions were answered differently simply because they were more difficult questions, as the questions are reversed. The second day of testing is simply to compare the repeat performance of individual students. Sample questions can be found in the Appendix.

**Utilization of the Tool**

This tool had been useful in the diagnosis of problems specific to an individual student. A student can tell by the difference in scoring whether or not he or she has problems answering questions when the questions have been reworded. It is apparent that a difference in percentage correct of 20% or more between the originally worded questions and either the Caucasian or African American language variant questions marked a potential problem when attempting to pass board examinations that utilize multiple choice formatting. This is not the detection of a simple reading comprehension problem, which the student may or may not have. This is instead the detection of a distortion of understanding when questions are worded differently from the student’s cultural proclivities, or differently from the language variation to which the students is accustomed. When a student has been found to have this problem, the student is informed. The researchers at TSU have found that the simple knowledge that this problem exists appears to be helpful for students when developing their own personal study strategies. The faculty has recommended that students with language variant problems not only study the content of the test, but also the language of the test. One method that has been helpful is when these students study with other students who were not found to have language variation problems, to confirm that there is a clear understanding of practice examination questions.

Over the past five years, the TSU physical therapy department has seen an improvement in the pass rate on the NPTE from 50.0% to 90.5%. Although many changes could have assisted in this process (change in curriculum, hiring of more full-time faculty, changes in our admission standards, critical thinking workshops, etc.), many students have cited the utilization of the diagnostic examination and the provision of the results as a strong reason for their ultimate success on the NPTE.
Conclusions

Because of the positive outcomes of the TSU PT Students on the NPTE over the years, this study and utilization of the Language Variation Diagnostic Tool will be ongoing. This tool has provided valuable information to the research team, the TSU faculty, and the participating students. The main limitation of the study is that changing the wording of an examination can alter the validity of that examination when comparing groups. However, it still provides valuable information when comparing the individual component scores to each other for each individual student. Another limitation is that many variables were modified at TSU, and it is difficult to assess the degree of NPTE score improvement that is due solely to the utilization of the diagnostic tool.

It is recommended that this research continue, and that other colleges and universities employ similar strategies to create their own discipline specific tool. Through collaborative efforts, this process can be polished, and the data collected can be analyzed in aggregate. This should tell us more about the degree of effect that language variation might have on the racial discrepancy that occurs with multiple choice testing. When students are informed of their tendency to answer questions differently after questions are reworded, they can begin word on more effective metacognitive strategies to perform at a higher level. This could help to decrease the racial discrepancy in scoring outcomes. We cannot have social justice in professions that require the passing of board examinations and other high stakes examinations if racial discrepancy continues. The research community must remain open-minded for any new strategies proposed that could assist all students from all ethnic backgrounds, who have knowledge and competency to practice in their desired professions. This will not only help improve diversity in the professions, but will encourage social justice.
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**APPENDIX – Sample questions with subtle differences**

**Questions as originally written by Giles (2007)**

1. An order is received to perform chest physical therapy on a patient status post abdominal surgery. A chart review identifies right atelectasis. The MOST appropriate exercise to teach the patient is:
   1. reflex cough technique
   2. Codman’s pendulum exercises
   3. segmental breathing
   4. quick paced shallow breathing

2. A patient returns to an outpatient physical therapy clinic two hours after being seen complaining of increased back pain. The patient has been in physical therapy for three previous visits and has had little difficulty with a program consisting of palliative modalities and pelvic stabilization exercises. The patient was referred to physical therapy after straining his back two weeks ago. The MOST appropriate physical therapist action is:
   1. contact the referring physician to discuss the patient’s care plan
   2. instruct the patient to discontinue the pelvic stabilization exercises and re-examine the patient at his next visit
   3. refer the patient to the emergency room of a local hospital
   4. instruct the patient to cancel existing physical therapy visits and schedule an appointment with the physician

3. A physical therapist reviews a research study that examines knee flexion range of motion two weeks following arthroscopic surgery. Assuming a normal distribution, what percentage of patients participating in the study would you expect to achieve a goniometric measurement value between the mean and one standard deviation above the mean?
   1. 25%
2. 34%
3. 46%
4. 68%

4. A physical therapist uses a spirometer to administer a pulmonary function test to a patient with suspected pulmonary dysfunction. Which of the following measurements would the therapist be able to obtain directly without utilizing the results of other pulmonary function tests?
   1. expiratory reserve volume
   2. total lung capacity
   3. minute volume
   4. residual volume

Questions written in a Southern African American Language Variant

1. An order’s been received to perform chest physical therapy on a patient coming right out of abdominal surgery. The chart shows the right atelectasis (the lung won’t inflate all the way). What is the best thing to teach this patient?
   1. reflex cough technique
   2. Codman’s pendulum exercises
   3. segmental breathing
   4. quick paced shallow breathing

2. A patient came back complaining of back pain, two hours after being treated. They been in the clinic three times before, and had little difficulty while receiving treatment consisting of palliative modalities and pelvic stabilization exercises. The patient was initially referred to physical therapy after straining his back two weeks ago. The best thing the therapist could do now is:
   1. contact the referring physician to discuss the patient’s care plan
   2. instruct the patient to discontinue the pelvic stabilization exercises and re-examine the patient at his next visit
   3. refer the patient to the emergency room of a local hospital
4. instruct the patient to cancel existing physical therapy visits and schedule an appointment with the physician

Questions written in a Southern Caucasian Language Variant

3. A physical therapist takes a look at a research study that evaluates knee flexion a couple weeks following arthroscopic surgery. Assuming the sample represents a normal distribution, from what percentage in the study would you expect to measure a goniometric reading between the mean and one standard deviation above the mean?
   1. 25%
   2. 34%
   3. 46%
   4. 68%

4. A physical therapist uses a spirometer to do a breathing function test on a patient with suspected lung problems. Which of the following measurements can the therapist do without using the results of other lung functioning tests?
   1. expiratory reserve volume
   2. total lung capacity
   3. minute volume
   4. residual volume

Academic Performance in Cohort-Based Pre-service Teacher Education Programs

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Abstract

In an *ex post facto* causal-comparative research design, this study investigated whether or not education candidates were affected by the type of delivery model (cohort vs. non-cohort) they experienced as undergraduate elementary education majors, as assessed by their performance outcome scores on the Praxis II PLT exam. This study also focused on how Praxis II scores were influenced by extraneous variables such as ACT scores, age groups, gender, and teacher education program entry GPA. Using a quantitative treatment of data, a sample was taken from all K-8/K-6 majors at the cooperating institution of higher education from Spring 2005 to Spring 2010.

Introduction

Teacher education in the United States is once again in crisis. Educational policymakers and teacher education practitioners are persistently occupied with curriculum development, as well as the ever-changing national and state policies concerning teacher preparation. Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) must continually supply the K-12 system with quality teachers who are prepared to meet the demands of the modern school, especially in specific subject areas where personnel shortages abound. Teacher Education Programs (TEP) are frequently faced with the challenges of preparing teacher education candidates who are competent, caring professionals for diverse and contemporary classrooms. The United States Department of Education predicted that public schools will need more than 4.2 million teachers by 2016, an increase of 18% from 2004 (Hussar, Bailey, & National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). As a result, teacher education programs have recognized the need to
develop stronger collaborative partnerships with community colleges in order to prepare pre-service teachers. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) stated, “Reducing the teacher shortage requires strong collaboration between 2- and 4-year institutions” (Schuhman, 2002, p. 6).

For many years, community colleges and four-year institutions have partnered to develop various articulation agreements to support the transition of matriculating from one center of higher education to another. A substantial number of potential teacher education candidates are either geographically or economically bound to a specific region within their state. In addition, a number of these potential candidates are non-traditional in nature and may be “place-bound” due to family responsibilities (Schuhman, 2002). Therefore, it is important for teacher education programs to understand what attracts and retains teachers in these rural areas (Burton & Johnson, 2010; White & Reid, 2008).

University programs for pre-service teachers are delivered through a variety of organizational patterns or models. One variation is the teacher cohort model. The term cohort is commonly defined as a group of people who stay together from beginning to end of a program and grow through the process, experiencing essentially the same stimulus material and challenges of the work environment (Goodlad, 1990). The cohort program is designed to create learning environments based on building communities of learners (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006). Within these learning communities, the pre-service programs design their curricula around the learners and simultaneously teach methods and content (Mather & Hanley, 1999).

A traditional teacher preparation program is defined as an on-campus college or university program that primarily serves undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students without prior teaching or work experience, which leads to a bachelor’s degree in education (Department of Education, 2010). Traditional
teacher education candidates in Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) are sometimes defined as being individualistic and isolated (Goodlad, 1990). However, the cohort communities are created to model the desirable attributes of teachers and their relationships in schools, such as collaboration and teamwork (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006). In order to be effective in rural areas pre-service and novice teachers must build relationships and identity within the community they plan to teach; this process begins with where and how they are trained (White & Reid, 2008). By forming cohorts in these isolated areas, pre-service and novice teachers are able to develop a consciousness of their surroundings and place significance for their teaching (Burton & Johnson, 2010; White & Reid, 2008).

This study provided higher education, community college, and teacher preparation administrators with reliable assessment data concerning the effectiveness of cohort-based education related to traditional pedagogical program instruction. Furthermore, the information gathered in this study can be used in planning and implementing cohort curricula characterized by a seamless transition from community colleges to Institutions of Higher Education (IHE). Therefore, community colleges have the greatest potential to become prominent and vital components of teacher preparation programs (Schuhman, 2002). While several studies have been conducted to predict the pass rates for Praxis II, little to none have been found to predict pass rates for the Praxis II PLT. In brief, this study provided Colleges of Education with new insights into the area of professional learning communities/cohorts that may help candidates pass the Praxis II PLT exam on the first attempt. Furthermore, the information gathered in this study can be used in planning and implementing cohort curricula characterized by a more seamless transition from the community college to the Institutions of Higher Education (IHE). Finally, the results of this study will provide the insight needed for community colleges and universities to review the NCATE standards concerning the feasibility of extending accreditation status to teacher education programs housed at
community colleges. This research was guided by two primary questions:

1. What differences exist in *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* (PLT) exam scores between non-cohort groups and comparable cohort groups at a single southeastern Institution of Higher Education (IHE)?

2. What will be the difference, if any, in candidate scores on the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* (PLT) exam of non-cohort groups and comparable cohort groups when compared to (a) ACT scores, (b) age groups, (c) gender, and (d) Teacher Education Program (TEP) entry GPA?

**Related Literature**

While partnerships between Institutions of Higher Education and two-year colleges have been around for decades, the idea of housing the last two years of a four-year university teacher education program at the community college began emerging nationwide in 2002 (AACTE, AACC, & ACCT, 2002; Blair, 2003; Schuhman, 2002). In 2003, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) predicted that “we will see greater awareness of the tie between community college and economic development, more effort on the part of community college leaders to demonstrate their responsiveness to the needs of local businesses, increasing enrollment as laid-off workers seek training….” (Christie, 2002, p. 262). For these reasons, ECS believes there will be an expanded role for community colleges in preparing teachers (Christie, 2002).

Furthermore, universities have fostered the creation of professional development school models in order to provide clinical and field experiences in closer proximity to the collaborative off-campus programs (Garber, 2006; Schuhman, 2002). In spite of the challenges of interfacing institutions, collaborating programs, a projected teacher shortage spanning decades, and a lack of identified and trained prospective
Long

educators, twenty-two states now offer teacher preparation programs at community colleges (Blair, 2003).

The Cohort Model of Teacher Education

Teacher education programs continually experiment with organizing or grouping students into collaborative learning communities. These groupings are known by names such as vanguard teams, university centers, peer groups, professional learning communities and cohorts. The term cohort in education is widely considered as a group of candidates that is organized by the college or department, usually for a period of no less than two years, where all or the majority of the courses are taken together (van der Wey, 2005). Saltiel and Russo (2001) suggested that defined membership, common goals, and structured meetings over time play a part in the definition and formation of cohorts. Saltiel and Russo further stated that cohort-based programs are more than learning communities because the cohort model requires a deeper level of commitment and cohesiveness when candidates are assembled into a construct built from a common curriculum that extends throughout a given time. By using the same methodology, students can learn to work together in collaborative communities that practice teaching together.

A critical analysis of cohort groupings has surfaced, and researchers have looked at both the positive and negative aspects of cohorts. The findings from these studies indicate that personalities of the members of the cohorts affect how the cohort operates as a whole, whether it is as a team, a dysfunctional family, or something in between (Mather & Hanley, 1999; Sapon-Shevin & Chandler-Olcott, 2001). The ideologies/philosophies driving the cohort initiative are derived from clearly advocated ways for teacher education candidates to become more involved in the learning process, and to become empowered by their own professional development (Barnett & Caffarella, 1992). One study described cohort groups as an
effective model when restructuring a teacher education program and went on to state that the primary focus of the program implementation was communication and human interaction (McIntyre & Byrd, 2000).

**Praxis II Series Assessments and the PLT**

The reauthorization of the Title II Higher Education Act (P.L. 105-244) mandated that institutions of higher education must report pass rates of teacher exams on all TEP candidates (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Currently, 45 out of the 50 states (including the District of Columbia, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) require candidates to take and pass a version of the Praxis II exam before receiving a license to teach (Praxis II Test Review, 2010). Eighteen states, including Tennessee, and the Department of Defense Education Activity require that teacher education candidates pass the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam to obtain a license (ETS, 2010). The PLT exams have been designed for pre-service teachers enrolled in teacher education programs.

The Praxis II exams are designed to assist teacher education program completers with initial licensure requirements (Educational Testing Services, 2008). *The Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam is designed to assess a beginning teacher's knowledge of a variety of job-related criteria. Such knowledge is typically obtained in pre-service preparation in areas such as educational psychology, human growth and development, classroom management, instructional design and delivery techniques, evaluation and assessment, and other professional preparation (ETS, 2008).

Tennessee pre-service teachers must take and pass at least two exams: one over general or specific content knowledge within the candidate’s specialty area, and another that addresses teaching pedagogy at varying grade levels known as the
Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) exam (Educational Testing Services, 2008). Candidates seeking licensure in elementary education must take the PLT (K-6) exam (Test code 0522) (Educational Testing Services, 2008). The Tennessee State Board of Education and the Tennessee State Department of Education Office of Teacher Licensing currently require the submission of Praxis scores. In order to fulfill the current requirements for an initial license with an endorsement to teach elementary grades K-8 or K-6, candidates must receive a minimum score of 155 on the Elementary Education K-6 Principles of Learning and Teaching exam.

As noted by Clauser, Margolis, and Case (2006), “A passing score on a licensure examination may be seen as a prerequisite for acceptable practice, but not as a guarantee of acceptable practice” (p. 717). Clauser et al. attributed this statement to the difference between perception and performance: test takers may have requisite knowledge but not demonstrate that knowledge in the classroom. Educational Testing Service has acknowledged that inferences based on teacher preparation credentialing exams are not predictors for future classroom success (Clauser, et al., 2006).

Methodology

An analysis of the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) scores for the state licensure exam were conducted, with a focus on any overall differences in mean scores of candidates participating in a cohort-based program compared to those in a non-cohort delivered program. In addition, any differences due to ACT scores, age groups, gender, and teacher education entry GPA groups were examined.

The sample for this study consisted of 1,161 Multidisciplinary Studies Human Learning (MDHL) and Multidisciplinary Studies Elementary (MDSE) candidates who graduated from the teacher education program from the spring of 2005 to spring of 2010.
The *Praxis II PLT* exams were taken by all candidates in the teacher education program to fulfill requirements for certification and licensure. All TEP candidates involved in this study completed an approved program of study, including coursework, field-based and clinical experiences. Of the 1,161 candidates involved in the study, 717 participated in a cohort delivery model represented by eight sites, while 444 were enrolled in a non-cohort model delivered on the main Institution of Higher Education (IHE) campus.

**Hypotheses**

A three-way ANOVA at $\alpha = .025$ level of significance was used to analyze null hypotheses 1 through 4 ($H_01 – H_04$) after adjusting for the experiment wise error rate using the Bonferroni adjustment technique, and a one-way ANOVA at $\alpha = .05$ level of significance was conducted to analyze null hypothesis 5 ($H_05$).

- $H_01$: There is no statistically significant difference in candidate scores on the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam between a non-cohort group and comparable cohort groups.
- $H_02$: There is no statistically significant difference in candidate scores on the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam between a non-cohort group and comparable cohort groups based on age group levels.
- $H_03$: There is no statistically significant difference in candidate scores on the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam between a non-cohort group and comparable cohort groups based on TEP entry level GPA.
- $H_04$: There is no difference in the variables (cohort vs. non-cohort, TEP entry GPA, age groups, and the interactions between these variables) that are significant in explaining candidate scores on the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam in the separate ANOVAs for males and females.
Hₐ₅: There is no statistically significant difference in candidate scores on the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam between a non-cohort group and comparable cohort groups based on ACT scores.

**Results**

A three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* (PLT) exam score differences between non-cohort and cohort groups, age groups, and the entry-level GPA of Teacher Education Program (TEP) candidates. ANOVA results, presented in Table 1, showed a significant main effect on ONOFF \((N = 1161, F = 8.38, p = 0.004)\) and ENTRYGPA \((F = 29.61, p = 0.000)\). Interaction between factors was significant between ONOFF and ENTRYGPA \((F = 4.15, p = 0.016)\).

**Table 1**

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
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<td>1149</td>
<td>103.214</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates significance at \(p < .025\)

There was a statistically significant difference between candidate scores on the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam between a non-cohort group and comparable cohort groups based on ACT scores below 22 \((n = 717, M = 171.45, SD = 10.24)\) and ACT score above 22 \((n = 444, M = 173.25, SD =\)
10.85, \( F = 8.383, p = .027 \). Candidates with an ACT above 22 achieved better scores on the PLT than candidates who scored below 22. However, it should be noted that when split into gender groups, only females showed significance. Table 2 summarizes inferential statistics calculated in the form of an ANOVA at the \( \alpha = .05 \) level of significance.

Table 2
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (ACT)

<table>
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<td>103.214</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates significance at \( p < .05 \)

Findings

Based on the results of the one-way ANOVA, Null Hypothesis 1 (H\(_0\)1) was rejected. The test confirmed a statistically significant difference in mean PLT scores for candidates enrolled in the non-cohort group as compared to the PLT scores of candidates enrolled in comparable cohort groups. The majority of recent research performed on cohorts has been qualitative in nature (Agnew, Mertzman, Longwell-Grice, & Saffold, 2008; Mather & Hanley, 1999; McPhail, Robinson, & Scott, 2008; Saltiel & Russo, 2001; Sapon-Shevin & Chandler-Olcott, 2001; Seifert & Mandzuk, 2006) and therefore, difficult to establish a correlation to the quantitative results found in this study. Barnett, Basom, Yerks, and Norris (2000) suggested that an examination of the challenges linked to cohort instruction should become a vital research component for institutions of higher education, “especially if this innovation is to become more than a passing fad” (p. 256). Conversely, as White and Reid (2008) discussed, the main drawback of cohort instruction was that the place of
instruction was too often removed from the culture of the community in which the novice teacher was placed.

By analyzing the results of the three-way ANOVA, and the underlying interactions between each of the variables, the study revealed answers to Null Hypotheses 2 ($H_o2$), 3 ($H_o3$), and 4 ($H_o4$). Null Hypothesis 2 ($H_o2$) was retained because age was not a factor in how well candidates performed on the Praxis II PLT. In contradiction, Wenglinsky (2000) found that teacher education programs with higher traditional enrollments (i.e., 18-24 years old and non-working) had candidates that outperformed non-traditional candidates on the PLT.

Null Hypothesis 3 ($H_o3$) was rejected because candidates with a GPA of 3.5 – 4.0 performed significantly better in both the non-cohort and cohort environments. However, it should be noted that candidates with a GPA of 2.5 – 2.99 performed better in the cohort environment, while candidates with a GPA of 3.0 – 3.49 performed better in the non-cohort environment.

These findings were further substantiated by several other studies that tested the validity of teacher certification exams using GPA as a key variable (Blue, O'Grady, Toro, & Newell, 2002; Rogness, 2005; Selke, 2004; Sutton, 2004). Blue et al. (2002) found a correlation between teacher certification testing and grade point average. While significant correlations were found between Praxis exam scores and high and mid level final GPA scores, the opposite was true for low final GPA scores. In a research study by Selke et al. (2004), teacher certification exams, such as the Praxis II series, were compared to GPA and found to possess a positive correlation (Rogness, 2005).

Null Hypothesis 4 ($H_o4$) was retained because there were no significant differences between cohort and non-cohort, TEP entry GPA, age groups, and the interactions between those variables based on gender. The literature revealed limited results as to the effects of gender on the Praxis II Principles of Learning and
Long

Teaching (PLT) exam. However, a study by Livingston and Rupp (2004) compared the performance of men and women on multiple-choice and constructed-response exams such as the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam. Livingston and Rupp suggested that the use of only multiple-choice questions would result in lower performance score for female candidates. Prior research with high school students compared the scores of male and female participants on multiple-choice and constructed-response exams, and research revealed that females consistently outperformed their male counterparts (Breland, Danos, Kahn, Kubota, & Bonner, 1994).

Based on the results of the one-way ANOVA, Null Hypothesis 5 (H₀₅) was rejected because candidates, cohort and non-cohort, with an ACT composite score above 22 achieved higher scores on the PLT than candidates who received an ACT composite score below 22. Educational Testing Service (1999) collected ACT results from 300,000 participants who had taken some form of licensure test offered by ETS. The results of the study showed evidence of a relationship between high ACT scores and high Praxis performance.

Conclusions

This study revealed that candidates instructed in the non-cohort delivery model performed better on the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam than those instructed in the cohort delivery model. The findings of this study were in contradiction to the findings of Saltiel and Russo (2001) who suggested that cohorts were stronger because of the commitment to the group. Mather and Hanley (1999) also noticed the apparent influences and advantages of the cohort due to class size and teaching approach.

The data did not indicate that the cohort delivery model had a significant effect on PLT scores. Nevertheless, it should be noted, that while the difference in Praxis II PLT scores between
cohort and non-cohort were found to be significant, the
difference was less than three points. It is also worth mentioning
that this difference may be due to the disproportionate number of
candidates enrolled in the cohort versus the non-cohort model.
The research institution selected the cohort approach as a viable
delivery option for reasons such as the inherent social benefit,
smaller class sizes, and the opportunity for peer mentoring,
modeling and class discussion. However, the major justification
for implementing the cohort program was that many rural and/or
economically depressed candidates gravitated toward the
community college venue as a practical alternative for higher
education. By implementing a university-driven, cohort-based,
teacher education program (TEP) via the community college, the
university enables two-year education candidates to experience a
four-year TEP without having to relocate. Candidates based in
these geographically isolated areas find this solution to be better
than the unconventional, alternative routes to teacher
certification that do not require clinical and/or field-based
experiences. Furthermore, cohort programs are more than just
professional learning communities; cohorts demand a level of
dedication and interconnectedness that extend beyond the
traditional teacher education model.

Some research studies have established incongruities between
the academic performance of community college transfer
students and native university students (Glass & Harrington,
2002), while other studies designated a strong similarity in
academic performance between native and transfer students
(AACTE, 2002; Recruiting New Teachers, 2002). It is unknown
why college students pick one institution of higher education
over another. The possibilities range from monetary to familial,
academic competency to personal maturity. Further research is
needed in order to increase program perspectives built on
academic performance outcomes between candidates who began
their college career in a community college opposed to those
who began at a four-year institution.
This research study found no difference in PLT scores based on candidates’ age. As stated earlier, Wenglinsky (2000) found that teacher education programs with candidates in the 18-24 year old range outperformed non-traditional candidates on the PLT. It is widely held that non-traditional candidates often outperform traditional candidates in classroom-based activities. If so, why are these same candidates not performing as well on the PLT? Is there a connection between age and test anxiety? These are questions for further research. However, it is interesting to speculate if the non-traditional label also carries with it a heavier burden of responsibility. These candidates go to school full time while maintaining active family lives and balancing a pre-arranged work schedule.

Perhaps the most significant information gleaned from this study relates to the effect of entry level GPA, ACT and the performance on the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam by non-cohort candidates. Candidates with a GPA of 3.5 – 4.0 and a composite ACT score above 22 consistently outperformed those with lower scores. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that traditional four-year university candidates may be more academically competent than their community college counterparts. Other studies have found a similar relationship between scores on tests in the Praxis series and academic measures like GPA and ACT (Blue, et al., 2002). When looking at GPA and ACT, researchers must keep in mind that teacher education programs must set minimum admission criteria that candidates must meet in order to gain entry into the program. In turn, these criteria may be used as predictors due to the fact that candidates have already exhibited a degree of success by gaining entry into the program.

Changing the minimum entry requirements for candidates who apply for the teacher education program may have a profound effect on performance outcomes as well. Raising the minimum GPA from 2.5 to 2.75 would have eliminated 105 candidates from the sample used in this study. Many of these lower
performing candidates contributed to the outliers found in the PLT scores. By changing the GPA requirements, teacher education programs can implement a more rigorous admissions process, and therefore, convey a more competent pool of candidates.

All ACT scores used in this study were first attempt scores. The score received on the initial tests revealed a greater extent of a priori knowledge. If candidates were allowed access to remediation (i.e., multiple attempts) their scores would not accurately reflect their knowledge at the point of entry to the teacher education program. A composite ACT score of 22 or higher was required for admittance into the Teacher Education Program (TEP). Candidates not meeting this requirement were expected to pass the Praxis I PPST exam in order to meet TEP competencies. In conclusion, this study revealed that forty-six percent of the candidates involved were successful in meeting the admissions criteria while fifty-four percent were required to present alternative assessments based on their first attempt scores.

This study was unsuccessful at detecting any differences due to gender. It cannot be concluded with any certainty that gender played a role due to the fact that the numbers of males and females were so dissimilar. The percentages of male and female candidates enrolled in the K-6/K-8 elementary education program are somewhat consistent with the dominance of female practitioners in the teaching profession. When separate ANOVA tests were conducted based on a gender split, a significant main effect was discovered for females between non-cohort and cohort ($N = 1,062$, $F = 8.401$, $p = 0.004$) and TEP entry GPA ($F = 26.211$, $p = 0.000$). Interactions between factors were also significant for females concerning non-cohort and cohort and TEP entry GPA ($F = 4.352$, $p = 0.013$). Male candidates showed no individual significance or interactional significance within variables. However, the small number of male candidates ($n = 99$), coupled with the ANOVA testing, may not have provided a
large enough number suitable for a proper sample. Whether the ANOVAs would have been analogous if gender had been comparable is a question for further research.

**Recommendations for Practice**

It is recommended that universities work with local community colleges to ensure that similar coursework is provided and artifacts are developed that are aligned with the state and national standards for elementary education. The AST and AAT degrees, awarded by two-year programs, are considered vehicles for such a task.

In this particular research study, all cohort-based candidates completed two years at community colleges prior to admission into the university teacher education program. It is recommended that the university analyze current trend data to compare the average ACT scores for candidates entering community colleges as compared to the average ACT scores of “native” four-year university candidates. These data can be used to determine what outcomes, other than academic, might be considered when delivery models are compared.

It is recommended that university advisors work with community college advisors to maintain strong relationships built on the foundation of strong articulation agreements that benefit the transfer candidate. Teacher education programs need continued research in the area of professional learning communities (cohorts) in order to identify the areas that need to be strengthened in the preparation of pre-service teachers.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

There was a limited amount of research concerning cohort groupings at the undergraduate level. This gap in research could be due to the fact that educational cohort groupings are still considered somewhat a new strategy. Deficiencies in research
pertaining to cohorts and their effect on teacher licensure exams contributed to the in-depth analysis of only one teacher education program. The following recommendations were established from the findings and conclusions of this research study and are suggestions for future research.

Further investigation of state mandated licensure exams should be conducted to see if differences exist between the extraneous variables used in this study (ACT, age groups, gender, TEP entry GPA) and other Praxis II exams. Statistical analysis on the other Praxis II exams would strengthen the impetus for using teacher-based licensure exams to achieve the “highly qualified” status.

In addition to added testing, further research is warranted with a more diverse population in regards to gender and ethnicity. The results would be much easier to generalize across a variety of settings if a more heterogeneous sample were included in the data analysis.

It is recommended that a study should be considered on cohorts and non-cohorts involving more than one university teacher education program. The study could draw conclusions based on demographics from a more diverse population and, therefore, a wider scope and application could be gained from the comparison.

A longitudinal research project involving qualitative research should be considered. Inquiries into the areas of program satisfaction, self efficacy, team collaboration, and peer mentoring would provide an additional source of information for the development of a knowledge repository required by teacher education programs in order to make an informed decision concerning the effectiveness of the cohort delivery model.

A study should be conducted regarding recruitment of candidates in cohort and non-cohort sections. Additional descriptive statistics could be gathered to further define the population
academically. In addition to this research, a variable could be added as to whether or not candidates enrolled in the non-cohort were “native” to the main campus or transfer students from another college or university.

It is recommended that future research is needed to determine predictable academic outcomes based on whether or not cohort groupings were in urban or rural areas. The identification and tracking of candidates’ field and clinical placements would be categorized based on indicators of urban or rural locations.

A study should be conducted on the social adjustments, or “transfer shock,” of community college candidates. Furthermore, this research could help discover whether or not the shock of moving from a two-year program to a four-year Teacher Education Program has an effect on academic performance outcomes such as the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* exam.

In the closing stages of this research study, it is important to identify the impact delivery models may ultimately have upon student learning. The effects of the cohort delivery model in undergraduate teacher education programs are yet to be determined. A single study at a southeastern, NCATE accredited, regional institution of higher education cannot exclusively determine what needs to be reformed or redesigned in teacher education. The implications for additional empirical research are not only evident, but also vital to the success of preparing pre-service teacher candidates.

**References**


The Effects of Social Justice Activity Participation on Aspiring School Leaders in an Instructional Leadership Degree Program

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Abstract

Social justice promotes unity in schools and addresses the challenges that some students in the general curriculum face that are related to their race, ethnicity, scholastic ability, socioeconomic status, language, appearance, and gender. This qualitative study investigated the effects of participation in social justice activities on aspiring school leaders in a Southeastern public university’s instructional leadership program. The participants were graduate-level students in a practicum course in instructional leadership that involved administrative field experiences and two social justice activities: a case study on a marginalized student and an equity audit on the special education population of the participants’ respective schools. A survey with open ended items was administered to participants to investigate what they learned from the social justice activities and what their recommendations were as a result of the experience. The constant comparative method was used for the data analysis.

Introduction

Using social justice activities in educating aspiring school leaders is critical to make them aware of the growing societal problems that affect students and their role in helping all students learn. Teaching for social justice promotes unity in the school setting and attempts to address the inequitable issues many students experience regarding their race, ethnicity, ability, class, language, appearance, and gender.
As a result of the serious economic and social problems facing American students, teaching for social justice is an essential element in today’s higher education curriculum. Leadership for social justice “poses solutions for issues that generate and reproduce society inequities. Generally, social justice theorists and activists focus their inquiries on how institutionalized theories, norms, and practices in schools and society lead to social, political, economic, and educational inequities” (Marshall & Oliva, 2010, p. 20).

Child poverty is one of the most pressing issues for social justice in American education. Nationally, the percent of children living in poverty increased from 17% in 2000 to 20% in 2009. “This represents about 2.4 million more children living below the poverty line in 2009 than in 2000” (Casey Foundation, 2011, para. 13). The 2011 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* reported that experts predict more current statistics on family income will reveal that over 22% of American children now live in poverty.

Poverty is a major factor in the achievement gap in American public education. This gap is most often used to describe the “troubling performance gaps between many African-American and Hispanic students, at the lower end of the performance scale, and their non-Hispanic white peers, and the similar academic disparity between students from low-income and well-off families. It shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates. It has become a focal point of education reform efforts” (Achievement gap, 2004, para. 1).

Economic segregation is revealed in the stark contrast between the educational opportunities and student achievement of high poverty and middle class schools (“Economic segregation rising,” 2010). One in six students attends a high poverty school, according to the National Council for Education Statistics 2010 report, *The Condition of Education*. “High poverty schools get worse teachers . . . are more chaotic . . . [have] lower levels of
parental involvement . . . and lower expectations than middle class schools – all of which translate into lower levels of achievement” (“Economic segregation rising,” 2010, para. 3).

Educators’ interest in social justice is evidenced by the growing number professional organizations and associations such as Educators’ Network for Social Justice, Teachers for Social Justice, Teachers 4 Social Justice, and regional organizations such as Northwest Teachers for Social Justice. An organized approach for social justice is needed for educators since “Policymakers and scholars talk about what can or should be done, but educational leaders are the people who must deliver some version of social justice and equity” (Marshall & Oliva, 2010, p. 1).

The term social justice was coined in 1840 by the Jesuit priest and polemicist, Luigi Taparelli (1783-1862), during the era of unification in Italy and social revolution in Europe. Taparelli developed his ideas when he was teaching a natural law course and could not find a book that met his requirements, so Taparelli developed his own treatise (Behr, 2003).

Taparelli was influenced by the works of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), an important medieval theologian and a forward thinker, who promoted the reintroduction of Aristotle’s work to the West. Aquinas’ work was influenced by Albert Magnus, his teacher at the University of Paris. Magnus’ monumental work, involving the translation of Aristotle’s writings from Greek and Arabic, was “instrumental in the widespread acceptance of medieval scholars for Aristotelian theories of natural philosophy. Aquinas was one Magnus’ students and further developed many of Magnus’ ideas that were aimed at reconciling reason and religion” (Applied Research Group, 1997).

Aquinas claimed that Christians have a duty to “distribute with provision” to the poorest of society. Aquinas wrote in *Summa Theologica* (n.d.) that justice is a virtue that governs one’s
relationship with others and is a willingness to extend to each person what he or she deserves. Since justice governs one’s relationship with others, it requires that we must be social in order for us to be just. Breakdowns in society are the result of injustice.

In 1916, John Dewey was the first well known American proponent of social justice in educational philosophy. Dewey believed that a school should be organized as a small community and its goal should be the growth of the child. In *Democracy and Education* (1997) Dewey wrote that to promote the ideal of shared values for all individuals in the school:

All members of the group must have an equable opportunity to receive and to take from others. Members must be able to accept each other’s ideas and must be able to compromise. There must be a large variety of shared undertakings and experiences. Otherwise, the influences that educate some into masters, educate others into slaves. And the experience of each party loses in meaning, when the free interchange of varying modes of life-experience is arrested. A separation into a privileged and subject-class prevents social endosmosis. The evils thereby affecting the superior class are less material and less perceptible, but equally real. Their culture tends to be sterile, to be turned back upon itself; their art becomes a showy display and artificial; their wealth luxurious; their knowledge overspecialized; their manners fastidious rather than humane.

A follower of Dewey, George Counts (1899-1974) was an educator, important theorist, and American educational political leader. An experienced educator, Counts was a high school teacher, principal, and athletic coach before attending graduate school in 1913 at the University of Chicago where Dewey had been a faculty member.
In the 1920s, Counts was involved in research on social class assumptions underlying the American educational system and his perceptions of the U.S. economic crisis. At an address Counts presented to the Progressive Educators of America (PEA) in 1932, Counts (as cited in Jupp, 2011, para. 2) argued that the PEA’s focus on child-centered education was flawed:

It betrayed an upper-middle class orientation and, to become genuinely progressive, Counts proposed that teachers “dare build a new social order” through a complex, but definitely possible, process. Counts explained that only through schooling could students be educated for a life in a world transformed by massive changes in science, industry, and technology. Counts insisted that responsible educators cannot “evade the responsibility of participating actively in the task of reconstituting the democratic tradition and of thus working positively toward a new society.

Counts’ address to the Progressive Educators of America and the subsequent publication put him in the forefront of the social reconstruction movement in education.

In the 1970s, John Rawls, an American philosopher and professor, promoted the idea of social justice as a secular concept. Rawls is primarily known for his 1971 magnum opus, *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls’ theory (as cited in Garrett, 2005, para. 1) provides “a framework that explains the significance, in a society assumed to consist of free and equal persons, of political and personal liberties, of equal opportunity, and cooperative arrangements that benefit the more and the less advantaged members of society.”

An advocate for low income students, Paolo Friere (1970) promoted the idea of critical pedagogy. The focus of critical pedagogy “is with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations” (Burbules and Burke, 1999, para. 5). Friere writes that
no pedagogy that “is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption” (Friere, 1970, p. 25).

As a child in Brazil, Friere personally experienced a reversal of fortune when his middle class existence changed dramatically after the death of his father. Due to his father’s death, Friere’s family was required to relocate to a lower socioeconomic area where Friere was four grade levels lower than his peers. Although Friere’s family’s economic situation soon changed for the better, Friere’s decision to help improve life for the poor was based on his experiences as a child. Friere said that poverty and hunger affected his ability to learn. Friere wrote that he “didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge” (Friere as cited in Stevens, 2002).

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the effects of social justice activities on prospective school leaders in an instructional leadership course at a Southeastern public university. This study gathered data from the participants using a survey that was developed by the researcher. The survey was composed of four open ended items. The constant comparative method was used to analyze the survey data.

The participants were five graduate students in a practicum course that combined field experiences with two social justice activities. The first activity was an analysis of a case study on a marginalized student who had unknowingly been “tracked” into non-college bound classes. The second activity was an equity audit of the special education school population in the
participants’ schools that included gathering data on African American male students regarding their special education placements, attendance, and discipline. The participants were administered the survey at the last class meeting to investigate what the participants discovered about social justice as a result of participating in the social justice activities.

Results

The data from the qualitative items on the four item survey were analyzed using the constant comparative method. Trends and patterns were observed and documented in the process of data analysis.

The first of four survey items asked respondents to explain their reaction to the case study regarding whether they had considered issues of exclusionary practices on marginalized students. Eighty percent of the respondents (four out of five) reported that they had already considered issues of exclusionary practices on marginalized students prior to participating in the social justice activity. One participant reported that through the university’s instructional leadership program, the participant learned that excluding students “hurts more than it helps.” Other anecdotal evidence included the following comments:

- “I have considered issues of exclusionary practices because I work with ELL students whose linguistic and cultural diversity creates the need for unique teaching strategies.”
- “Often I am the advocate for my students when I witness exclusionary practices. Marginalized students often continue to be behind academically and socially.”
- “I have learned from reading research that all students are capable of learning and the special needs students will surprise you in how they retain knowledge.”
- “I have not have any experience with exclusionary practices in my school, but I am not surprised . . . when I
• was in high school I was under the impression that the challenging classes were for the “smarter students.”
• “I have worked in schools that have a very high African-American population (between 75-100%), this is an issue that arises often. Many of these students end up in exceptional education for the most part because of behavior issues.”

For the second survey question, respondents were asked their reaction to the results of the equity audit they conducted using their respective schools’ data on African American male students regarding their placements, attendance, and discipline. Eighty percent (four out of five) of the respondents were not surprised at the findings of their audits. The respondent who was the one exception wrote that she “was surprised at the data, especially about African American males. I now look at these students and the treatment of these students by teachers in my school in a different manner.”

Anecdotal evidence from other respondents revealed findings related to student discipline and special education placements. Two respondents noted that students in their schools are placed in special education due to “their behaviors” and to “cultural differences.” One respondent noted that disciplinary actions “are more strenuous when dealing with Black males.” Additionally, another respondent reported that “I see firsthand that exclusionary practices take place.”

The third survey item asked respondents to consider who would benefit if the results of their equity audits were released to the public. The respondents reported that students, parents, teachers, directors of schools, stakeholders, and the general public would all benefit. Anecdotal evidence that supports this conclusion as indicated by the following comments:

• “I feel the African American students would benefit. There are a bunch of outside organizations that love to help African American students that are at risk.”
“Parents, teachers, and stakeholders would benefit because it would make people more aware that educational discrimination does still occur in schools and people would possibly be more aware of how to prevent these things from happening.”

“Directors of schools would benefit so they could pass the findings of the equity audit down to principals and principals could pass it down to teachers to come up with ways to make changes.”

“The African American male students would benefit and classroom teachers would also benefit from this knowledge.”

“Teachers, parents, and students would benefit from this information. I believe this will allow the general public to develop an understanding of their students’ needs. I also feel this allows the public to know the social justice issues within the education department.”

The fourth and final survey question asked respondents to reflect on what they learned about social justice as a result of the two activities in the course: analyzing the case study on the marginalized student and the equity audit of the special education populations at their respective schools. An analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the social justice activities had meaning for each individual respondent. The anecdotal evidence to support this finding is from the following comments:

“I have seen firsthand the social injustice . . . the social justice issues often affect students’ dropout rates. I have seen special education students placed in electives instead of core curriculum courses.”

“Social justice is dependent on the perspective of the individuals involved. . . . I was reminded that not all people are treated the same and we need to work to decrease the gap between these inequities in the schools.”

“That racial discrimination in education may not be as prevalent as it was in the past, but we as educators should
never feel that it does not exist or that it will not happen within our schools.”

- “I learned that at times society is a ‘dog eat dog world.’ Although everyone has their own ideas when it comes to how students achieve, these ideas may not be thought out and may end up hurting the child in the long run.”
- “That this type of injustice happens more often than it should . . . it is so unfair to anyone it happens to.”

**Discussion**

Each of the aspiring school leaders who participated in this study reported that the two social justice activities (the equity audit and the case study on the marginalized student) had meaning for them. The majority of the participants were not surprised at the results of the equity audit for the special education population. One respondent who was surprised at the results of the audit reported that she now looked at African American male students and the treatment of them by teachers in her school in a different manner. Additionally, another respondent said that although discrimination in education may not happen as often as in the past, educators should not be complacent but be proactive in addressing inequities in education.

It is recommended that equity audits be conducted in schools on the special education population and the results of the audits should be made public. Community members who are not directly involved in K-12 education do not see, as teachers do, the students who are discriminated against or marginalized in schools.

As the participants of this study recommended, releasing the findings of the equity audit may result in teachers, principals, and directors of schools discussing the findings, the ramifications for their schools, and proposing solutions to problematic situations. If the results of the equity audit were released to the general public, parents, community stakeholders, and other concerned
citizens would become aware of the issues of inequity and unfairness that some students experience daily. Social justice can make a difference in the lives of students when the entire educational community understands the issues and is concerned enough to develop solutions to problems that promotes unity, equity, and fairness in the school setting.

References


Second-Language (L2) Teacher Preparation and Ongoing Professional Development in a World in Need of Social Justice

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Abstract

Balancing the ideal and the real in second-language (L2) teacher preparation / ongoing professional development is a juggling act. Constraints on L2 teachers’ preparation may equip them to deal only with what is pragmatic. Preparation for the bigger picture will empower them to know themselves more fully, come to identify with and understand more fully the Other, and potentially bring about more social justice thinking and action on their part and in their learners.

Introduction

Much was written approximately a quarter century ago relative to L2 teacher preparation and ongoing professional development. Here, the author revisits his own research and writing (Heffernan, 1987a; 1987b; 1989) and that of a sample of others of the era (Calve, 1983; C.T.F., 1984; Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1985; Wilton, 1985; Lamarre, 1986; Bibeau, 1987; Obadia, 1987; and Lapkin, Swain & Shapson, 1990) on this issue. As this has also become a much addressed contemporary issue, we will synthesize as well recent findings and thinking on the subject, with a view to identifying what appears to have remained constant and what has changed. The author will also note in his conclusion developmental areas which he believes have been overlooked in the literature.

In a related vein, he has also explored during the past decade the choice of language-of-dissemination practice of leaders in the L2 field (a subject seldom looked into in North America, but which
was the centre of reflection in a recent, special annual issue of the prestigious, Europe-based International Review of Applied Linguistics, 2007).

We can assert that the two are inter-connected. Living fully what one practices is the prescription for a satisfying, growth-oriented professional life in L2 teaching and a prescription for the expansion of one’s personal and professional horizons to incorporate social justice focus in one’s practice.

**Key Recommendations for L2 Teachers’ Professional Preparation and Ongoing Professional Development from A Quarter Century Ago**

Heffernan (1987a; 1987b; 1989) addressed as a key issue that of a professional blame cycle or cycle of guilt relative to not only L2 teachers’ alleged want of preparedness and qualifications for doing their work competently but also L2 learners’ alleged want of progress as they made their way through multi-year L2 programs. In order for L2 educators to break themselves free from these shackles of blame and guilt, he suggested (ibid: 6-7) that “more articulation committees between all levels [be] set up everywhere and [that] this should be a high priority of the profession”. He asserted that such articulation committees, which were then rarely found, had the potential, as forums for ongoing dialogue, not only to enhance communication among those working at different levels (from the elementary to the graduate school) but also serve an ongoing in-service or professional development function for participants.

Along with other researchers and teacher trainers of the era, he also emphasized the need for linguistic and communicative standards, echoed for example by Bibeau (1987:3) who called for “basic linguistic and language competence and above-average meta-linguistic competence” as prerequisites for teacher certification and Obadia (1987:9) who, while addressing the ongoing shortage of French immersion teachers, highlighted
particularly for that group of teachers the need for a “sociolinguistic awareness of the language that can only be acquired in a francophone environment”. In a similar vein, Heffernan (ibid) recommended an extended stay in an authentic immersion setting for teachers of any language, combined with follow-up stays of varying duration every five years or so, as language and culture constantly evolve and such immersion experiences of many years ago provide the teacher, years later, with mainly outdated linguistic and cultural reference points. If not made mandatory, Heffernan suggested that, at the very least, such experiences undertaken by L2 teachers should be subsidized and rewarded by special recognitions, especially at local levels, such as that of school districts.

All researchers and teacher trainers of that era also noted that, beyond the requirements of developing sound linguistic and sociocultural competence, even native speakers of a L2 they are teaching need training in L2 pedagogy. Heffernan additionally recommended that all L2 teachers participate annually in at least one related professional conference or methods course.

Lapkin, Swain and Shapson (1990), in a much touted research agenda set for French immersion teacher education in Canada, spoke to the complexity of the knowledge base about teaching and the importance of valuing inquiry-based and reflective models of initial and continuing education. More concretely, they addressed the needs: 1) to strengthen the relationship between theory and practice, 2) to understand the continuum leading from initial teacher preparation to professional induction through to ongoing professional learning and growth, and 3) to strengthen the structures for collaboration (i.e., echoing Heffernan, setting in place structures for articulation committees or what are more recently referred to as professional learning communities).

In large measure, those researching, reflecting and writing a quarter century ago on the issue of L2 teacher preparation and career-long learning voiced many of the same concerns and were
making similar recommendations.

**Current Recommendations for L2 Teachers’ Professional Preparation and Ongoing Professional Development**

L2 teachers’ initial preparation and ongoing professional development have become objects of considerable study and reflection in recent years, as they were a quarter century ago.

In way of examples, the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics (CAAL/ACLA) focused at a symposium held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in June 2007 on “Current Themes and Challenges in FSL Teacher Education”. Upcoming Canadian colloquia in 2011 are focusing similarly on “Innovative Approaches to Second-Language Teaching: Interdisciplinary, Multimodal, Digital and Tried and True Practices” (University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, early April 2011) and a pre-conference colloquium of the CAAL/ACLA being held in early June 2011 in Fredericton, New Brunswick is once again focusing on the theme of L2 teacher preparation. In 2009, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) published a special study on this same issue (principal investigators: Salvatori and MacFarlane).

On the one hand, one might observe: “Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose”. On the other, one observes that thinking about the issue has become more nuanced and more fine-tuned, as it has become more informed by research in recent years focusing not only on so-called scientific research approaches and linguistics *per se* but also on alternative research paradigms and new ideas flowing from such fields as identity studies, sociolinguistics and pragmatics, among others.

At the Saskatoon symposium, Mandin (2008) addressed the primordial need in any and all teaching for there to be passion, which is both authentic and made transparent in order for it to be passed along to those one is preparing for L2 teaching.
Simultaneously and in way of concrete ideas, she also suggested that L2 teacher educators, as agents for change and growth, must focus on enabling budding and growing L2 teachers to find and define themselves as bilingual, potentially bicultural persons. She asserts then that identity and culture must be key components of learning for all who are interested in L2 teaching. To this, she adds the need for L2 teachers to have high levels of L2 competence, with the ability to deal with language not only in formal contexts but also in areas such as the expression of feelings, humor, and everyday language in all of its idiomatic splendor. She suggests too that teacher clienteles are becoming more diverse from year to year, just as are school student populations in Canada and the U.S.A., and that accordingly our L2 teacher preparation and in-service activities need to be adjusted in kind. It is also suggested that errors should be seen in a new light, as learning opportunities rather than simply as mistakes, and that this orientation needs to be modeled in L2 teacher preparation and in-service activities, where power is shared in classrooms become truly learning communities. She concludes with the mandate for more articulation, which she refers to as partnership, among all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, teacher trainers and researchers.

At the same Saskatoon symposium, Bournot-Trites and Kristmanson, Dicks, Le Bouthillier and Bourgouin followed Mandin’s lead in suggesting professional learning communities rather than traditional formats for teacher preparation and in-service. In such formats, an individual(s) play(s) the role of leader(s) and master(s) while all other participants are in a more receptive, hierarchically subsidiary, more dependent position in relationship to the ‘expert’. Professional learning communities, on the other hand, are organized in a more realistically egalitarian manner, wherein all participants are valued for their prior knowledge and wherewithal to undertake a considerable amount of new learning autonomously and in working things through collaboratively with others, which others include both the instructor or in-service leader(s) as well as their remaining
peers in the professional learning community. This shift from a hierarchical structure to one which is more democratic and open validates and empowers all members of the learning community and enhances both individual initiative and group collaboration.

As Obadia (1987) had done years earlier, Bournot-Trites (2008) also reviewed recent research on the continuing shortage of French immersion teachers in Canada and addressed specifically the issue of the linguistic preparedness (or want of same) of incoming and practicing L2 teachers. In order to remediate this situation, she discussed an on-line course she has developed using a constructivist approach for teachers and budding teachers at a distance functioning collectively as a professional learning community to be able to develop their linguistic structures using text-based grammar, reflective language observation, systematic practice and transfer of learning in creative writing.

Kristmanson et al (2008) also discussed a professional learning community project focused on the development of L2 teachers’ and students’ writing skills.

Given the importance attached to the development of enhanced writing skills in L2 contexts in each of the last two projects mentioned, it might be concluded that, of the four linguistic skills, writing remains a kind of final frontier. Certainly, given the importance of highly competent mastery of grammar for excellent written expression, this focus is understandable and connects well with others discussed throughout this paper.

Arnett (2008), in a small-scale study of L2 learners’ own perceptions of what works best for them in L2 teaching, identified two dominant themes. L2 students generally found that greater and discerning use by the L2 teachers of the second language being taught worked best for them in their L2 acquisition. This included not only L2 teachers’ instructional voice but also the language-rich environment they created throughout their classroom (and perhaps even throughout their
school). Arnett also identified peer support and collaboration in L2 learning as elements of the L2 classroom setting that they particularly valued. From her findings, she also concluded that each of the above themes was augmented by inclusive practices employed by the teacher. In other words, use of lots of the L2 in the classroom combined with peer support and collaboration worked well for all students, including those identified with some learning challenges. Indeed, as Arnett (2008:74) suggests, “inclusive teaching and effective teaching within core French provide somewhat of an implicit argument for the compatibility of the two constructs”. Hence, training exemplifying each would be a benefit for L2 teachers in preparation and in their ongoing professional development.

Training in the use of language portfolios will also help ensure that we are developing more reflective L2 teaching practitioners (Kelly and Grenfell, 2004; Newby et al, 2007). Portfolio models originally designed with the European Framework in mind are now being adapted and used widely in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

All is not rose-colored, though. For example, while it is Canadian government policy (Government of Canada, 2003; 2008) to double by 2013 the number of Canadian secondary school graduates with a functional level (which remains undefined) of bilingualism in their L2, from the mouths of French L2 teachers in Ontario, Canada’s most populous province, Mollica, Phillips and Smith (2005) heard that these teachers lacked funds for professional development and participation at conferences, lacked the time needed to engage in professional reading as a form of professional development, and perceived a general relegation of French L2 studies to secondary status in the curricular order of things in schools. Indeed, across Canada it is not uncommon for L2 teachers to be cajoled into taking charge of L2 classrooms, even when they have no formal preparation to do so. As Lapkin, MacFarlane and Vandergrift (2006) discovered, less than a third of French L2 teachers from
across the country responding to their survey indicated they had French L2 teaching qualifications and almost 40% indicated they had considered leaving French L2 teaching in the course of the past year. Yet, citing Heffernan (1987a) and appearing on the masthead of each issue of Mosaic: A Journal for Language Teachers, one reads: “The language teacher graduate who never reads a professional journal and participates only minimally, if at all, in professional meetings, will stagnate. There is an onus on the profession in all areas to upgrade and keep abreast of current developments in the field”. How is one to reconcile these apparently contradictory observations regarding the ideal and what is reality?

Heffernan, in his Saskatoon session and in related publications (2008; 2009), addressed the issue in L2 teacher education and ongoing professional development of the need for more of the kind of modeling of target-language usage, advocated also by Arnett above, not only in university classrooms but also in the dissemination of L2 researchers’ work both in presentations and in publications. His research of a number of key journals’ practices in the field demonstrated that the L2 professional community still has a long way to go in this vein, while methodologists are left constantly seeking more target-language publications to use in their teaching and related work. He raises the question then of why, in an Anglo-dominant world, linguistic affirmative action policies of language teaching publications ironically apply to the English language, thereby curtailing researchers’ choice or opportunity to publish in languages other than English (Heffernan, 2007), those other languages in which they live and work daily. This dilemma remains unresolved.

Some Constant and Some Evolving Issues in L2 Teacher Preparation and Continuing Professional Development Identified

We can now identify some issues in L2 teacher preparation which have remained constant over the past quarter century and
Heffernan

others which are new or evolving.

Table 1 outlines a number of issues which were identified a quarter century ago and which remain current issues.

**Table 1**

**Persistent Issues**

More articulation needed among key L2 stakeholders (Heffernan, 1987; Lapkin, Swain & Shapson, 1990; Mandin, 2008)

Shortage of French immersion teachers in Canada (Obadia, 1987; Bournot-Trites, 2008)

Need for enhanced target-language linguistic and sociolinguistic/communicative competence for L2 teachers (Frisson-Rickson & Rebuffot, 1985; Bibeau, 1987; Heffernan, 1987; Obadia, 1987; Bournot-Trites, 2008; Mandin, 2008; Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009)

Table 2 identifies a number of issues identified in more recent literature in the L2 teaching field.

**Table 2**

**More Recently Identified Issues**

Need for greater self-awareness and identity training for prospective and practicing L2 teachers as bilinguals and polyglots (Mandin, 2008)

More diversity training is needed for increasingly multicultural L2 classrooms in schools and universities (Mandin, 2008)

Linguistic errors correction needs to be modeled more and in new ways in L2 teacher preparation and continuing education programs (Bournot-Trites, 2008; Mandin, 2008)

Hierarchical learning structures need to be replaced by more empowering L2 professional learning communities (Bournot-Trites, 2008; Kristmanson et al, 2008; Mandin, 2008)

Given oral language’s longstanding focus (and relative success),
there is perhaps the need now for more focus also on writing skills development (Bournot-Trites, 2008; Kristmanson et al, 2008)

Need for more target language both in university classrooms and in the various venues of dissemination of L2 research (Arnett, 2008; Heffernan, 2007; 2008; 2009)

Need for more preparation for inclusive L2 teaching/learning situations (Arnett, 2008)

Need for more preparation in the use of L2 teaching portfolios (Kelly & Grenfell, 2004; Newby et all, 2007) so as to enhance L2 teachers’ reflective practice

Conclusion

We have seen in the research and thinking of L2 professionals of a quarter century ago and of more recent times that the L2 field is burgeoning, dynamic and multidimensional. As a result, the preparation and continuing professional development required for teachers in this field are complex, fluid and evolving. As Mandin (2008) has so aptly suggested, nothing beats passion in this ongoing enterprise. Combined with commitment and willingness to grow in the multiple competencies of L2 teachers, it is certain that teacher educators will be able to pass on the torch to budding and practicing L2 educators and that they in kind will be able to pass this on to their students.

There are indeed a number of constant and of more recently identified issues pertaining to the preparation and ongoing professional development of L2 teachers, which we have identified in the literature. To these might be added the need for a common set of standards, such as DELF/DALF (for French) and other, related language test results, in lieu of the medley of standards (e.g., ACTFL proficiency scales, U.S. World Languages Other Than English Standards, a wide variety of tests developed at individual universities, inter alia) currently used to determine L2 teachers’ (and students’) levels of linguistic competence. Technology training too will be a sine qua non for
bringing other languages and cultures routinely into L2 classrooms. Readers may well have other ideas of their own which they would add to this evolving list.

Implicit in all of the recommendations made are L2 formateurs’ and teachers’ cultural awareness of and sense of belonging with the target language community-ties they are teaching combined with a predisposition to perfectionnement (rather than unattainable perfection), collaborative learning structures, connectedness, sometimes referred to as ‘with-it-ness’, and openness to and engagement with alterity. In being and becoming one with the Other, one simultaneously broadens one’s horizons and builds bridges of reciprocal understanding, a baby step in the direction of social justice.

Note: This article is an adapted version of presentations made at WestCAST in Brandon, Manitoba in February 2011 and at the NWATE in Lacey, Washington in April 2011.

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