

## **Learning Together What We Do Not Know: The Pedagogy of Multicultural Foundations**

**By Andrea Whittaker, Morva McDonald, & Nancy Markowitz**

I'm struggling with how to get the students to address the culture of power—I might bring in something... on curriculum and instructional planning that draws on students' backgrounds and interests and makes explicit how their home knowledge can be used as a bridge to school knowledge. This might help to make the abstract ideas more concrete. (Instructor multicultural foundations course)

I came into this class thinking... of everyone as the same... treat everyone equal... About half way through [the course] I start to think about race and [other] issues. Should I think about it in my class? Mid-way through I'm really lost and not sure what to do as a teacher. [Now,] I'm heading toward knowing that race is an issue. (Prospective teacher enrolled in multicultural foundations course)

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Comments from the teacher educator and prospective teacher acknowledge the complexity of incorporating issues of equity in teaching and learning to teach. The teacher educator considers the pedagogical decisions that enable prospective teachers to connect concepts with their classroom practices, while the prospective teacher reflects on how her experience related to race intersects with the lived experiences of her students. Their participation in a

course on multicultural foundations prompted them to think deeply about a number of issues such as the socio-political contexts of schooling; race and ethnicity; the culture of power; and equitable teaching practices. How does this course provide such opportunities for learning? What is the pedagogy? How does the teacher educator engage in constructing and evaluating that pedagogy? As K-12 students in the United States become more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and language and the pool of prospective teachers remains primarily white, female, and middle class, answers to these questions become increasingly important to teacher educators and teacher education programs committed to preparing teachers to teach in urban schools with students from diverse backgrounds (Banks, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Zeichner, 1996).

Teacher education programs employ various strategies aimed at providing teachers with the knowledge, habits of mind, and practices necessary to work with increasingly racially and ethnically diverse students. Often, these efforts have centered on the addition of a multicultural foundations course (Banks, 1995; Tom, 1996). Research on multicultural foundations courses focuses on the content and the impact of such courses on teachers' beliefs and attitudes but provides few insights into the pedagogy of multicultural foundations. This paper examines the pedagogy of one multicultural foundations course, focusing on the instructor's self-assessment of her teaching and the resulting innovative changes in course curriculum.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is derived from the instructional triangle of students, teacher, and subject matter (Hawkins, 1974). When applied to a teacher education course, the instructional triangle refers to the dynamic interactions between the instructor, prospective teachers, and content. Pedagogy occurs in the interaction between these and refers to the instructional process often initiated by the instructor. Pedagogy includes strategies such as whole and small group instruction, the representations, explanations, and illustrations of the content, as well as course tasks and assignments (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1987). The instructor's and prospective teachers' prior experiences and the course content play an important role in the form and utility of the pedagogical process (Engeström, 1996; Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999). Each component of the instructional triangle is explained.

### **Prospective Teachers**

Research and theory suggest that prospective teachers' experiences along a number of dimensions frame their participation and learning in teacher education. The authors highlight three types of experience as important to informing the pedagogy of a multicultural foundations course. First, teachers' taken-for-granted notions of teaching and learning based on student experiences provide a frame of reference for how they understand their formal preparation (Kennedy, 1999; Lortie,

1975). Second, prospective teachers' inter-cultural experiences and awareness of broader socio-political conditions informs how they learn about issues of race, class, and culture (Briztman, 1986). Third, the relationships among prospective teachers and the similarities and differences in their conceptions of teaching and students converge in the classroom context. Similar to students in K-12 classrooms, prospective teachers individually and as a group become the context for the pedagogy of any specific course (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

### ***Instructor***

Pedagogy reflects the knowledge, dispositions, and practices the instructor brings to her teaching. An instructor's teaching and learning experiences, her inter-cultural experiences, and awareness of broader socio-political contexts shape her conceptualization of and practices within a multicultural foundations course. In addition, her university status (e.g., tenured, tenure track, or adjunct) may inform the content she highlights, the strategies she uses to engage prospective teachers, and the time she has to prepare and adapt the course to the needs of those enrolled. The instructor's content and pedagogical content knowledge also act to inform the course pedagogy and the opportunities afforded to teachers as they learn to teach diverse students. Research substantiates that teachers' content knowledge and their capacity to adapt that content in pedagogically powerful ways is critical to providing students with high quality learning opportunities (e.g., Grossman, 1990). Finally, the instructor's disposition toward inquiry, assessment, and change play an important role in how she adapts the pedagogy to the continuously shifting terrain between herself, the content, and the prospective teachers. Cochran-Smith (2001) suggests that, "inquiry as stance is a process that involves learning to raise new questions, and, at the same time, unlearning long-held assumptions, and beliefs that are often difficult to unroot" (p. 3). This stance supports the instructor to question and reassess her pedagogy, teachers' learning, and the course content.

### ***Content***

Subject matter and course content is recognized as a fundamental aspect of teaching (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1987). The structure of the discipline along with the discipline's theoretical concepts influences both teaching and learning (Dewey, 1895). Multicultural foundations courses tend to be interdisciplinary and are influenced by the goals and purposes selected by the instructor. Is the goal to provide prospective teachers with content knowledge of diverse cultures? Is the goal to change teachers' attitudes and beliefs about students by exposing them to people of color or families from low-income backgrounds? Is the goal to provide teachers with concepts and theories for working with diverse students? Is the goal to support teachers to develop practices that will enable them to work effectively with all students? Whether focused on one or all of these goals, the content of the course conforms and the pedagogy is designed to reflect that content.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The self-study of one teacher educator's practice in a multicultural foundations course included two goals: (1) to assess the pedagogy and how it develops in interaction between students, the instructor, and the content; and (2) to provide an avenue through which this individual teacher educator could explore, innovate, and improve her practice. Two research questions were posed:

1. What is the pedagogy of a multicultural foundations course?
2. How does it evolve in interaction with the content, the students, and the instructor?

### **Method**

The professor teaching the course and a researcher not officially associated with the program conducted the study. This allowed for an insider and outsider perspective, which informed the nature of the research and the analysis. The Teacher Education Collaborative Intern Program (TECIP), an elementary teacher preparation program at a large urban, state university was selected because of its explicit interest in integrating issues of equity. The course on multicultural foundations functions as the primary class addressing concepts of equity and thus provides a strategic site for exploring the pedagogy of such issues within teacher education. Data sources included: (1) interviews with instructor to understand teaching goals and to explore the pedagogical moves and adaptations (two formal and multiple informal conversations); (2) sixteen observations of course sessions; and (3) a review of course assignments and completed student work to examine content and purpose of assignments as well interns' interpretations and understanding.

### ***The Program***

TECIP is an induction program with ongoing support and coaching for new teachers through their third year in the classroom. The program emerged from a district/university partnership aimed at improving the quality of new teachers entering the local schools. In their first year, teacher candidates receive 20% pay as an intern working in faculty associates' (cooperating teacher) classrooms. During their 20% work time, they gain experience in teaching while providing release time for their faculty associate to work as a support provider for beginning teachers. In the second year, the candidates work fulltime in their own classrooms and continue to attend university seminars. In the third year, teachers are fully credentialed yet receive services within a district beginning teacher support program.

Originally, the TECIP design focused primarily on structural and process issues such as providing: (1) teacher candidates with a strong professional development program that relies on gradual induction; (2) close links between university coursework and fieldwork; and (3) teacher leaders within each district release time

to support beginning teachers. Beginning teachers were supported to use the process of inquiry to examine and improve their practice, but in the early years of implementation it was unclear about what, in particular, they should be inquiring. Faculty and district personnel engaged in a curriculum revision process that examined how to apply an equity lens to teacher preparation, developed a rationale for course sequence, articulated common strands cutting through all the courses, and generated competencies expected of graduates. The *Multicultural Foundations of Education* course became pivotal as faculty reinforced the need to begin teacher preparation by challenging candidates to examine their beliefs and assumptions about the linguistically and culturally diverse populations of students, parents, and communities with whom they work.

### ***The Interns***

Demographic information about the 27 interns enrolled in TECIP offers a general sense of their prior experiences. Interns included 13 caucasians, 3 Chinese Americans, 1 Korean American, 1 Hispanic, and 4 of mixed racial heritage. Ages ranged with 13 under 25, 8 between 25-30, 2 between 36-40, and 4 over 40. The majority of the interns were English speakers; five were bilingual students, three of whom learned English as their second-language. Nine interns had been teachers' aides, and four had been full-time classroom teachers. As the conceptual framework suggests, interns interpreted what they learned in the multicultural course through these experiences. Through course discussions and assignments, interns revealed more about them, their particular experiences with teaching and learning, and the intra-cultural experiences that helped the instructor assess where they were in their understanding of issues of equity and aided her in developing pedagogy based on their prior knowledge.

### ***Instructor Background***

The course instructor defined herself as white, English speaking, and from a working class background. She emigrated to the U.S. from Canada as a child and attended public schools in a suburban community. The first person in her family to go to college, she earned her bachelor's degree in child development from a state university and her graduate training focused on cognitive psychology. Without formal disciplinary training in equity related issues, she became self-taught through reading and a range of job experiences that took her into culturally and linguistically diverse urban classrooms; and a series of personal and professional development opportunities that included substantive reading, dialogue, and inquiry with friends and colleagues of color.

This recent professional development coupled with key theories from cognitive psychology and development influenced her pedagogy. Most notably, Piagetian schema theory and its contrastive links to the socio-cultural theories of Vygotsky (1978) have guided a pedagogy grounded in the social nature of learning, where

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learning is the product student's past knowledge and experiences, their own social environments and the social system of a classroom. Teaching from the perspectives of learning as assisted performance (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), schema use (assimilation) and schema change (accommodation), the instructor questioned how to use each when teaching about equity and multiculturalism. If she pushed too much toward accommodation then students become resistant and no change in attitudes, beliefs and practices is possible. However, if students were only assimilating bits of new (general or comfortable) knowledge into existing schema, then students may develop only surface understandings that do not promote truly transformative teaching.

Major questions for the instructor included, (1) How do I ensure that the learning is deep and purposeful so that interns leave the program with schema for social justice and equitable teaching/learning? (2) How do I ensure that interns acquire schema that are both affective/attitudinal and strategic in terms of practical things to do each day with students? and (3) How do I ensure that interns acquire schema that allow them to continue to learn and grow with students in changing demographics, policies and teaching contexts? The instructor expressed a strong belief that self-regulation is necessary for this type of learning to occur. Moreover, reflection about one's learning (particularly one's learning about one's own attitudes, beliefs, and practices) is a tool that a teacher can use to support students to develop their own analytical and self-regulatory skills. The framework for reflection in the multicultural foundations course described below was her attempt to guide this type of learning and inquiry into practice for the interns as well. As described in the following section, this inquiry emphasis framed the course goals and assignments.

#### ***Framework and Course Goals***

*Multicultural Foundations of Education* is designed to develop beginning teachers' commitment to equitable outcomes and high achievement for all students. To address this goal and build on and modify interns' existing schema of beliefs, attitudes and practices, the course modeled and promoted three levels of reflection — descriptive, analytical, and evaluative — adapted from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The first level describes "*What?*" the interns observed, read, felt, experienced or discussed. The second level unpacked what the interns described and asks "*So, what?*" What does this (reading, concept, experience or observation) mean for interns and "others" that may be different from them? Why is it important? What are the theories or concepts that help to explain how and why this is happening? Finally, evaluative reflection examines the question, "*Now, what?*"<sup>1</sup> What is the implication of this observation, theory, concept, or idea for what the interns need to do in their own teaching? What specific suggestions do the interns have for improving their own teaching (and life) related to this concept? What kind of pedagogy or instructional strategy can be used to

promote equitable access and outcomes for children in the interns' classrooms? Each class meeting was framed around these three levels and included journal writing in response to readings, class activities, guest speakers, videotapes and subsequent discussions.

The course goals and framework intersected with the interns' expectations about the course. At the first class session, the instructor asked the interns to share their thoughts on what a course called *Multicultural Foundations* might address. Their expectations about what they would learn in the course included: how to use students' backgrounds in instruction; how to ensure that all students have equal access to learning; and how their own cultural backgrounds would impact teaching. During this discussion, interns' concerns about learning methods and strategies for working with diverse learners dominated. Interns' emphasis on specific strategies, while not in direct conflict, sat in tension with the course goal of developing and challenging their conceptual understanding of equity, privilege, and bias. The tension between interns' interest in specific strategies and the course goals of developing their conceptual and intellectual understanding of teaching is a familiar theme in teacher education (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon 1998). Balancing this tension required the instructor to structure activities and assignments in ways that addressed these multiple goals. The "What; So, what; and Now, what?" structure helped to balance this tension and allowed the interns to feel like their interest in developing methods and strategies was addressed.

#### **Key Assignments and Activities**

To promote inquiry and reflection, a variety of pedagogical tools were developed prior to and during the course. These included journal writing; an autobiography; creating identity icons depicting the interns' defining features of identity; participating in small group and whole class circle discussions; and completing a final reflection on interns' personal learning throughout the course. Each activity and discussion was guided by class agreements or ground rules generated during the first class meeting to promote an environment for risk taking, speaking frankly about tough topics, and maintaining confidentiality. Two examples — a class discussion of two videos and an assignment — highlight how the pedagogy of the course evolved in the interaction between the instructor, the students, and the content.

*Videos about race.* Videotapes played an important role in the pedagogy of the course and supported course goals and student learning by encouraging schema change and offering varied perspectives on racism, oppression and identity. Videos included a PBS documentary entitled *Skin Deep* and a San Francisco NBC affiliate evening news special on race. *Skin Deep* portrayed diverse undergraduate students participating in a weekend retreat on racism and race relations. The poignant stories of the students of color along with the misconceptions and attitudes expressed by white students promoted a vivid understanding and point of reflection for the



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interns. The NBC special focused on race as a social construct framed by white and minority attitudes and beliefs about one another, as well as the role that race and racism plays out in their day to day lives.

Together, these videos helped to provide the perspective of people of color that was absent in a mostly white, middle class and female cohort. In addition, interns used the words of those in the videos as a springboard for telling their own stories of biracial identity, Asian American stereotyping, heteronormativity, and prejudice as the result of physical disability. As part of watching the NBC video, the instructor asked interns to write notes in three categories: new information, information that is surprising, and remaining questions. Interns referred to their notes during small group conversations on the video and the articles they had read for that day (Mura, 1999; Yamato, 1988). During the class discussion, interns reiterated statements from the texts and reflected on their own experiences with race, racism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression. The following comments exemplify interns' reflections.

My group looked at Asian Americans who are fitting in. Are they fitting in because they've become white or because their culture just fits? Mura [referring to an article they had read] talked about where Asian Americans are — we're kind of in the front of the bus and one of the rules is that you don't look back at the back of the bus. (Intern #1)

As long as there's a system-wide difference it can't just be about people. I'd like to make the parallel between racism and heterosexism. There are some things in this society that I can't have — I can't be legally married... When things like that exist it's much bigger than differences between people. (Intern #2)

These representative comments and the goals described by the instructor point to three factors influencing the course pedagogy: (1) the range of knowledge and experience of the interns; (2) the absence of particular perspectives being represented by individual interns; and (3) the tension between providing interns with opportunities to explore their own cultural beings and cautioning them to be critical of over-generalizing from experience, whether their own or others.

At first glance, one might assume that the interns in this cohort shared similar knowledge (schema) about race and racism given that the majority of the interns are white, middle-class women. While this might be true in a general sense, their individual experiences and their ways of making sense of those experiences varied. At one end of the spectrum is the intern who has had limited inter-cultural experiences and little exposure to formal knowledge related to institutional structures. At the other end is the intern who through direct individual experience has a connection to issues of race, ethnicity, class, or sexual orientation and brings an analysis of those experiences that includes an awareness of institutionalized oppression. Many interns fell somewhere along this spectrum. As in K-12 classrooms where the range of students' understanding requires teachers to construct tasks that provide access to learning for all the students, the teacher educator in this instance must also construct tasks that challenge interns'



thinking, without requiring them to reach beyond their own zone of proximal development.

The perspectives, experiences, and realities of all the various cultural or other socially constructed groups will never be represented completely by the students in any given cohort. Even when certain groups are represented, the complexities of those experiences must be deconstructed to help prospective teachers avoid the pitfalls of interpreting particular students' lives based on such broad categories. The instructor attempted to address this by including in-class opportunities for interns to learn about the experience of various cultural or racial groups, for example African-Americans. To avoid reifying stereotypes of the African American experience, she provided interns with readings, videos, and classroom discussions that challenged them to view the experiences of African-Americans as varied while informed by their racial affiliation. Again, the interns themselves and the experiences they bring to the course shape the pedagogy, in particular the types of conversations and analysis of socio-political contexts that can occur. The case of one of the interns who chose to be an "out" lesbian illustrates this point. As suggested by her comment referred to above, her experience as a lesbian mom and as a person in a domestic partnership raised the issue of sexual orientation and institutionalized heterosexism as part of what her colleagues should consider when thinking about bias or prejudice. As the semester continued, her perspective of being a lesbian mom in this culture and her willingness to share her experiences with her classmates became a part of the content of the course.

*The community investigation.* In addition to the day-to-day activities, readings, and video based discussions, interns completed several major assignments that required reading, reflection and activity outside of class. Interns' experiences and reflections on the community investigation assignment are discussed to exemplify how the assignment and interns' understanding of the assignment interact to inform the instructor's pedagogical adaptations. The community investigation intended to develop awareness of families living in poverty by experiencing this life, albeit briefly. Small groups of interns were presented with a scenario depicting a family with limited financial means and went into the community to experience the scenario as if they were a part of that family. Scenarios included planning a menu for a family of four on food stamps; finding affordable child care; applying for unemployment; finding healthcare without insurance; purchasing school uniforms and supplies for three children; and registering children for school without immunization records.

To complete the investigation, interns could not use cars, checking accounts, ATM cards, cell phones or other resources. They took only the cash in their wallets and used only public transportation. Interns were to imagine what it would be like if they did not speak or read English fluently. Interns documented their experiences and feelings throughout the half-day events in course journals. Following the investigation and a class discussion about the experience, interns prepared a paper using the *What, So What, Now What* framework.

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What did interns learn from their community investigations? For many interns, the investigation challenged their assumptions and previous judgments about families. In particular, interns reflected that before the community investigation, they were quick to judge parents as disinterested or uncaring when they didn't come to parent/teacher conferences, read with their child every night as part of the classroom homework, or repeatedly dropped off children late to school. The investigation prompted them to question this disposition. For example, one intern wrote:

So what does it matter to know the experience of a single father in search of uniforms. It makes a world of difference. It means that the child that comes to school for a week without a school uniform isn't necessarily defiant...it means that parents that don't come to back to school night shouldn't be accused of not valuing education.

Through the community investigation, interns raised questions about their own beliefs and assumptions as well as the assumptions they had overhead from teachers at the school sites. While posing questions seems like a relatively weak outcome, it does indicate that the interns had begun to challenge their own practice and the practice of other teachers. A more critical analysis of interns' comments and their reflections would caution, and perhaps rightly so, that this experience provided only a moment of awareness that will fade as these interns face the practical realities of today's classrooms. Perhaps the context of the program in which these interns spend three mornings a week in classrooms and one full day as the primary teacher allows them to develop these ideals while having to negotiate, at least in part, that classroom reality.

The written assignment required interns to consider the implications their reflections might have for their practice with students. The structure of having interns link new concepts with their teaching is an example of how the pedagogy attempted to bridge theory and practice. This requirement led some interns to grapple with the question of how their knowledge of students' backgrounds would lead to changes in their practice, in concrete ways. One intern discussed three steps she would take as part of her student teaching placement: "*My first step is to get to know the parents . . . my next step is to research the resources at my school . . . and finally I will make myself available before and after school . . .*"

Other interns, decided to develop a resource binder of community and family services in the neighborhood in an effort to help low-income families. Many students commented, however, that they were unsure of what to do. For example, one intern says, "*So, now what? It seems to me one of the first things a teacher can do to support students who might be living in poverty is to commit to understanding their situations. When I become a teacher, how will I become educated about the community and their experiences?*" Questions like this point to the interns' developing willingness to challenge their previous conceptions about the responsibility of teachers to connect with families and communities. However, they also

point to interns' lack of knowledge and preparation to enact particular methods or strategies that will help them fulfill that responsibility.

### Unintended Outcomes and Pedagogical Adaptations

While the overall impact of the community investigation led to a heightened awareness of the issues facing families, in the first implementation of the assignment during a four-week summer course, the instructor faced a troubling outcome. During the debriefing session, several students were excited about resources they had come across during the investigation. For example, students who had explored health care options had revealed their status as students to a healthcare worker at a nearby hospital who supplied the students with brochures and applications for free medical insurance for children and families. Interns decided that they would prepare a binder for families with healthcare options and other community resources as a "*Now, what?*" implication for their own practice. They expressed how good it felt for them to be helping their families in this manner. The instructor realized that the major outcome of the activity had not been met. Instead of developing empathy for families and understanding how societal structures including schools serve to maintain the status quo of inequity, the interns were expressing sympathy and offering solutions that would maintain their own status as privileged, white, middle class, English fluent, helpers. At the next class meeting, the instructor asked students to reflect on the word *helpful* and its potential antonyms. Further, students were asked to consider what their role as *helper* means for those being helped. The class had just read about the concept of *reciprocity* (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) so they could ask themselves how they could shift from the role of helper to the role of learner with families so as to draw on the funds of knowledge offered by parents and children to make these relationships more reciprocal.

When the community investigation was assigned to the cohort that participated in this study, the helpfulness orientation came up on a smaller scale, perhaps due to subtle changes in the assignment description and the way the investigation was introduced. Because of the previous experience, the instructor could respond immediately with the prompting questions and engage students in making the reciprocity connection during the debriefing session rather than at the next class meeting. These changes in instruction from semester to semester exemplify how the pedagogy in the course builds on instructor learning as well as student learning developmentally and in a social context. The instructor began to question the legitimacy of the one-day event and the helpfulness orientation that resulted as a problematic aspect of the course. She remarked,

Perhaps a more sustained interaction with real students and families from their own classrooms using interviews (as suggested by Moll, et al., 1992) might enrich the experience and make the "*Now, Whats?*" all that more relevant and immediate. I had originally planned a home visit for the summer course but it was abandoned quickly

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after realizing the time crunch of the 4-week course. For the fall semester, I assumed that it would be too much to ask of first semester interns since they were just getting to know students and parents on a limited basis.

The commentary demonstrates that, in this case, the pedagogy of the course is influenced not only by the content, the instructor, and the prospective teachers but also by the context in which the course is embedded, in particular where it is located within the program sequence. In addition, the instructor's remarks illustrate how her continued understanding of the community investigation assignment informs her thinking about her pedagogy in future courses. Building on this understanding, she grapples with how to design assignments that will challenge interns' conceptions without reifying a deficit orientation toward students and families living in poverty and that will support them in connecting theory with practice.

### **Discussion**

This study is discussed in terms of the implications for both this specific multicultural foundations course and the instructor and for teacher education programs more generally. The authors first reflect on the content of the course and possible adaptations to assignments. Second, the authors consider how the instructor's stance toward assessment and innovative instructional change has raised more questions about her pedagogy than answers. The authors conclude with broader implications for teacher education programs and the study of pedagogy within such programs.

### ***Adaptations of Content***

Even in combination with other class activities, the experiential community investigation is not nearly enough. While it is effective in raising awareness of life in poverty it does not transfer to what interns need to do with children and families. As is, it runs the risk of promoting a sympathetic helpfulness orientation rather than empathy and an understanding of reciprocity — that all families and children bring something to school and it is the teacher's job to identify what that fund of knowledge is. The instructor now wonders if a home visit assignment will support the interns to move from awareness to practice. However, in designing the home visit, she must think carefully about how to scaffold it for students so that it doesn't promote the same type of misconceptions or reinforce stereotyping experienced in the investigation. How can the home visit support learning about students' and their families' strengths and talents that can be used to bridge curriculum and identify avenues for parent participation in school? How can the instructor assist the interns in understanding that they must first be welcomed into a student's home and must always proceed with the utmost care and respect when working with families in this way? How does she support interns to learn about the cultural values and ways of knowing used in students' homes that might contrast with those of schooling? How

do the interns begin to use those cultural values to support equitable access and student success? How can interns be assisted to question and change the policies and practices of their classrooms and schools that alienate families?

### ***Pedagogy and Unanswered Questions***

While teaching multicultural foundations, working on this research, and writing this article, the instructor asked herself many times if she had any legitimate right to be teaching the course. She wondered if she had the content knowledge and expertise necessary to support the interns to learn what they need to know. She herself had limited experiences being “other”. She wondered if she had experienced enough of the disequilibrium she wanted to promote within her own students to actually learn what she needs to know to teach the course effectively. Did she, as a result of her ignorance, miss opportunities to build on a teachable moment? Her inquiry into teaching this course has resulted in the realization that the more she knows, the more she needs to know.

The faculty curriculum revision process provided a context for supporting the instructor’s inquiry into teaching the course. Faculty discussed the roles of content knowledge and lived experience and pondered whether or not both are needed to teach this course well. Perhaps those who know more push disequilibrium in ways that cause resistance? Perhaps students develop strategies for responding to the instructor in expected ways but don’t really change their schema? Perhaps what is also important is for the instructor to hold a disposition toward new learning herself—a disposition to learn with and from her students to gain the content knowledge that isn’t quite there yet, to learn together what we do not know.

### ***Implications for Teacher Education***

Overall, the results of this study emphasize familiar themes in teacher education — tensions that continue to inform the pedagogy of university-based teacher education courses, in this case a course on multicultural foundations. First, the relationship between theory and practice persists in framing the instructor’s and the prospective teachers’ experiences. Prospective teachers’ emphasis on and need to develop specific strategies and methods, while in this case does not overwhelm their interest in developing conceptions of equity, it does require the instructor to balance, rather than avoid, their practical concerns. Developing a structure for reflection and assignments, in this case the “What; So, What; and Now, What?” framework allowed prospective teachers to grapple with implications for their practice. Simultaneously, it provided them with opportunities to develop theoretical understanding from and for practice. This helps teachers and teacher educators negotiate the relationship between theory and practice.

Second, if the notion that prospective teachers are a fundamental part of the context of the pedagogy in teacher education, then teacher educators must consider who the prospective students in our programs are and whom they represent. At the

broadest level this speaks to the need to recruit people of color into teaching along with people from other socially constructed groups that remain under-represented in teacher education programs. It also speaks to the need of teacher educators to carefully depict the experiences of people who are not typically represented within their particular programs as well as to complicate the interpretation of the experiences of those who are represented. This points to another theme within teacher education, and courses on multicultural foundations in particular: the tension between providing prospective teachers with general knowledge of people from diverse backgrounds and challenging them to consider the particular experiences of individuals. The community investigation and the unintended outcome, in some cases, of reinforcing teachers' "helpfulness" orientation toward students and families speaks to the need of teacher educators to carefully consider how the pedagogy of the course assists prospective teachers to understand the realities of communities with which they may be unfamiliar and also engages them in a process that will help them learn about the strengths of the particular students they teach.

The authors conclude that further research into the pedagogy of multicultural foundations courses would help develop the field's knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy within teacher education. The demographic imperative in which students in public schools are increasingly diverse and the pool of teachers remains primarily white, female, and middle class requires that teacher education programs consider the pedagogy within and across courses and how that pedagogy, in interaction with prospective teachers, the content, and the instructor shapes the knowledge, habits of mind, and practices prospective teachers develop to work with students from diverse backgrounds.

## Note

<sup>1</sup> The framework was discussed first at an early meeting of the curriculum revision process. Misty Sato, Stanford National Board Resource Center Support Program Coordinator, a guest, introduced the framework in reference to the types of writing required in a certification portfolio. Later discussions regarding program coherence led some faculty, including the instructor of the course described here, to include the framework across the different courses in the program.

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