A Multicultural Approach to ATE's Standards for Teacher Educators

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What is more, we contend that although all children *can* and *should* succeed, they have not always done so, due largely to an inequitable educational system embedded within and the product of a larger, and just as inequitable, social system. Therefore, in order to better educate *all* children, teachers today have to be adept at building cultural bridges (Gay, 1993); they have to be attuned to the unique needs of diverse learners; and they have to be committed to catalyzing equitable educational opportunities for all children, regardless of race, class, gender, or ability. To that end, and in our dual role as teacher educators and multicultural education scholars, we focus on developing in our pre-service teachers the capacity (i.e., knowledge, skills, dispositions) to teach effectively, successfully, and fairly, whoever the students are in their classrooms.

While we want our pre-service teachers to realize success with their diverse students, our ultimate vision is much grander. Multicultural education is about far more than ensuring academic success for all students. In fact, such a simplified statement these days is riddled with the political and implicitly racist underpinnings of *No Child Left Behind*, which declares that all children WILL learn without any acknowledgement of or recourse for systemic barriers to that success (Grant, 2006). What, then, is multicultural education advocating? There are numerous definitions and typologies (see Banks, 2004; Bennett, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gollnick & Chin, 2006; Sleeter & Grant, 1999), and the following one by Banks and Banks is representative:

> multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school. (2001, p. 1)

To this end, multicultural education is explicitly concerned with restructuring schools, teaching, and curriculum to meet the unique needs of racially, linguistically, physically, and socioeconomically diverse learners equitably (Banks, 2004; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006) and, ultimately, promote social justice (Grant & Agosto, 2008; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2004; Grant & Sleeter, 2007). Multicultural education is a philosophy that recognizes and values the diversity of the United States; it is a reform movement advocating structural, systemic change of the American educational enterprise; and it is a process of behaving and thinking in education that promotes equity and justice (Gay, 2004). At its core, multicultural education is concerned with identifying and theorizing practices that will achieve these ends, with an emphasis on humanizing constructivist pedagogies, such as culturally relevant and responsive teaching and multicultural social justice teaching (Bartolome, 1994; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002.

The implication for teacher education programs, including our own, is that our pre-service teachers are expected to know the histories, cultures, learning preferences, and linguistic challenges of culturally diverse students; to have an extensive and varied pedagogical toolkit that can be adapted to their specific students; to collect and analyze evi-

dence and use that evidence to foster improved learning opportunities; and to question how well schooling is furthering democratic goals and values (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008). Thus, central to our work as both teacher educators and multicultural scholars is equipping teachers with the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices to educate all students effectively and fairly. In doing so, it is our ultimate hope that teachers and their students will become advocates, activists, and change agents not merely for fairer schools but also for a fairer and more just society (Anyon, 2006).

RESPONDING TO THE ATE STANDARDS FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

The Standards as a Whole

In our dual role as scholars and teacher educators, we are guided by both the theoretical underpinnings of multicultural education as well as the practical demands of university teaching. Indeed, we are ultimately concerned with praxis, or the nexus of theory and practice, particularly related to teacher capacity (Grant & Agosto, 2006). The great benefit of the ATE Standards for Teacher Educators is that they give voice to the need for rigor and the pre-eminence of praxis in teacher education; they articulate the multiple layers of our work; and they are a document that all can agree is important. However, these nine standards are primarily a background: It is our job as teacher educators to bring them to life by enriching them with specific practices[1] and to link them to our vision for educational reform. We have selected standards one (teaching), two (cultural competence and social justice), and seven (public advocacy) as a primary focus here using our dual perspective of multicultural and teacher education.

We must note, however, that our selection of these standards is somewhat arbitrary. *All* of the standards speak to our complex and multifaceted work within both fields; unfortunately, we are constrained by space limitations. As the standards are written, it appears that multicultural education has been relegated solely to standard two (cultural competence and social justice), but it is for certain that multicultural education is guided by, implicit in, and sits at the nexus of all nine teacher education standards. We could just as easily have delved into

any of the remaining six standards in our multicultural enrichment of the standards. Examples of specific standards follow.

Standard Three: Scholarship

Our work with pre-service teachers is grounded in the original scholarship of multicultural education. From syntheses (e.g., Banks & Banks, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gibson, 1976; Sleeter & Grant, 1987) to field research (e.g., Grant & Sleeter, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 1992) and comprehensive pedagogical paradigms (e.g. Gay, 2000; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), multicultural scholarship is central to the structure and content of our teacher education courses and student teacher observation and support. As such, and given the current political and educational climate, we recognize the grave importance of (and our personal responsibility in) continuing to document and interrogate effective pedagogy, curriculum, and school structures for diverse learners, as well as to challenge those educational structures and practices that perpetuate inequality and leave unquestioned racism, classism, and other oppressive forces (see Grant, 2006; Grant & Agosto, 2008; Grant & Gillette, 2006a, b).

Standard Four: Professional Development

Among teacher educators, the quest to improve pre-service teachers' multicultural preparation and to catalyze personal and professional growth is driven by constant self-reflection, program evaluation, and sharing of best practices (e.g., King, 1991; Kumashiro, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; Nieto, 2006; Sleeter, 1992; Sleeter, Torres, & Laughlin, 2001). Reflection and documentation of our pedagogical choices is the primary way we improve instruction. In turn, the weaknesses, problems, and questions that arise in our classroom practice drive and inform our scholarship (e.g., Bartolome, 1994).

Standard Five: Program Development

Multicultural educators are centrally concerned with the development and reorganization of comprehensive multicultural and social jus-

tice teacher education programs (e.g., Beyer, 2001; Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003; Sleeter et al., 2005; Zygmunt-Fillwalk & Leitze, 2006). In fact, restructuring teacher education programs, and sharing the successes and struggles of that work, is central to preparing our students systematically to work with diverse student populations.

Standard Six: Collaboration

Particularly because multicultural scholars often work alone or in small numbers within teacher education programs, our work can only thrive through collaboration, whether that be across institutions (most evident in scholarship, e.g., Banks & Banks, 2004), between different disciplines and departments (e.g., Olson, Evans, & Schoenberg, 2007), or between K–12 schools/teachers, teacher associations and universities (e.g., Grant, Agosto, & Jetty, 2007).

Standard Eight: Teacher Education Profession

Multicultural scholars occupy dual positions as teacher educators. We serve as editors of journals, active participants in professional organizations, writers of scholarly and practical materials and other tools for pre-service courses and the entire field of education; and we are leaders in the field. Improving education for all students requires our active advocacy for teacher education and education in general.

Standard Nine: Vision

As we move forward in the twenty-first century, multicultural educators are concerned with our changing world and, in particular, the effects of globalization on classroom learning. To that end, we are in the forefront of conceptualizing the changes that must be made at the K–12 and university level to deal with both negative and positive influences of globalization (e.g., population mobility, cultural, environmental, and social interdependencies).

Clearly, all of the ATE standards guide our work within teacher and multicultural education, and our selection of standards one, two, and

seven are arbitrary. These standards, however, speak strongly to our emphases within teacher education.

Standard One: Teaching

While there are certainly practices proven successful with particular students, and while we recognize the importance for teachers to understand cognition, human development, and other professional and content knowledge, we are also wary of the methods fetish in education (Bartolome, 1994). We certainly model best practices in our courses, often in a metacognitive way that makes explicit our lesson design and pedagogical choices. However, we are also aware that there are no silver bullets or magic pedagogies miraculously successful with all students.

Our practice as teacher educators is as much about modeling effective practices as it is about teaching our students to be critical of those very practices (Grant & Gillette, 2006a, b). In addition, effective teaching of diverse students is, at its core, about teacher beliefs and ideologies (see Bartolome, 2004; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Therefore, teacher beliefs and ideologies are the foundations of our courses, from Introduction to Elementary Education to the student teaching seminar. While we may, for example, employ and teach humanizing, student-centered pedagogies that build upon personal knowledge, often quite successful with diverse learners (Bartolome, 1994), their very success reflects the teacher's belief that it is *worth* building on students' knowledge and life experiences, however varied and marginalized they may be (Grant & Sleeter, 2007).

We also believe that, while a toolkit of varied assessments and practices is central to success, whether with pre-service teachers or K–12 students, good teaching most importantly emphasizes higher-order thinking and a critical analytic lens. It is not enough to model teaching to multiple intelligences, to employ the latest technological fad, or to move beyond the blue-book exam to portfolios or journaling. Rather, modeling effective teaching in the pre-service classroom requires a comprehensive, self-conscious pedagogy akin to Ladson-Billings' (1995) notion of culturally relevant pedagogy, which is as much about *good teaching* as it is about cultural competence.[2] Such an approach maintains fluid student-teacher relationships, demonstrates connected-

ness with all students, develops a community of learners, and encourages collaboration.

Teacher educators explicitly teach, and thereby empower, their pre-service teachers with a pedagogical language that declares knowledge is not static, must be viewed critically, is produced through dialectical relationships; and, as Werstch (1998) argues, human performances are never individual performances but always mediated by other people, cultural tools, and artifacts. Teacher educators must also scaffold learning experiences for their students (Vygotsky, 1978) so that pre-service teachers can become critical and passionate consumers of knowledge committed to the success of all students (Grant & Gillette, 2006a, b). Just as in Ladson-Billings' theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, this approach produces students who achieve academically, demonstrate cultural competence, and understand and critique the social order.

What does such an approach look like in a university classroom of pre-service teachers? There is a rich body of reflective literature documenting various teacher educators' practices, lessons, and projects designed to foster critical thinking and knowledge consumption among their students. For example, in an effort to equip teachers with the tools to critique the viewpoints of curricula and to identify misrepresentations, Gay (2002) advocates engaging pre-service teachers in a critical analysis of cultural representations within pop culture, popular media, and academic textbooks.

In order to foster constructivist approaches among future teachers, Villegas and Lucas (2002) advocate metacognitive approaches where students rank themselves on a constructivist/transmission model continuum and monitor their ideological progress over the course of a class or program. In addition, experiential learning (Olson, Evans, & Schoenberg, 2007) should also play a prominent role in an effective multicultural and constructivist teacher education classroom, whether that be through cultural plunges (Nieto, 2006), study/teaching immersion experiences (e.g. Sleeter, 2001; Zygmunt-Fillwalk & Leitze, 2006), partnerships with diverse and constructivist classrooms (e.g. Villegas & Lucas, 2002), or engaging teachers in action research (Caro-Bruce et al., 2007).

Ultimately, for teacher educators to model effective teaching practices we need to practice what we preach, and this means modeling far more than any single method or fad. If what we're advocating is a high-quality,

rigorous education that will be successful for all students, then we must show pre-service teachers what effective teaching looks like and how to make it happen. If we want our students to become rigorous scholar-teachers, agents for social change, and bridge makers not only of cultures but also of theory and practice, then our teacher education programs must be self-consciously designed explicitly to show our students what this looks like in practice.

The reform of a master's program at California State University, Monterey Bay is an excellent example of a teacher education program modeling effective practices for diverse learners (Sleeter et al., 2005). Finally, if we want our pre-service teachers to be able to evaluate critically the effectiveness of teaching and curricula for all students, we must model these practices in our university courses and in all school of education policies and procedures. We teach in an era of evidence; therefore, we must teach our students how to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence, and how to make instructional and pedagogical decisions based on their interpretations of that evidence (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008).

Standard Two: Cultural Competence & Social Justice

Cultural competence is the traditional arena of multicultural education, the often supplementary domain where our work is deemed relevant, and it is certainly central to multiculturalism. In order to teach the increasingly diverse students of America's classrooms effectively and fairly, our overwhelmingly white teacher candidates must recognize themselves as cultural beings benefitting from white privilege and social inequality (see King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007). Also, they must be aware that all teacher candidates, including pre-service teachers of color, have much to learn about diversity and changes introduced to education by global and local conditions.

Pre-service teachers must be knowledgeable about the cultural experiences of other groups, and not simply in terms of food, fairs, and festivals. Rather, they need to honor and value diverse funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; Moll et al., 2004) as well as understand what it means to be marginalized, oppressed, and silenced by language differences, cultural barriers, or hegemonic narratives. This is an arena where scaffolding pre-service teachers' learning experiences is essential and often

highly successful (see Cooper, 2007; Nieto, 2006; Rios, Trent, & Castaneda, 2003; Sleeter, Torres, & Laughlin, 2001).

In working to build cultural competence, our hope is to develop teachers' capacity to see from multiple viewpoints; to think, work, and move across multiple boundaries; to seek out multiple perspectives; to become advocates for justice and equity; and to reduce prejudice (Kumashiro, 2002; Olson, Evans, & Schoenberg, 2007). We want our preservice teachers to teach in support of a democratic agenda that values access to knowledge for all learners, a cultivation of democratic values, and a critical consumption of knowledge and education (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008).

It certainly seems, then, that we are promoting social justice. But herein lies a problem: The ATE Standards for Teacher Educators, like most other documents referencing social justice, fail to define exactly what social justice is (Grant & Agosto, 2008; North, 2006). In failing to do so, social justice remains a mirage, as explained by Michael Novak (2000). He references British-born economist and political philosopher Friedrich Hayek's assertion that "whole books and treatises have been written about social justice without ever offering a definition of it. It is allowed to float in the air as if everyone will recognize an instance of it when it appears" (p. 11).

Is social justice, as referenced by the ATE standards, referring to distributive equality and cultural recognition? Is it referring to a social reconstructionist project of transforming schools and society? Or is it merely referring to good human relations and fairness? And what, precisely, does fairness mean? The problem with allowing social justice "to float in the air as if everyone will recognize an instance of it when it appears," by not defining it at all or by narrowly defining it in relation to teacher capacity, is that it leads to superficial, ineffective, and uninformed actions by teacher educators and pre-service teachers (Grant & Agosto, 2008).

Therefore, central to our work as multicultural educators is defining social justice, both in scholarship and in our classroom practice, and in connecting it and teacher capacity to the good of society as a whole. We also advocate for developing tools of adjudication by which to measure and evaluate the social justice efforts of teachers and teacher educators. Too often, teacher education pays lip service to social justice without

ever advancing it beyond Hayek's mirage (Grant & Agosto, 2008). By defining social justice substantively and by creating evaluative tools for assessing our actions, we can move social justice from a mirage to an actual guiding principle of education.

Standard Seven: Public Advocacy

While our work as teacher educators is centrally about helping our pre-service students to become more effective and fairer teachers for all students, we also recognize that improving classroom teaching alone is not enough to produce educational or social equity. Classroom teachers can only be as effective and transformational as the educational system within which they are operating. Unfortunately, the educational system they are currently working within is designed to perpetuate inequality.

Educational inequity is not an accident. Rather, it is the product of racist, assimilationist, and unjust policies designed to perpetuate the privileges of the dominant class (Kozol, 1992, 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2005). Therefore, as teacher educators committed to supporting our teacher candidates and as multicultural scholars attuned to the need for policies and practices that equitably support and nurture a diverse polity, we take seriously our role as public advocates, not merely for equitable education but for more just policies in our communities and our nation as a whole.

Particularly in our current political and educational climate that values the market more than individual citizens, that sees inequality as a technical issue rather than a structural one (Grant, 2006; Lipman, 2006), and that ignores our nation's deeply entrenched history of racism and oppression, our work as public advocates for social change is critical. Current educational reforms, such as *No Child Left Behind*, are ostensibly committed to the success of all children, but the on-the-ground reality of twenty-first century school reform is that it is patently not in the public interest, including the interests of diverse children. Rather, it supports private and corporate interests, usually in direct opposition to the needs and interests of nonwhite, low-income individuals (Lipman, 2006).

NCLB and its accompanying accountability, standards, and data-driven reforms not only delegitimize other forms of research, inquiry, and education (Barone, 2006), but they also actively produce differential student outcomes (Cornbleth, 2006; Gillborn, 2006). What makes

this particularly tragic is that many in the United States seem oblivious to the ways our current policy makers and politicians ignore and attack our public interests. As Barone (2006) describes:

> The populace seems lost, distracted, largely unconcerned as one of the last bastions of hope for what Dewey called the Great community—the public school—is betrayed by policymakers who are failing to act in the public's interests in ways that most do not fully comprehend (p. 215).

Therefore, teacher educators, as researchers, scholars, and *citizens*, must speak out against the current wave of neoliberal policies that are clearly not in the interest of children or the public. To work within education and to not speak out against them is a moral failing: education researchers have an "obligation to take more courageous and bold steps in the face of retreats from all things public" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006, p. 12). In speaking out in advocacy for those who are marginalized by our political and social systems, it is not enough to call attention to education in isolation. Rather, we must also call attention to greater social inequities, such as structural and systemic racism, and argue for systematic, overarching social change (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Lipman, 2006). In fact, as Anyon (2006) argues, research in the public interest is fundamentally about things other than education.

Educational researchers need to be advocates for reform in all areas of society. Just as our pre-service teachers can only be as effective and transformative as the schools in which they operate, schools can only be as effective and transformative as the society in which they operate. Comprehensive urban school reform, for example, if it occurred, or even if it seemed to 'succeed' according to accountability measures, would ultimately fail students unless it were coupled with adequate jobs in all sectors of the economy, resources to support college educations, the guarantee of a living wage, and access and support of a flourishing life (Nussbaum, 2000).

In advocating for the public interest, teacher educators must set their sights on the democratic ideals that supposedly guide the American educational project:

> In the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights—are America's ideals: freedom, dignity, equality for all

> people, justice, and a fair opportunity. . . . We must begin the conversation at the point where we admit that we have failed to align our practices with [these] democratic ideals; accept that we have a dual society and a racist discourse; and have done little as a nation to foster intergroup integration and harmony (Grant, 2006, p.170).

We can then present new visions of what democracy can be, new visions of how schools can further that democratic project, and new visions of educational and social reform.

CONCLUSION

From the perspective of multicultural education, our goal here has been to elaborate upon the generalities of the ATE Standards for Teacher Educators. We have sought to name our best practices, to outline the ideologies and pedagogical beliefs that support our work, and to problematize key ideas in our field. In looking at the indicators, the rationale, and the artifacts called for in the standards, one sees that this is a well-researched document, inclusive of scholars representing a variety of viewpoints and addressing the multifaceted work of teacher educators. This document provides a solid background for our work, and we have discussed here the ways in which we build upon and give specificity to this background. The standards themselves are not providing the vision for our work, but rather, they are the structure and the outline of what teacher education work is. We have then enriched this background with a multicultural vision.

However, while the standards are well researched, inclusive, and comprehensive, they strike us as functioning still as rhetoric. There is certainly no argument about their validity and importance, but what happens now that these standards have been added to the teacher education discourse? How well will they accomplish what they set out to, and how will we evaluate and measure our progress? Where is the language moving towards action, and then where are the tools of adjudication to measure this action? As so often happens within teacher education, we have defined good teaching, we have defined our outcomes and objectives, but we have not given consideration to assessing our progress against these outcomes and objectives.

Multicultural education is as guilty of this as any other field (see Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Grant & Agosto, 2008; Sleeter, 2001). It is as we explained earlier regarding social justice: By not defining the term and then by not giving tools for assessing our work towards it, most teachers' and teacher educators' efforts are superficial, uninformed, or ineffective. What the ATE Standards for Teacher Educators have going for them is that they have taken the first step, they have defined high-quality teacher educators. Now, we must turn to the next step.

Certainly, tools of adjudication are outside the stated boundaries of this document, but they are definitely within the bounds of the organization. How has ATE dealt with this responsibility? If it has not, we must make this happen, or else the hard work of providing standards for teacher educators threatens to prove meaningless.

NOTES

1. Indeed, by enriching the standards with multiple perspectives, it is possible to resist the oft-hegemonizing force of educational standardization. After all, the very idea of standards is contentious: While we absolutely see merit in clarifying learning outcomes and teacher competencies, we are also acutely aware of the possibility that standards can become an oppressive force. This has most often been documented in regard to state standards in K–12 subject areas (see Lipman, 2006; Sleeter & Stillman, 2005), but it certainly applies to teacher educators, as well.

2. Many of these aspects of teaching are included in the ATE standards, but they are erroneously included under cultural competence and social justice, where one finds that teacher educators should "Demonstrate connecting instruction to students [lives]"; "Model how to identify and design instruction appropriate to students' stages of development, learning styles, linguistic skills, strengths and needs"; and, "Teach a variety of assessment tools that meet the needs of diverse learners." These are essential tools for teaching.

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