Looking over the Edge:
Preparing Teachers for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Middle Schools

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One morning, the four of us met to plan our teacher education curriculum for the upcoming year at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM). Francisco had recently returned from a trip to the Grand Canyon. He described his trip down the Colorado River by raft and the hike up out of the canyon. Embedded in his story was what he had learned about the canyon: that the Colorado River did very little to carve out the canyon; rather, the canyon walls were pushed up from beneath the earth to reveal the multicolored layers of rock to the river. On the walk up out of the canyon, each layer appeared quite distinct. When looking over the edge of the canyon from the rim, however, the layers blended to create a spectacular display of geological beauty.

As we proceeded to talk about the role of multicultural education in middle level education, we realized it too was like the Grand Canyon. At one level,

multicultural education is about appreciating the differences while simultaneously seeking a greater unity. At a different level, we realized that, for us, multicultural/multilingual education had pushed up from beneath the middle level and teacher education reform movements that had informed our work in the Middle Level Teacher Education Program at CSUSM. In revealing the layer of multicultural education, we realized its symmetry to these other two reform movements. For us, the multiple, rich layers of middle level, teacher education, and multicultural education reforms had blended together and bled into each other like the exposed rock layers of the canyon. This view from afar showed a compatible and symmetrical blending of elements, each essential to the development of a cohesive middle level teacher education program which prepares preservice teachers to promote the academic, social, and personal success of the widest possible group of students along with an agenda on educating for social justice.

This paper describes how current reform movements influenced the development of our middle level teacher education program, and how through that development the principles and practices of multicultural education became the heart of the program. These five principles—fostering inter/intragroup harmony through learning communities, targeting social justice and the affirmation of diversity, student empowerment and teacher empowerment, seeing things from multiple perspectives, and explicitly preparing teachers for cultural and linguistic diversity—are described in some detail. We conclude with a discussion of the challenges faced and lessons learned about preparing teachers for diverse contexts in the twenty-first century.

Schooling and Educational Reform

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative of Educational Reform (1983) focused the nation's attention on the need for educational reform. Two of the many reform movements that grew from that public wake-up call have now converged: the middle level reform movement and the teacher education reform movement. This convergence grew out of a growing realization that many teachers are unprepared to meet the needs of middle school students. A third component of educational reform developing since the early 1980s is multicultural education. These three movements do not exist isolated from a fourth critical component: local school contexts. As we developed our middle level teacher education program at CSUSM, we were primarily informed by the middle level and teacher education reform movements; later, we realized how consistent they were with multicultural/multilingual educational reform. We review these education reform movements briefly (see Table 1), then discuss how we have integrated those models with multicultural/multilingual education to better prepare middle level teachers for the twenty-first century.

Table 1
A Review of Educational Reform Recommendations

Middle level reform:
1. Create small communities for learning;
2. Teach a core academic program;
3. Ensure success for all students through flexibility in arranging instructional time, adequate resources for teachers and the elimination of tracking by achievement level;
4. Empower teachers and administrators to make decisions;
5. Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are experts at teaching young adolescents;
6. Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness of young adolescents;
7. Re-engage families in the education of young adolescents; and
8. Connect schools with communities.

Teacher education reform:
1. Form partnerships and encourage collaboration between schools and universities;
2. Set high standards for entry into teaching, including academic preparation;
3. Model exemplary practice in teacher education programs;
4. Provide career long professional development opportunities for teachers;
5. Establish and promote professional standards for teachers;
6. Provide differentiated roles for teachers;
7. Empower teachers to be proactive and make change in their environments; and
8. View teaching as a moral endeavor.

Middle level teacher education reform:
1. Offer earlier, lengthier and more varied (by setting, building configuration and ethnicity) field experiences and student teaching with mentors selected for their expertise not their availability;
2. Cover a greater variety of teaching and assessment techniques;
3. Include more on young adolescents' social, physical, cognitive and emotional development;
4. Provide more in-depth coverage of classroom management strategies that respond to young adolescents developmental characteristics and needs; and
5. Emphasize academic subject content more deeply.

Multicultural education:
1. Promote intergroup harmony;
2. Target social justice;
3. Empower students and their caretakers;
4. Develop a multicultural perspective: viewing issues from multiple perspectives; and
5. Explicitly prepare teachers for cultural and linguistic diversity.

Middle Level Reform

Middle level reform has been guided by scholarly research and the principles outlined in a number of private and government sponsored documents. The late 1980s publication of *Caught in the Middle: Educational Reform for Young Adolescents in California Public Schools* (Middle Grade Task Force, 1986) and *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) set the agenda for middle level reform. *Turning Points* provides the most succinct statement of principles in its eight recommendations for middle level education (see Table 1).

Teacher Education Reform

Simultaneous with the issuance of these middle level documents, the preparation of this nation's teachers was also receiving attention from reformers. Reports of the Holmes Group (1986), the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986), and the Center for Educational Renewal (Goodlad, 1990) urged a reconceptionalization of teaching and teacher education. Reinventing teacher education programs has become a concern not only of colleges of education but of university administrations (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1992; The Renaissance Group, 1992). The general recommendations underlying reform in teacher education are enumerated in Table 1. If adopted, the cumulative effect of these reforms would be a significant step toward the revitalization of teaching and schooling.

Middle Level Teacher Education Reform

The confluence of the reform movements in middle schooling and teacher education is reflected in reform reports (Alexander & McEwin, 1988), research studies (Scales, 1992), and professional standards documents (National Middle School Association, 1991; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1992, 1993). Scales' (1992) research for the Center for Early Adolescence, *Windows of Opportunity*, summarized middle level teachers' recommendations to improve teacher education programs for middle level teaching (see Table 1).

Multicultural/Multilingual Education

Preparing teachers for the 21st century provides us with a fourth dimension to consider: the preparation of teachers for the cultural and linguistic diversity they will likely encounter in middle level schools. Critical to this dimension are the ways in which schooling can be a tool by which social justice might be attained (Banks, 1981; Sleeter & Grant, 1993). Given this, it seems evident that even within a monocultural setting, multicultural and multilingual education for teachers would be relevant since central to the purpose of schooling is social justice—a goal all teachers would find worthy to consider and pursue.

Striving for an education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist is one primary goal of multicultural education. There is also a compatible interest in doing such in the reform reports, especially with their focus on being student-centered and on recognizing/affirming diversity (as opposed to minimizing it or seeing it as a deficiency). However, beyond paying lip service to issues of diversity, these reform reports did little to spell out how multicultural education and cultural/linguistic pluralism was critical to every element of the reform principles and practices that are spelled out (McEady-Gillead, vii, in Manning, 1995).

Despite this lack of attention to systemic and comprehensive goals and efforts around multicultural/multilingual education, we felt compelled to respond to these issues full speed. In addition, it is quite apparent the middle schools are excellent places for diversity issues to get played out (Manning, 1995):

> 1. Middle level students become more aware of self and "others" including how they are similar and different; how they feel about these differences sets a base for how they will respond to differences in the future;
>
> 2. Middle level students begin to develop a sense of "fairness" and are all too eager to point out contradictions in how what is ideal differs from what is real; they become equally aware of bias, prejudice, racism, sexism, etc.;
>
> 3. Middle level students are interested in finding positive, just alternatives to these contradictions and to these "isms," especially in light of their interest to form close friendships with others;
>
> 4. Middle level students, but especially those who are from diverse backgrounds need to know that they are affirmed for all that they are (including their ethnicity, language, gender, etc.); and
>
> 5. Middle level students are looking for how they fit into the world—what is their place—who are others and who am I?

Of course none of this can happen to middle level students if their teachers are not prepared to have students learn with and learn from one another (including accepting differences), prepared to move beyond accepting of differences to welcoming differences, prepared to see things from multiple perspectives, prepared to understand the powerful role of culture and language in learning, prepared to explicitly address social justice issues, and prepared to help kids feel like they can make a difference.

In short, it was when we paid attention to the cultural and linguistic diversity layer of educational reform in program development and implementation that we saw how naturally compatible and supportive each reform movement was to the others. We had been examining the layers up close, but when we finally stepped back to look at what we created, we were looking at our own Grand Canyon.

Local School Contexts

Universities cannot operate in a vacuum. A critical informant of the effective preparation of classroom teachers is the local school context. As university faculty members we appreciate the contributions of our school partners. In short, we learn from the "wisdom of practice." We also learn from the situations in which we live and work. In southern California, we live and work in a multilingual, multicultural community which provides us with unparalleled opportunities as we prepare teachers to meet the needs of the populations we serve.

It was this, our local context, which ultimately inspired us to make multicultural education a central focus of our program. While the reform reports gave us the outline for what elements we needed to include, and while multicultural education provided the "guts," our local school context provided the impetus.

Spurring the Convergence

The State of California, seeing the need to rework the certifications available that focused specifically on working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, decided to replace existing certifications—English as a Second Language (ESL), Language Development Specialist (LDS), and Bilingual Certificate of Competence (BCC)—with one that combines the ESL and LDS specializations into one certification—Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD). In addition, the CLAD would be prerequisite for anyone interested in pursuing certification for their bilingual teaching credential; the BCC would be replaced by the Bilingual Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (BCLAD). In doing this, the state posited that all educators who work with ethno-linguistically diverse students need the competencies associated with teaching English as a second language. They need to be skilled in teaching academic content in English to students emerging in their English proficiency so that students also learned content specific English. Bilingual teacher candidates need additional competence in teaching content in the primary language for students who are potentially English proficient.

As the CSUSM College of Education discussed the new state credentials, initial conversations revolved around the establishment of a B/CLAD certification program that would be separate from the standard certification program. As program developers began to detail the advantages of such a B/CLAD certification program (teacher education candidates would be prepared to meet the needs of an expanding group of students who were attending schools in the local service area, candidates would be given hiring preferences, etc.), the faculty decided that it would make sense to require the CLAD certification for *all* candidates across *all* programs. For their part, the faculty agreed to inservice training aimed at preparing themselves to infuse competencies associated with the CLAD into their respective courses.

While some discussion had taken place in the Middle Level Planning Committee around issues of diversity, the committee enthusiastically embraced the idea of requiring all middle school candidates to be certified to teach in cross-cultural and multilingual contexts. The committee earnestly discussed ways to address the competencies for the CLAD certification for all candidates and for the BCLAD certification for those who were proficient in a second language and in English.

To work toward this end, the college provided professional development workshops to the faculty at multiple points around the CLAD credential and ways for faculty to infuse these competencies in their courses. These workshops involved national scholars and the college's own multicultural/bilingual faculty members. One workshop was conducted collaboratively with public school teachers.

For the middle level teaching team, these inservice opportunities extended their collective knowledge base around cultural and linguistic issues. Importantly, this training was taking place at the same time that we became aware of the extent of cultural and linguistic diversity evident in the local middle schools where our student teachers would be placed. Because of this, the team felt a collective sense of ethical obligation to educate ourselves and prepare our candidates as effectively as we could to respond to this diversity. This further spurred our efforts to move toward the greatest possible infusion of the CLAD competencies that we could attain.

Another factor spurring our efforts in this regard was the fact that we were creating and learning all along: learning about middle level and teacher education reform, creating the middle level program, learning about our local middle level partners, learning about multicultural education, creating an interdisciplinary curriculum, etc. As we became more aware of the issues in middle level and teacher education reform, we were also quite keenly focused on how these efforts spoke to issues of increasing access to academic success for the widest array of learners. In a sense, then, our own learning and creating around issues of diversity was part of an easy marriage born from suggested changes in middle level schooling and teacher education.

With each successive cohort of teacher education candidates, our own education and our infusion of issues around cultural and linguistic diversity has continued forward. The team developed a lesson plan format to assist the candidates in considering the types of practices that would make instruction in English comprehensible to second language learners while putting them at ease when learning it (Krashen, 1981). While developing the lesson plan format was important, it reinforced the principles upon which inclusive instruction would be based.

Another step forward was an extended discussion by the team of ways to make multicultural/multilingual concerns take on a more central focus in our programs. The team decided that one way to accomplish this would be to develop our own themes for our interdisciplinary curricula that addressed explicitly our vision of schooling and teaching for middle level students in multilingual/multicultural

contexts. In doing so, we felt that we had achieved a more total confluence between the different entities that informed our program (multicultural/multilingual education, reform movements, and our increasingly diverse local contexts).

Five Components of Teaching for Diversity in the Middle Level

At this point, then, we have come to see the need for preparing teachers for reformed middle level schooling and for cultural and linguistic diversity as nearly synonymous. Thus, beginning in 1994-1995, we made "Fostering Change for Democratic Education in Middle Schools" the central theme of our curriculum. Within this overarching theme, five goals from the multicultural education literature have guided our practice as we seek to reconceptualize the preparation of teachers for diversity in middle level education.

Goal One: Fostering Intergroup Harmony through Learning Communities

A sense of community is one of the most fundamental needs for humans as social beings as well as being fundamental for learning to occur. *Turning Points* (1989) pointed out the need for young adolescents to be part of "small communities for learning where stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth" (p. 9).

Everyone needs to feel part of some group. The importance of bonding in classrooms—especially in middle level classrooms—is well established if children are to succeed (Johnston, 1994). It is easier for students to learn from people who they feel care about them and whom they care about. Students learn from other people not so much through conscious emulation as by joining a "club" of people who see themselves as being alike and by being supported in meaningful activity. Smith (1988) suggested that we learn from the company we keep. For example, if we are around literate people who engage in reading and writing and value them, we will tend to engage in reading and writing and value it.

The sociocultural theory of learning posited by Vygotsky (1978), Smith (1988) and Goodman (1982), among others, is well established. Vygotsky argued that learning happens first on the social (interpersonal) plane; then what is learned becomes incorporated on the psychological (intrapersonal) plane.

The goal of intergroup/intragroup harmony is to "provide a classroom that leaves individual students better prepared to live and work with members of their own social group as well as members of different cultural and ethnic groups" (Davidman & Davidman, 1994, p. 6).

The first way that we strive to reach this goal is by fostering a community spirit in the classes we teach. We are explicit about how we all learn from each other and that what each person has to share is important. As teachers we are active partners in the learning community. Our candidates learn both from each other and from the

instructors, and we construct activities and assignments so that collaborative learning takes place often.

We include discussions about the numerous communities that candidates are members of, as well as how and what they can learn from those communities. The family unit is the first community children learn from, in terms of literacy; thus, reading, and writing development are addressed in this theme. Children are also members of cultural groups that have an impact on their learning; so we discuss responsive pedagogy for cultural and linguistic diversity. Children are part of school communities as well, and here we introduce the philosophy and characteristics of exemplary middle schools. We include the notion of communities of teachers and students in interdisciplinary teams and cooperative teaching and learning. We also address our own learning community, with our candidates designing and decorating our classroom environment (a dedicated room in a local middle school).

We also stress the concept of membership in one's civic community. We introduce the pedagogy of service learning and what it means to participate in one's local community. Service learning is especially valuable for middle level students because it demonstrates to them how they can contribute to their community and, in turn, be viewed by the community as valuable members of the society. Service learning appears again later in the curriculum with regard to how participating in one's community is empowering.

One especially valuable experience in this theme is observing how communities are established in schools and classrooms at the beginning of a school year by administrators, teachers and students. Our candidates spend the first one to two weeks of the program with a middle school teacher. They observe the professional development meetings that take place prior to the opening of school; then they observe the teachers as they set the tone for the year with their young adolescent students. Our candidates then write a case study of their first middle school experience. We debrief this experience immediately upon the candidates' return to our classroom. Through this debriefing, they are made aware of the various elements necessary to build classroom and middle school communities.

In addition, we have engaged in the following:

- Candidates are placed in cohorts and take courses together throughout the program;
- Student-teachers are placed at a few selected school sites (thus they can develop supportive relations at their student teaching site) and are required to team teach and do peer coaching;
- Joint assignments/projects/reports/presentations are required;
- The importance of middle school students' developmental need to feel connected and to coming to terms with the differences they see among themselves are discussed;
- Cooperative learning and its value for students (especially ethnic-minority

students) in terms of increased academic achievement and positive relations is taught about;

- Since conflict will inevitably arise, conflict resolution skills/strategies are taught;
- Classroom meetings are held;
- SAS or SST Teams are described as support services that utilize a community of caring individuals to help students;
- It's noted that promoting intergroup harmony is a specific goal of multicultural education;
- One faculty team member is assigned each school site so that student teachers and faculty member feel connected to each other; and
- We have worked to create a middle level teacher education faculty who are themselves part of their own learning/teaching community.

Goal Two: Social Justice and the Affirmation of Diversity

Stevenson (1992) best characterized the value of promoting a social justice framework when he suggested

> Young adolescents are becoming increasingly able to conceptualize ethical-moral dilemmas; they are similarly becoming more idealistic about how to rectify social injustices and neglect....These youngsters stand ready to take actions aimed at improving our society. Their keen consciousness of fair play can be cultivated into realizations of the complexities of concepts of justice and responsibility. Savvy middle-level educators recognize and cultivate their students' readiness to engage in often complex moral-ethical issues, also helping their students act constructively on their indignation about injustices. (p. 98)

There perhaps is no better time to place social justice issues in the center of the curriculum than during the middle school years. As previously discussed, there is a dual responsibility we, as teacher educators, embrace. We certainly have a responsibility to help our preservice teachers, our students, meet the needs of their students (middle schoolers). We do this in part by our curriculum and instruction that puts middle school students in the center of the curriculum which means being responsive to their social-emotional development. While social justice concerns are of primary importance to middle schoolers, they must also feel like they can do something about the injustices they see. Thus, in allowing middle schoolers to see that they can make a positive difference in helping others in their community, they must also feel empowered. This involvement in social action reinforces the notion that there is still racism, prejudice and systematic injustice in society today.

Our other responsibility is to the multicultural education of our preservice teachers. Our candidates, we hope, enter the credential program committed to "multicultural education." However, most see little connection between multicultural education and social justice. When we first discuss this notion in terms of our theme topic "Education is a Political Act," we encounter less than an enthusiastic reception from our candidates. Our students ask questions like, "Does this mean we

have to lead our class to march on Washington?" Many candidates are uncomfortable with overtly supporting particular political causes. They argue that they will be at constant odds with a school district and school community that may be offended by the liberal political policies inherent in the notion of promoting social justice. We instructors discuss these understandable concerns with our students. A piece we find particularly helpful in assuaging fears is Bob Peterson's article, "Teaching for Social Justice: One Teacher's Journey" (in fact, the whole issue of *Rethinking Our Classrooms*, 1994, by Rethinking Schools, Ltd., is especially powerful for this goal). Besides giving concrete examples of classroom experiences where social justice is at the center of the curriculum, this article also discusses the five characteristics that are essential to a social justice classroom. These are:

- A curriculum grounded in the lives of the students;
- Dialogue;
- A questioning/problem posing approach;
- An emphasis on critiquing bias and attitudes;
- The teaching of activism for social justice.

Keeping our dual responsibility clearly in focus, we go about planning and implementing a curriculum that goes to the heart of teaching for and about social justice. As a primary text in our course entitled "Theory and Methods of Bilingual and Multicultural Education" we use *Affirming Diversity* (1992) by Sonia Nieto, since it provides an explicit focus on the sociopolitical context of diversity and schooling.

Another message we explicitly explore is the notion of promoting educational equity. This is a clear theme in *Affirming Diversity*. It is a major recommendation in *Turning Points* (1989). It reads:

> Early adolescence offers a superb opportunity to learn values, skills, and a sense of social responsibility important for citizenship in the United States. Every middle grade school should include youth service–supervised activity helping others in the community or in school–in its core instructional program. (p. 45)

However, we also examine how schools might establish systems that keep students involved and empowered. We try to minimize the use of the term "at risk," while realizing that middle level classrooms must be about keeping students in school, active and productive.

The notion of service learning is an important part of middle level preparation. Our preservice teachers research organizations in the community that provide services to young people. They, in turn, volunteer with the organization as a means of understanding the value and learning that comes from service. Service learning has clear connections to social justice. While the aims may be somewhat different, the conclusions that are reached are the same: "We can make a difference; we must make a difference."

While working to promote social justice, we also discuss the importance of and

struggle with ethnic identity development for middle school students of color. *Affirming Diversity* (1992), for example, provides our preservice teachers with case studies of young people who are struggling to claim their ethnic identity. Our candidates come to the realization that a positive ethnic identity works to promote academic achievement. Likewise, these case studies help our preservice teachers realize the need to expand their curricular choices to include voices of ethnic minorities because they can understand the need of young people to see themselves reflected in the larger curricular picture.

Goal Three: Student Empowerment and the Empowerment of Teachers

In one of our assigned readings, "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention," Jim Cummins (1986) states his belief that "a major reason previous attempts at educational reform have been unsuccessful is that the relationship between teachers and students and between schools and communities have remained essentially unchanged." This interaction pattern relates to the need for student empowerment (Cummins, p. 54). It is such a fundamental notion that it stands as one of our central themes: "Empowerment of students is essential to the students' meaningful participation in a democratic society."

Cummins is referring here to empowerment of K-12 students. However, we instructors of preservice teachers realize that in order for our candidates to value the power of empowerment, they too must be empowered. So once again we are faced with a dual role: that of teaching our candidates about approaches and strategies that will help empower their middle school students and involving our preservice teachers in processes that empower them as professionals. In doing so, we describe empowerment as something to strive for in the profession, with their role as being agents of change the goal to pursue.

The approaches and strategies that we believe empower all students and help them take responsibility for their own learning are also strongly supported in middle level reform documents (*Turning Points*, 1989). Cooperative learning, active learning, and student choice are only a few of the approaches that are supported in multicultural literature and middle level reform. Our candidates are given daily opportunities to experience these approaches first hand. As instructors, we have made a conscious decision to practice what we preach—and make our teaching transparent. Thus, we provide our candidates with choices in their assignments and to have a say in the evaluation process. Our preservice teachers are also asked to design lessons and units that utilize these techniques. In order that our candidates might create appropriate lessons for youngsters whose first language is other than English, we ask our candidates to include some of these strategies into the design of every lesson. Throughout this assignment we stress the need to begin a unit of instruction by tapping into the students' understandings and interests.

Individual curricular reform movements have also informed our teaching. We see these movements to be about the empowerment of K-12 students. The Califor-

nia Math and Science Frameworks, for example, have at their core critical thinking and the student's active construction of knowledge. The Whole Language approach to literacy is all about the power that comes from student choice and the honest negotiation of meaning using worthwhile texts.

When teaching our preservice teachers about various techniques and approaches of classroom management, student empowerment is at the center of our philosophy. We explicitly teach about the need to create democratic classrooms–classrooms where students are part of the decision-making process. We examine management models that help students take responsibility for their own behavior and develop into caring and empowered citizens.

Importantly, critical to our discussion of empowerment is feeling empowered ourselves as instructors who have been able to create a program for the professional preparation of middle level teachers. We extend this empowerment to classroom teachers who play an active role in the on-site supervision (beyond that of master teacher) of our student teachers. The on-site supervisor role empowers teachers as teacher leaders at their sites. In this way, the university is recognizing the school site teacher's expertise.

Goal Four: Seeing Things from Multiple Perspectives

Obviously one goal of the preparation of teachers for middle level schooling is the reconceptualization of schooling for young adolescents. To begin, we ask candidates to recall their own experiences in their middle grade years. We then present candidates, by way of a survey, with different (and often competing) perspectives on what schooling is about (indeed the competing visions evident even within the cohort). We follow by providing candidates with the middle school philosophy and history as well as to show a video produced by one of the local schools that details the history of middle grades schooling. The result is that we begin to see the "scales fall from their eyes" as they make explicit the beliefs they previously held or as they compare what they now know to be good practice to what they experienced. We have discussions about heterogeneous grouping, and some of them talk about their own tracking experiences (for better or worse). They talk about the practices at the schools their own children attend. Those who grew up in the local school districts talk about how much the district has changed (demographics) and how they must be prepared for more diversity than their teachers were prepared for years ago. But it is also about seeing that there's multiple paths to how things might get done in middle schools (the goals are clear but the paths may vary—and that is all right). Thus during their student teaching, candidates must teach at two different middle schools and often have observed at one or two more.

Another varied perspective that we present to the candidates includes the multiple models of multicultural education described by Sleeter and Grant (1993). We describe the research in multiple intelligences with its concomitant emphasis on valuing the gifts students bring to the teaching-learning relationship. As part of this,

we emphasize assessment and learning by noticing what students can do, not what they cannot. In looking at the children in our local communities and the families from which they come, we try to help our preservice teachers learn how to go about understanding the values of these families and genuinely honoring those values while addressing explicitly the challenges of this task.

With respect to curriculum and instruction, we ask candidates to see the multiple models of curriculum described by Banks (1981). This allows us to show how social studies can be taught through literature in a way that various persons' perspectives about an event are represented. In addition, we describe the multiple approaches to teaching, including acknowledging difference in teaching styles and teacher values. In this we describe the implications for teaching with others in an interdisciplinary team where values and styles diverge.

We aim to keep this focus on multiple perspectives working by seeing the multiple perspectives on schooling that young adolescents bring. Candidates complete a "Shadow a Student" case study where they try to see things through middle school students' eyes. They also have been involved with seventh grade students in a journal exchange project. Both assignments are powerful in showing the different perspectives about teaching and learning that middle level students have.

Of final note for this goal is the diverse perspectives our candidates bring to the program. Since our bilingual teacher candidates are integrated throughout the program, they do much to teach their peers (and the teaching team) about varied experiences, perspectives, and passions related to schooling. We have come to rely on our candidates (credential students) as well as our school partners and colleagues to continue helping us to see issues central to schooling from multiple perspectives.

Goal Five: Explicitly Preparing Teachers for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

As stated earlier, the middle level team felt committed to infusing multicultural and multilingual competencies into all courses in the middle-level program. The state of California's CLAD competencies explicitly state the knowledge and skills areas essential for teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse contexts; these competencies were a centerpiece to our infusion. The competencies center around the nature of culture, manifestations of culture, cultural contact, cultural diversity in the U.S. and in California, language structure and use, theories and factors in first and second language development, theories and methods of bilingual education, theories and methods for instruction in and through English, and language and content area assessment.

These competencies are the central focus of two courses. "Cultural Diversity and Schooling" is a prerequisite for entry into any teacher education program and focuses on the theoretical foundation of cultural and linguistic diversity. The second course, "Theories and Methods of Bilingual and Multicultural Education," is for candidates in the program and is both conceptual and practical in its focus. Thus,

while issues of diversity are infused throughout the program (in the curriculum, in the assignments, in the field experiences, etc.), these two courses assure the explicit instruction of issues surrounding a culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy and approaches to schooling.

In addition to the course work candidates receive, each of them has at least one experience in schools where there is a significant amount of student diversity (cultural and linguistic). This reinforces for our candidates the changing face of middle school students in our local districts and the need to be prepared to foster success for the widest range of students. It also gives them an opportunity to observe and to begin to develop a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Lessons Learned

While we have worked hard at seeing more clearly the multicultural and multilingual layer of our middle level program, it has not been without its challenges. We are particularly aware of the challenges of empowerment and competing visions of schooling.

Empowerment

One challenge for us is to work out our own issues about what it really means for our preservice teachers to be empowered and to help them understand how to truly empower their own students. For example, some candidates misunderstand empowerment as weakness on our part or as we do not know what we are doing. So we are challenged to ask, What happens when power is really shared? Obviously the same could be true for students in middle level classrooms. Thus, we have had to discuss the fine line between empowering and enabling; we want to be sure that in empowering others it is positive and works for the good while promoting democracy and equity for all.

Within this challenge is the need to achieve a balance between empowering our candidates but keeping them humble and willing to continue learning. We worry that our graduates may leave us thinking that they are too good–or so good that they should call the shots on where they are hired and how they will act once they get employed.

Competing Visions of Schooling

A second major challenge revolves around different perspectives of middle level schooling that we advance and the vision and practice our candidates see in the surrounding districts. Often times, our candidates are all too ready to dismiss what they have learned in the program as "academic idealism" while seeing the actual practice of schools as being "reality." Thus we are continually challenged with preparing our candidates for things as they are as opposed to things as they might be. Associated with this later challenge is helping our preservice teachers

cope with and transform the existing system without getting fired. These challenges are important to the lessons we have learned and they continue to push us forward in our efforts to prepare educators who are responsive to the growing diversity of this nation's student population. Certainly, multicultural and multilingual education will continue to drive our curriculum because it embodies the basic values our team members espouse. But also we have learned to look closely at the various layers of the complex top most features of the education landscape. We have learned that as we explore them further, surely new layers will be exposed. Finally, we have learned to step back and investigate the multiple layers of middle level teacher education with its emphasis on issues of student diversity, to pause and reflect on the vistas and visions that surround. And we will continue to learn.

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