Rethinking the Teacher Education Curriculum for Diversity

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Factors Contributing to the Trend Toward Diversity

- Higher birth rates among racial/ethnic minority groups.

- Increased worldwide migration.

- Adoption of education policies of inclusion.

Selected Demographics: U.S. Student Population

- Students of color account for 49% of total enrollments (P-12).

- About 15% of all school-aged children speak a language other than English at home.

- Students classified as having a disability comprise 13% of total enrollments.

Teacher Education Response

- Add a course or two on diversity.

- Have individual teacher educators who wish to infuse attention to diversity in the content of their courses do so.

Our Argument

- We need a coordinated approach to rethinking the teacher education curriculum for diversity:

  - Builds on a vision of the responsive teacher.

  - Uses that vision to give conceptual coherence to the teacher education curriculum.

Organization of Presentation

- Definition, approach, and positionality.

- Framework for preparing responsive teachers for a diverse student population.

- One strategy for getting there.

- Concluding comments.

What We Mean by
TE Curriculum for Diversity

- **<u>Content</u>**: Knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers need to teach a diverse student population.

- **<u>Learning opportunities</u>**: Activities designed to engage teacher candidates in learning to teach.

Vision of the Responsive Teacher

1. Sense of sociocultural consciousness.

1. Affirming attitudes toward students from diverse backgrounds.

1. Commitment to serving as agents of change and advocates for their students.

1. Knowledge of how learners construct knowledge.

1. Familiarity with the lives of their students.

1. Ability to use what they know about students' lives to engage them actively and productively in learning.

1. Sociocultural Consciousness

- An understanding that people's ways of thinking, behaving, and being are profoundly influenced by one's location in the social order relative to factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, among others.

Power Relations Among Sociocultural Groups

Sociocultural Category	Dominant Group	Marginalized Group
Race	White	People of color
Ethnicity	Anglo-Saxon	Hispanic, African American
Social class	Middle class	Working class, poor
Gender	Male	Female, transgender
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual
Ability	Able body	Disabled

Sociocultural Profile

Sociocultural Category	Membership	Status
Race	White	Dominant
Ethnicity	Latina	Marginalized
Social class	Poor	Marginalized
Gender	Female	Marginalized
Sexual orientation	Lesbian	Marginalized
Ability	Able	Dominant

How Schools Structure Inequalities

- Non-inclusive curriculum

- Biased testing

- Instructional tracking/segregation

- Funding inequalities

Sociocultural Consciousness Continuum

Sociocult Dysconsc. → → → → → *Sociocult Consc.*

- Hierarchical arrangement of social positions
- Layered identities
- Structured inequalities

Application of Strand 1
for Teachers of Students with Disabilities

☐ Challenges notions of disability as innate and the medical model of disability.

☐ The political and social consequences of ableism - ideology of "normal" that legitimizes educational structures and practices, and marginalize students with disabilities.

☐ The prevailing ideology of the "normal curve" negatively affects the social standing and access to social capital for students with disabilities.

2. Affirming View Toward Diversity

Deficit View → → → → → → → → *Affirming View*

<u>Deficit</u>: Students from non-dominant groups are deficient and in need of remediation.

<u>Affirming</u>: All students have experiences, ideas, and language that can be built on in the learning process.

Application of Strand 2
for Teachers of Students with Disabilities

- ❑ Disability is framed by a broader conception of diversity and inclusion – learning how to live with and learn from difference.

- ❑ Critique conceptions of learning that are deficit-based.

- ❑ Disability as one marker of identity that is multi-dimensional and intersectional.

- ❑ Recognition of labels and other linguistic markers used for students with disabilities as deficit-based.

3. Change Agentry

T. as Technicians → → → T. as Agents of Change

Technicians: See schools as neutral and accept standard practices uncritically.

Agents of change: See teaching as an ethical activity and assume responsibility for disrupting inequitable practices.

Promoting Change Agentry

- ☐ Help teacher candidates assume responsibility for making a difference in students' lives.

- ☐ Develop awareness of ways in which schools structure inequalities.

- ☐ Develop skills for reflecting on their own teaching.

- ☐ Develop the ability to collaborate with colleagues.

# Application of Strand 3 for Teachers of Students with Disabilities

- Examine the "hidden curriculum" and "master script" of practices, pedagogy, and materials that promote and perpetuate ableism.

- Recognize ways to challenge taken for granted views of "normalcy."

- Advocate for students beyond their labels and diagnoses.

- Collaborate with a variety of professionals to serve the best interests of students.

Relationship of Responsive Teaching Orientations

Affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds
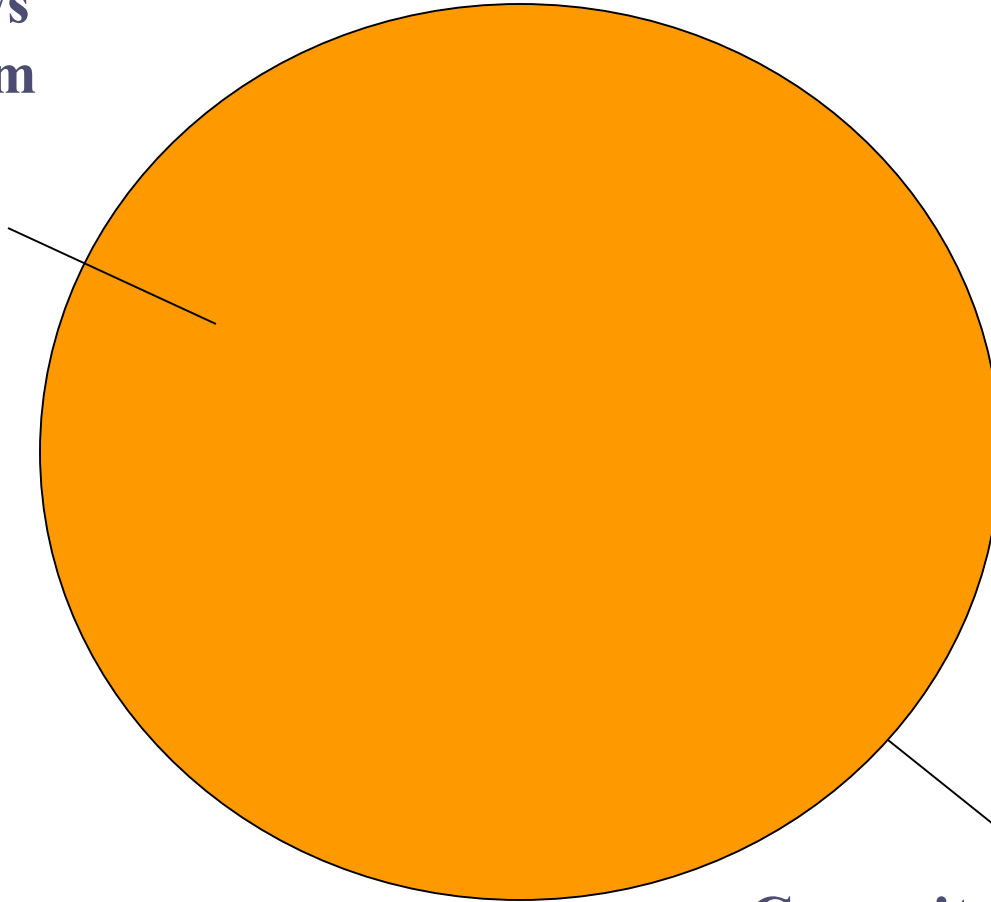
Commitment to acting as agents of change

Cochran-Smith, M., & Villegas, A. M. (in press). Research on teacher preparation: Charting the landscape of a sprawling field. In D. Gitomer and C. Bell (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching*. Washington, D.C., AERA Press.

Cultivating Orientations:
Learning Opportunities Used in Courses

- ☐ Autobiographical and journal writing
- ☐ Sociocultural profile
- ☐ Critical incidents
- ☐ Games (e.g., barnga)
- ☐ Videos
- ☐ Examples of schools/classrooms that aim for equity
- ☐ Plan a budget

Cultivating Orientations: Learning Opportunities Used in Fieldwork

- Conducting classroom observations

- Tutoring students

- Preparing case studies of individual children

- Interviewing school personnel

- Conducting community studies

4. Constructivist Views of Learning

Transmission Views → → → → *Constructivist Views*

Transmission Views

- <u>Knowledge</u>: A collection of objective facts.

- <u>Learning</u>: Receiving information.

- <u>Teaching</u>: Transmitting information.

Constructivist View

- <u>Learning</u>: Reconfiguring or reorganizing what the learner already knows about the topic being studied.

- <u>Teaching</u>: Building bridges between the content to be learned and the learner's individual and cultural background.

Application of Strand 4
for Teachers of Students with Disabilities

- View teaching as individual, contextual, and dynamic – anything but "normal."

- Conceptualize teaching to the margins, rather than to the average.

- Resist the use of labels as a formula for instruction.

5. Learning about Students

- Students' lives outside school:
  - Immigration history
  - Favorite activities
  - Concerns and interests
  - Areas in which they excel

- How the different subject areas are used in students' communities.

- Students' prior knowledge/experience with particular topics to be taught.

Strategies for Learning About Students:

❑ Talking with the students themselves.

❑ Having students keep journals.

❑ Conducting home visits.

❑ Doing community studies.

❑ Talking with other teachers who know the students.

Application of Strand 5
for Teachers of Students with Disabilities

- ☐ Efforts to learn about students' strengths, interest, personal history, and understand how their disabilities intersect with other dimensions of their experience.

- ☐ Learn about students' view of disability and validate their personal experience.

- ☐ Collaborate with peers, parents, and professionals.

6. Using Responsive Teaching Practices

- Helping students to see links between what they are learning and their current/future lives.

- Embedding new ideas in problem-solving activities that are meaningful to the students.

- Using examples and analogies from students lives to introduce or clarify concepts.

- Using curriculum and instructional materials that reflect diverse perspectives.

- Tapping community resources.

Application of Strand 6 for Teachers of Students with Disabilities

- ☐ Have a repertoire of instructional strategies for use according to individual need and particular context.

- ☐ Provide multiple opportunities for students to express themselves in a variety of contexts.

- ☐ Afford students a greater autonomy and authority in expressing who they are and what their experiences in the world are about.

Developing Pedagogy:
Learning Opportunities in Courses

- ❏ Reflecting on personal experiences as learners.

- ❏ Eliciting views of learning depicted in different cases.

- ❏ Modeling constructivist views.

- ❏ Analyzing vignettes that feature responsive teachers.

- ❏ Analyzing videotaped lessons in diverse classrooms.

Developing Pedagogy: Learning Opportunities in Field

- ☐ Observing responsive teachers.

- ☐ Tutoring students of diverse backgrounds in afterschool programs.

- ☐ Planning instruction for students in fieldwork site.

- ☐ Practice teaching in diverse classrooms.

Responsive Teaching Components

Personal Transformation

- Sociocultural consciousness
- Affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds
- Commitment to acting as agents of change

Pedagogical Transformation

- Constructivist perspective on learning
- Strategies for learning about students
- Responsive teaching practices

Developing Responsive Teachers

1. *Sociocult. dysconcious* → → → → → → → → *Sociocult conscious*

1. *Deficit views* → → → → → → → → → → *Affirming views*

1. *T. as tech* → → → → → → → → → → *T. as agent of change*

1. *Transmission views* → → → → → → → → *Constructivist views*

1. *Knows little about students* → → → → → → *Knows students well*

1. *Uses few CRT practices* → → → → → → *Uses many CRT practices*

Making It Happen

- Coherence is needed:

  - Agreeing on a vision of the responsive teacher.

  - Infusing that vision throughout the teacher education curriculum.

Coordinated Infusion of Diversity Strands Throughout Teacher Education Curriculum--MSU

Courses	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pub Purposes Ed	√	√			√	
Sociocultural Perspective on Teaching and Learning	√	√	√	√	√	√
Educating ELLs Module	√	√	√	√	√	√
Inclusion Module	√	√	√	√	√	√
Language and Literacy				√	√	√
Methods				√	√	√
Fieldwork				√	√	
Teaching for Learning I				√	√	√
Teaching for Learning II				√	√	√
Student Teaching	√	√	√	√	√	√

Suggestions for Future Research

- It would be productive to explore the development of responsive teaching across the different phases in a teacher's career.

- An examination of the ways that different preparation programs include disabilities as an element of student diversity would contribute to a better understanding of responsive teaching.

- A major gap exists in our knowledge of how to develop the pedagogical characteristics of the responsive teacher.

- We need high-quality studies that address questions about teacher candidate learning to teach for diversity at the program level.