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Strangers in Stranger Lands: Language, Learning, Culture

Hong Li, University of Missouri at Columbia

Roy F. Fox, University of Missouri at Columbia

Dario J. Almarza, University of Missouri at Columbia

Abstract

This study investigates international students' perceptions of the issues they face using English as a second language while attending American higher education institutions. In order to fully understand those challenges involved in learning English as a Second Language, it is necessary to know the extent to which international students have mastered the English language before they start their study in America. Most international students experience an overload of English language input upon arrival in the United States. Cultural differences influence international students' learning of English in other ways, including international students' isolation within their communities and America's lack of teaching listening skills to its own students. Other factors also affect international students' learning of English, such as the many forms of informal English spoken in the USA, as well as a variety of dialects. Moreover, since most international students have learned English in an environment that precluded much contact with spoken English, they often speak English with an accent that reveals their own language. This study offers informed insight into the complicated process of simultaneously learning the language and culture of another country.

Readers will find three main voices in addition to the international students who "speak" (in quotation marks) throughout this article. Hong Li, a Chinese doctoral student in English Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia, authored the "regular" text. Second, Roy F. Fox's voice appears in italics. Fox is Professor of English Education and Chair of the Department of Learning, Teaching, and Curriculum at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Third, Dario J. Almarza's voice appears in boldface. Almarza, a native of Venezuela, is an Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education at the same institution.

Key words: English Language; United States Culture; Language Learning; International students; English as a Second Language; Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills; Academic Language Proficiency

Many international students have reported that they have not felt welcomed and have been treated like uninvited guests in a strange land. (Tan, 1994)

Introduction

As an international student from China, I have studied and lived in America for almost one year. This was also a year to grapple with the English language that got me into hot water at any time. For instance, my limitations in speaking and listening created a great deal of stress for me. When conversing with native speakers, I often felt helpless because I could not speak freely what was exactly in my mind. I often became easily lost in conversations, just due to missing a word or a sentence. The worst situation occurred when I sometimes heard only the sound of peoples' voices in English but knew nothing of what they were saying. Whenever this happened, the feeling of being an illiterate, struggling in a modern society, tortured me.

On the other hand, I was shocked to realize how little I actually knew about the English language, its tons of vocabulary, let alone the colloquial expressions of Western culture. These unexpected but bursting feelings of failure and embarrassment were so overwhelming, that I even doubted my original goal of improving my English proficiency in this country. At such times, this goal seemed like an impossible dream.

This awareness of my own language problems strongly intrigued me and motivated me to learn the situations of other international students. I wondered if the high number of international students enrolled in American colleges and universities possibly had met similar difficulties in the English language, as I had, and as I continue to have. According to the Institute for International Education (2005) between the 2004-2005 academic year, 565,039 international students attended American educational institutions; 264,410 (46.8%) of them were graduate students. Over the years, many studies have examined international students' problems and needs. Research shows that academically, international students struggle with completing essay examinations and taking notes during lectures due to their limited language proficiency (Deressa and Beavers, 1988; Parr, Bradley & Bingi, 1992). Likewise, Das, Chow and Rutherford (1986), as well as Wehrly (1986), have found that the most commonly reported personal/social concerns of international students involve social isolation, loneliness, homesickness, irritability, and fatigue. Another study suggests that international students' psychological distress is related to a profound sense of loss, a sense of inferiority, a sense of uncertainty, communication problems, culture shock, and the loss of social support systems they had in their country of origin (Sandhu, 1995).

Although these studies provide useful insights into the needs and concerns of international students, several issues remain unexamined. For instance, hearing the international students' true, informal voices, exploring the factors that influenced their language learning, particularly interested me. I was also curious to know how they regarded the issue of improving their English ability in America.

With these questions in mind I conducted a case study with eight international graduate students in order to explore their perceptions of the difficulties they face learning both academic and functional English in America. Based on interviews of these eight graduate students, as well as the perspectives of two professors at the University of Missouri-Columbia, this article summarizes obstacles that international students perceive they confront when trying to further develop their English language ability. The study identifies the sources of these obstacles according to the participants' perspectives, and offers some practical suggestions to help international students.

This article is comprised of five parts. The first one introduces the origin of this research. The second one describes background information of the eight interviewees, as well as the research methods employed in this study. The third part records the main findings of the interviews, pointing out that Basic International Communicative Skills (BICS), the culture gap, language input, individual personality, and study habits are the main hindrances that international students must learn to cope with. The fourth part provides three suggestions based on these interviews and the researchers' own experiences and knowledge. The fifth and final part offers conclusions and reflections from each author on the issues discussed.

Methodology

Research Approach

Because of the nature of the study's purpose, a qualitative research paradigm was used to gather data for the study. Since the intention of the study was to unveil insights of the international students' perceptions, a qualitative research approach was chosen as the method for the study. A quantitative study may not have yielded such insights. Merriam (1988) notes, "Research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p.3).

Likewise, Patton (1980) states, "qualitative measures describe the experiences of the people in depth" (p.22). In this case, the experiences of international graduate students immersed in an American educational environment were vividly captured by the qualitative approach. Hatch (2002) notes that a qualitative researcher can unveil the participant's insights by asking questions to determine how each individual makes sense out of his or her own experiences. In this study, international graduate students were asked questions related to their experiences with their immersion in American education and the learning of English.

In addition, since the purpose of the study was not to test a hypothesis or any other already formulated theory, qualitative research seemed more appropriate. It was the intention of the researcher to use grounded theory. That is, theory that is generated from the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1999). It is an inductive approach to research that seeks to describe reality that exists. Glaser and Strauss (1999) note, "Generating a theory from the data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of research" (p.6). The findings of this study were obtained inductively from the data gathered.

Within the qualitative research framework, we followed a modified case study design. According to Merriam (1988), the case study is the most effective means to examine an educational phenomenon. Case studies are ideal since they focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomena (Merriam, 1988), such as the situation of international students of this study. Patton (1980) sees the value of case studies in unique programs. He notes information from various sources are "brought together to produce a highly readable narrative that can be used by decision makers and information users to better understand what it was like to be in the program" (p.305).

In addition, case studies are heuristic: the reader will come to a fuller understanding of the phenomena through the case study (Merriam, 1988). Patton (1980) concurs, stating that the purpose of a case study is to provide in-depth information that will lead to fuller understanding. I hope that readers of this case study will learn a great deal about the difficulties international graduate students perceive in regards to the use of the English language.

Participants

In order to conduct this case study, I spent one month in 2004 interviewing the following eight international students who were currently studying at the university.

1. Mandy: a graduate student in the School of Journalism, majoring in Broadcasting. She came from China in 2003.
2. Kim: a graduate student in the College of Education, majoring in Language and Literacy. She came from South Korea in 2002.
3. Yi: a graduate student in the College of Education, majoring in Language and Literacy. She came from South Korea in 2003.
4. Wang: a doctoral student in the College of Education, majoring in Science Education. She came from Taiwan in 2001.
5. Lee: a doctoral student in the College of Education, majoring in Art Education. She came from Taiwan in 2002.
6. Kram: a graduate student in the College of Education, majoring in Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis. She came from Laos in 1999.
7. Chwee: a doctoral student in the School of Information Science & Learning Technology. She came from Singapore in 2001.
8. Blanca: a graduate student in the Teacher Development Program, studying for her teaching certificate. She emigrated from Mexico in 1999.

Data Collection

After securing official approval from my university's "Institutional Review Board," to ensure that human subjects are protected, the interviews with eight international students, each of whom was 30-40 years of age, began with their self-introductions, such as their names, nationalities, previous English education in their home countries, current study programs, and the length of time they had been living in America. Then, I showed them ten questions I designed, based on my reading and research, my own experiences and language problems, as well as feedback from my graduate advisor (Dr. Roy Fox), fellow students, and others. The interviewees were then asked to look through the questions first and select those that interested them the most. Then, we met to discuss the topics selected.

The interviewees were also welcomed to relate "critical incidents" in their language learning. However, I hoped to know their ideas about the core questions I listed in advance. Here are some sample questions:

- How do you define or describe a "language environment"?
- What do you think about studying English in America?
- What kinds of cultural influences affect your learning of English?
- How do you respond to language confusion?

Because these students came from six different countries and regions, English became the only available language throughout our interviews. To make them feel comfortable for the interviews, I met eight interviewees either at the corner of my office, where a round table and several chairs offered us a quiet, isolated space, or at their home, if that was possible. During each interview, I took notes and tape-recorded our talk. After each interview, I transcribed tapes and typed the interviewee's answers to my questions. I also gave each of them a pseudonym, so that I could assure them of anonymity and easily keep track of their stories.

I selected these interviewees because their majors demanded high levels of English language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Seven came from the College of Education and one from the School of Journalism at my university. Also, interviewing eight international students provided me first-hand information to understand the subjective and objective factors that hinder international students from more effectively learning English within an English-speaking environment.

Limitations

One serious limitation of this study is the lack of male participants. While gender was not a focus of this study, it is important in learning language and literacy. The thought that conversations between females would be much easier and casual led me to avoid involving males in the interviews. Also, I hoped that these female interviewees, educated in similar settings, would provide their honest ideas about learning the English language.

Another limitation of this study is that much of the information in this qualitative inquiry is based on interviews and personal experiences of international students from Asian countries, which may render it somewhat geocentric. Nevertheless, I believe their feelings about the English language and their experiences dealing with the language may be quite typical among international students from other areas of the world.

Findings

As noted above, I collected data from the eight participants in the study by interviewing them during a one-month period. After coding and analyzing the data gathered, several patterns emerged.

Concerns about Proficiency in English

First, I was impressed repeatedly by the interviewees' deep concerns about their inability to manipulate the English language. Most of them appeared to lack confidence in their English skills and felt upset for not better mastering the language. These language concerns not only made them fearful of communicating with native speakers, but also kept them suffering from a variety of inconveniences in their academic studies and in their daily life in America, even though they all had been living here for a couple of years. Overall, these international students experienced far more trouble with the English language, than they had when they lived in their home countries. For example Mandy said, "Sometimes I can't catch what American people say if they go on quickly; I don't understand what they are talking about, especially when they talk about things very related to their lives." Likewise, Kham mentioned, "I tried hard to think of the right words to say. I don't know the deeper meaning of the words... I just used simple words to express and tried to tell how I felt... they call my English 'layman English.'" Yi, also expressed her feelings, "I felt so depressed and nervous when American people keep asking me, 'What did you say?' I was so sad, because I never met such things before..."

These reflections reveal that these international students are highly sensitive about how others may perceive their skills in speaking English. Therefore, I wondered why we international students have so many difficulties in handling the English language while being surrounded in a “pure” language community of American English. From what perspective should we interpret such a confusing experience? Is there any possibility of helping international students with their language and reducing their feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, and frustration?

Even though I could be regarded a “successful” second language learner (I was able to complete two Master’s degree programs, to obtain a Ph. D degree from a reputable American university, and to become a faculty member at the college level), I cannot forget the troubles I endured during my journey. Before I came to the United States, I studied English in my home country of Venezuela for nine years at grade schools, the college, and language institutes. Despite all those years of “learning” English, I was not prepared to survive in either the academic world or the real world in America.

As a former director of a large writing program in the early eighties, I cannot forget the sting of my American faculty members’ attitudes toward the writing of international students. When faculty from all disciplines gathered to evaluate essays written for our “Minimal Competency Exam”—a one-hour writing that students had to pass before they could graduate from the university—my English Department colleagues often insisted, sometimes with a sneer, that international students “should write as well as everyone else.” Every time I heard this, I always thought, but too seldom said aloud, “Okay, fine—but I would like to see you in a writing center in Beijing, working on your Mandarin—just how well do you think you’d do?”

Fourteen years after first asking how my colleagues would perform in the same situation as our international students, I was sitting in a cable car in Tokyo, after participating in the World Englishes Conference in Nagoya. The tracks seemed suspended in air, high above a maze of urban sprawl, signs and wires sprouting out of everything. Two stops were next to each other: “Shigo” and “Shigio.” The conductor’s voice was fuzzy with static, which did not help my miniscule understanding of Japanese. There was no chance of helping this international student and even less chance of reducing his feelings of anxiety and frustration.

Later, I was sitting in the Nagoya Airport coffee shop, waiting for my flight home. Two American and two Japanese men enter and sit at the next booth. It is obvious that the two Americans have just arrived and have not met their Japanese hosts. The young waitress carefully takes their orders. I do not pay much attention to them until I hear one of the Americans, with a Texas accent, order “cream soda.” “That’s odd,” I vaguely think to myself, “why would anyone order that, in Japan?” A long period of time elapses and the waitress brings orders for everyone but the Texan. More time elapses and I hear the Americans mumble about the slowness of the service. Finally, the waitress arrives and appears embarrassed and out of breath. She had, no doubt, been working hard to satisfy this customer. On the table, in front of the Texan, she sets a glass of shimmering green soda.

Previous Experiences Learning English

Another pattern that emerged was that the participants expressed difficulties using English in America, despite the extensive English training they had in their home countries. Overall, a great majority of the international students received a comparatively thorough and systematic education in English grammar and have learned considerable vocabulary in their own countries. These eight interviewees had studied English for an average of 7.5 years, from preschool to high school. During that period, they were taught rules of pronunciation, basic sentence structures and tenses, and regularly used vocabulary (approximately five thousand words) upon graduating from their high schools.

The administrative leaders of my Midwestern university are firm believers in international or “global education.” They recognize our shrinking earth—our technological advances, our dire needs for economic and environmental interdependence. Indeed, our Chancellor speaks fluent Thai. In spite of these fortunate circumstances, a few years ago, during another round of budget cuts, we lost our program in Foreign Language Education. Part of this loss was due to several years of low enrollments in this program.

Considering their previous English education, international students have been equipped with fundamental knowledge of the English language before studying abroad. Most of them can converse with English native speakers in basic terms, as well as write brief English passages. Nonetheless, why do these students still have so many difficulties in using English in America? Let us listen to what these interviewees say about their encounters with the English language in this country.

“What I learned before is so different from what I heard here in America. For example, I just learned ‘I am twenty-three years old’, but never knew ‘I was ‘twenty-something’ or ‘I am ‘over twenty’. I never learned such expressions in Korea.” -- Kim

“Before I came here, I knew that if they say, ‘thank you’, I should answer, ‘you are welcome,’ something like this was in my English textbooks. Now I found there are lots of ways to reply ‘you are welcome’, like ‘sure’ or ‘Um-hum’. That’s in a more casual way, but I did not know this in China.” -- Mandy

“I did not expect that people here like to say, ‘make sense?’ and ‘figure out’ if they are trying to understand something. But in my mind, the word ‘understand’ is the only one I can think of.” -- Blanca

It’s hardly possible for international students to experience the full range of American dialects and the multiple forms of informal English unless they live in the USA for many years. Even Americans who have traveled widely in the USA seldom, if ever, accomplish this. The same holds true, of course, for anyone learning a new language. As well, even experienced American teachers cannot understand all of informal American English. I recently worked with experienced literacy teachers who teach “at risk” students—those who have committed crimes and attend residential correctional facilities. These teachers do not understand some of the language that their students use—from “crib” (i.e., one’s home) to “dappin” (a type of handshake); from “muggin” (looking closely at someone, up and down) to “triflin” (something messy or disgusting). The “up side” here is that, when teachers return to students to ask them to explain such terms, this interaction becomes a small demonstration of respect for these students, showing them that they know some things that teachers do not. The building of such confidence is an authentic, basic building block necessary for students to use--and hence learn and value--language.

Also, Kim, Mandy, and Blanca should know that it’s hard enough to learn one way of saying or writing something in another language. To learn multiple options for communicating basically the same meaning is accomplished by very few people over the course of a lifetime. It is also true that many teachers and many cultures perpetuate the “one correct way to do things” approach, as well as focus heavily on the details of “the one right way to do things,” thus displacing time and effort on exploring language options. These three international students, then, seem to feel “ignorant” or “ill-prepared” about something that they should not.

Based on my personal experience and the stories told by many other international students from Latin America with whom I have shared experiences, the training we received in English in our home countries was a waste of time. In order to be able to operate in a society with a different

language, the second language learner has to learn the culture in which that language is embedded. Unfortunately, the English teachers in our countries believe that second language learners of English are better off if they learn “standard” English that could be used everywhere, that is, a language without any cultural context.

Difference between Formal and Conversational English

Participants in the study consistently perceived the difference between formal and conversational English as a major obstacle for the appropriate use of the English language. Participants find that there is a great distance between their previous knowledge of the more formal English language and the more informal, authentic spoken English in American life. This conflict between conversational language and formal language is, according to the participants, the first and most severe difficulty presented to them. To better understand this issue, we need to briefly review the basic types of language acquisition.

Cummins (1979) defines two types of language acquisition: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), stating that one achieving total bilingual status in conversational English may never achieve bilingual status in their academic language. This is because conversational English is highly contextualized and less demanding than academic English, which requires more linguistic elaborations because of the reduced context surrounding its use (Cummins, 1981; Collier, 1987). However, Leki (1992) claims that the reverse may also be true: a person may be able to read academic or even literary writing in his/her second language, but may have little experience in carrying on an informal conversation in the second language. This is the case for international students; most of them do not expect the considerable discrepancy between interpersonal and academic English until they arrive in an English-speaking country. Kim, Mandy and Blanca, whom I interviewed, have provided evidence that they actually are struggling between BICS and CALP.

Therefore, we can easily infer that international students often experience two types of language acquisition. With the support of strong English grammar knowledge and a substantial vocabulary they learned in their prior education, international students usually have a fairly well developed academic language proficiency but lack interpersonal communicative skills. That is, they are able to read academic and professional articles and books in English, yet they may have troubles conversing with English native speakers. This great distance between BICS and CALP naturally becomes one of the impediments to international students' proficiency in the English language.

The findings of this study corroborate the existence of the gap between BICS and CALP as mentioned above. In the course of interviewing, I noted that these students' unfamiliarity with the way of oral language is the main reason why they may become “deaf” in communication. Different from written language, oral language involves a great many idioms and colloquial expressions, accumulating from one generation to another. Although Americans are well used to these, international students know little about them. Lee, a girl from Taiwan stated, “Once my professor told me ‘you bet’; I looked at her blankly, because I did not know what she meant until she repeated ‘you are right.’” For Kim, an interviewee from South Korea, “I am done” is the first new expression she learned from American friends. “I heard them say it on many occasions, and now I also try to use it in my talk, because it is so universal.” Yi, another interviewee from South Korea, also admitted that she has learned a lot of current and informal English expressions since she arrived in America: “At first, I just wondered why so many people rushed to this country to study English. I thought that was unnecessary. But when I came here, I found out the reason: English that people speak here sounds totally different from what I learned in Korea.”

In addition, international students face the challenges of English phonetics when communicating with Americans. Not being as good at making word/sound connections in English as native speakers,

international students cannot react to the English sounds as promptly as they would do in their own language. Pronunciation also bothers international students because they cannot distinguish the nuances in English. “What I hear from native speakers here in America is a continuous stream of sound waves rather than separate spoken words,” Chwee, a girl from Singapore complained.

Moreover, since most international students have learned English in an environment that precluded much contact with spoken English, they often speak English with an accent that reveals their own language. So this kind of “dialect English” almost becomes one of international students’ distinctive marks. Yi was concerned about her heavy accent: “I have no way to get rid of it, since it is so rooted. People here know where I come from by my accent.” Conversely, international students find it difficult to make sense of American people who have dialects or accents. It is common to hear international students privately talk about which professor’s lectures are hard to catch due to his/her regional accent. In one word, these factors combine to prevent international students from acquiring better interpersonal communication skills, further damaging their confidence in their English ability.

When we come to the United States we are used to speaking and listening to “standard” English – the kind of English nobody speaks in real life. Therefore, we arrive figuratively deaf and mute, unable to understand the common language used by native speakers and pronouncing English in such a way that nobody understands us. Many international students express their frustration in trying to communicate and survive in this country right after arrival. They have already passed the TOEFL test in their native country, and are supposed to have a good command of English, but have less knowledge of idiom and slang. One of the most challenging cultural situations is to answer r the phone. Unable to see the body language that helps us make sense of some of the words, a phone call from a native speaker of English becomes, for an international student, a source of anxiety and frustration. It is especially frustrating when we try to articulate and express a complete idea and the person at the other end says, “WHAT?” “What did you say?” or if the listener understands something completely different from what we meant.

Native Culture vs. Adopted Culture

Participants also identified a second major obstacle in using the English language. The difference between their native culture and the American culture makes it more difficult for them to properly function in an American environment.

Kham, an interviewee from Laos, explained how one cultural difference affected her academic work:

I do not think I am stupid, but the culture stops me sometimes, like when I wrote a paper, I did not give it more reasons, because in our culture, we are not expected to explain things too much. If you explain a lot that people did not ask you, they may think you are trying to hide something. But here, what professors want to see in my paper are examples, examples, and more examples.

Kham feels it is hard to bridge the gap between her Laotian culture and that of America, even after living in America for five years. Actually, her confusions caused by American culture are not rare among international students. This phenomenon is the second important factor that works negatively on international students who are trying to adapt to a new language environment.

Overall, some major patterns of discourse—especially the paradigms for presenting an argument or explaining a topic--certainly differ in Eastern and Western countries. In academic writing, this presents a major obstacle for Asian students, because they have to negotiate between their deeply-instilled cultural values (as Kham’s fear or reluctance to explain herself too much) and the expectations of American academic prose, which often demands a more linear, deductive approach to writing. Some Eastern cultures consider it “rude” to begin their communication by stating what they want, instead

preferring to arrive at their conclusion in a more circular, inductive way. Americans, on the other hand, often value beginning their messages with the “bottom line” or conclusion, because it is direct and efficient. Such differences reach far beyond how to organize one’s writing: rather, they are deeply rooted in one’s culture. Another “myth” that is deeply rooted in American AND Asian culture is the belief that standardized test “tells all”—that a passing or proficient score will mean that we can achieve what it promises, at any time, under any circumstances!

Within the Latin American culture, it is also rude to present an argument in a direct way. Even more, it could be insulting for the reader. It could imply that you are not smart enough to get the main idea by “reading” the cues provided, and therefore you were forced to express your argument in a childish form. That difference in discourse usually leads college professors to believe that Latino students do not know how to write “good” quality papers. It takes several years of assimilation for international students to become proficient in American discourse.

One of the direct consequences that may result from culture gaps is misunderstanding a language that is not grounded in shared cultural experience. Therefore, non-natives often have to guess at meanings (Bartholomae, 1980). That is why many international students often complain that none of the words in reading are difficult to understand, but the interpretation of the meaning is only possible accompanied by an understanding of the cultural setting. Mandy, the interviewee from China, explained her view of the interaction of American culture and its language: “You know nothing about their lifestyle when you come here; of course, you don’t know what they are talking about.” Mandy’s personal experience also proved her point. Majoring in broadcast journalism, she is particularly interested in mass media in America. Once watching a movie on TV, she discovered that dashes sometimes appeared in English captions. She was confused by this until her American friends told her that the American government regulates some guidelines for mainstream media in order to prohibit “dirty words” from being shown in public. “I became aware of which words are not allowed to be shown publicly in this country,” Mandy said.

The culture gap often influences the international students’ approach to English in other ways. For example, two Asian culture values listening more than speaking, because being modest is considered an important virtue. This is one reason that Asian cultures emphasize memorization and recall of grammatical structures, while class discussion is discouraged (Fu, 1995). Consequently, quietness and withdrawal are typical of Asian students. The seven interviewees from Asian countries convinced me again that, like me, they are reluctant to participate in class discussions unless they are directly called upon by the instructor. Kim explained that in her country, she was taught to absorb knowledge from her teacher. However, she explains, “here we are encouraged to challenge professors’ ideas or raise opposing questions or do some creative things. I am not used to this American way.”

Mandy is right: “speaking vs. speaking only when spoken to” represents a significant cultural difference between Asia and America. This gulf has widened in the past 25 years, as Americans have increasingly lost their abilities to listen sensitively and to listen for extended periods of time. Decades ago, listening was routinely taught in classrooms, as one of the “Language Arts,” along with speaking, reading, and writing. I believe there are two primary reasons for this loss. First, the teaching of listening in classrooms has been displaced (as have many other subjects and values) by our increasing emphasis on “accountability” and massive, standardized testing programs.

Another, more pervasive reason is that our culture, especially television, film, and popular music, continue to glamorize “the performance”—particularly loud, aggressive, unceasing talk—from Jerry Springer, to gangsta rap; from Rush Limbaugh, to the Comedy Central Television Network; from “Survivor” to “The O’Reilly Factor,” to “American Idol.” These values have spread to politics,

religion, education, and technology. Our collective devaluing of the art of listening has not seemed to lead Americans to any gains in personal or social freedom, independence, critical thinking, or autonomy.

Lack of vocabulary

Most of the participants felt overwhelmed by the number of new words they had to learn and by the limitations that the lack of vocabulary imposes. For example, Wang said: "I suddenly feel so desperate sometimes, because there are large amounts of words I do not know. Whenever I opened a newspaper or turned on a TV set, I was suddenly surrounded by endless unknown words."

Wang's helplessness is not unusual for international students, most of whom may experience an overload of the English language input upon arriving in United States. Mandy, who got her Bachelor's degree in English Literature in China, told me, "There are a great many words and expressions I do not know. Even those very common words for Americans became burdens for me to memorize. I never knew that my vocabulary was so tiny and that I needed to do so much work to enrich it." Confronting various features of the language, such as idioms, slang, and dialects, makes it hard to determine how much of this language is enough for international students' daily communications with native speakers. Therefore, they seem to often worry about their lack of vocabulary and think it is really hard to find the right English words and forms to express themselves. Moreover, the fear of choosing incorrectly forces them to avoid using unfamiliar words. On the other hand, knowing few connotations of words and their nuances, international students have fewer options for picking up appropriate expressions. Most of the interviewees sadly admitted that sometimes they had to give up some good ideas in class discussions just because they could not find the available words at the moment.

This shortage of vocabulary could also increase international students' timidity in communicating with native speakers. The more effectively international students wanted to speak in English, the more vaguely they would express themselves, in essence, "hiding" under a cloak of fuzziness, generality, and simplicity (Leki, 1992). Consequently, the feeling of embarrassment and frustration at not being able to say what they want in English, as well as the fear of appearing foolish before native speakers, seemed to force more and more international students to remain "dumb." Lee, one interviewee, described her feelings under such conditions this way: "I know I flushed with embarrassment when I failed to explain our customs clearly to my American friends. I am much more anxious than they are."

The other possible consequence of lacking vocabulary is that international students are not liable to comprehend much of the language coming at them, if it is too fast and has little repetition. Even though these students pay careful attention to what is going on around them, they may actually understand only a portion of what they hear (Leki, 1992). All of the eight interviewees had the experiences of requesting their American professors or classmates to slow down in the midst of their conversations. "I have to interrupt their talks," confided Yi, a shy girl from South Korea, "because I can not catch them. Otherwise, I just smile at them to conceal my embarrassment."

Individual Personality

In an interview, Lee noted, "I like to keep to myself, and I am quiet most of the time in a crowd, so I don't talk with Americans too much. But I know I have lost many opportunities to polish my spoken English." As Lee states, her biggest hindrance in learning English is her introverted personality. And she also admitted that her passivity does not help her generate more interactions with native English speakers. Lee's example demonstrates Ellis' point that individual characteristics of learners also have an important impact on how well a second language is acquired (Ellis, 1985). Ellis insists that how

introverted or extroverted a learner is will probably play in his/her behaviors in learning a second language.

Self-confidence may also play a vital role in determining the effectiveness of language acquisition. However, lacking sufficient confidence in using English is rather common among Asian students. Chwee, the interviewee from Singapore, where English is the official language, still cannot overcome her hesitation to speak English in public: “I just sit at the corner of the classroom, trying not to be noticed by my professor, because I am afraid to be asked to say something in class, you know. I don’t think my English is bad, but I dare not to speak before them (Americans).”

In a sense, Chwee’s activity is understandable. Different from little children, who may be unconscious of their spoken errors, or pay little attention to their mistakes, college students and other adults are likely more sensitive to others’ attitudes and reactions. Asian students, especially, value their self-esteem and are afraid of negative or insulting comments from others. Their classroom behaviors often reveal this, as they express doubt about their ability to understand and be understood in English. They often keep silent. In addition, they may suspect that native speakers might refuse their ideas.

I understand Chwee’s fear of speaking—not just because she may not understand English well, all the time—but because of other, larger factors, such as America’s collective attitudes and knowledge about Asia. The Asia Society (2001) conducted extensive research on this topic and concluded that there is a “huge gap between the strategic importance of Asia—the largest, most populous, and fastest-growing area of the world—and Americans’ disproportionate lack of knowledge about this vital region” (p.7). Another finding was that 70% of the American public and 97% of American leaders believes that “China will play a greater role in world affairs in the coming decade” (p.18). However, yet another finding underscores the schism here: “275,076 Asian students were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities during the academic year 1998-99, whereas less than 8,000 American students were studying in Asia” (p.12).

Americans know little about Asia. For instance, one out of every four high school students could not name the ocean that separates North America from Asia, and two out of three respondents did not know that Mao Zedong, often referred to as “Chairman Mao,” was the first leader of the People’s Republic of China (Asia in the Schools, 2001.) It seems likely, too, that many Americans would have little understanding of the longevity, depth, and breadth of Chinese culture.

And Americans, like most people, tend to fear what they do not understand. I have spoken with enough Asian and other international students to know that many of them have experienced prejudice and racism from Americans. I also believe that many Americans, including well-traveled and educated Americans, are simply afraid of Asia. They fear not knowing the language, they fear the sheer multitudes of people, and they fear the incredible size and maze of its cities. They fear being a stranger in what they consider to be an even stranger land than those with which they are already familiar.

When American students interact with international students, especially from underdeveloped countries, they usually ask questions such as “Do you have running water?” or “Do you have cars over there?” From those questions, international students get the perception that Americans believe we come from “uncivilized” or “primitive” societies, and therefore we don’t have much to offer in an academic discussion. This attitude explains in part the reluctance of international students to participate in class.

Study Habits

Interviewing eight international students made me realize that study habits probably bring about some kind of side-effects too. Depending excessively on bilingual dictionaries has become a headache for most international students.

Taking along a bilingual dictionary is expected to offer international students convenience; however, the bizarre translations of words and several different translation options--without any context--create much confusion. I heard a lot of complaints about bilingual dictionaries from my interviewees. They agree that most of the time they have no idea which of the several possible translations might be appropriate for each context. Wang, the girl from Taiwan said, "I especially get puzzled with adjectives. Each word has more than five Chinese translations, and I almost do not know which one fits my situation."

But why do they still prefer to use the bilingual dictionaries? Lee, the other girl from Taiwan, replied that the explanations in English-English dictionaries create even more confusion, if she does not read the translations in Chinese. Like her, the other interviewees admitted that they cannot connect one English noun to the object/ image in their mind, unless they know what it is in their own language.

In timed essay exams, some institutions do not allow native students to use a dictionary or thesaurus. There is method in this madness. Looking up too many words (again, for that "one right answer") takes considerable amounts of time, deflecting the writer's or speaker's focus away from meaning and context and onto correctness. Overall, in the wrong situations, relying upon dictionaries can reinforce one's dependency on "one right answer," retarding the writer's progress in developing fluency and self-confidence, often causing her to avoid the risks inherent in further communication. This becomes a self-perpetuating, vicious cycle, since, to learn a language, it must be used, over and over again, trying out language options in different contexts and with different audiences.

It is interesting that none of the Latino international students that I have met show any reliance on a dictionary, as the Asian students seem to have in order to survive in the academic world. This difference could be explained by the fact that English and Spanish share a large percentage of words that have either Latin or Greek roots that are similar in both languages. When Latino students use dictionaries, they prefer English version.

Recommendations

One contribution we hoped this study could make is find ways to better assist international students' language development. All the interviewees are making efforts to seek various ways to reduce the difficulties they experienced in learning English in America. Here, briefly, are their primary suggestions:

Engage in Informal and Formal English Whenever Possible

Just like culture shock to newcomers, "language shock" may cause learners to lose confidence in their ability to survive in their current culture (Fu, 1995). Exposed to the enormous sea of "uncontrolled and spontaneous" language in the second language environment they have never before met, international students may become overwhelmed.

No one likes to be tortured constantly by the limitations of language. Therefore, international students often seek ways to enrich their language learning. All of the interviewees agreed that they engaged in English anywhere in their daily lives that they could, in an attempt to learn as much new vocabulary. Kim and Yi think that "copying" the way Americans speak will provide a shortcut to help them improve their vocabulary. Kim stated that, "When I hear one word from Americans several times, I try to use that word in my speaking. I think exposure to the language is a good way for me to learn it." Kham and Blanca, who have lived in the U.S. longer than the other interviewees, emphasized that they learned a lot of new vocabulary from reading and writing:

“For me, reading is very important. Most of my vocabulary comes from reading. Also, I learn how to use these words and phrases in context, how to construct sentences and how to pick up proper words.” -- Kham

“Reading gives me most of my vocabulary, and I get familiar with those words when I keep on reading. I am glad to monitor the words printed in my own writing. Writing helps me memorize the new words.” -- Blanca

Form International Groups

Once being aware of their deficiency in oral and aural skills, international students often lose confidence in their ability to adapt psychologically to their new environment, even though they can read and write in English. As a result of the difficulties they experience in speaking and understanding English, these students often seek out and interact mainly with others from their own countries. Speaking the same language and sharing a similar appearance makes them feel safe and comfortable (Leki, 1992).

Blanca, the interviewee from Mexico, shared her “small secret”: “I enjoy talking with international students from other countries, because I need not worry about my poor English and accent. I feel so relaxed that my spoken English becomes surprisingly fluent as we talk. We can also use gestures to get across our meaning. Communicating with them is easy and full of pleasure.” It seems that only on occasions such as this could international students recover their lost confidence and experience a sense of accomplishment when using the English language.

This international student did not become “hamstrung” because of the tyranny of “one right answer.” She is not looking up words, one by one, in a dictionary; she is not fearful of her audience and of “sounding dumb” or “sounding ignorant.” Instead, she is gaining practice and confidence—taking risks and building fluency—fundamental to anyone’s increasing their learning of language.

Besides daily associations and holiday gatherings with their compatriots, most international students prefer to live close to each other or with those sharing a similar cultural background. Like Blanca, these students usually do not mind associating with other international students who may have some elements of culture and customs in common with them—people who are experiencing the same adjustments as themselves (Leki, 1992). For example, six of the eight interviewees choose to live in the International Students Apartments supplied by the university. First, they are free to share one apartment with people from their own country. Second, commonalities in living and cooking habits allow them to avoid many inconveniences and troubles.

However, Kham, who has been living in America longer, voiced a different opinion:

I do not think living with international students is the best choice to help us get familiar with American culture and learn English. I got this lesson from the experience of one of my friends here, who arrived in America almost the same time as me, but her English speaking and listening abilities improved faster than mine. The only reason was that she lived with an American family for two years. Living together forced her to speak more English than me.

Kham’s remarks made me realize that these international groups may not be so preferable for learning the English language. Limiting communication among international students removes a rich source of language input – social interaction with native English speakers. Although international students may attain psychological satisfaction by staying with their compatriots, simultaneously, they

have greatly reduced their opportunities to get used to the English language (Long, 1983). Kim, the interviewee from South Korea, said, “My husband and I talk to each other little if we agree to speak in English at home. When we visit our friends here, we still speak our own language, though we know that is not good for our English improvement...”

My Latino friends who wanted to improve their English skills usually avoided gathering with other international students. Instead, the ones who were the most successful were those who often socialized with native speakers. These students were not only able to learn the second language faster, but were also able to assimilate the culture. Latino students also criticized those who used English at home to communicate with their spouses and children. Even though it is assumed that “practice makes perfect,” speaking English at home was perceived as some sort of cultural betrayal.

When to speak one’s native language (the “language of nurture”) and when to speak one’s adopted or L-2 language remains a complex issue. In essence, for native English speakers, the language of nurture – spoken and written for close, trusted audiences – is informal English (Britton, et al., 1977). Therefore, Kham’s friend, who learned English quickly because she lived with an American family, was immersed in informal English, the type that is most challenging for international students. It is also true that international students need the psychological safety and security of their own language--their own language of nurture. International students need to engage in both of these language contexts. This is a complicated, difficult task and often impractical.

Seek Comfort from Culture and Family

For international students, coming to America to study means separating from dear families and friends; therefore they often endure intense emotional pain. In particular, as they try to come to terms with cross-cultural experiences, these students can become emotionally fragile. In a new culture, they may be less flexible, inventive, and spontaneous than they may be at home. Since their usual coping mechanisms do not work, they may revert to child-like dependence on others and become exhausted from trying to accomplish even routine activities (Scarcella, 1990).

In such situations, international students are eager to find a reliable setting, in which they are allowed to reflect on and appreciate their own culture. Talking with others from their own country is a preferable option, because it is the most practical way to escape the dreaded new culture and new language, “partly to combat loneliness and homesickness, but also to complain bitterly about all the faults of the new culture and its people” (Leki, 1992). This seems to be what happened with Lee, a Chinese girl:

Can you imagine my feeling of being called by my first name by an unfamiliar person here? I felt so uncomfortable. In China, only my close family members would call me that. The worst is that my American professors and classmates pronounce my Chinese name in many different ways. Sometimes I even don’t know if they are calling me or not. So I had to give myself an English name, but I feel that is not me. How much I wanted to use my own name!

Lee looked bitter as she told me this. I understand her completely, because I met the same embarrassment because of my name. To be honest, I don’t feel very comfortable being addressed by my given name in public, because even my parents won’t call me that in a formal setting. Even in America, Chinese students still follow their tradition by greeting each other with their whole name. But since taking on an English name is popular among international students, I tend to view this as our attempt to accept western culture and language.

In over three decades of working with international students, all except one or two have insisted that they be referred to by their simple, adopted American name. Even the Chinese students—in China—insisted that I call them by their American names. It is indeed a popular thing to do and represents, as Hong Li notes, an attempt to accept western culture. In another sense, a new name also affords them a kind of “fresh start.” One young Chinese woman I worked with in Tibet insisted that we refer to her as “Joy”—she was proud of the fact that she selected this name from a dictionary and that she also liked its meaning. There is, of course, a very practical reason for international students to adopt American names: it’s less troublesome and more efficient, due to the fact that international students find that many Americans have great difficulty in pronouncing (and hence remembering) “foreign” names.

It has long been my practice to ask international students to use their real names, and I usually have to gently coax it out of them. I have done so because of America’s own history of calling minority groups “out of name.” Especially during those years preceding the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s, African Americans were often “called out of name” by whites. It was not unusual for whites to assign nicknames to Blacks, instead of using their real names. (While racial slurs may be related to such nicknames, this is not my focus here.) For example, “Boy” and “Girl” were commonly used to refer to African American adults. Other categorical or “one size fits all,” pejorative terms included, “Uncle Tom,” “Uncle,” and “Rastus.”

Such language use was perpetuated by popular media and culture. The radio and television series, “Amos N’ Andy,” featured characters widely known as “The Kingfish” and “Step-N-Fetch-It.” (It’s interesting to note that the only exceptions to these names occurred when the characters referred to themselves: The Kingfish became “George Stevens” and “Andy” became “Andrew J. Brown.”)

American culture has continued to “call people out of name” as well as to find new ways of devaluing cultures unlike their own. America’s Spike TV Network currently airs a program called, “MXC” that is described as, “A Japanese-produced game show in which contestants attempt outrageous stunts.” This describes what the program would be when it airs in Japan. However, in the USA, this program contains very rapid “voice over” narration in American English. American male voices are inserted to substitute for the Japanese people on screen, who were speaking Japanese. The American voices make fun of the Japanese contestants and hosts, belittling their appearance, actions, and mannerisms, in between a barrage of sexual jokes, cultural put-downs, and comments that rely upon extreme stereotyping.

I have always found interesting the practice that Asian students adopt an American name. That is not the case for Latin American students. We have to get used to hearing our names pronounced in a zillion ways, but still we do not change our name. We often adopt, as in my case, the pronunciation that is most commonly used by Americans without relinquishing our own Spanish name.

On the other hand, six out of eight interviewees admitted they would seek comfort from their families and friends if they felt depressed or had any troubles caused by speaking and listening to English. Wang’s way of dealing with hard times with English seems representative among international students: “I would call my sister (who is in Michigan) or close friend here to tell them my troubles with English and I want them to hear me and share my sadness, and then I will feel better and relieved.” The other three girls, Mandy, Chwee and Yi, said that the cost of calling their homes amounts to 30% of their monthly living expenses.

Again, since language has to be used in order to be learned, it makes sense that international students, who live with English speakers, or at least associate more often with them, will more quickly

gain fluency and competence in English. It seems that all cultures gravitate to their own kind. As these students make clear, a certain amount of fear drives these “clannish” practices. However, it seems to me that China, Japan, and other cultures are much more inclined to think and behave in terms of groups than are their American counterparts. In my recent trip to China, I was one in a party of five. Every time we checked into a hotel, the clerk automatically registered us as a single group, swiping the credit card of just one of us; they neither asked for, nor wanted, separate credit cards, since they already had one—who represented the whole group. My companions had a hard time convincing them that we were, yes, a “group,” but that we were separate individuals, each of whom wanted to be responsible for his or her own hotel bill! Hence, international students who function with a strong “group” mindset may have a very difficult time modifying this pattern.

On the other hand, for all of Westerners’ vaunted “rugged individualism,” that we want to apply to ourselves, we are less effective at perceiving other cultures as individuals. As a child, I often heard whites say, “all blacks look alike.” Now I hear, “all Chinese look alike” and “I can’t tell a Chinese from a Japanese from a Korean.” In his essay, “Marrakech,” George Orwell (1997) implicates his own culture’s point of view when he describes the native people: “Do they even have names? Or are they merely a kind of undifferentiated brown stuff, about as individual as bees or coral insects?”

Overall, these cultural tendencies reflect a model of mental growth, posited by James Moffett (1973) and others, in which “simultaneous differentiation and integration” functions throughout life as we develop into more complex organisms. In short, differentiation means accepting or learning how one’s self diverges from others, while integration means learning how one’s self is akin to other people or ideas. International students, then, seem to be differentiating themselves and integrating themselves on several levels—from their personal and professional home lives, to their personal and professional new lives. As well, this intense differentiation and integration occurs within a compressed time frame, creating a pressure-cooker atmosphere for visiting students.

Latin American people are by “nature” very close. Neighbors and family members are always available to help each other. Being in a foreign country causes Latinos to become even closer to each other. Nothing is more relaxing after a hard week immersed in another culture than to “hang out” with your own people and feel at home. The close knit Latino group serves another fundamental purpose: survival. Latino students rely on each other to learn the American system and be able to function in it. Tasks, such as how to negotiate the purchase of a car, how to obtain a driver’s license, how to get credit, or how to open a checking account and understand the importance of a credit score are basic skills for survival. However, cultural expertise is not taught in college but must be learned from your “new family” in the United States: your Latino group.

Final Reflections

From Hong Li

The most important benefit of interviewing eight international students is that their experiences, as well as mine, help me to place the question (“What is the best way to learn a second language?”) into perspective. “Keep practicing” should be our international students’ optimum choice regarding English learning. In doing so, we must grab any communication opportunity with native speakers and immerse ourselves into the cultural diversities of the United States. However, talking with these eight international students, I notice that they, in a sense, have actually excluded themselves from a pure language community, depriving themselves of ample chances to communicate with native speakers. “We are an isolated group of people in the United States,” as Lee said. This kind of self-pity would only limit international students’ exposure to the English language.

Vygotsky (1978) concludes that language develops entirely from social interaction. Extending Vygotskian theory to second language acquisition, Lantolf and Appel (1994) claim that second language learners advance to higher levels of linguistic knowledge when they collaborate and interact with speakers of the second language who are more knowledgeable than they are, for example, a teacher or a more advanced learner. Hatch (1992), Pica (1994) and Long (1983) have argued that much second language acquisition takes place through conversational interaction. Based on his observations of learners and native speakers, Long (1983) asserts that what learners need is not necessarily simplification of the linguistic forms, but rather, an opportunity to interact with other speakers, in ways which lead them to adapt what they are saying until the learners show signs of understanding.

Despite the linguistic and cultural obstacles international students must overcome, I think the key to opening the door for English learning is in their own hands. First, what they need most is to treat their language abilities boldly and make efforts to battle with their psychological difficulties caused by the language, since second language acquisition should take place in a setting which minimizes fear, nervousness, and self-consciousness (Krashen, 1982). Also, they must break their sealed language environment and become active language learners. Using the real language for real communication with native speakers, they can perhaps acquire the language in an authentic sense. Gaining a sense of belonging in a new culture with the help of its language is what all international students expect. To attain that, they must dare to confront their apprehension, embarrassment, and fear.

The exciting thing is that some international students have realized this fact and made encouraging attempts toward the right direction. They begin to participate in various programs to look for more opportunities to improve their language ability. For example, Wang joined in the multicultural discussion group in Columbia to get more chances to practice her English. Lee and Kim are members of the Language Partners Program on campus. Meeting with the native English-speaking volunteers weekly in a casual environment, they sharpen their English skills and absorb new expressions and slang as well. Kim also changed her idea about the English language: "After studying here for two years, I actually came to know that English is simply a language like any language in the world, and it is impossible to 'learn' it without using it in your life."

From Dario J. Almarza

This study corroborates the findings of previous research on international students' issues in American higher education. Both I and the participants of this study have had the same difficulties adjusting to the campus environment as the international students reported by Tan (1994). As this study seems to indicate, as international students we encounter an environment in which the language, norms, laws, and the people are different from those in our native lands. Also, previous research has identified the English language as one of the greatest problems among international students (Solberg, Choi, Ritsman, & Jolly, 1994) as is the case with participants of this particular research. Likewise, this study shows that international students experience multiple adjustments within the campus culture, and that navigating the academic curriculum is a challenge. Because of the international students' culture, our classroom behavior may be perceived as passive or shy. Due to language barriers, we may have problems taking notes, answering questions, and writing essays. Although we have excelled academically in our home countries, marginal competence in English can affect our ability to concentrate on lectures and other factors within the curriculum.

As I reflect on the findings of this study, it seems evident that higher education institutions should take an active role in helping international students cope with the difficulties of learning English, succeeding in the academic world as "invited guests" in a "stranger land." Student learning is in large part a function of the effort, frequency, and quality of the interactions between

the student and the agents within the campus environment. As Kuh (1994) contends, it is important to determine whether faculty and student cultures foster or discourages student engagement in the activities that matter to learning and personal learning. For international students, higher education needs to re-examine how instruction within the classroom environment ensures that a learner whose first language is one other than English understand the handouts as well as participates in class discussion. In other words, higher education must create a caring/positive environment for international students. As noted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), students who feel they belong and are valued as individuals within the learning environment are more likely to take advantage of the resources the institution provides for their learning.

Finally, in higher education, despite some well-intended policies and programs, the “sink or swim” approach in regards to international students still prevails. They have to obtain their visas, buy their tickets, arrive on campus in another country, register for courses during the same time as host country nationals and begin their studies without any cross-cultural training or major help from the host institution to adjust to the new environment. International students should be able to attend cross-cultural training programs in which they are:

1. Able to recognize that any important life transition is likely to result in stress and discomfort as a usual and normal consequence. The pain caused by the change might be less if recognized as a normal response.
2. Reassured and shown support to maintain a healthy self-image and to restore their sense of self-efficacy.
3. Given time to adjust without pressure or urgency.
4. Shown the patterns of the adjustment they have to go through. In that way the process may become more concrete and less ambiguous.
5. Prepared to cope with the culture shock. That preparation might include language study, learning about the host culture, simulating situations to be encountered, and spending time with nationals from the host culture.

From Roy F. Fox:

I would like to offer two final reflections—one brief, the other longer and more serious. I have no easy answers or simple solutions to either one.

First, in my years of researching language, media, and “culture,” it seems clear that word, “culture” has become a very easy “scapegoat” for all of us—academics, teachers, students, even the general public. This complex term has become almost a personification for any of society’s ills, and the term is used as if it is something that has a definite shape, face, personality, and full set of superhuman powers, both good and bad. I am in no way denying the powers of one’s cultures, be they good, bad, or indifferent. Indeed, throughout my career, I have ceaselessly argued that we must learn about this phenomenon.

The fact that so many different people are using the word, “culture,” so often and so easily, is good, because at least people are becoming aware of its powers and are giving “lip service” to it—a step in the right direction. On the other hand, many people who use this word would have a hard time defining it in concrete terms. Because “culture” is so high on the ladder of abstraction, it means many different things to many different people. Hence, the problem resides in the fact that most people would assign quite different meanings to the term that they are “blaming” (or crediting) for a whole smorgasbord of causes and effects. There are, of course, no shortcuts to dealing with culture, and in a

world rife with cultural clashes of all varieties, the term, “culture” is becoming demonized--a quick and easy thing to blame for our many complex problems.

Second, the eight international students explored here (as well as my own experiences with American and international students, both in the USA and overseas) suggest that what resides at the root of so many problems with international students, is fear—fear of saying or writing the wrong thing, fear of not appearing responsive or sufficiently smart or knowledgeable, fear of embarrassment, fear of being different, fear of not fitting in. In short, fear of being “foreign.” Such a fear seems natural for anyone visiting another culture. I view such fear as relatively benign. While it causes considerable problems for the students explored in this study and needs to be addressed by all of us, it does, at root, signify respect for the host culture.

However, another kind of fear is far more dangerous--institutionalized fear—or “fear-mongering”: spreading panic about certain cultures or groups of people, where no real threat exists. Fear-mongering can be direct or indirect and insidious. It is most often instigated by institutions, especially by governments and public “leaders,” be they American televangelists preaching against the evils of gay people, or politicians, such as the late U.S. Senator, Joe McCarthy, warning against the evils of communists. The problem is that pandering to a general population’s fears travels straight to our emotions and usually leads to destruction.

When governments promote fear, especially against “foreigners,” wars can be “sold” to its populace. One current example of fear-mongering in America, which may well eventually affect the students in this study (and maybe their children and grandchildren) is the “selling” of certain types of education legislation. For example, starting with the 1958 launch of the Russian satellite, “Sputnik,” American leaders poured millions of dollars into the “space race” by pandering to the American public’s fear of “foreigners”—Russians and Communists.

In the past year, the same thing seems to be happening all over again. However, this time, the “foreigners” are different. President Bush recently called for STEM education, especially math and science, to be a national priority. The U.S. House Science Committee quickly followed suit by introducing three bills “to strengthen U.S. economic competitiveness” by large infusions of dollars into math and science education programs and research (Press Release, May 11, 2006). In further orchestration, many state governors are pursuing similar initiatives.

The past Cold War fears of a “common enemy” resonate within today’s calls for enhancing math, science, engineering, and technology education. Let’s start with Congress and the three bills mentioned earlier. In the press release, one bill’s sponsor, Senator John Schwarz (R-MI), stated that, “Countries like China and India are graduating millions more math, science, and engineering students than the United States. We cannot afford to sit idly by or we face a realistic chance of a decline in our standard of living.” (Never mind that China graduates more students in these areas due to their larger population.) This time around, it’s not Russia to fear. It’s China, India, and “countries like [them].”

At the state level, Texas Governor Rick Perry stated that, “if . . . China and India continue to graduate higher numbers of students equipped with these skills, the next generation of Texans will face a future of limited opportunities....” (Korsec, 2005). Delhi vs. Dallas. Hong Kong vs. Houston. New York Governor George Pataki warned that, “In tomorrow’s economy, our students’ competition for jobs, investment and opportunity will not come from places like South Carolina or Indiana; it will come from places like South Korea and India....” (Press Release, January 04, 2006). Missouri Governor Matthew Blunt stated that America is “becoming more dependent on foreign talent to work in the areas of math and science” (Columbia Daily Tribune, January 23, 2006, p. 5A). Governor Blunt further noted that, by the year 2010, “more than 90 percent of all scientists and engineers in the world will be living in Asia if

current trends continue” (Press Release, January 24, 2006). While being careful to avoid naming “Asians,” Blunt nonetheless evokes fears of “foreigners”--of “yellow hordes” swarming over the green valleys of Missouri, trampling the white blossoms of Dogwood trees.

Are we, once again using fears of common enemies (Communists, Asians, Arabs, et al.)? Are we cultivating fears of “foreigners” more than perceptions of global interdependence? Educators, especially, are responsible for asking these questions and pursuing answers. And this means looking at ourselves and other cultures, especially the Asian culture, without fear. Only then will visitors, regardless of where they are from, be able to move across lands that seem more like their own, more like home.

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Needed: Critics of Literacy Education with a More Inclusive Perspective

Dr. Joseph Sanacore *

Long Island University/C.W. Post Campus

Abstract

Journalists, book authors, and think tank members have been extremely critical of how literacy is presented in schools. Many of these critics who are inexperienced in literacy education believe that educators are inadequately teaching reading and writing. Those most critical of the “inadequate skills perspective” are usually experts in their respective fields, including neuroscience, speech-language pathology, and educational psychology. Not surprisingly, their fields of expertise are not fine-tuned in the field of literacy. These critics are more likely to promote balanced and constructive criticisms if they (a) hold graduate degrees in the areas in which they serve as critics, (b) collaborate with colleagues who believe in different points of view, (c) maintain rigorous peer-review standards before releasing research findings to the media, (d) have practical experience in schools, and (e) attend professional development sessions concerning big-picture perspectives and make observations in schools where these perspectives have been effectively implemented.

* *Dr. Joseph Sanacore* is a professor in the Department of Special Education and Literacy at the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University, Brookville, NY. He also has been a consultant to school systems nationwide, and he has served as Literacy Program Director for the Annenberg and Rockefeller Foundations’ Comprehensive School-Reform Collaboration among the C.W. Post School of Education, Yale University School Development Program, and Westbury (New York) School District. His major roles included working cooperatively with the key players—teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community—to promote highly successful literacy-learning environments. Dr. Sanacore’s current interests include matching instructional practices with the strengths and needs of ethnic minority children, connecting caring relationships and literacy learning, and supporting optimal conditions for learning in heterogeneous settings. Dr. Sanacore can be contacted at joseph.sanacore@liu.edu

Needed: Critics of Literacy Education with a More Inclusive Perspective

The professional literature and the media are blitzed with publications that are critical of educational ideology, research, and practice. Many authors of these publications are concerned about basic skills in literacy which they perceive to be inadequately taught in schools. Some critics have even attempted to use functional magnetic resonance imagery to show connections between brain activity and learning to read, and this “brain glitch” perspective not only is questionable but also is being used to support ideological agendas (Coles, 2004). Moreover, corporations have developed self-serving partnerships with schools in an attempt to manipulate public opinion and to promote high-stakes standards and testing initiatives (Emery & Ohanian, 2004). Joining the bandwagon are philanthropists who can influence the agendas, dynamics, and politics of school reform as well as import a private-sector mindset concerning accountability, results, and rapid execution (Hess, 2005; Colvin, 2005). Although some criticism of school-based literacy practices is well-intentioned (and even necessary), much of it is still misguided probably because the critics are not trained in literacy education.

My perusal of the articles and books most critical of the “inadequate-skills perspective” indicates that many of the critics are experts in neuroscience, pediatrics, special education, speech-language pathology, educational psychology, or other areas. Critics are usually accomplished in their respective fields, and their insights can add to the ever-increasing body of knowledge about how children grow and develop. Their expertise, however, is not finely-tuned in the literacy field. Specifically, they have not been trained in advanced graduate work concerning the research, theory, and practice of helping children become literate. They also have not worked with struggling readers and writers in a supervised, graduate-level, clinical setting. Furthermore, they have not been classroom teachers and administrators for extended periods of time, working with real children in real schools.

Facing reality

I believe these critics should leave their safe think tanks and visit the world of practice. These visitations would serve as necessary reminders that classrooms are organized heterogeneously with a wide diversity of learning needs, ranging from students who are at risk of failure to students who are gifted, from learners who are reared in low-income homes to learners who are more advantaged, and from individuals who are English language learners to those who are fluent in American Standard English. In addition, these classrooms would consist of communities of learners, some who are “included” with learning disabilities or emotional problems, some who have health-related issues, and some who live with such conditions as attention deficit hyperactivity disorders and autism spectrum disorders.

Compounding this challenging, real-world context are the out-of-school demographic trends involving a steadily increasing divorce rate for both first and second marriages (50% to 60%, respectively), a rise in single-parent households, and an increase in the number of parents entering the workforce. Moreover, unsupervised homes after school are contributing to adolescents becoming involved with gangs, sex, alcohol, and drugs. Exacerbating this negative mix is the rising percentage of youth who have tried to commit suicide or have considered suicide, resulting from conflicts with friends, depression, family problems, difficulties with male-female relationships, and feelings of worthlessness (Sanacore, 2001; 2004). Although this stressful context is harmful to many children’s emotional and intellectual development, children of ethnic minorities are most negatively impacted. For example, according to Barton (2003) of the Educational Testing Service, 17% of white children live in homes with their mothers only, compared with 25% of Hispanic children and 49% of African American children. The hardships imposed on ethnic minority students and their families are obvious.

Recently, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and KidsPeace conducted a study involving a survey of 1000 parents and caregivers with children under 18 years of age living at home. Harvard psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint helped to oversee the study. Ninety-four percent of those surveyed indicated they were aware that the amount of meaningful time parents spend with children is related to how children handle such issues as discipline and substance abuse. The respondents' major complaint was that their work schedules resulted in their not having enough time to spend with their children. Specifically, 54 percent indicated that they had little or no time to be engaged with their children in physical activities, such as playing catch or taking a walk. In addition, 50 percent indicated they were unable to read to their children or guide them with homework or other related activities (Kerr, 2003).

As expected, many children return to less supervised homes each afternoon and do not become involved in activities that support school-based learning—homework, pleasure reading, and so forth. I often have dinner at restaurants (between 8:00 and 9:00 PM) and am surrounded by single parents and married parents who are eating and talking with their school-age children. I believe that most of these parents, although tired and stressed, are doing the best they can for their families. I also believe that when arriving at home after a long day, many of these parents do not have the energy to go through a daily ritual of reviewing homework assignments, supervising bath time, and reading aloud a favorite book. Children look forward to and benefit from this ritual, which supports a sense of security and structure.

With less consistent structure evident in many households, we should not be surprised when we read about educators implementing programs related to character education and etiquette, both of which were traditionally modeled and taught in homes.

Recently, a comprehensive article in *Newsday* focused on educators observing a decline in civility and, consequently, adding character and etiquette lessons to their curricula (Rhone, 2004). Supporting this direction is Packer's (1997) book *How Rude! The Teenagers' Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Grossing People Out*. Because children and adults (including some teachers) emulate behaviors that are demonstrated for them, both benefit from reminders about avoiding bad behaviors. Packer noted ten rude things that students do to teachers, such as "talk while the teacher is trying to teach" and "use physical and verbal aggression to get their way." Included on the list of ten rude things that teachers do to students are "make fun of them in front of the whole class" and "play favorites." Although students learn bad manners from adults and peers in their lives, they also receive negative prompts from cartoons, sitcoms, movies, and musical videos that highlight rudeness as normal and even "cool."

Teaching is both emotional and academic work

Because students bring their real-world experiences to school, caring educators realize that they must respond to their students' learning needs in big-picture ways, considering both emotional and academic perspectives. Only uninformed or naïve critics would view teaching and learning as pure cognitive functions. More than a half-century ago, Hightet (1950) viewed teaching as an art involving human values and emotions. Supporting this notion of teaching as an art form is Parini's (2005) poignant reflection, which considers the classroom to be a kind of theater with the teacher playing a variety of roles, including actor and dramatist. Moreover, the results of Winograd's (2003) research suggest that teaching is profoundly emotional work, involving such dimensions and observations as:

- (1) There are rules that govern teachers' emotional behavior in schools.
 - (2) Teachers do emotion work, or emotional labor, in response to these emotion rules.
 - (3) Teachers experience emotions that have functional uses; that is, the emotions alert teachers to problems in their work and then action to address these problems.
 - (4) Teachers experience emotions that have dysfunctional uses; that is, the emotions lead to self-accusatory behavior by the teachers, or they lead to the blaming of others, such as students, parents, or administrators.
- pp. 1651-1652

Why do critics of literacy education seem oblivious to the emotional realities of school environments? Why do they take a strong stance suggesting that teachers should simply teach systematic skills in reading and writing and that the personal problems impacting on children will take care of themselves and will not negatively affect learning? Why do these same critics demonstrate disdain for using school time to respond to children's and teachers' emotional needs? At the very least, these critics should be aware of the extreme conditions that many children and teachers face each day. They also should be aware of the necessity of responding not only to children's academic needs but also to their emotional concerns. As whole people, children (and adults) are primarily emotional and secondarily intellectual, and they are more likely to learn effectively when their emotional needs are considered in the framework of their learning. "To neglect the social and emotional aspects of their development, to focus all our attention on measured academic performance, is to blind us to these youngsters' need to live a satisfying life" (Eisner, 2005, p.16). Lacking this inclusive perspective, some critics have relegated the teaching-learning process to a vacuous context in which children's brains are considered disconnected receptacles for acquiring systematic skills.

No Child Left Behind Act

A contributor to this limited viewpoint is the No Child Left Behind Act, which is not only an accountability law but also a vehicle for political manipulation. The Reading First component of the law requires the implementation of grades K-3 reading programs to ensure that children are reading on or above grade level by the end of third grade. This important goal has always been embraced by primary-level teachers and administrators, whose uphill efforts have been helping children, especially those in inner-cities, to make slow but steady progress toward becoming better readers and writers. NCLB, however, implies that reading programs rather than reading processes are necessary for promoting effective literacy learning. Although commercially produced programs are not required by NCLB, Congress has charged the U.S. Department of Education with interpreting and administering the law, which has resulted in portions of Reading First money being used for purchasing comprehensive programs (typically commercially manufactured reading programs). According to McGill-Franzen (2005):

At the present time, given the mantra of "scientifically based reading instruction" among state and federal policymakers in the United States, I am incredulous that administrators and teachers in low-socioeconomic-status schools are forced to buy one of a dozen or so "core reading programs," all of which are poorly validated for the target population and none of which have demonstrated effectiveness with children most at risk—presumably those children who are the intended beneficiaries of Reading First. Poor children, especially low-achieving poor children, and their teachers are thrust into "forced choice" standardized curricula that, at worst, may limit opportunities to achieve at grade level. This situation represents an inappropriate "scale-up" of leviathan proportions that has not been adequately studied or evaluated. p. 366

Ironically, given this vitally important perspective, educators who work in eligible schools and who are interested in applying for Reading First funding must demonstrate in the application that they will use comprehensive reading programs that are supported by scientifically based research (quantitative), as specified in NCLB. (Recently, the phrase *evidence-based* is replacing the phrase *scientifically based*, used consistently in both NCLB and Reading Excellence Act. See Allington, 2005/2006.) Realistically, the Reading First grant applications that are approved for funding are the ones that highlight the types of programs that place a heavy emphasis on systematic phonics, even though literacy educators have known for decades that effective classrooms are based mostly on effective teachers who focus on children's individual needs rather than on any singular approach to teaching reading (e.g., Bond & Dykstra, 1997; Haycock, 1998; Stewart, 2004). While no responsible literacy educator would negate the importance of teaching skills, teachers are typically concerned with a variety

of related issues, including the intensity of skills instruction, the need for differentiated instruction, and the extent to which skills are connected to meaningful contexts. My observations nationwide suggest that school administrators and teachers are working steadfastly to match instructional practices with students' individual learning needs and, at the same time, are facing increasing pressure to implement a system of one size fits all. In fact, all children do not need the same skills instruction and the same instructional intensity. Instead, effective teachers are needed who teach students, not programs (Allington, 2002).

Although some commercial programs that are selected for Reading First funding might represent a reasonable mix of reading and writing processes and strategies, educators must critically analyze all programs before adoption. Such critical analysis is necessary because many of the programs are evaluated by the program developers, who have an obvious vested interest in demonstrating positive outcomes. These "entrepreneurs and corporations, not independent researchers, are bearing the weight of program evaluation and dissemination" and, not surprisingly, are reporting positive effect sizes (McGill-Franzen, 2005, p. 367). A related problem concerns "confirmation bias," in which program developers who conduct research on their own programs might unconsciously (or consciously) design and interpret their studies in favor of their desired outcomes (Mahoney & DeMonbreun, 1981; Wason, 1960; Willingham, 2005).

To prevent such questionable practices, teachers, administrators, and researchers must engage in critical reviews of instructional programs to determine their efficacy in meeting the literacy learning needs of children, in providing opportunities for modifying instruction to accommodate individual students, and in describing aspects of reading not only as stipulated in NCLB but also as broader aspects of the reading and writing processes. Educators also need to collect both qualitative and quantitative data concerning the value of literacy learning programs for children (Sanacore, 2005). For an excellent analysis of NCLB, its Reading First component, and its connection to early literacy instruction, see Stewart (2004).

Considering the complexities of becoming literate, I often question the motives of certain critics who apparently have "bought into" the simplistic ideology of not only promoting commercial instructional programs that emphasize systematic phonics but also supporting commercial high-stakes assessments that are often poorly aligned to standards and to quality instruction (Herman, 2003; Mathis, 2004). Of equal concern are some of these reform initiatives generated by corporate players and education policymakers that pretentiously have supported standards and accountability but realistically have resulted in self-serving partnerships (e.g., converting school administration to business management models). With a well-coordinated and sustained attack on public schools, a number of corporations and other organizations have developed a strong network that supports high-stakes standards and assessments (Emery & Ohanian, 2004). Such dark forces behind this aggressive version of school reform suggest that certain corporations might have conceptualized and engineered a reliance on testing.

For example, Standard & Poors, the financial rating service, has lately been offering to evaluate and publish the performance, based largely on test scores, of every school district in a given state—a bit of number crunching that Michigan and Pennsylvania purchased for at least \$10 million each, and other states may soon follow. The explicit findings of these reports concern whether this district is doing better than that one. But the tacit message—the hidden curriculum, if you will—is that test scores are a useful and appropriate marker of school quality. Who would have an incentive to convince people of that conclusion? Well, it turns out that Standard & Poors is owned by McGraw-Hill, one of the largest manufacturers of standardized tests. (Kohn, 2002, pp. 113-114)

Are critics unaware of the hidden agendas behind some of the standards and testing initiatives? Do these critics really believe in the efficacy of these initiatives, or do their criticisms reflect incentives resulting in book royalties, expanded newspaper sales, and television appearances? From my way of thinking, the major beneficiaries of these initiatives are the companies that produce the programs and assessments that support NCLB requirements. Moreover, in responding to a question concerning the testing requirements of No Child Left Behind, Jonathan Kozol said, "The kind of testing we're doing in school today is sociopathic in its repetitive and punitive nature. Its driving motive is to highlight failure in inner-city schools as dramatically as possible in order to create a ground swell of support for private vouchers or other privatizing schemes" (Kozol, cited in Solomon, 2005, 14).

I have come to expect politicians to have hidden agendas as they engage in shallow, "apple-pie" rhetoric about standards, testing, and accountability. I am dismayed, however, when learned people emulate a dangerously narrow view about how children grow and develop as learners. While issues related to the utility (Noddings, 2005a), legality (McColl, 2005), and clarity (Erpenbach, Forte-Fast, & Potts, 2003) of No Child Left Behind are being debated, its requirements are being considered for implementation in U.S. high schools (Henriquez, 2005). According to The White House website, the President's Fiscal Year 2006 budget will provide \$1.5 billion for the new High School Initiative, and "\$250 million will be used for state assessments to ensure that high school diplomas are truly meaningful with required state assessments in high school" (The White House, 2005).

The impact of high-stakes testing

Such a narrow stance of requiring all students to fulfill the same high standards and testing requirements for a high school diploma increases the probability of generating disproportionately higher dropout rates among students at risk of failure, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds (Orfield, 2004) and those with disabilities (Allbritten, Mainzer, & Ziegler, 2004). Not surprisingly, this narrow view has already demonstrated negative outcomes in the form of higher retention and dropout rates. For instance, the National Board of Educational Testing and Public Policy at Boston College examined the effects of high-stakes assessments on dropout rates and high school completion rates. The National Board focused on evidence that is mainly correlational, and it concluded that high-stakes assessments are related to decreased rates of high school completion. "The strands of evidence reviewed here indicate that high-stakes graduation testing, together with grade retention practices that may be affected, both directly and indirectly, is associated with decreased rates of high school completion" (Clark, Haney, Madaus, 2000).

This conclusion should be taken seriously because high school graduation rates nationwide are dismally embarrassing. Consider some of the outcomes of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. Only an estimated 68% of U.S. students who enter ninth grade actually graduate with a regular diploma in twelfth grade. Not surprisingly, the national graduation rates are worse for students of ethnic minorities and boys (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004), whose legacy is to be unemployed or to work in menial jobs for the rest of their lives. Although the Civil Rights Project did not focus on high-stakes testing in the context of graduation rates, the potential for decreased rates of high school completion is apparent, especially for minority students. Moreover, the negative consequences for these students and their families are obvious because "in the landscape of the economy, these dropouts are often lost travelers without a map" (Barton, 2006, p. 16).

High-stakes testing also seems to negatively impact on students with disabilities. According to Advocates for Children of New York, high school students with special needs in New York City public schools earn Regents or local diplomas at a rate substantially below their peers who are not disabled. The requirements for both diplomas include successfully completing a specified number of credits and

passing state examinations. Thus far, only about 12 percent of students with disabilities graduated with Regents or local diplomas, and approximately 12 percent of students with severe disabilities earned IEP diplomas. Regrettably, individualized-education-program diplomas do not confer the same benefits of the Regents or local diplomas (Advocates for Children of New York, 2005; Samuels, 2005).

Interestingly, some of the periodic gains in high-stakes testing in inner-city elementary schools should also cause thoughtful educators and critics to reflect on these temporary testing gains, which are probably the result of test-preparation regimens, and to realize their minimal impact on secondary schools. Realistically, the gains are not authentic and substantive, or else they would transfer to middle schools and high schools. According to Kozol (2005b),

Children who know how to read—and read with comprehension—do not suddenly become nonreaders and hopelessly disabled writers when they enter secondary school. False gains evaporate; real gains endure. Yet hundreds of thousands of the inner-city children who have made what many districts claim to be dramatic gains in elementary school, and whose principals and teachers have adjusted almost every aspect of their school days and school calendars, forfeiting recess, canceling or cutting back on all the so-called frills (art, music, even social sciences) in order to comply with state standards—those students, now in secondary school, are sitting in subject-matter classes where they cannot comprehend the texts and cannot set down their ideas in the kind of sentences expected of fourth- and fifth-grade students in the suburbs. Students in this painful situation, not surprisingly, tend to be most likely to drop out of school.
p.54

Indeed, using substantial time for test preparation in inner-city elementary schools is questionable because of limited transfer outcomes to secondary schools, curricular fragmentation for students, and extreme pressures on the stakeholders—children, teachers, and administrators (Kozol, 2005a). Ironically, teaching to the test supports an anti-educational stance. “The whole direction of education in the United States, with rigid testing of students and ... teachers, seems woefully misdirected, and ruinous to learning” (Parini, 2005, p. 10).

Although high-stakes testing is sustaining its momentum for national accountability and international comparisons, Gardner (2005) thoughtfully reminds us that we must avoid the herd mentality because improving test performance is a dreadful goal for any education system. “A transient numerical result, due to any number of reasons, becomes the *raison d’être* for the whole educational process. What a depressing prospect” (p. 44). Instead, we should focus our efforts on cultivating the minds we truly need in the future, including a disciplined mind, a synthesizing mind, a creative mind, a respectful mind, and an ethical mind (Gardner, 2005). Furthermore, we should not forget the vitally important role of imagination and its connection to the growth and development of the human mind in both children and adults (Sanacore, 2006). We need to nurture playful environments that encourage imagination and provide the groundwork for the advancement of knowledge into adulthood (Kane & Carpenter, 2003). This big-picture perspective is substantially different from the teach-to-the-test regimen, which at best will result in temporary achievement gains and at worse will dissuade children from the lifetime love of learning.

Promoting more balanced criticisms of schools

What can we do to promote more balanced criticisms of schools and, as a positive side effect, better learning opportunities for all children? Because critics have immense power in molding public opinion, their published views can have a substantial impact on the key players, including politicians, policymakers, education professors, administrators, teachers, and parents. Critics, therefore, have the clout to influence the power elite who, in turn, can pressure schools to adopt certain approaches to

teaching and learning. While not a panacea, the following suggestions are intended to promote more balanced criticisms of schools:

- Members of think tanks should be required to hold advanced graduate degrees, with related training and internships, in the specific areas in which they serve as researchers and critics.
- Members of think tanks, who typically maintain a conservative ideology, should pursue research findings and evaluative feedback from colleagues with other points of view. Surveys, symposia, conferences, peer-reviewed journals, and other sources of information can help develop “big-picture” perspectives when these sources consider a variety of windows into how children grow and develop as literacy learners. Implicit in this view is that conservatives, liberals, progressives, and moderates have the capacity to question their own assumptions about literacy education and to engage in intensive, collaborative conversations about how children become literate. With no naïvete intended, I realistically understand how messy and volatile these initial conversations can be, especially with respect to ideological agendas and political leanings. As caring people, however, if we truly persevere and focus on children’s needs, then we increase the chances that our efforts will be better aligned with children’s needs.

Because of many critics’ emphasis on teaching systematic skills, one probable outcome of these conversations is to explore research concerning different approaches to word study (Stewart, 2004). For example, Treiman’s (1985) findings suggest that breaking a word into its rime and onset is easier than breaking a word into its individual letters and sounds. Thus, the word *mask* is easier to break into its rime *ask* and its onset *m* than *m-a-s-k* or *ma-sk*. This conversation could lead the think tank members to discover Wylie and Durrell’s (1970) work in which 37 high-frequency phonograms, or rimes, were identified. They also might learn that children can use some of the words they know in reading and in spelling to unlock new words (Goswami & Bryant, 1990). Thus, in using this spelling by analogy, the known word *bank* might help to unlock *sank* or *blank*.

In addition to word study, think tank members could talk about some of the other pillars of effective reading instruction. Allington’s (2005) thoughtful synthesis includes (a) a daily balance of whole-class, small-group, and individual lessons (Taylor & Pearson, 2005); (b) differentiated instruction of texts and tasks so that children are matched with appropriate resources and activities (International Reading Association, 2000); (c) easy access to a variety of interesting reading materials, freedom of choice in what to read, and opportunity to share with peers during reading (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004); (d) support of the reciprocal relationship of reading and writing (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991); and (e) expert tutoring (D’Agostino & Murphy, 2004). These five pillars complement the five key areas identified by the National Reading Panel (2000): phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In retrospect, all ten areas (as well as other instructional priorities) represent an important foundation for young readers.

Furthermore, think tank members could extend this conversation into adolescent literacy as they explore different literacy programs and processes and become increasingly aware that “no one program or approach...will meet the needs of all adolescent readers” (Darwin & Fleischman, 2005, p. 85). Instead, adolescents’ diverse literacy needs benefit from a comprehensive approach encompassing a variety of strategies (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).

Discussions of this type convey a growing affirmation that skills and strategies are extremely important and that they can be learned and applied effectively in a variety of ways. An essential part of this flexible perspective is an increasing awareness that children, in general, and ethnic minority students, in particular, benefit from a learning environment that supports

their strengths. Thus, what children **can do**, based on what they bring to school, is valued as a foundation for academic success (Sanacore, 2004, 2005). This perspective represents a major paradigm shift from focusing on children's weaknesses to emphasizing children's less formal skills and knowledge and their connections to school learning (King, 2005).

- Before releasing their research findings to the media, members of think tanks should submit their completed research to academic journals, known for their rigorous peer-review process. Although this process does not guarantee high-quality research outcomes, peer reviewers are usually more objective than in-house researchers and reviewers; thus, the peer-review process reduces the risk of releasing research findings that are based in ideology and politics. As mentioned previously, a related concern is "confirmation bias," in which researchers design and interpret their studies with an inclination toward desired outcomes (Mahoney & DeMonbreun, 1981; Wason, 1960). "That's why having [blind] impartial, expert reviewers is vital to research" (Willingham, 2005, p. 35).

Sometimes, however, suitable outlets for high-quality research are unavailable because certain journals might not consider the topic, length, etc. of the research manuscript. This lack of suitable outlets might decrease the flow of important information. If so, then think tank researchers should be required to have their research critiqued by in-house reviewers. Then, the research should be critiqued by board members and outside experts. This approach, of course, is not as rigorous (or as honest) as the "blind-review" process in which both researcher and reviewer do not know each other's identities. For a discussion of when to release research findings, see Viadero (2005).

- Members of think tanks should be required to spend time in schools. Although these scholars are extremely busy, they need some practical experience for understanding the classroom context, the out-of-school experiences that students bring to school, the stresses encountered and generated by parents and community, and the district-level politics. Think tank members and critics benefit from some experience in collaborating with teachers and administrators, in observing classroom interactions, and even in planning and teaching lessons. Interestingly, one of the recommendations of a panel of the National Academy of Education is that preservice teachers should be engaged in a minimum of 30 weeks of clinical practice, preferably in schools that foster professional development and that provide support from skilled veterans (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Keller, 2005). Although critics and think tank members do not have the time for this type of comprehensive clinical practice, they still need some experience in real schools to develop a better understanding of the many dimensions of responding to learners' needs.
- Theoreticians, researchers, classroom practitioners, school administrators, and journalists should attend professional development sessions related to big-picture perspectives and to visit schools in which these perspectives have been effectively carried out. As with the previous suggestion, such experiences will help critics to realize the complexities of helping students become successful and then to demonstrate this broad-based awareness when writing responsible criticisms. Among the big-picture efforts is the School Development Program, developed by Dr. James Comer and his colleagues at the Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center (Comer, 2004, 2005; Comer, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 2004; Yale Child Study Center, n.d.). The framework of this effective program values students' total development as being essential for success in school and in life. While highlighting total development, the framework involves six important developmental pathways, which are psycho-emotional, social-interactive, physical, linguistic, cognitive, and ethical. This caring and comprehensive context receives broad support from the School Planning and Management Team (teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents), the Student and Staff Support Team (principal, psychologists, social workers,

counselors, nurses, and others with expertise in mental health), and the Parent Team. Through dedicated efforts, the key players engage in genuine collaboration aimed at all aspects that contribute to children's learning. This broad-based focus on nurturing children's total development substantially increases the chances that children will fulfill their powerful learning potential (Comer, 2004). Such a commitment also complements the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's Position Statement on the Whole Child. The ASCD statement includes contributions of what communities should provide (e.g., civic, government, and business support and resources), what schools should provide (e.g., a climate that supports strong relationships between adults and students), and what teachers should provide (e.g., demonstrations of healthy behaviors) (ASCD, 2005). "This stance takes us well beyond the current emphasis on academic achievement and assessment, which are only small components of student learning and development, and educational accountability" (Freeley, 2005, p. 6). Exposure to the School Development Program, the ASCD Position Statement, and other important big-picture perspectives (Kilgore, 2005) will help critics realize that becoming a successful student requires more than learning systematic skills in isolation and being prepped for high-stakes assessments, both of which are often separated from interesting, meaningful learning.

Reflections

In retrospect, all professional fields, including literacy education, benefit from criticisms that are voiced by responsible professionals who are genuinely knowledgeable, objective, and balanced in their criticisms. I respect such critical analyses, especially when they are aimed at innovations and commercial programs that are costly and fluffy and that do not result in students' total development and literacy growth. Educating whole people to be successful, however, involves more than supporting their proficiency in reading and mathematics. Children also need practice in dealing effectively with real-world problems and issues that they encounter both in and out of school. Among the many ways of providing such support is to address, with sensitivity and respect, the emotional, social, aesthetic, and moral questions that arise across the curriculum (Noddings, 2005b; Simon, 2001). Complementing this perspective is the need to revive a progressive vision of education that pays attention to the whole child. For example, educators can (a) recognize and nurture the talents of individual children; (b) focus on how students respond to instruction, not only cognitively but also imaginatively, socially, and emotionally; (c) use forms of assessments that create a better awareness of how to nourish the developing child; and (d) consider the emotional and social lives of children as much a priority as academic achievement (Eisner, 2005). Progressive education should also include A Learner's Bill of Rights, which "all educators should embrace and protect" (Rathbone, 2005, p. 471). Among these rights are the right to choose, the right to remain engaged, the right to wallow, the right to err, and the right to take learning personally. Supporting children's total development is vitally important because it will help them deal more effectively with today's demographic realities and will increase their chances of success in the academic arena (Haynes, 1998; Sanacore, 2000). Throughout my career as a teacher, administrator, and professor, I have learned that the more we support big-picture perspectives in children's lives, the more likely we are to help them realize the many ways of knowing their personal and academic worlds. I also have learned that to have a substantive impact on education, we must reflect on and critically analyze our work while considering inclusive perspectives that represent the best of educational research, theory, and practice. Otherwise, our reflections and criticisms will result in fragmented outcomes and will be remembered as just another fad.

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Cross-Cultural Perspectives of International Doctoral Students: Two-Way Learning in Library and Information Science Education

Dr. Bharat Mehra*

School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee

Dr. Ann P. Bishop**

Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

This paper draws upon a case study of library and information science (LIS) international doctoral students in the United States and documents their perspectives to identify ways to further internationalization. Internationalization is defined as incorporating non-US issues and elements into LIS education. The study explores internationalization in the context of a “two-way” learning process in which international students gain from the discipline, but also LIS education gains from the cross-cultural experiences of the students. Documenting the perspectives of LIS international doctoral students provides a critical outlook by giving voice to an under-represented group. It also becomes a methodological strategy to represent global diversity and facilitate cross-cultural exchange.

Key words: internationalization, cross-cultural perspectives, international doctoral students, two-way learning

* *Bharat Mehra* is assistant professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee. Broadly Mehra's teaching and research philosophy brings in a deeper understanding of the users and their social and cultural contexts (including socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors) into library and information science education. Specifically his work explores diversity and intercultural issues and has focused on community informatics or the use of information and communication technologies to enable and empower communities to meet their needs and aspirations. This is intimately tied to social justice and social equity in the information professions for representing minority and disenfranchised populations. For more information about Mehra, see his home page at URL: <http://www.sis.utk.edu/people/faculty/mehra/>

** *Ann P. Bishop* is associate professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Bishop's current research involves community members in the creation of online inquiry-based collaboratories to support citizen learning, research, and action; she currently teaches courses in participatory action research, social justice in the information professions, pragmatic technology theory and philosophy, community information systems, and literacy in the information age. For more information about Bishop, see her home page at URL: <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/oc/people/bio.html?id=abishop>

Introduction

Political, economic, social, cultural, and technological changes in the new millennium are having a profound influence upon people around the world and how they participate in a closely-knit 'global village' (Bender, 1996; McLuhan, 1964). A global information revolution and the spread in networked information and communication technologies (ICTs) further tie geographically dispersed and culturally disparate constituents in a macro community. The dictates of a globally intertwined environment demand developing human and social capital¹ across the globe to build mutual trust and cross-cultural communication that, ultimately, may realize a shared dream of peaceful co-existence and reciprocal understanding. In their professional capacity to explicate and implement activities related to information creation, organization, and dissemination processes, LIS professionals have an obligation to further recognize global diversity and build multicultural collaborations towards this ideal. As curators of world knowledge, LIS professionals can contribute practical solutions that nurture positive intercultural and global interactions, thereby playing a more significant role in promoting world peace and international good will.

This paper proposes one such strategy by drawing upon a case study of LIS international doctoral students² in the United States that was performed by the first author, in order to document their perspectives and identify possible ways to further internationalization. Internationalization is defined as incorporating non-US issues and elements into LIS education. The study explores internationalization in the context of a "two-way" learning process in which international students gain from the discipline, but also LIS education gains from the cross-cultural experiences of the students.

Data collection methods in this research included in-depth interviews with structured, semi-structured and open-ended questions, and informal discussions with all 21 international doctoral students in a premier American LIS institution. Documenting the perspectives of international doctoral students provided a critical outlook by giving voice to an under-represented group. Critical theory recognizes perspectives of all stakeholders in a particular situation. This includes points of view of the under-represented in order to "do justice to a diversity of socially defined perspectives while providing a grounding for the evaluation of controversial problems" (Endres, 1996, ¶24). Critical thinking goes hand-in-hand with a reflective process to question traditional understandings and scrutinize existing values, practices, ideological frameworks, and processes (Froomkin, 2003; Habermas, 1993; Kellner, 1989). The application of critical theory in this research becomes a methodological strategy to represent global diversity and facilitate cross-cultural exchange.

Research on LIS International Doctoral Students

Recent augmentation in enrollment of international doctoral students in American LIS programs (Association of Library and Information Science, 2003) provides a potentially rich knowledge source for furthering internationalization in LIS education. According to the ALISE report (Saye & Wisser, 2003), of the 810 doctoral students seeking a Ph. D. degree from 28 schools that reported doctoral enrollment during fall 2002, 279 (34.4%) students were international students. Twenty-three international students received doctoral degrees (35.4%) out of a total of 65 doctoral degrees conferred in 2001-2002. In light of these increasing numbers, and based on predictions of similar trends in the years to come, the need to promote two-way learning in LIS is gaining importance. Strategies to build reciprocal knowledge should incorporate: 1) attempting to understand the perspectives of LIS international doctoral students; 2) providing opportunities to LIS international doctoral students to share their past cultural experiences and knowledge; and, 3) based on the experiences and perspectives of LIS international doctoral students, identifying possible interventions to encourage the growth of internationalization in the discipline. This research applies the above strategies via documentation of international doctoral students' perspectives about internationalization. It also opens up possibilities for the identification of novel and efficient

internationalizing strategies based on existing strengths of international constituents in LIS education.

There have been sporadic studies done on LIS international students and fewer still on LIS international doctoral students in the United States (Cveljo, 1996). The current research extends past historical studies on the subject (Mehra, 2005) in two directions of inquiry, namely: successes, problems, needs, and improvements in effectiveness of student learning (Robbins, 1978; Sarkodie-Mensah, 1988; Rochester, 1986); and the application of American LIS education to home countries of the students (Carnovsky, 1971). In the contemporary context of global interconnectedness and interdependence, a much broader philosophical route needs to be adopted. In the light of "civil society," we must recognize the importance of social equity and global equality in international participation and collaboration, and project a more eco-centric (instead of an egocentric) world view. Only when such an approach is taken will the dream of peaceful co-existence be realized, since it will be marked by a respect of the equality intrinsic to all human beings and the recognition of need for harmony between nations. Prior research initiatives on LIS international doctoral students present a deficit approach and imply a parochial outlook in which their past cultural experiences are considered irrelevant or inconsequential in the growth of the discipline in the United States. Such an outlook assumes an active role for LIS education that is expressed in terms of the unidirectional impact of its application to improve the lot of the knowledge-deficient and information-impooverished conditions in other parts of world. The activeness of LIS education and the passiveness of international students are also expressed in terms of the discipline making efforts to improve the conditions of the students who are viewed as passive and helpless. They cannot do anything to improve their own lot, nor contribute anything positive towards the growth of LIS. This research balances past efforts by focusing on the contributions international students can make to the discipline in the United States, and thereby taps into its existing global richness and diversity in a more concrete manner. A two-way learning strategy recognizes that American LIS education needs to utilize the cross-cultural experiences, knowledge, networking and cultural-specific skills of its international students to promote its growth and further internationalization.

Narrative interviews (employed as a standard phrase by various researchers to represent open-ended, qualitative interviews) used in this research extend prior conceptual and methodological strategies for gathering responses from LIS international doctoral students. Most previous research has provided primarily anecdotal (Tallman, 1990) and survey-based evidence (Marques de Oliveira, 1990) that yields limited understanding about the perspectives of LIS international students. Narrative interviews provide a more detailed and thorough understanding of their cross-cultural points of view. A case study facilitated research of individual context and identified internationalizing strategies throughout various areas in the discipline.

More than a decade back, at the first conference of and for international students (entitled "*Translating an International Education to a National Environment*" hosted by the University of Pittsburgh's School of Library and Information Science during September 23-25, 1988), Josey (1990, p. 4) called for the recognition of wide-ranging cultural perspectives and universal applicability in LIS education that he conceptualized as the "product of a careful, planned, varied, and sustained set of learning experiences, commencing the day the student enters the library and information science school until graduation. The program should be international in its intent." Since the Pittsburgh conference there have been substantial developments in networked ICTs. These have resulted in the growth of globally dispersed, yet mutually interacting, knowledge communities that have drawn attention to issues surrounding global diversity and multicultural experiences worldwide (Broidy, 1999). Such changes are having significant impact upon the internationalization of the educational system in the United States. In this context, the need to educate US LIS students about international developments in the discipline is all the more important. International knowledge and sophistication are prerequisites if American libraries and librarians are to collaborate successfully and participate in international data flows and exchanges (Josey, 1990). New efforts need to be made to strengthen existing internationalizing strategies in

response to the latest globally distributed social and technological developments. Such initiatives will also have tremendous influence upon national information policies and library network development; there is much to learn from policies developed and implemented in different countries around the world (Haddock, 1990; Zhang, 1990). This is relevant, too, in the area of human information and management systems since there are problems in "applying Western management expertise, practices, and technology appropriate to the practice of management in general, and libraries in particular" (Ojiambo, 1990, p. 73). Documenting perspectives of LIS international doctoral students about internationalization is one method to achieve this goal.

Research Setting and Case-Participants

The research setting of the LIS graduate school and its doctoral program chosen for this study embodies a fitting real-life example of a learning community quite typical of LIS education in the United States; it also includes international students who come from various parts of the world. The doctoral program focuses on research and provides interdisciplinary connections to various units and departments across the semi-urban campus, allowing students to pursue multidisciplinary careers in academic, public and/or corporate settings. It claims to provide a supportive learning community where there is much room for potential growth for teaching, research, and service-oriented activities based on individual students' interests, goals, and skills.

There were a total of 48 doctoral students in the doctoral program under study, of which 15 female and 6 male international doctoral students participated in this research. Research participants were from China (10), Korea (3), India (2), Azerbaijan (1), Canada (1), France (1), Georgia (1), Russia (1) and the United Kingdom (1). The duration of participants in the program (until the time of interview) ranged from less than a year (more than a semester) to 7 years. Their ages fell between the ranges 20-29 and 40-49 years, with the largest number of students in the 30-39 years range. Participants reported completing their masters program from their country of origin, resident country, or in the United States, in disciplines as diverse as engineering, computer applications, business, cognitive science, management of agricultural information, history of science, and LIS.

Data-Collection Methods and Data Analysis

The following section describes the methodological execution of the narrative interview process in this case study to explain how findings were generated in data analysis. Data-collection methods of narrative interviews and informal discussions were facilitated during formal, structured interactions that were initially applied in a pilot study with five participants. Subsequently, refined procedures were used to gather responses from the entire international doctoral student body, during which a first set of interview questions provided demographic characteristics about the case-participants. These were followed by specific questions on internationalization that included: the importance of internationalization; how American LIS education can become more international; and the nature of internationalizing activities in which participants were involved. All interviews were transcribed.

Narrative interviews provided an apt hermeneutic method in this research since they were applied without any preconceived theoretical framework beyond trying to broadly understand the cross-cultural perspectives of case-participants and explore possible internationalization strategies in the discipline. During the narrative interviews, participants' willingness to tell "little stories" about remarkably different behavior in their cross-cultural learning processes provided a rich source for developing scenarios. Scenarios were pieces of personal narratives, threaded together, and used as a mode of data presentation and analysis.

Generating patterns and themes following grounded theory in data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) helped produce socially relevant and substantive theory emerging from an understanding of the occurring social phenomena (Schwandt, 1994). Derived from movements of American pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, “grounded theory inquiry is portrayed as a problem-solving endeavor concerned with understanding action from the perspective of the human agent” (Haig, 1995, p. 56). Grounded theory, thus, provides a humanist attempt to connect social science data/phenomena to the concerns and beliefs of participants in order to address the problems of practice of daily life (Layder, 1990). The process of coding interview data in this research involved socially grounded elements: seeking multiple perspectives as a part of the research inquiry; adopting triangulation strategies that verified specific information from multiple sources; following systematic and rigorous procedures for understanding social processes and phenomena that case-participants spoke about; and employing techniques of induction, deduction, and verification to develop theory based on constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Coding practices encompassed *open* coding (that accounted for named activities, processes, events, moments of awareness); *axial* coding (relating categories and subcategories to each other); and *selective* coding (that helped integrate concepts with both interview questions and the broader cross-cultural perspectives of case-participants).

The following narrative example (defined as a scenario) of one case-participant demonstrates the coding procedures that were adopted and how such “stories” shared by case-participants became tools for presenting and pulling together, piece by piece, various elements related to case-participants’ perspectives on internationalization. It represents a typical process that was adopted during data analysis in this research.

“Because US literature is so US-centric [q6³] that you are not citing other people outside the US. So it is hard to even find what is going on in the rest of the world. This includes international literature that comes from other parts of the world in what students are supposed to read including different views on subjects that international students have knowledge about [4.q8.1.p17]...I am pretty sure in the US they teach only the US methods [q6] so I would say include other international takes on things in the US curriculum like say this is how the rest of the world is looking at the problem that would make sense and it would otherwise mean opening up publication arena and profs would have to get input from international panels and things which they can get from international students and their earlier experiences” [4.q8.2.p17].

The above scenario is composed from two pieces of narratives that were separated by additional sentences that have not been presented for purposes of their irrelevance or brevity; this is indicated by the presence of “...” In different instances, the underlying thread connecting two or more disjointed narrative pieces is that either they are in response to the same question or refer to issues that are tied together. Each scenario is composed of the spoken statements of only one person. This procedure was adopted in order to maintain simplicity, and obtain clarity in identifying the main issues that each person expressed or addressed.

Additionally, certain words in the interview transcriptions were underlined to indicate key response points to consider within each question. Identifying other question numbers that indicated how that point was related to another question sometimes followed these underlined words. For example, in the above scenario, the words “literature is so US-centric” and “teach only the US methods” are underlined to indicate that these were concerns identified by the case-participant and that they were also related to the question “Why is internationalization of American LIS education important?” as indicated by the tag “q6.” Connecting the details of what case-participants said to their demographic characteristics, progress in the program, and temporal and structural stage (as indicated by the interview number, as in “4” in the context of the above scenario) allowed the researchers to connect each case-participant’s perspective to where they were in terms of general progress in the program. As the research

progressed, comparing and tracking overlaps, intersections, and variations from other interviews helped refine and make clearer the various perspectives of case-participants involved in this research.⁴

Why is Internationalizing LIS Education Important?

Participants shared various reasons why they thought internationalization and non-US experiences were important in LIS education. The reasons can be related to: urgent contemporary needs; reflection of basic philosophical underpinnings of the discipline; fulfillment of specific LIS goals, objectives, and functions; and provision of intangible results and concrete gains.

Table 1 summarizes participants' responses about the importance of internationalization of LIS education owing to contemporary issues in globalization and global technological developments. For example, several participants recognized the importance in an interdependent world to collaboratively build library collections (both digital and print) and recognize LIS progress in different parts of the world. As one participant noted:

"If you do a world-wide DL project, for example the paintings of artists around the world, and in that case you will have to work with librarians and information scientists from different countries and cultures. You have to know about each other, how they do work in their own cultures, you have to be aware of the differences, then you can work smoothly, otherwise there are lots of misunderstandings [1.q6.1.p9]."

Additionally, some participants brought up the relevance of internationalization in the context of world-wide developments in the spread of ICTs and the Internet. As the following participant stated:

"Internationalization is important because the Internet is already a global library network and information system and we need to study it and find a way to influence the evolution of this global information system keeping in mind how it is used in different places and how we can make a positive influence on its usage and to make it better representative of the world" [9.q6.4.p10].

Table 2 summarizes participants' responses on the importance of internationalization of LIS education in the context of the discipline's broad philosophy, vision, and mission. The following statement by one student captures views that several participants shared:

"I think internationalization is important since the foundation of LIS is organization of information to promote access, depending upon different contexts, depending upon the needs, and the objectives of the organization or the objectives of the community. Different contexts could be across digital divides, be it across borders or across languages. We have to consider how local issues will play themselves out in different situations and I think international is one dimension of the kind of situations" [3.q6.4.p7].

Also, most participants considered internationalization essential for the practice and education of LIS since the two were closely tied. Diverse perspectives were reported to be important for progress and growth in world knowledge, and for LIS developmental research and applications that would be effective in different parts of the world.

"Ranganathan Colon Classification came along though it never went ahead as it could have. And maybe that is one example to show why people can learn from other countries and how libraries are managed there. Dewey decimal system is good but had they adopted some concepts that Ranganathan proposed things would have been different. Faceted hierarchies are now being

developed for management of the web and are extending Ranganathan's ideas but had they been developed in the beginning there would have been more progress" [6.q6.3.p13].

Table 3 summarizes participants' responses about the importance of internationalization of LIS education to fulfill specific LIS goals, objectives, and functions as a discipline. For example, some participants related internationalization to the role of LIS to provide varied services to different people. Participants thus considered it essential to have diverse groups of people represented in the discipline. They also attributed internationalization to the growth in research via development of new ideas and world knowledge.

Table 4 summarizes participants' responses about the importance of internationalization of LIS education for providing intangible benefits and tangible outcomes. Some participants suggested that for the United States to maintain a leading position in science and technology, it was necessary for people here to know the diversity of the field across the world in order that diverse applications and representation could be incorporated, especially in the context of globalization. Another tangible benefit from incorporating non-US experiences in LIS education was seen in its usefulness in collaborative research, where participants saw a positive value of having perspectives of people with diverse experiences working on globally-implemented projects. One participant spoke about building from the networks of international students expressly to facilitate international research projects. Tangible benefits related to economic gains from the development and application of technological systems for global markets was also mentioned.

The "How To" for Internationalizing LIS Education

This section highlights specific recommendations that participants made for promoting internationalization in various areas in LIS education. Table 5 summarizes participants' responses to how LIS education can further internationalize its philosophy, vision, and functions. For example, several participants called for aggressive presentation of LIS as a field to study interactions among people, society, and technology in terms of "how technology is implemented and how it shapes people's lives differently in different societies and countries" [1.q8.3.p7]. One student called for learning from micro-level practices of people and relating those to cultural interpretations and locally-applicable conventions in LIS:

"At micro-level, communities are different and so are people's practices. They have different networks; how differently people use libraries and what they use libraries for is different. Not determined so much by race or nationalities or ethnicities but is determined more by social-economic factors like how much money people have what can they afford" [1.q8.2.p7].

Table 6 presents participant feedback about how LIS education can further the internationalization of world knowledge. Several participants believed that one important effort towards this goal was to develop cooperation and networks to insure metadata quality and quality problems in cataloging via inclusion of correct and complete bibliographic data for international publications in American indexing and abstracting sources. As one participant said,

"It can become more international in terms of pulling up more case studies of what good is happening in other countries. Specifically, for example, some of the publications that take place there never reach here. Most of the publications are US based or European based publications but especially from Asia I don't see publications that I have come across. If you want to make your education more interesting, diversified and international then you should have publications from there and know what kind of research those people are doing and that will help in developing good ideas here" [6.q7.5.p13].

Table 7 presents ideas from students about how LIS education can incorporate international knowledge domains and frameworks of practice. Several participants mentioned learning from other disciplines such as computer science, about increasing recruitment of international faculty in LIS education. Other participants pointed out that hiring of international faculty was not enough; support and promotion for researchers who did work with international dimensions is also needed:

“It is important to promote leadership of people who support international research to make sure that once the vision is there, the resources will be there to follow through and the interest is going to be developed and sustained. If it is something that faculty will be rewarded for, then it will be something worthwhile to pursue [3.8.11.p7].

Table 8 outlines various participant suggestions as to how LIS education can extend an international agenda in the development of its curriculum, specific areas of research, and class instruction practices. Several participants mentioned the need for teaching and research to promote models and interpretations based on comparison and contrast among different cultures of practice in LIS education:

“Like there is a reading about classification systems and it mentions in Japan they have the lowest heart disease rate but that is because they don’t count the stroke as heart disease; they count it as brain disease so it is a cultural thing but it does affect the classification. If you want to do global collaboration in shared classification for an info system or repository, then you must consider cultural interpretation but I don’t think they do it now. They just look at only the American side” [2.q7.3.p13].

Table 9 presents students’ feedback about how LIS education can develop global socio-technical infrastructures to further internationalization. For example, several participants reported building community platforms based on country of origin and discipline that would connect sub-communities within and outside the discipline:

“Technical means can develop a platform, say in LIS settings, for all the LIS doctoral students from China. You can establish this for discipline and country and others can join if they want and share their experiences. It will lead to interaction not only in US schools but in other areas and universities [6.q19.1.p14].

Two-Way Learning from International Doctoral Students

Case-participants provided detailed examples of situations where they applied internationalizing strategies in various activities they were expected to perform as LIS doctoral students. In these situations, they tapped into their past non-US cultural-educational experiences to further the cross-cultural learning process for themselves and others. These scenarios identify two-way strategies for LIS programs to utilize international doctoral students as gatekeepers or bridges to other cultures and countries.

In their role as teaching assistants/instructors of LIS classes, participants reported using specific non-US cases and making direct and detailed references to experiences and examples from their countries of origin. As the following participant reported:

“As a TA there are several occasions where I bring LIS examples of how things are done in my country or about my culture in the classroom. Students seem pretty interested and they say “oh, yeah.” I talk about library and information setting. And we use different kinds of classification schemes because Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal classification does not really work for a particular country” [15.q9.3.p8].

Participants reported two-way learning that was reflected in their students' appreciation of such discussions since they provided an international flavor to LIS issues and concerns; expanded understanding of how specific services, systems, and standards worked in different countries; and allowed for comparison and contrast with how things worked in the United States.

Several participants also mentioned knowledge sharing, information exchange, and networking with international visiting scholars who participated in their class activities, as significant to student learning in LIS:

"An example is a scholar from India. She is visiting here. She is sitting in my ___ [name of class] class and she shares her experiences of community networks and digital libraries and information technology from her country [18.q9.4.p18].

International visiting scholars provided two-way learning opportunities in US classrooms because they offered direct and first-hand experience of different issues from around the world. Experiences of case-participants reflect a general trend in their use of non-US references and resources in the teaching environment, efforts that can be more systematically and ardently supported by LIS schools across the country.

In their activities as research assistants on different projects, several participants mentioned working with people from different backgrounds and cultures as a significant international experience in their LIS education. As one participant reported,

"The project has many students, many group members and people from different places, and they know many different things. Some people know about biology and some people know about psychology and some are programmers. But they all bring in their experiences from the different countries they belong to and people have different normal standards in different places and it helps understand aspects about people and culture in LIS" [20.q9.3.p6].

Several participants (especially those from China) spoke about the importance of the country of origin-discipline dyad that shaped their research skills and technological abilities:

"I think the fact is not that I am only a Chinese student. But it is my educational background skills that combined with the fact that they took place in China and I have a technical background from there that helped me find RA work here" [11.q9.3.p7].

In such experiences, two-way learning took place owing to a complex, yet rich, interaction between the international origins of participating students and their interdisciplinary backgrounds. People practiced LIS-related functions and activities under different disciplines in various countries. Hence, they brought to the interaction cultural experiences related to their country of origin. Additionally, diverse experiences, standards, constructs and modes of conceptualization based on their LIS-related disciplines (as practiced across the world) provided a diverse set of factors impacting (and emerging) in the social interaction.

The country of origin-discipline dyad was also expressed in different classroom activities where people from different ethnic backgrounds, countries, and disciplines worked together towards a common goal. Two-way learning in such group activities took place for most international and American students, who noted that their past interactions in classrooms had lacked diversity of people from a range of cultural and disciplinary backgrounds. Participants also gave examples of class activities where there were conflicts and variation in points of view, owing to cultural differences. Several case-participants recognized the importance of these conflicts since they helped participants understand deeper issues

about human nature, privacy, intellectual property, task assignment negotiations, and group dynamics. Recognition of the impact of personal and cultural factors in the working of cross-cultural learning communities in LIS education is necessary for effective exchanges in such communities.

Another issue that participants mentioned was the range of missed opportunities for two-way learning. One participant noted,

“In classes there are some international students. Sometimes we share what is going on in China what is going on in their country. Those are interesting but not given much value. I can think of one professor when we talk about information policy or intellectual property policy the professor asks oh, what about in China. Then we talk about something else and the professor seems very interested in the European countries and they say oh what is happening in that country we must look at the information policy there. It seems they have some preference in their reactions there is a very very very subtle discrimination maybe” [17.q20.3.p13].

The above scenario suggests that tensions around interventions aimed at internationalization are complex and important to LIS education. Such examples identify the need to pursue discussion and activities that provide fair representation of LIS-related developments in different parts of the world. The same participant suggested that even if faculty members do not have personal experiences in certain parts of the world, there should be encouragement for a rich and fruitful exchange. Actions, support, and a positive mindset that helps to minimize misperceptions based on cultural factors should be encouraged.

Several participants provided examples of drawing attention to inaccurate, US-centric information that led to changes in the information presented in class materials. For example, one participant stated:

“When I was a student and it was in the ___ [name of class] class and they talked about the “Gutenberg Library” and the whole history of printing. And it happened in ___ [name of country] before and it wasn’t mentioned and I raised my hand and like I said that actually happened in ___ [name of country] beforehand. Class slide said that United States was the “first” which was not correct. And so ___ [name of teacher] went ahead and corrected it and changed the slide” [16.q20.1.p9].

The above example identifies two points of consideration that are significant to two-way learning. First, that the person in charge recognized the inaccuracy and US-centricity of the class material provided and changed that information once more accurate information was provided. Second, the international doctoral student shared some LIS-related cultural knowledge that s/he had and drew attention to the concern that s/he had about issues presented in class. Such an experience shows a positive mode of interaction in terms of reciprocal learning.

During their participation in conferences, several participants (especially those from China) mentioned the importance of their strong networks with other people from their country. Participants reported two-way learning in future efforts via tapping into such networks to promote growth in LIS education. Participants also mentioned support for more collaborative teams with international student members to co-author papers where cross-cultural experiences could be represented. International networks could be tapped to build future online databases in LIS education that helped promote international partnerships and collaborative ventures. Participants also reported developing tasks related to enhancement of specialized skills in LIS that emerged from specific ethnic or cultural experiences. Translation of works in major languages of the world was one kind of skill that international doctoral students in LIS could provide that would contribute mutual learning and growth in world knowledge and cultural exchange.

Conclusion

Two-way learning from international students in various LIS programs across the country can further internationalization of the discipline at local, regional, and national levels. International students have access to specific cross-cultural knowledge, international experiences, global social networks, and cultural-specific skills that have often been ignored or underutilized in the past. Contemporary globalization and globally networked ICTs present an urgent need to tap into this existing knowledge base within the discipline. Encouraging knowledge sharing with international doctoral students is relatively low-cost, reliable and efficient, and provides rich, authentic, and trust-worthy insights.

In this research, two-way learning from case-participants yielded valid perspectives in terms of providing voice to an under-represented population that was directly being impacted by US-centric educational conditions. Moreover, and ironically, who better to provide feedback about internationalizing LIS education than those constituents in the discipline who have international backgrounds and experiences? Yet they have often been barred from providing any feedback in related LIS educational processes! Additionally, two-way learning with international doctoral students can facilitate implementing the internationalizing practices that participants recommended that would otherwise only be possible via extensive foreign travel and international social networks developed over a lengthy period of time.

Two-way learning strategies that were adopted in this research can be applied in other LIS schools, programs, and levels of study, as well as in other disciplines across college and university settings. Both LIS and non-LIS audiences (including educators, administrators, and practitioners) in various academic, corporate, organizational, and public sectors may benefit from mutual learning to further internationalize their work environments. Study findings may also be useful to people who are studying and finding ways to facilitate cross-cultural collaborations in the development of globally distributed knowledge communities.

One limitation in the application of study results is generalizability of the findings. The limitation of the research to a single case with only 21 participants will be addressed in future research that will document two-way learning from international students in other schools, programs, disciplines, and levels of study.

The goal of this research, however, was not to identify all-encompassing statements about the perspectives of all LIS international doctoral students, nor was it to present a comprehensive look at internationalization issues in LIS. The goal instead is to provide an in-depth look at the perspectives of one case in LIS education. Since such an effort has not been conducted in prior studies, this research becomes exploratory, descriptive, and interpretive in its nature.

This research has specific philosophical, conceptual, and methodological implications for future work on “two-way” learning in any environment, be it academic, commercial, organizational, national, international, or other. On a philosophical note, considering the need for global interdependence and international understanding, the strategy to adopt “two-way” learning where American and international constituents may learn from each other about diverse experiences, knowledge, information practices and use, is a worthy direction to pursue. Such interactions can take place only when there is a mutual respect and recognition of diverse knowledge bases and multicultural experiences emerging from different parts of the world. Applying this mode of thinking to various other contexts of study, within and beyond the academy, in order to promote global collaborations and build shared knowledge and practice is sorely needed now.

Prior work in international student research usually focuses on how to improve the conditions for individuals belonging to such groups. There is minimal research that recognizes their cross-cultural experiences as worthy of contribution towards academic growth in the United States. This is also pertinent to LIS education in the United States where a two-way learning approach in recognizing the value and cross-cultural contributions of LIS international students will provide mechanisms for adaptation, survival, and global applicability of the discipline. Focus on a two-way learning will also help LIS schools to improve international collaborations and partnerships, build upon international alumni networks, enhance international student enrolment and recruitment, and help explain the success or failure of future knowledge sharing in international contexts.

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Tables

Table 1: Why is Internationalization of LIS Education Important?

Broad Reason	Specific Dimensions	Impact of Reason/Dimensions
Reflects contemporary political, economic, social, cultural, and technological changes	Results of external globalization on a world society	Intensifies social relations and creates new forms of interaction/interdependence
	Development of global networked ICTs and the Internet	Connects diverse people to interact with each other in processes of information creation-organization-dissemination
	Pressures from internal changing demographics and cultures in the United States	Calls for LIS professionals to develop sensitivity to diversity and understanding of different cultures

Table 2: Why is Internationalization of LIS Education Important?

Broad Reason	Specific Dimensions	Impact of Reason/Dimensions
Strengthens the basic philosophy, vision, and mission of LIS as a discipline	To recognize diversity in perspectives, experiences, and knowledge bases	That may lead to a valuing of people from different geographic areas and disciplines
	To affirm connections between global practice and education in LIS	That may contribute to a growth in world knowledge, information research, and technology design and implementation
	To acknowledge various globally represented (dominant and alternative) knowledge domains	That may further development of new ideas to solve world problems

Table 3: Why is Internationalization of LIS Education Important?

Broad Reason	Specific Dimensions	Impact of Reason/Dimensions
Fulfills specific goals, objectives, and functions in a global context	To provide access to diverse perspectives and multiple view points	Will expand services to fulfill needs of varied communities and individuals
	To identify critical LIS foundational issues such as user information needs, networked information technologies, and organization/management of information resources/services	Will provide representation of multiple contexts across varied digital divides, inter-cultural and cross border issues, and diversity of languages
	To map influence of socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political factors in shaping information creation-organization-dissemination processes	Will develop understanding of experiences at local levels and how they play themselves out in globally dispersed situations

Table 4: Why is Internationalization of LIS Education Important?

Broad Reason	Specific Dimensions
Provides intangible benefits and tangible outcomes	Facilitate cross-cultural communication and knowledge network development
	Maintain a leadership role of the United States in IT-related fields
	Develop global partnerships and collaborations
	Provide people with diverse perspectives to work in global collaborations
	Increase economic gains from technological systems for global markets
	Improve varied services for different people
	Develop cross-fertilization/exchange in new ideas, best practices, benchmarks, and world knowledge

Table 5: How Can LIS Education Further Internationalize its Philosophy and Functions?

Participant Recommendations
Promote international marketing of LIS as a discipline to study interactions between people, society, and technology in terms of their global intersections and cultural expressions
Project a global image of the discipline to study how information technology is implemented and impacts people's life in different societies and countries
Learn about social, cultural, and political experiences of people in different countries and how those determine their usage, networks, conventions, and micro-level practices
Represent greater non-US research projects and experiences in LIS education and thereby re-evaluate the question "Are we pursuing an American LIS degree or just an LIS degree?"
Adopt a hybrid model to recognize the influence of individual-culture-language factors as they determine contributions of international student constituents towards LIS growth
Promote models and interpretations based on the comparison-contrast approach that identifies similarities and differences between different cultures of practice in LIS that may reveal a broader range of individual-society-culture-technology interactions
Incorporate international dimensions in LIS programs' vision/mission statements
Represent international issues and cultural differences in the information creation-organization-dissemination processes
Identify international research directions, cross-cultural research projects, international collaborations, global educational partnerships, and cross-cultural perspectives as important avenues to develop in LIS

Table 6: How Can LIS Education Further Internationalize World Knowledge?

Participant Recommendations
Expand the knowledge base and contributions from different countries in the processes of information creation-organization-dissemination
Build databases and collections about LIS-related research, from, and of other countries to include publications from other countries, global contributions related to development of user studies literature, and associated online country-wise databases where people from around the world can contribute information (user-studies data) from their countries
Establish cooperation and networks to insure metadata quality and quality problems in cataloging since there is a lack of knowledge about the international subjects and languages from other countries (online systems to develop shared cataloging)
Represent international field examples and case studies that capture latest trends, best practices, and current conditions of application across the world

Table 7: How Can LIS Education Incorporate International Knowledge Domains and Frameworks of Practice?

Participant Recommendations
Study global manifestations and variations in knowledge areas, information-related practices, cultural values, resources and networks, and frameworks of solutions to address different problems
Support faculty who practice internationalizing efforts that may establish credibility, authority, and acknowledgement of international theory, concepts, applications, and practices in LIS

Table 8: How Can LIS Education Extend an International Teaching/Research Agenda?

Participant Recommendations
Teach students to look for sources outside the United States and build research and teaching networks inclusive of people outside the United States
Incorporate internationalizing references throughout the course work, structure and program and develop specialized courses on internationalization
Include international perspectives/dimensions in all topic areas via incorporating global field studies to study needs assessment, software design and development, evaluation and usability issues, and technology planning and implementation
Have more non-US experiences and global examples in areas such as digital library and cataloging that may cover greater content from different countries around the world
Cross-post courses on cultural differences from different departments across the campus and develop courses based on sharing experiences in international travel
Recognize clashes between universal applications and local variations in creation of standards, international librarianship, and library curriculum development
Incorporate internationalization elements in LIS courses such as history of LIS across the world, global classification and cataloging, user-centered studies, cultural issues in LIS, children's literature, intellectual property, and indexing and abstracting, amongst others
Provide opportunities in the classroom for sharing of cross-cultural experiences and perspectives of international students in teaching and research missions
Recognize different modes of behavior, practice, and interaction, especially for students from different cultural backgrounds
Support stronger professional faculty-student relationships to create openness and cross-cultural communication because of differences owing to cultural and individual factors

Table 9: How Can LIS Education Develop Global Socio-Technical Infrastructures?

Participant Recommendations
Support global exchanges across institutions, public and private stakeholders, NGOs, communities, and individuals
Build collaborative databases, shared technological platforms, and online repositories for expanding information content, communication and information exchanges, and reification efforts that establish a global community and identity amongst international participants in LIS education
Create community platforms based on country of origin and discipline intersections that nurture sub-communities within and outside the discipline

Notes

^[1] In this research, the need to develop both human capital (identified in terms of psychologies, skills, learning development, and other capacities and capabilities of the individual), as well as social capital (in terms of potential and developed factors related to interaction of people with others in groups or communities) is considered essential to further cross-cultural communication and understanding between globally dispersed people.

^[2] For the category “international students,” the research follows the definition of the United States Department of Labor as all students who are not citizens, permanent residents, or landed immigrants in the United States. Professional literature refers to “international students” by names that include overseas student, foreign student, student from abroad, international student, and study abroad student. A discussion of these terms, each of which acquired currency of use and meanings based on specific socio-historical, political, and cultural assumptions emerging during different temporal and place-bound contexts is beyond the scope of this paper. Here, the term international student is used to reflect current usage in contemporary American universities.

^[3] In coding the data, interviews were numbered in sequence; this appears at the start of each tag (i.e., bracketed set of codes). For example, in the example scenario all the tags begin with “4,” which indicates that the scenario is taken from the fourth interview as sequenced by the researcher. Since there was much variation during the

interviews owing to situational dynamics of interaction, the sequencing only broadly reflects the interview process enactment. This is indicated by portions of the tag such as “q8.1” and “q8.2”. These indicate that the scenario is a response to question eight as sequenced by the author (“q8” is the question: “Provide examples of how your non-US experiences have been helpful in the performance of activities expected of you as a doctoral student?”). The numbers (1 and 2 as in “q8.1”...) following the decimal in the tags indicate that there were two main points in that response of the case-participant to the question. These included reference to international literature that international students know about (“q8.1”) and the exposure to research methods applied internationally that international students may have used in their work before coming to the United States (“q8.2”). The last part in each tag indicates the page number on the transcribed copy of the interview where the particular narrative piece occurs (“p17”).

⁴ A point to note is that the first author was the only person working on the coding process. Lack of validity resulting from use of one coder was compensated by sharing details of the process and results with a research committee after removing any personally identifying information from the data, as well as giving opportunities to case-participants to review a draft of research findings.

The Rates of Participation of the Member Countries in the Institutional Objectives of UNESCO
(According to World Data on Education of UNESCO)

Dr. Erdal Toprakçı*

Cumhuriyet University, Turkey

Abstract

This study focuses on the rate of the participation of the member countries in the objectives of UNESCO. Text-based approach in method of content analysis has been used to carry out the study. The objectives of UNESCO have been identified and examined to reveal whether the member countries acknowledge these objectives among their national educational objectives. The study is limited with the data available on the UNESCO Web Page (World Data on Education of UNESCO). It has been found that only 5 of the member countries have fully adopted the objectives of UNESCO, which means that the national educational objectives of the remaining 97% of the member countries do not fully reflect UNESCO's objectives in their education policies. The most highly participated objectives are "Equality" with 56.05%, "Human Rights" with 35.03%, "Freedom" with 25.47%, "Universal Values" with 19.10% and finally "Peace" with 15.28%. This situation may put UNESCO's existence into danger in the future, and may cause serious doubts about its activities and its future success.

Key Words: UNESCO, comparative education, educational objectives, national education, international education

* Erdal Toprakçı is currently associate professor at Cumhuriyet University at Sivas, where he trains school managers, supervisors and teachers. His responsibilities include teaching, student advising, and research. He is the author of several articles, books and presentations, especially on educational administration, multicultural education, international education, globalization and education.

Introduction

In our increasingly globalized world, multinational corporations have a key role to play in issues ranging from human rights to environmental policies (Browne 2002; Ranald 2002; Toprakçı 2004). Among others, the United Nations seems to be the most important organization, although it has been severely criticized since the day it was established following the World War II. The United Nations was established on October 24, 1945 by 51 countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security (United Nations 2004). Today, a number of multinational corporations are linked to the UN through cooperative agreements. Some of these corporations are as follows: UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), ILO (International Labor Organization), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN), etc.

This study was designed to investigate UNESCO, which, in addition to its individual endeavors, works in cooperation with other organizations such as UN and other international organizations. Working in cooperation with other organizations such as UNICEF, IMF, WHO, etc., UNESCO has been showing great effort in our globalized world to put into effect important projects, which it believes can be realized through the overall education of people. Among the objectives of UNESCO are;

- ✓ *Reducing extreme poverty:* The proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries should be reduced by at least one half by 2015.
- ✓ *Universal primary education:* There should be universal primary education in all countries by 2015.
- ✓ *Gender equality:* Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women should be demonstrated by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.
- ✓ *Infant and child mortality:* The death rates for infants and children under the age of five years should be reduced in each developing country by two thirds the 1990 level by 2015.
- ✓ *Maternal mortality:* The rate of maternal mortality should be reduced by three fourths between 1990 and 2015.
- ✓ *Reproductive health:* Access should be available through the primary health-care system to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages, no later than the year 2015.
- ✓ *Environment:* There should be a current national strategy for sustainable development, in the process of implementation, in every country by 2005, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015 (UNESCO 2002-a; 2005-a).

As can be understood from the above objectives, UNESCO has a vital role to perform. It is, therefore, crucial to get to know UNESCO, understand its raison d'être, and evaluate its achievements and this also points towards the importance of this study.

Understanding the importance and mission of UNESCO

UNESCO —United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization— was born on November 16, 1945 (UNESCO 2004-a). As of March 17, 2005, there are 191 Member States in the organization (UNESCO 2005-c). For this specialized UN agency, it is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, science, culture and communication are the means to a far more ambitious goal: to build peace in the minds of men.

The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declares that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed”. In order that a unanimous,

lasting and genuine peace may be secured, the Preamble further states that the States Party to the Constitution believed 'in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge.'

As defined by the Constitution, the purpose of the Organization is "to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations" (Article I/1-UNESCO 2002-b).

As mentioned above, UNESCO has five main objectives that work together: Human Rights, Peace, Universal Values, Freedom, and Equality. UNESCO tries to fulfill these objectives through the betterment of the educational systems in member states. Furthermore, UNESCO's vital role will be better understood when people get closer to UNESCO's objectives through education. In this view, UNESCO's efforts not only provide education with peace, human rights, universal values, freedoms and equalities but also aim at reaching these objectives in other fields of life (e.g., human rights in health).

Today, UNESCO works as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse that disseminates and shares information and knowledge while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields. In short, UNESCO promotes international co-operation among its 191 Member States and six Associate Members in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

UNESCO works to create the conditions for true dialogue, based upon respect for commonly shared values and the dignity of each civilization and culture. This role is critical, particularly in the face of terrorism, which constitutes a threat against humanity. The world urgently requires global visions of sustainable development based upon observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty, all of which lie at the heart of UNESCO's mission and activities.

There are about 2,145 members from some 160 countries (April 2003) in UNESCO. As a result of a new decentralization policy, more than 640 staff members work in UNESCO's 53 field offices around the world. UNESCO is the only UN agency to have a system of National Commissions in 190 Member and Associate States. The Commissions form a vital link between civil society and the Organization. They provide valuable insight into the Organization's program and help implement many initiatives including training programs, studies, public awareness campaigns and media outreach. The Commissions also develop new partnerships with the private sector, which can provide valuable technical expertise and financial resources (UNESCO 2003-c).

UNESCO approaches its work with a variety of tools. It is not a funding agency. It supports programs and projects in its fields of competence, promotes the development of networks of concerned individuals and organizations in these various fields, stimulates reflection on important issues through international commissions, organizes conferences, and issues publications. One important set of tools that is sometimes overlooked is UNESCO's standard setting, or normative, instruments — conventions, recommendations and declarations.

UNESCO offers leadership in the setting of norms and standards in its fields of competence. Its constitution provides that a General Conference of its members may adopt conventions and recommendations for submission to member states. Each of the member states undertakes to submit recommendations or conventions to its competent authorities within a period of one year from the close

of the session of the General Conference at which they are adopted. The process of ratification in each member state may take several years (CCTP 2005).

Declarations, recommendations, charters and frameworks for action are not binding and have only declamatory character. They are not subject to ratification. However, States and governments adopting these declarations and recommendations also subscribe to moral commitments. These instruments clearly state their intention to implement them, even though there are no legal penalties for non-compliance. Furthermore, they may by custom become recognized as laying down rules binding upon states (UNESCO 2005-b).

UNESCO has a regular two-year budget that is financed by Member States through assessed contributions. The proposed regular budget for 2004 and 2005 is US\$610 million. UNESCO also benefits from substantial extra-budgetary funding to strengthen its programs, especially in the field, and to increase its outreach activities (UNESCO 2003-c).

Table 1
The regular budget and the extra budgetary of UNESCO
(Since 1960)

Budget Year	Regular budget (mill. \$)	Extra budgetary funds (mill. \$)
1960	13,7	4,5
1970	39,4	37
1980	151,5	90,6
1985	187,2	80,3
1986	144,6	75
1990	189,4	108,3
1995	227,8	110,5
2000-01	544,4	483,5
2002-03	544,4	681
2004-05	610	-

(Source: UNESCO 2002-b; UNESCO 2003-a; UNESCO 2003-b; UNESCO 2003-c; UNESCO 2004-c)

As it is seen in Table 1, UNESCO is an organization which has a considerably large budget. All organizations have some type of objectives that are reflected in their mission statements. In organizational literature, the term “objectives” are somewhat used interchangeably with other terms such as “goals,” “aims,” “targets,” and “success criteria.” There is no agreed upon generic word that describes these concepts collectively. Organizational objectives (goals or aims) nurture and steer creative tension and release and harness human energy; they keep the organization on the move, heading in a certain direction (Everard and Morris 1990, 152; Harchar and Hyle 1996, 15). All organizations have to make provision for continuing activities directed toward the achievement of given aims (Pugh 1990; Cameron 1980; Daft 1992; Perrow 1986).

The purpose of this study is to critically explore UNESCO in terms of the degree of correspondence between the objectives of UNESCO and the national educational objectives of the member countries. Organizational goals or objectives have a pervasive influence on behavior in organizations (Lunenburg and Ornstein 1996, 107). Organizational behavior is related to the members of organization (Costea and Crump 1999, 3). The members of UNESCO are countries; therefore, the members, at least to a certain extent, are supposed to comply with the objectives of the parent organization. There may become a conflict in the organization due to lack of consensus of opinion (Haag

1982; Fiol 1994). For effective success, it is expected that there should be a degree of harmony between the objective and objectives of each member organization (Hicks 1979, 87). Furthermore, it is expected that the organizational objectives are assimilated by each member (Hoyle 1986, 53).

UNESCO is an intergovernmental organization which especially focuses on education. Like each organization, UNESCO has clearly defined institutional objectives. If the national education objectives of the member countries are similar to the objectives of UNESCO, the organization can be regarded as successful. Therefore, making a comparison between the objectives of UNESCO and the national education objectives of the member countries seems to be a good exercise to assess the institutional success of UNESCO.

Organizational systems may be described in terms of the values of their members and their practices (Hofstede, et.al., 1990; French 1987). Every organization needs a harmony between its objectives and its members' objectives, and the degree of sustainability of this harmony. The more the objectives of the members are harmonious with their own objectives, the more successful the organization becomes (Barnard 1958; Kotter 1978; Frost and Gillespie 1998; Lawler 1986; Conley 1993; Steers 1976; Mackenzie 1998). Achieving this harmony is sometimes hindered by the organization itself or by its members. The same situation applies also to UNESCO. When the conclusions of this study are considered, it shall be clearly observed that most of the members of UNESCO have not assimilated official institutional objectives of UNESCO.

Method

This study focuses on the harmony between the objectives of UNESCO and the national education objectives of the member countries. There are basically two means of accessing data regarding UNESCO and its member countries. One is the database CD-ROMs prepared by IBE, which are updated annually; the latest version available at the moment is the database CD-ROM that appeared in 2003. One can easily get information on how to obtain these CD-ROMs on the internet (UNESCO 2004). The other is the web database that has the same content as the mentioned CD-ROMs (UNESCO 2004-b). The data available on the internet database is updated regularly just like the CD-ROMs prepared by IBE, and at present the November 2004 edition is online. Since the web database has more recent data, the study relies mainly on the data available on the UNESCO Web Pages (World Data on Education of UNESCO-Web edition, 2004). Text-based approach in method of content analysis (Forster 1995; Weitzman and Miles 1995; Marshall and Rossman 1999; Yıldırım 1999; Berg 2001; Patton 2002; Hancock 2004) has been used to carry out the study. The major difficulty pertaining to the text-based approach arises from the texts written in various languages. To overcome this, texts composed in five different languages used in UNESCO records (Table 1) have been studied. Accordingly, one of the languages on the UNESCO web page, the Cape Verde —the Creole— language has been excluded since as a country it has no affinities with any of the 5 languages in Table 1.

The concepts expressing the objectives (Human Rights, Peace, Universal Values, Freedom and Equality) may be included in the other legal texts of member countries. *However, it must be noted that this study is limited with the internet texts giving information about the member countries of UNESCO.* Apart from these documents, other practices and documents remain outside the generalizations made here. And the countries which are not available on the UNESCO Web Page (Web edition, 2004) are excluded from the study. The data of 157 countries out of total 191 have been collected. While determining the participation rate of the countries in terms of their national educational objectives, five objectives of UNESCO that are mentioned above has been taken into consideration.

The data have been collected according to whether a member country has the concepts expressing UNESCO's objectives which are included in its document on the UNESCO Web Page.

Therefore, special care has been given to words in Table 2 or to the expressions which overlap with these words. For example, as the Senegal's document on the UNESCO Web Page is in French, to determine whether UNESCO's objectives exist in this country's educational objectives, the words like *droits de l'homme* (human rights), *paix* (peace), *valeur universelle* (universal values), *liberté* (freedom) and *égalité* (equality) or the expressions which can carry the meanings of these words have been searched. Items that exist are marked (+), and the nonexistent ones are marked (-).

Presenting the case of Lithuania can be helpful to explain how exactly the data used in this study has been gathered. The following steps have been followed for this process: "World Data on Education (Web edition, 2004)", an official UNESCO page, has been accessed through world-wide web (UNESCO 2004-b). On this page, the Lithuania link can be reached through "Table of Contents", which includes data for each country as regions. This link has official data gathered from texts that are sent by Lithuania (and other countries) to UNESCO. This page has next and back buttons; through the "next" button one can reach the data for Lithuania. The page for Lithuania, for example, harbors the following information:

According to the Education Act of 1991, education is a state-supported priority sector in the development of the Republic of Lithuania. It is based on the humanistic cultural values of the nation and the world (*Concept of Universal Values*), on the principles of democracy and the universally recognized human rights (*Concept of Human Rights*) and freedoms. (*Concept of Freedom*) Education determines the cultural, social and economic progress of the country consolidates solidarity, tolerance and co-operation among people and nations. (*Concept of Peace*)

This paragraph reveals that there are four concepts that overlap with UNESCO's objectives, which have specially been italicized. The last sentence of the following paragraph entitled "Current educational priorities and concerns" also has another objective that could be associated with the objectives designated by UNESCO, namely the concept of equality:

In 1992, the government published a document entitled, The general concept of education in Lithuania, stating that 'the education system is based on European cultural values: the absolute value of the individual, solidarity, innate equality among human beings (*Concept of Equality*), freedom of conscience, tolerance, affirmation of democratic social relations.

Thus, Lithuania can be said to fully comply with the objectives of UNESCO since the report incorporates the previously mentioned five objectives.

Certain words in the texts belonging to each country have been searched with the program "Words for Windows". First, concepts have been searched in terms of word-to-word matching. If the word or words that correspond to the concept have been found, no more searches have been carried out for the concept in question. The words "Human Rights" and "Freedom" in the above quotation are of this kind. When a text has no matches corresponding to the concepts through the "Word for Windows" scanning, the text has been closely read by the author in order to find other phrases or clauses that might refer to the concepts in questions. The concepts of "Equality", "Universal values", and "Peace" in the paragraphs above have been detected in this way.

Table 2
Words in various languages expressing the UNESCO objectives

Language	Words				
English	Human Rights	Peace	Universal Value	Freedom	Equality

<i>German</i>	Menschliche Rechte	Frieden	Universalwert	Freiheit	Gleichheit
<i>French</i>	Droits de l'homme	Paix	Valeur universelle	Liberté	Égalité
<i>Spanish</i>	Derechos humanos	Paz	Valor universal	Libertad	Igualdad
<i>Italian</i>	Diritti dell'uomo	Pace	Valore universale	Libertà	Uguaglianza

To make some conclusions from the collected data, two variables have been considered important throughout the study: The first one is the membership dates of the countries to UNESCO. Related data have been obtained from the list of 191 Member States of UNESCO and the date on which they became members of the organization in alphabetical order (UNESCO 2005-c). According to the data, the old and the new member states were compared among themselves. The second one is the region categories or country groups of the members classified by UNESCO. Countries are grouped according to the following geographical regions: Africa South of Sahara, Asia and Oceania, Central Europe and former USSR, Middle East and North Africa, North America, South and Central America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe (UNESCO, 2004-e). In this part, the countries in the same region have been compared. For example, the data on the Western Europe countries are presented in the same table and they are ranged down according to their membership dates. The participation rates of the older countries and the younger members of the region have been compared. Next, the numbers of the countries including the words or the concepts which express UNESCO's objectives are shown in percentage and frequency. Then, the participation rates of all the countries in this region to UNESCO objectives have been shown as percentage and frequency.

Results

In this part of the study, the extent to which the countries' national educational objectives reflect the objectives of UNESCO have been shown in tables on the basis of their membership dates and the region groups in which they are placed. The data obtained from the categories are presented below.

The Rates of the Participation of Africa South of Sahara Countries in the Objectives of UNESCO

The data on 38 of the region countries have been obtained. There is no meaningful relationship between the membership dates and the level of adherence to all the UNESCO objectives. The data presented in Table 3 reveal that 12 countries do not have the objectives at all or any relevant concepts related to the objectives of UNESCO. Rwanda's national educational objectives reflect 80% of the objectives of UNESCO, which means Rwanda has the highest rate of participation in this region. Kenya's national educational objectives reflect 60% of the objectives of UNESCO. Although the concept of Equality is mentioned within this percentage, there are studies which reveal that education in Kenya suffers from cases of inequality and similar problems (Alwy and Schech 2004, 272). Another striking finding is that the rates of the participation of other countries in this region are much lower as seen in Table 3.

One of the common features of such countries as Rwanda, which have a high rate of participation in UNESCO's objectives, is the fact that they have received a great deal of aid (e.g. SWAP¹) from international organizations. The acceptance and implementation of these aids necessitates, first of all, a series of considerable changes in the constitution of the country concerned. The national educational objectives of a country are delineated by laws, too. Therefore, certain applications concerning the implementation of objectives may prove to be rather difficult even in such countries if we assume that the regulations are directly related to the objectives. As a matter of fact, despite certain improvements in the implementations (World Bank 2004), literacy is a problem in Rwanda, as is the disparity between men's and women's education. In Rwanda, 76% of the men and just 65% of the women are literate (Africare 2005); and similar problems still exist.

Table 3
Africa South of Sahara Countries

	DM	Country Name	HR	P	UV	F	E	Total	Participation Rate %
1.	06/03/1947	LIBERIA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
2.	01/07/1955	ETHIOPIA	+	+	-	-	+	3	60
3.	26/11/1956	SUDAN	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
4.	11/04/1958	GHANA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
5.	02/02/1960	GUINEA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
6.	18/10/1960	BENIN	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
7.	24/10/1960	CONGO	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
8.	07/11/1960	MALI	-	-	-	+	+	2	40
9.	10/11/1960	MADAGASCAR	-	-	-	+	-	1	20
10.	10/11/1960	NIGER	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
11.	10/11/1960	SENEGAL	+	-	-	+	-	2	40
12.	11/11/1960	CAMEROON	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
13.	11/11/1960	CENTRAL AFRICAN R.	-	+	+	-	+	3	60
14.	14/11/1960	BURKINA FASO	-	+	+	-	-	2	40
15.	14/11/1960	NIGERIA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
16.	17/11/1960	TOGO	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
17.	25/11/1960	D. REP.OF THE CONGO	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
18.	19/12/1960	CHAD	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
19.	10/01/1962	MAURITANIA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
20.	06/03/1962	UNI.REP.OF TANZANIA	+	+	-	-	+	3	60
21.	07/11/1962	RWANDA	+	+	+	-	+	4	80
22.	16/11/1962	BURUNDI	-	+	-	-	-	1	20
23.	07/04/1964	KENYA	+	-	-	+	+	3	60
24.	27/10/1964	MALAWI	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
25.	09/11/1964	ZAMBIA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
26.	29/09/1967	LESOTHO	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
27.	25/10/1968	MAURITIUS	-	-	+	-	-	1	20
28.	01/08/1973	GAMBIA	+	+	-	-	+	3	60
29.	11/10/1976	MOZAMBIQUE	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
30.	11/03/1977	ANGOLA	+	-	-	+	-	2	40
31.	22/03/1977	COMOROS	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
32.	25/01/1978	SWAZILAND	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
33.	02/11/1978	NAMIBIA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
34.	16/01/1980	BOTSWANA	+	-	-	-	-	1	20
35.	22/09/1980	ZIMBABWE	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
36.	31/08/1989	DJIBOUTI	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
37.	02/09/1993	ERITREA	+	+	-	-	+	3	60
38.	12/12/1994	SOUTH AFRICA ⁽¹⁾	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
Total according to Region			10	8	4	5	19	46	
Participation Rate %			26,31	21,05	10,81	13,51	50,00	24,21	

DM: Date of Membership, **HR:** Human Rights, **P:** Peace, **UV:** Universal Values, **F:** Freedom, **E:** Equality

⁽¹⁾ Previously a Member State from November 4, 1946 to December 31, 1956

(Source: UNESCO 2004-b)

Table-3 reveals that the concept which has the lowest participation of the countries is “Universal Values” with a rate of 10.81%. On the other hand, the concept which has the highest participation in this group is “Equality” with a rate of 50.00%. The rate of the participation of the countries in the region in all the objectives is 24.21%. When compared with that of all the other countries, this is the lowest rate of participation. The reason for this is a mesh of problems in this region such as overpopulation, lack of natural resources, poverty, and culture clashes. An efficient way to curb these problems is education.

Such that, African educators in the 21st century face the challenge of creating multi-purpose systems that preserve the multi-cultural social fabric of each country in a context of national inclusion and unity (Woolman 2001, 43).

***The Rates of Participation of Middle East and North Africa Countries
in the Objectives of UNESCO***

The data on 19 of the region countries have been brought together. As it is presented in Table 4, there is no meaningful relationship between the membership dates and the level of reflecting UNESCO's institutional objectives. The objectives of 8 countries (40.0%) in this group are not in harmony with the objectives of UNESCO.

**Table 4
Middle East and North Africa Countries**

	DM	Country name	HR	P	UV	F	E	Total	Participation Rate %
1.	04/11/1946	EGYPT	-	-	-	-	+	1	0
2.	04/11/1946	LEBANON	+	-	+	+	+	4	80
3.	04/11/1946	SAUDI ARABIA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
4.	04/11/1946	TURKEY	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
5.	16/11/1946	SYRIAN ARAB REP.	+	-	-	-	-	1	20
6.	21/10/1948	IRAQ	+	+	-	+	+	4	80
7.	16/09/1949	ISRAEL	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
8.	14/06/1950	JORDAN	+	-	-	+	+	3	60
9.	27/06/1953	LIBYAN ARAB JAM.	-	-	-	+	-	1	20
10.	07/11/1956	MOROCCO	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
11.	08/11/1956	TUNISIA	+	-	+	-	+	3	60
12.	18/11/1960	KUWAIT	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
13.	06/02/1961	CYPRUS	-	+	-	+	+	3	60
14.	02/04/1962	YEMEN	-	+	-	+	-	2	40
15.	15/10/1962	ALGERIA	-	+	+	+	+	4	80
16.	18/01/1972	BAHRAIN	-	+	-	-	+	2	20
17.	27/01/1972	QATAR	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
18.	10/02/1972	OMAN	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
19.	20/04/1972	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
Total according to Region			6	5	3	7	9	30	
Participation Rate %			31,57	26,31	15,78	36,84	47,36	31,57	

DM: Date of Membership, HR: Human Rights, P: Peace, UV: Universal Values, F: Freedom, E: Equality
(Source: UNESCO 2004-b)

The highest level of participation (80.0%) comes from three countries in this group —Lebanon, Iraq and Algeria. An interesting finding in these countries is the situation of Iraq, which has been declared a terrorist state before the invention of the USA. In fact, Iraq's national educational objectives are more harmonious (80.0%) with the objectives of UNESCO than those of many countries in this region.

As it is seen in Table 4, the objective with the lowest rate of participation is “Universal Values” (15.78%). On the other hand, the objective that has the highest rate is “Equality” (47.36%). In addition, since the rate of the participation of the countries in the region in all the objectives is 31.57%, the situation for the other objectives does not seem so promising. These countries, which are deemed to be rich because of their petrol resources, should make a special effort in developing the objectives that are harmonious with the objectives of UNESCO. In addition, these countries such as Israel (Yablon, Katz and Yaacov 2001) that face religious conflicts seem to be in need of an educational curriculum in compliance with the objectives of UNESCO.

***The Rates of Participation of Asia and the Oceania Countries
in the Objectives of UNESCO***

The data on 24 of the region countries have been obtained from the UNESCO web site. Table 5 reveals that there is no meaningful link between the membership dates and the level of reflecting the objectives of UNESCO.

Among the countries in this region, national educational objectives of 11 countries (42.30%) do not at all reflect the objectives of UNESCO. On the other hand, the country that has the highest participation rate is Nepal with 80.0%. Nepal has experienced intense political change in recent decades from 1962 to 1990. National planning attempts to tackle such issues within an overall agenda “to create a society that is cultured, modern, and development-oriented.” Enhancing the quality, efficiency and relevance of education, in addition to improving access and equity, are central to this overall aim. The Tenth Five-Year Plan, currently in preparation, prioritizes the need to produce citizens with an awareness of “nationality, democracy, human rights and social responsibilities” (Carney 2003, 91-92).

**Table 5
Asia and the Oceania Countries**

	DM	Country name	HR	P	UV	F	E	Total	Participation Rate %
1.	04/11/1946	AUSTRALIA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
2.	04/11/1946	CHINA	-	-	+	-	+	2	40
3.	04/11/1946	INDIA	-	-	-	+	+	2	40
4.	04/11/1946	NEW ZEALAND	-	-	-	-	+	1	20,
5.	21/11/1946	PHILIPPINES	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
6.	06/09/1948	IRAN, ISLAMIC REP. OF	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
7.	01/01/1949	THAILAND	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
8.	27/06/1949	MYANMAR	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
9.	14/09/1949	PAKISTAN	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
10.	14/11/1949	SRI LANKA	-	-	+	-	+	2	40
11.	27/05/1950	INDONESIA	+	-	+	-	+	3	60
12.	14/06/1950	REPUBLIC OF KOREA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
13.	02/07/1951	JAPAN	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
14.	03/07/1951	CAMBODIA	+	-	-	-	-	1	20
15.	06/07/1951	VIET NAM	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
16.	09/07/1951	LAO PEOPLE'S DEM. REPUBLIC	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
17.	01/05/1953	NEPAL	+	+	-	+	+	4	80
18.	16/06/1958	MALAYSIA	-	-	-	+	+	2	40
19.	01/11/1962	MONGOLIA	+	-	+	-	+	3	60
20.	27/10/1972	BANGLADESH	-	-	+	-	-	1	20

21.	04/10/1976	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
22.	18/07/1980	MALDIVES	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
23.	13/04/1982	BHUTAN	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
23.	17/10/1989	COOK ISLANDS	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
24.	10/02/1994	VANUATU	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
25.	17/03/2005	BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
26.	*	SINGAPORE	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
Total according to Region			4	1	5	3	14	27	
Participation Rate %			16,66	4,16	20,83	12,50	53,84	20,76	

DM: Date of Membership, **HR:** Human Rights, **P:** Peace, **UV:** Universal Values, **F:** Freedom, **E:** Equality

* On the UNESCO Web Page there is no data concerning the date on which it became member (UNESCO 2005-c)

(Source: UNESCO 2004-b).

Table 5 shows that the objective having the lowest participation rate is “Peace” with 4.16%. The objective with the highest participation rate is “Equality” with 53.84%. Also the level of overall participation in all objectives does not seem to be so high (only 20.76%). For example, in a study about Korea as a country in this region, “The lack of student rights, teacher rights, and parent rights is discussed, and the need for radical transformation of the educational structure and school culture is proposed” (Kang 2002). Also in Malaysia as another country in this region, educational policies are determined preferential to the Malays (Chiu 2000).

The Rates of Participation of Central Europe and Former USSR Countries in the Objectives of UNESCO

The data on 24 of the region countries have been gathered from the UNESCO internet sources. As it is seen in Table 6, there is no relationship between the date of membership and the rate of the participation in the UNESCO objectives.

Table 6
Central Europe and former USSR Countries

	DM	Country name	HR	P	UV	F	E	Total	Participation Rate %
1.	06/11/1946	POLAND	-	-	-	+	+	2	20
2.	14/09/1948	HUNGARY	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
3.	21/04/1954	RUSSIAN FEDERATION	+	-	-	+	-	2	20
4.	12/05/1954	BELARUS	+	-	+	-	-	2	20
5.	12/05/1954	UKRAINE	+	-	+	-	-	2	20
6.	17/05/1956	BULGARIA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
7.	27/07/1956	ROMANIA	+	-	-	+	-	2	20
8.	16/10/1958	ALBANIA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
9.	07/10/1991	LITHUANIA	+	+	+	+	+	5	100
10.	14/10/1991	ESTONIA	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
11.	14/10/1991	LATVIA	+	-	-	+	+	3	60
12.	22/05/1992	KAZAKHSTAN	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
13.	27/05/1992	REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
14.	27/05/1992	SLOVENIA	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
15.	01/06/1992	CROATIA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
16.	02/06/1992	KYRGYZSTAN	+	-	+	+	+	4	80

17.	09/06/1992	ARMENIA	+	-	+	+	-	3	60
18.	07/10/1992	GEORGIA	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
19.	09/02/1993	SLOVAKIA	+	-	-	-	-	1	20
20.	22/02/1993	CZECH REPUBLIC	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
21.	28/06/1993	THE FORM. YUGOSLAV REP. OF MACEDONIA	+	-	+	+	+	4	80
22.	17/08/1993	TURKMENISTAN	+	-	+	-	+	3	60
23.	26/10/1993	UZBEKISTAN	+	-	+	-	-	2	40
24.	20/12/2000	SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO*	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
Total according to Region			18	1	8	8	15	50	
Participation Rate %			75,0	4,16	33,33	33,33	62,50	41,66	

DM: Date of Membership, **HR:** Human Rights, **P:** Peace, **UV:** Universal Values, **F:** Freedom, **E:** Equality

*The former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia became a Member State on 31 March 1950. The participation of Yugoslavia in meetings of governing bodies and conferences of UNESCO was suspended following Resolution 47/1 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 22 September 1992, which stated that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) could not continue automatically the membership of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Accordingly, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which became a Member State on 20 December 2000, could not automatically succeed the former SFRY as a member of the Organization. Following the adoption of the Constitutional Charter of Serbia and Montenegro by the Assembly of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 4 February 2003, the name of the State of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been changed to 'Serbia and Montenegro' (UNESCO 2005-c).

(Source: UNESCO 2004-b)

Among the countries in the region, two countries, Hungary and Bulgaria, have no educational objectives in accordance with UNESCO's objectives. Lithuania, on the other hand, reflects all the objectives of UNESCO among their national educational objectives. Two countries which seem to be harmonious with UNESCO's objectives at a rate of 80.0% are Kyrgyzstan and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The reason for the high rate of participation in this region is probably the regulations carried out in the USSR era. It was a fact that legal regulations were necessary in all the countries belonging to Republic so as to create the identity of USSR citizenship, for the educational objectives of a country can only be put into effect in no way other than through its constitution. The desired citizen can only be produced thanks to education. Educational objectives were probably under scrutiny in order to see whether the applications were in line with the regulations; however, it was most probably not the case after the fall of the USSR, in other words, these countries may turn out to have poor levels of participation in the UNESCO objectives today. In fact, after the fall of the USSR the characteristics of the countries in this region changed negatively. For example, inequality towards women took the place of the efforts to improve the role of the women in society (Melinowska 1995).

The Rates of Participation of Central South America, North America, Central America and the Caribbean Countries in the Objectives of UNESCO

The data of 30 of the region countries have been reached. As it can be seen in Table 7, the old members are in better conditions than the new members in terms of their compliance with the objectives of UNESCO. In other words, the national education objectives of the old members are more harmonious with UNESCO's objectives than those of the new members. In this region 4 countries (13.33 %) do not have national education objectives which can be accepted to be in relation with UNESCO's objectives. On the other hand, there are 3 (10.0 %) countries which may be regarded to have realized UNESCO's objectives with an absolute rate. These are Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Guatemala.

Table 7
North America, Latin America and the Caribbean Countries

	DM	Country Name	HR	P	UV	F	E	Total	Participation Rate %
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1.	04/11/1946	BRAZIL	+	-	-	+	+	3	60
2.	04/11/1946	CANADA ⁽¹⁾	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
3.	04/11/1946	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	+	+	+	+	+	5	100
4.	04/11/1946	MEXICO	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
5.	13/11/1946	BOLIVIA	+	-	+	+	+	4	80
6.	18/11/1946	HAITI	-	-	+	-	-	1	20
7.	21/11/1946	PERU	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
8.	25/11/1946	VENEZUELA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
9.	22/01/1947	ECUADOR	+	+	+	+	+	5	100
10.	29/08/1947	CUBA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
11.	31/10/1947	COLOMBIA	-	+	+	+	+	4	80
12.	08/11/1947	URUGUAY	+	-	-	+	-	2	40
13.	16/12/1947	HONDURAS	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
14.	28/04/1948	EL SALVADOR	+	+	-	+	+	4	80
15.	15/09/1948	ARGENTINA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
16.	02/01/1950	GUATEMALA	+	+	+	+	+	5	100
17.	19/05/1950	COSTA RICA	+	-	+	+	-	3	60
18.	22/02/1952	NICARAGUA	+	-	+	-	-	2	40
19.	07/07/1953	CHILE	-	-	-	+	-	1	20
20.	20/06/1955	PARAGUAY	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
21.	02/11/1962	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
22.	07/11/1962	JAMAICA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
23.	21/03/1967	GUYANA	+	+	-	-	-	2	40
24.	24/10/1968	BARBADOS	+	-	-	-	-	1	20
25.	17/02/1975	GRENADA	+	-	-	-	+	2	40
26.	09/01/1979	DOMINICA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
27.	06/03/1980	SAINT LUCIA	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
28.	10/05/1982	BELIZE	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
29.	26/10/1983	SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	+	-	-	-	-	1	20
30.	01/10/2003	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ^{(1),(2)}	-	-	-	+	+	2	20
Total according to Region			14	6	8	11	18	57	
Participation Rate %			46,66	20,0	26,66	36,66	60,0	38,0	

DM: Date of Membership, **HR:** Human Rights, **P:** Peace, **UV:** Universal Values, **F:** Freedom, **E:** Equality

⁽¹⁾ In this table, North American countries of Canada and the United States are handled with Latin America and the Caribbean Countries.

⁽²⁾ Previously a member state from November 4, 1946 to December 31, 1984

(Source: UNESCO 2004-b)

It is interesting to note that three poor countries grappling with a series of problems should have a much higher rate of participation (100%) in UNESCO's objectives than the USA, which has a low score of mere 20%. However, the fact that the countries in this region which are commonly considered to be developed have a low participation rate should not lead us to think that they are far from fulfilling the objectives of UNESCO in their education programs. On the contrary, they seem to be closer to UNESCO objectives than many countries in the world. In the United States, for instance, nearly all adults — 97% of both men and women — can read and write (Africare 2005). On the other hand, the actual situation may prove just the opposite of what the objectives aspire to achieve. For example, the United States might claim to be the leader of the free world; however, in a gender gap study, measuring equality between women and men in 58 countries, the United States scored 17 (Lopez and Zahidi 2005).

As Table 7 reveals, the objective which has the lowest participation rate is "Peace" with 20%. The concepts which have the highest participation rate are "Equality" (60.0%) and "Human Rights" (46.66%). When the situation of all the countries is considered, the overall participation rate in the countries of this region appears to be 36.66%.

***The Rates of Participation of Western European Countries
in the Objectives of UNESCO***

The data on 20 of the region countries have been obtained. As it is presented in Table 8, there is a meaningful correlation between the membership dates of these countries to UNESCO and the harmony with the UNESCO objectives. In this region, the number of the countries which do not reflect the concepts in their own national education objectives is 5 (25.0%). On the other hand, the country which has an absolute rate of participation in the objectives of UNESCO is Austria

As it is seen in Table 8, among these region countries, the rate of participation in all the UNESCO objectives is lower than 20%, except the concepts of “Equality” with 65% and “Freedom” with %30. However, a study dealing with the problem of gender and higher education in Sweden, a country from this region, states that women, who make up the largest group of students in the beginning of higher education studies, slowly lose their position as they progress through higher education (Wojciechowska 1995). At the same time, it is possible to say that European Union countries are sensitive in the practices of “equality” (Rees 2001). For example, Britain passed Great Britain's Race Relations Act 2000 to promote equality in education (Garg 2002; Hall 2001).

**Table 8
Western European Countries**

	DM	Country name	HR	P	UV	F	E	Total	Participation Rate %
1.	04/11/1946	DENMARK	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
2.	04/11/1946	FRANCE	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
3.	04/11/1946	GREECE	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
4.	04/11/1946	NORWAY	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
5.	29/11/1946	BELGIUM (French and Flemish)	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
6.	01/01/1947	NETHERLANDS	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
7.	27/10/1947	LUXEMBOURG	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
8.	27/01/1948	ITALY	-	-	-	+	+	2	40
9.	13/08/1948	AUSTRIA	+	+	+	+	+	5	100
10.	28/01/1949	SWITZERLAND	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
11.	23/01/1950	SWEDEN	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
12.	11/07/1951	GERMANY	-	-	-	+	+	2	40
13.	30/01/1953	SPAIN	+	+	-	+	-	3	60
14.	10/10/1956	FINLAND	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
15.	03/10/1961	IRELAND	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
16.	08/06/1964	ICELAND	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
17.	10/02/1965	MALTA	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
18.	31/09/1972	PORTUGAL ⁽¹⁾	-	-	-	+	+	2	40
19.	20/10/1993	ANDORRA	+	+	+	+	-	4	80
20.	01/07/1997	U K OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND ⁽²⁾	-	-	-	-	+	1	20
Total according to Region			3	3	2	6	13	27	
Participation Rate %			15,0	15,0	10,0	30,0	65,0	27,0	

DM: Date of Membership, **HR:** Human Rights, **P:** Peace, **UV:** Universal Values, **F:** Freedom, **E:** Equality

⁽¹⁾ Previously a Member State from March 11, 1965 to December 31, 1972.

⁽²⁾ Previously a member state from November 4, 1946 to December 31, 1985

(Source: UNESCO 2004-b)

The rate of countries showing similarity to the UNESCO's objectives in their own education objectives is 27% when the all objectives taken together. It is interesting to find that the participation rate

of industrialized and democratic countries of Western Europe is much lower than expected. Rauner's observation that "Western European countries are a little slower to change from their older form of civics to a more 'global' form" (1999, 99) is quite to the point when UNESCO's universal status is taken into account.

Discussion and Conclusion

UNESCO has 191 member countries. The data collected from the official web site of UNESCO on 157 of these countries were analyzed to find out the participation rate of these member countries in the UNESCO's educational objectives in terms of the degree of reflection of these objectives in member countries' national educational objectives. As the results presented earlier prove, only 5 (3.18%) of the 157 countries' educational objectives involve key words reflecting the UNESCO's educational objectives. The rates of participation of the countries having national education objectives in accordance with UNESCO's objectives based on the UNESCO region categories are as follows: Asia and Oceania 20.76%; Africa South of Sahara 24.21%; Middle East and North Africa 31.57%; Western Europe 27.0%; South, and Central America and the Caribbean 36.66%; Central Europe and the former USSR countries 41.66%. It is also evident that there is no direct correlation between the level of economic development and the degree of participation in the UNESCO's educational objectives; that is, the countries in the category of poor or underdeveloped and the countries accepted to be rich or developed seem to give the same degree of importance in their national educational objectives in terms of the rate of participation in the UNESCO objectives.

The mean value of the rate of participation of all countries in these five UNESCO objectives is 31.18%. That is, only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the member states reflect UNESCO's objectives in their national educational objectives. Probably that is why "UNESCO's educational activities have continuously been used to fill in the gap between the organization's wide mandate and the increasingly divergent interests of its member nations" (Mundy 1999, 48). For UNESCO, this may mean a very minimal influence over the member countries.

When the key concepts that define the UNESCO's objectives are considered in regard to all the countries, the participation rate of all countries to the concept of "Equality" is 56.05%. The participation rate of member countries to the remaining key concepts are as follows: "Human Rights 35.03%, "Freedom" 25.47%, "Universal Values" 19.10%, and "Peace" 15.28%. As a whole, the average participation rate of each country to UNESCO's objectives is 30.19%. [ideal participation = 157 (members) x 5 (objectives) = 785 (100%); actual participation = 46 (total according to Table 3) + 30 (total according to Table 4) + 27 (total according to Table 5) + 50 (total according to Table 6) + 57 (total according to Table 7) + 27 (total according to Table 8) = 237 (30.19%)]. For this reason, it can be said that the rates of UNESCO objectives accepted by the members have a very low percentage. However, among the concepts mentioned above, peace has gradually become to be dominant especially after September 11, 2001 (Torrence 2002; Garbarino 2002; Rizvi 2003). Moreover, whether it came into existence by means of deliberate efforts or not (a claim that should be seriously taken into consideration), SARS (earthquake in Pakistan or virus of H1N5 or earthquake in the South Asia or Hurricane Katrina in the USA) is another important example of how a specific problem in a certain region would become a universal one. However, peace education must today be accepted as an important aspect of national and international education (Harris and Forcey 1999; Adelson 2000; Kaman and Harris 2000; Page 2000-2001-2004; Rees 2000; McCarthy 2002; Salomon and Nevo 2002).

The results presented in this paper along with the views of serious critics of similar other organizations such as the World Bank and IMF should be kept in mind; for example, Sewell (1975) had pointed out "UNESCO and similar organizations have not been more successful because of the failure of the governments" and Camdessus observes that

There is urgent issue of the political responsibility of international institutions, including the IMF. These institutions are too often portrayed as unaccountable technocracies. They are, of course, responsible and accountable to their member states. The problem is not that institutions are not accountable but that they are not perceived as such. Also, some governments find it convenient not to express their public support for actions that they actually have supported in the executive boards. Governments have even until recently been reluctant to publish their agreements, thereby heightening the perception that these lack accountability (2001, 369).

However, it must also be admitted that it is not so easy to find solutions to the universal problems in an economy-based competitive world in which big companies have a dominant role. Likewise, re-nationalization is not the solution for these problems. The solution can only be found by means of an effective collaboration among the international organizations and countries. In doing so, it is also necessary to pay sufficient attention to national identities.

The common future of world will depend on the degree to which all the people become better world citizens, creating the unity within diversity which stems from an intercultural education which helps us to build strong cultural roots, to understand and respect the cultures of others and to learn to live together harmoniously in multicultural communities (Power 2000, 162-163; Sanderson 2004, 17)

This study does not suggest that UNESCO should be dissolved and replaced by a new organization since it fails to fulfill its functions. However, it is obvious that there is incongruity between the educational objectives of UNESCO as an organization and the educational objectives of the states as members. Therefore, simply stated, UNESCO must reconsider its role, functions, objectives and institutional strategies as an international, intergovernmental organization. As Kilmann argues, a formal organization's barriers to success can be diagnosed by examining all the documents that indicate direction: statements of vision, mission, purpose, goals, and objectives (1989, 10). What UNESCO can do as a first step is to focus more on the issue of education within the framework of cooperation with member countries. Since education prepares young children for adulthood, the preservation of the world values and passing on the world heritage to the next generation has to be the responsibility of education. It is in the educational circles that action ought to be planned and executed to provide opportunity to all for living effectively in a multicultural environment. The role of factors like equality, human rights, universal values, peace and freedom is well acknowledged in the policy formulation and has always existed in all the education systems.

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Notes

¹ UNICEF (2003) with other partners (UNESCO and other UN agencies, DFID, Swedish SIDA and other donors, World Bank, ADB, and civil society) within a framework (Sector wide approaches (SWAP) to education).

From Reflective Practice to Practical Wisdom: Towards a Post-Foundational Teacher Education

Mustafa Yunus Eryaman*

Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Abstract:

The author situates this paper within ongoing debates in related areas such as reflective practice, critical pedagogy, practical wisdom and critical theory. First, the author identifies some of the problems in the present notions of reflective teaching and progressive teacher education. He analyzes and compares the traditional-technical and interpretive literature on teaching and teacher education. None of these conceptions deal with teaching and teacher education in a reflexive way. Some problems the author identifies are located in the history of the concept “reflective teaching” and its interpretive underpinnings. Others emerge from particular applications within teacher education itself. The author’s critique challenges the prevalent conceptions of interpretive reflective teaching, and proceeds to offer a critical framework for further reconstruction of the theory and practice of reflective teaching. The final section offers an alternative conceptualization of teaching and teacher education as a post-foundational and moral-political philosophy.

**Mustafa Yunus Eryaman* is the managing editor of the International Journal of Progressive Education, and the associate editor of the Turkish Journal of Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research. He received his M.Ed. from University of Missouri-Columbia and his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is a member of the international advisory board of the International Association of Qualitative Inquiry.

Introduction

When I began working with preservice teachers, teaching methods courses and interviewing preservice teachers for my research, I soon learned they were eager to hear about real stories of classroom teachers and their experiences in diverse classroom settings. Whenever I talked to passionate preservice teachers, I noticed that they were also reluctant to share stories of their experiences in classrooms. I observed that many of these preservice teachers struggled to make sense of what they had learned in their university courses, at least with respect to how they could apply that knowledge to their field work.

According to Harrington and Garrison (1992) when entering the new teaching environment, preservice teachers engage in "an initiation into the practices, beliefs, and values shared by a culture" (p.730). The way in which preservice teachers learn these "practices, beliefs, and values" is complicated, in part because preservice teachers believe that they are receiving mixed messages in their teacher education courses, field experience, and from their own experience as students (Fieman Nemser & Buchman, 1985; Grossman, 1990; Kagan, 1993). Whether or not they are learning the "practices, beliefs, and values" that will make them effective teachers with a particular student body is even more difficult to discern. Problems exist between conflicting ideas (or preservice teachers' perceptions of conflicting ideas) found in university coursework, their prior experiences with schooling, and the views of the cooperating teachers and school districts within which they have their student teaching. Having based their teaching upon the theories and methods learned from university courses, academic books and research texts, preservice teachers have often mused why lessons work well with some students or classes while failing miserably with others (Kagan, 1993; Grossman, 1990). The problem has always been that there is no secret teaching formula, no fail proof method or strategy (Garrison, 1992). This, as I have learned from my teaching experiences and from the stories of other teachers, is because each student and each classroom is different. Many students respond to circumstances in a variety of ways depending to a large degree on issues/events outside of the classroom. What has joined me with other teachers and preservice teachers has been the sustaining influence of stories about classroom experiences, and how those experiences were shaped by cultural, moral-political, and ideological circumstances of school culture and by the students themselves.

Many of these stories addressed the disconnection between theory and practice, and the contradictions between formalized, complex, sometimes contradictory messages of teacher education programs on notions of "effective teaching" and "good practice." And from those stories where teachers and preservice teachers were overwhelmingly white, female, monolingual, and middle-class, and where students in the classrooms were diverse in cultural identity, socio-economic class, and language, I learned how crucial it was for teachers and preservice teachers to understand teaching as cultural, social and moral-political practices in order to become an "effective" teacher. What I learned from those stories was that teachers must realize that educational policies and teaching practices hold implications for cultural, moral-political and ideological transmission. As such, teaching practices are not limited to the cognitive strategies and methods, but are products of socio-culturally and politically constituted knowledge.

This paper is about understanding teaching as practical wisdom from a hermeneutic perspective. It aims to argue why teacher educators need to think of teaching practice as more like deliberative, performed, ethical and aesthetic experience and less like technical, scientific and controlled activity. It is an attempt to show why the current literature on reflection and teacher education is inadequate, and why teacher educators need a multidimensional hermeneutic approach towards teacher education.

The paper is divided into two sections. In the first section, I explore the traditional-technical and reflective-interpretive views of teaching practice and teacher education, and then analyze the limitations of these views, and why it is necessary to move reflective practice to practical wisdom.

In the second section, I describe what practical wisdom is, and how it is related to hermeneutic philosophy. Then, I demonstrate what a post-foundational and critical view of a teacher education looks like, and what its main characteristics are, and how it differs from the reflection oriented teacher education. This section will also bridge the theoretical framework to the research methodology.

Traditional and Contemporary Understandings of Teacher Education

Two contrasting epistemological approaches dominate the discourses and literature on teaching and teacher education: *traditional-technical* and *reflective-interpretive* (Carr, 1995; McLaren, 2000; Eisner, 2002).

In the first approach, teaching practice and teacher education are seen as a kind of instrumental and procedural activity that is the application of a technical, universal, and instrumental methods and procedures to teaching practice in order to gradually remove human error in the activity. Teacher education programs, which base their frameworks and philosophies on the characteristics of *traditional-technical* approach, require preservice teachers to develop a mastery of technical components that are applicable to all teaching contexts and student populations. These beliefs are captured in statements such as, "Treat all students the same regardless of who they are," "Let state standards and standardized tests to drive your instruction," and "Good teaching anywhere is good teaching everywhere." It is disturbing for some preservice teachers to overcome these beliefs, and to accept teaching as a highly contextualized process. In fact, teaching is as much a social performance, a moral endeavor, and a cultural script, as it is a technical craft (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; McLaren, 2000; Eisner, 2002).

Much of the contemporary literature on reflective practice and teacher education, however, presents an explicitly oppositional stance toward these teacher education programs which are characterized as "technical" or "instrumental", where preservice teachers would be seen as the object of research or the implementer of techniques which others devise. (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Eisner, 2002; Noffke & Brennan, 2005).

Before 1980s, many teacher education programs integrated the technical and instrumental view of teaching practice and teacher education into their educational activities (Eisner, 2002; Higgins, 2001; Noffke & Brennan, 2005). These programs differ because of the varying definitions of teaching practice, and methods of implementation (Tom, 1991). Despite the theoretical and methodological differences, these programs aimed to reduce teaching practice and teacher education into individual and technical processes that can be instrumentalized (Eisner, 2002; Higgins, 2001). Thus, teacher education programs become structured around the premise that if teacher educators provide the correct stimuli, then preservice teachers would not only learn, but their learning could be measured through observations of their expected behaviors. The main practical consequence of the traditional teacher education movement was that it led to a long series of strategies for schools and universities such as assessment by drill-practice strategies and standardized tests, and management by objective, outcome-based education, and teacher performance evaluation systems. The traditional teacher education placed the responsibility for learning directly on the shoulders of teachers. Teachers were led to believe that if learning was not occurring, then it was their responsibility to restructure the environment, determine the most appropriate objective reinforcement to promote the desired student behavior, or provide a negative reinforcement to extinguish unwanted behaviors.

It is usual to hear teacher education discussed in these traditional programs as the activity of an expert consultant. Teacher educators as expert consultants in these programs possess a special set of tools and competencies that enable them to transmit a particular kind of service to preservice teachers. These programs sustain a view of teaching in which children are to sit and listen while the teacher tells them what they need to know. The students play a passive role in their education and have no input on how or what they learn. This type of education does not recognize the differences in children's backgrounds as important to their learning. Nor does it acknowledge the different ways in which students process information and the fact that students will learn most efficiently from various methods of education. Freire (1972) call this type of education as "banking education" which isolates the learner from the content and process of education. It assumes that the teacher knows everything; the students know nothing. The teacher narrates, prescribes and deposits information which the student then must mechanically receive, memorize and repeat. This transfer of information becomes an emblem and an instrument of oppression that inhibits inquiry, creativity and dialogue. The purpose of reflection for the preservice teachers in this model of teacher education is to decide how to proceed in practice by making a selection from these bodies of knowledge provided by the teacher educator. In this light, teaching practice is understood as a matter of theoretical rationality, a problem-solving based on theoretical knowledge of how to achieve ends (Eisner, 2002). The practical consequence of this type of teacher education for preservice teachers is that after years of struggling to adjust the objective and context-free traditional teaching methods and strategies as classroom teachers, they fell short of producing positive effects within the complex context of the diverse classrooms and left feeling shortchanged and cheated by a system that placed the guilt for students' failure to learn in their hands. As a result of this pressure and guilt, most of these teachers leave their teaching carrier by their third or forth-year of teaching.

Furthermore, social scientism in the traditional model of teacher education "allows" educators to make the very important assertion that teaching practice not only could be understood by using instrumental, content-free and objective teaching techniques but also could be fixed by using these techniques (Erickson and Gutierrez 2002). Generally, ontological issues—our 'being' in the world as moral, political, social agents—are not part of this model. In this technical and instrumental view of teaching, focusing only on "what works" and not paying enough attention on development of a critical, social and political stance toward teaching produces regulatory and disciplinary powers that serve as technologies to reinforce and inscribe resources to Eurocentric, universalistic and objectivist teaching practice and teacher education (McLaren, 2000). Because today teachers work in increasingly diverse schools where equity issues, multiple contradictory reforms, and power differentials abound (Ladson-Billings, 1999), teaching defined as a technical and isolated skill is inadequate to support meaningful teacher learning. Moreover, the experiences and status of racial and language minorities in schools require teachers to develop a political consciousness about the technical skills they are asked to acquire. In this way, teachers avoid having their work become "nothing more than the dissemination of rhetoric" (Morrow & Torres, 1995, p. 268).

Another commonly questioned assumption of the traditional view of teacher education is that preservice teachers best practice teaching by aiming to redeem teaching practice from the political, ethical, racial, and gendered discourses of everyday life (McLaren, 2000). This is to be accomplished by reducing or eliminating, the contingency, ambiguity, and situated particularity of teaching practice to a more rational activity. Making it more rational means using some procedure such as drill-practice activities or standardized tests that will not permit teaching practice to be infected by subjective and political preferences, mere tastes, old habits, or desires (Carr, 1995). Teaching, then, is an individual, cognitive process in which one tries to make rational sense of an outside reality. The conception of teaching and teacher education does not generally take into account teaching on what it means to be a social and political agent in the world (Higgins, 2001). Rather than reflecting critically on the race-related and culturally diverse situations presented, they merely focus on what state standards and prescribed lesson plans for standardized testing ask them to do. And teacher educators play a key role in

this rational process as the providers of the prescribed information and strategies necessary to shape and control the natural and social environments. This self-awareness of teaching practice is closely related to modernist definitions of educational experience. According to Schwandt (2002), "The kind of education assumed here is largely utilitarian and instrumentalist; it is an education in learning to solve problems. Education is about acquiring power so that one can manage and control environment, society, and self" (p.13).

The central constitutive component of teaching practice in this utilitarian and instrumentalist view is the acquisition and proficient utilization of certain techniques in the performance of identifiable teaching tasks. Practice can be well learned by teaching its parts and it can be well measured by its products. Learning to teach for preservice teachers is more a matter of what the good student can do at the end of teacher education program than of what he or she will become in the process. The teacher educators' pedagogical assumption in this traditional model is that a particular methodology, one that is experientially based within a replicated, but controlled, practice context will initiate good students into the constitutive techniques of practice and, most problematically, that this initiation will somehow provide a sufficient basis for generalization to all practice contexts. The teacher educators' assumption concerning the teaching practice is that once good preservice teachers are initiated into the objective and universal techniques, further practice is needed only to complete the acquisition. These teacher educators tend to ignore using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them. For example, they do not acknowledge the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum. It is precisely this version of teacher education that the concept of reflective teaching at the interpretive and progressive view has been developed to resist.

Adler and Goodman (1986) noted that the technocratic view of teaching and teacher education with emphasizes individualism; efficiency, rationality and objectivity dominated educational thought in the twentieth century. While school systems promote the use of pre-determined instructional programs, teachers merely assume the role of manager or technician of the pre-determined curriculum and do not question curricular decisions. This leads to the acceptance of teaching practices as "embodying the teaching domain, to be accommodated and adjusted too rather than revised or even restructured" (Beyer, 1984:37).

Today, the current neo-conservative political climate and federal legislative agenda presents teacher educators and teachers with many challenges to keep the efforts of educators promoting an alternative-liberal reflective teaching alive. Because of the neo-conservative backlash in education educators are currently experiencing in US, and the federal invasion into decisions concerning teacher education, educational assessment and classroom instruction (Allington, 2002), there may be little room left for the alternative reflective teaching and its proponents. Federal and state neo-conservative agendas that focus on accountability through standardized tests and scripted instruction designed by commercial testing companies may provide little opportunities for liberal democratic teaching and teacher education. It seems that teachers are being told what to teach and how to teach it, leaving little room for teacher intellectualism and instructional decision making; both hallmarks of an alternative reflective teaching movement. Standardization would eventually lead back to the technical view of teaching and teacher education that educators were trying to avoid when they envisioned reflective practice in the first place.

Understanding Reflective Teaching and Limits of Interpretive Teacher Education

Since the early 1980s, an enormous amount of reflective practice literature has surfaced, and reflective teaching became popularized in the literature on teacher education. In the last 25 years, many

different philosophical and political underpinnings of the versions of reflective practice and teacher education have been promoted (Eisner, 2002; Noffke & Brennan, 2005).

The advocates of reflective practice and reflective teaching mainly argued that the view of educational and teaching practice implied in the "traditional and technical view of teacher education" – i.e., the idea of teaching and education as an intervention or instrument that is an objective and universal means to bring about pre-given ends – is not appropriate for the field of education. For them, what is needed for teacher education is a progressive view of teaching practice which is able to acknowledge the non-causal, social, moral and political nature of educational practice and inquiry. What is needed, in other words, is an acknowledgement of the fact that teaching is a practical and interpretive accomplishment, rather than a mere technical or technological activity. In this progressive and interpretive view, the most important question for teacher educators and preservice teachers is therefore not only about mere technical and procedural evaluation of efficacy of their practices but also about the potential social and practical value of what they do. For the proponents of this view, this is why the instrumentalist and universalistic conservative agenda of teaching and teacher education is insufficient, because teaching practice is more than the simple application of strategies or techniques to bring about predetermined ends – there is always the question about the educational, social, moral and political value of such techniques and there are questions about the specificity of particular contexts in which problems need to be addressed. For example, one of the preservice teachers in my teacher education class recently described the students in her fourth-grade student teaching placement: Of twenty students, three were Latino, five were African American, three were Asian American, seven were European American, and two had just immigrated, one from Turkey and one from Pakistan. Five of the children were receiving instruction in English as a second language. Two children had significant learning disabilities, so a special education teacher provided in-class support for two hours every morning. As a White, middle-class, monolingual woman who had grown up in a predominantly White neighborhood, attended relatively homogeneous K-12 schools, and been in an overwhelmingly White teacher education program, my student was somewhat in shock by the diversity of students in the actual classroom. Not surprisingly, she worried about how she would meet the needs of these diverse students. Moreover, having gone to elementary and secondary school before the beginning of "inclusive education," she was not used to the presence of children with disabilities in general education classes. It was evident for my student that if she did not design her lessons specifically for these diverse students, and incorporate culturally mediated activities, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in classroom instruction, she would miserably fail in that class. Her experience in the class helped her understand that teaching is more than the simple application of strategies or techniques, there are questions about the moral, social, cultural and political issues and problems need to be addressed in particular classroom contexts. It is precisely the version of teacher education that the concept of reflective teaching at the interpretive and progressive view has been developed to help teachers understand and deal with the complexities of teaching in diverse classroom settings.

For Dewey (1933), the purpose of reflective practice is to change teacher's classroom practice or actions, and their process of arriving at the decisions they make concerning curriculum and instruction based on the specific case at hand. If reflection did not lead to action, it was simply a waste of time. In this sense, the purpose of reflective practice is concerned with the actions taken by the teacher, the process of arriving at these decisions and the various consequences and outcomes of those decisions. Reflection must be linked to action; if not, teachers are simply reflecting for the sake of reflecting and not using their new understandings to improve instructional practice. Following Dewey, Schon (1983) made a similar suggestions and argued that

When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. His inquiry is not limited to a deliberation about means which depends upon a prior agreement about ends. He does not keep means and ends separate,

but defines them interactively as he frames a problematic situation. He does not separate thinking from doing, ratiocinating his way to a decision which he must later convert to action. Because his experimenting is a kind of action, implementation is built into his inquiry. (p. 68-69)

According to Schon, professional (teacher) education undervalues practical knowledge and grants privileged status to intellectual scientific and rational knowledge forms that may only be marginally relevant to practical acting. Schon's approach represents a significant departure from positivist and technological views of practitioners as technicians who consume university-produced knowledge, and are dependent upon experts for future professional development.

Following Schon's interpretive approach towards reflective practice and teaching, many research studies developed and analyzed the dialogical, interpretive, inquiry based and pragmatic models of reflection and teacher education. For example, Jay and Johnson (2002) analyzed the use of the reflective seminar in which reflective practice is modeled and developed through dialogue and the implementation of a portfolio that requires reflective writing in multiple iterations with support and scaffolding from a mentor. According to the authors, in this way of thinking, dialogue and deliberation are procedures or means; in fact they are regarded as the best means to enhance the use of reflective practice. Similarly, Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) explain how tools such as cognitive apprenticeship, interpersonal skills, collaborative problem-solving, and coaching and supervision illustrate their posited framework for teacher reflection. Tremmel (1993) describes some of the most important tools he uses like free writing in which stream of consciousness is recorded on paper so that attention can be paid to what is in the mind, here and now. Loughran (2002) studies the development of reflective practice emphasizing modeling as a pedagogical tool. Investigating his own practices like thinking aloud and maintaining a teaching journal, he concludes that reflectivity can be developed if teacher educators practice what they preach. Another example of this kind of work can be found in LaBoskey's 1994 study where she studies the development of reflective practice in preservice teachers as evidenced through the tool she terms inquiry based case investigation.

Even though these research studies successfully demonstrated the interpretive and practical dimensions of reflective teaching, in practice there remains a tendency in many teacher education programs and research studies to misinterpret reflective practice and reduce it into an individual epistemological process that can be instrumentalized (Eisner, 2002; Higgins, 2001) Many theorists have suggested that the concept of reflective practice in these studies and programs is often so vague and ill-defined that it is practically devoid of meaning (Rodgers, 2002; Zeichner, 1992; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Bullough, 1989; Calderhead, 1989). For example, at one extreme is Cruickshank's (1985) reflective teaching, a series of highly prescribed steps that take place in decontextualized settings. Roth (1989) describes twenty four procedures of a reflective practitioner. The procedures range from those that correspond to cognitive models of reflection and teaching techniques to an embracing of uncertainty like "adapt and adjust to instability and change," to more formal procedures like "hypothesize," "synthesize and test" (p. 32). The list reads much like the upper levels from Bloom's taxonomy, and while it does seem to take into account the notion of different time frames, it does not locate the processes in the day-to-day work that constitutes professional practice. Griffith and Tans (1992) provide a very comprehensive way of categorizing reflective processes that considers both time frames and purpose. They identify the dimensions of rapid reflection, repair, review, research, and retheorizing, contending that all are cognitive accomplishments.

These labels imply how reflection occurs in individual teacher's mind, and that the intersection of such dimensions influences action.

In all these studies, reflective practice is seen as a kind of individual activity which relies too

much on the “inner-cognitive” processes of teachers and not enough on social and political dimensions of teaching. These studies mistakenly suggest that once traditional structural relations and classroom practices are transformed in the reflection oriented activities and procedures, preservice teachers would have nothing left to challenge and develop reflective action toward the classroom practices and materials. Promoting a policy of encouraging teacher reflection, while instituting cognitive assessment strategies over preservice teachers and teacher education courses by using procedural and individualistic techniques, serves to obscure the nature and growth of teacher educators and preservice teachers under a rhetoric of “reflective practice”. Perhaps the term “reflective teaching” performs a hidden or misinterpreted function in practical level. On the surface, it appears to call upon a particular intellectual tradition. Yet it also operates to further confine the freedom allowed to teachers and preservice teachers to think politically and deliberatively about their own work. Zeichner and Liston (1990) criticize the literature on mere cognitive and individualistic view of reflective teaching and further argue that

we do not think it makes much sense to attempt to promote or assess reflective practice in general (e.g., Boud, Keogh, and Walker, 1985; Kirby and Teddlie, 1989; Stout, 1989) without establishing some clear priorities for the reflection that emerge out of a reasoned educational and social philosophy. We do not accept the implication that exists throughout much of the literature that teachers' actions are necessarily “better” just because they are more deliberate and intentional. (p.24)

Higgins (2001) and Eisner (2002) also argue that despite their move away from teaching as technical and instrumental practice, these programs and research studies failed to adequately address issues of ethics, politics, deliberation, aesthetics, and rhetoric in teacher education, because their view of self as cognizing agent in teaching practice does not take into account the inescapable role of social, political and aesthetical dimensions of teaching.

Focusing upon the social, moral and political content of preservice teachers' reflections, therefore, is crucial in order to bring substance and meaning to teaching process. In an attempt to highlight the notion that moral and political content matters, several scholars have attempted to provide conceptual clarity by organizing the field in order to point out the different dimensions along which reflective content can be understood.

Van Manen (1977), for example, makes a similar critique of misinterpretation of reflection and further argues that this view of reflection does not always make explicit how power issues intersect with culture and learning. In order to eliminate the limitations of interpretive view of reflective teaching and practice, Van Manen develops a complex model of reflection based on three arbitrary epistemological paradigms as positivist, critical, and interpretive. These paradigms, in turn, define the parameters of three hierarchical “levels of reflectivity” (Van Manen, 1977, p. 226). The first and “lowest” level, *technical reflection*, is concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of means to achieve certain ends, which themselves are not open to criticism or modification. The second, *practical reflection*, allows for open examination not only of means, but also of goals, the assumptions upon which these are based, and the actual outcomes. This kind of reflecting, in contrast to the technical form, recognizes that meanings are not absolute, but are embedded in, and negotiated through, language. The third and “highest” level, *critical reflection*, as well as including emphases from the previous two, also calls for considerations involving moral and ethical criteria, making judgments about whether professional activity is equitable, just and respectful of persons or not. In addition, critical reflection locates any analysis of personal action within wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts. The aim of such “critical reflection” is not the effectiveness of the technical level, nor the understanding of the interpretive level, but:

a distortion-free model of a communication situation that specifies social roles and social structures of a living together in unforced communication; that is, there exists no repressive

dominance, no asymmetry or inequality among the participants of the educational processes. Universal consensus, free from delusions or distortion, is the ideal of a deliberative rationality that pursues worthwhile educational ends in self-determination, community, and on the basis of justice, equality, and freedom. (Van Manen, 1977, p. 227)

Following Noffke & Brennan (2005), I do not refute such an important and comprehensive idea, in fact, such a refutation is not the aim in this paper. However there are problems in using this Habermasian framework to the everyday thoughts and practices of classroom teachers. Van Manen's "ways of being practical," even though sound in their logical correspondence to his "ways of knowing," seem to assign the major part of teachers' thoughts to the "lowest" level (Noffke & Brennan; 2005). The actual contents of their reflections remain undifferentiated and obscure. They are also, at least by implication, not as important. Van Manen argues that his purpose was "to demonstrate that it is only through such critical reflection that the questions of greatest significance to the field can be adequately addressed" (p. 205).

Noffke & Brennan (2005) argues that we should not disprove the argument that issues of "greatest significance" can only be achieved through "critical reflection," but that the hierarchical levels define away most teachers thinking without suggesting a clear contrast toward which a teacher might aspire. My aim here is to challenge the idea that there is an implicit elitism that not only names the "practical" of most teachers as lowly and less significant, "but also offers no guidance as to how to increase their level of reflexivity" (Noffke & Brennan; 2005, p.63). In fact, connections and interrelationships between levels of reflection are obscured, making the development of critical and practical reflexivity more difficult. There is also evidence that teachers are not always receptive to a critical perspective on reflection (Johnson, 2001; Zeichner, 1990); the problem is framed as one of resistance. The challenge becomes, therefore, how to create conditions for and support of reflection and learning so teachers become professionals committed to social justice education in schools serving predominantly working-class minority students. Based on the result of their research study, Zeichner and Liston (1987) also make a similar critique and argues that Van Manen's "levels," while corresponding to the goals of their teacher education program, did not adequately capture the existential and practical reality of the teaching discourses. They attributed this to Van Manen's reliance on "categories which were formulated within the realm of the theoretic," while the discourse of teachers and preservice teachers was primarily concerned with "practical problems" - those relating to "past, present, and future pedagogical actions" (p. 161).

Summary

I have identified some of the problems in the present notions of reflective teaching and teacher education. I argued that none of these conceptions deal with reflective practice and teacher education in a reflexive way. My critique challenges the prevalent conceptions of reflection and proceeds to offer new direction for further reconstruction of the theory and practice of reflective teaching. The final section of this paper offers an alternative conceptualization of "reflective practice" designed to address many of the concerns I raised, while acknowledging that some will always need to be addressed as a continual process.

Teaching as Phronesis: Towards a Post-Foundational Teacher Education

An alternative post-foundational way of thinking about teacher education put ontological, and practical issues of selfhood and human agency at center stage, and describes teaching practice as a political, ideological, gendered, sexual, racial, transformative, social, discursive, engaged, indigenous, lived, or performed *Praxis*, accordingly (Car, 1999; Dressman, 1998; McLaren, 2002). In this approach,

the distinction between ontology and epistemology seen in positivism and post-positivism gives way to a view that what can be known is intertwined with the interaction between a particular practitioner and a particular context (Carr, 1999). This transactional and subjective epistemology and ontology that is value mediated and value dependent leads preservice teachers to see a progression towards good judgment as an excellence of their practice at both global (outside of their communities) and local context (in their school communities). This interaction is dialectical, transforming misapprehensions of historically mediated structures into a view of how the structures might be changed (McLaren, 2000).

This proposal neither suggests another teacher education model to define what teaching practice "really" is nor rejects the progressive and interpretive dimensions of reflective practice. Rather, it restructures reflective practice as a multidimensional practical philosophy, and brings our notions of "practice" and "good teaching" closer to the moral and political realities of everyday life activities. This multidimensional view emphasizes and improves the shared nature of reflective teaching through three concepts: situated cultural activity, teaching as a social, political, moral and practical accomplishment, and teaching as a deliberative and action oriented critical process. Teaching is understood as a social accomplishment that is embedded in everyday activities situated in school cultures that are social, cultural, moral and practical in nature, where interactions with others are an important medium in which reflection occurs. This multidimensional view of teaching and teacher education requires deliberation and dialogue, and the exchange of ideas where reflection itself is not contained wholly in the mind of the individual but is shared through socio-political discourses and artifacts that are embedded in the social activity of the school community. For example, action research, collaborative curriculum planning and policy making, participating and developing teacher unions, organizing boycotts and strikes, etc. require teachers to discuss their beliefs and practices within the routines and outside of their daily work. As teachers participate in the practices of the community and use strategies and techniques to actively take part in political and intellectual decision making processes of their school communities, teaching itself becomes a form of practical, social, political, and intellectual accomplishment, or what Freire (1972) calls "Praxis." For Freire, Praxis without the regulative ideas of emancipation and social justice is blind; and the critical reflection without a concrete content from our practical interest in communicative practice is empty. It is teacher educators' task to show how an understanding of educational theory and practice is guided by both a recovery of shared tradition and a projection of an emancipated inquiry to their preservice teachers. But, how do teacher educators accomplish this task? And, how do they teach the ability to accomplish the task to preservice teachers?

For Bernstein (1983), this is a moral and political accomplishment, and this moral and political task requires a type of wisdom what he calls "phronesis," or "practical wisdom."

Practical wisdom, or phronesis, according to Aristotle (1976), refers to an inquirer's capacity to discern what is worth doing together with the ability to get it done, a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods. Practical wisdom differs from theoretical wisdom (*scientia*) by a conclusion in human action. "In the first place, the end of a practice is not to produce an object or artifact but to realize some morally worthwhile 'good'" (Carr, 1995, p. 68). Practically wise activities (*praxis*) for Carr (1995) have no fixed ends. The ends are constantly revised as "goods" are discerned. Praxis, morally worthwhile action, is not about choosing the right knowledge. It is about a way of being (Kessels, 1996). The starting point is what it means to be ethical, practical and political. What is needed for teacher education is a view of teaching practice which is able to acknowledge the non-causal, social, moral and political nature of teaching practice. What is needed, in other words, is an acknowledgement of the fact that teaching is a moral, social, practical and political accomplishment, rather than a mere technical or technological activity. The most important question for teacher educators and preservice teachers is therefore not only about mere technical and individual evaluation of efficacy of their practices but also about the potential social, moral and political value of what they do. In order to accomplish this task, phronesis, as a capacity acquired through experience, helps preservice teachers to ask penetrating

questions, provide insight into the implications of their actions and events, and to advise appropriate courses of action. Phronesis involves the ability to understand how complex and messy situations hang together in teaching and other educational practices, and to discern the affordances whereby appropriate actions might be founded. For example, in the case of my preservice teacher mentioned above, it was evident for her that if she did not relate her lessons and teaching strategies specifically to the diverse students' needs and backgrounds, and incorporate culturally mediated activities, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in classroom instruction, she would miserably fail in her class. Her experience in the class helped her understand that teaching is more than the simple application of strategies or techniques, there are questions about the moral, social, cultural and political issues and problems need to be addressed in particular classroom contexts. It is precisely the version of teacher education that I conceptualize in this paper in order to help teachers and preservice teachers understand and deal with the complexities of teaching in diverse classroom settings.

This paper is based on an argument that the idea of phronesis, or practical wisdom, offers a valuable framework to capture and represent the wisdom of preservice teachers. In this framework, I connect the features of phronesis and practical philosophy in the hope of developing a view for what needs to be captured and represented about the practical wisdom of preservice teachers.

In the following section, I discuss why it is necessary to move the theory and practice of reflection in teacher education towards a hermeneutic view of practical wisdom, and describe what the characteristics of this phronetic view of teacher education are.

From Reflective Practice to Practical Wisdom

The move from reflective practice to practical wisdom points to the possibility of developing a multidimensional approach of theory and practice of reflective teaching and teacher education foregrounded in the features of hermeneutic practical framework mentioned above. Higgins (2001) argued that "the Aristotelian concept of phronesis or practical wisdom (as extended by Hans-Georg Gadamer) offers us a richer vocabulary for talking about the very kind of reflectiveness Schön is after." (p.93). In order to show the limitations of contemporary literature on reflective practice, Higgins stated that

the move from reflective practice to practical wisdom helps us to capture crucial dimensions of educational reflection, like its inescapably ethical nature, which Schön fails to address. Once we build on Schön's account of reflection in this way, his diagnosis of the sources of unreflectiveness and his prescription of reflective practica no longer seem sufficient. If the unreflective practitioner lacks phronesis, then unreflectiveness is not merely inflexibility but a kind of moral blindness. Unable to see what the new demands of us, we fall prey to various forms of repetition. (p.93)

Higgins argues that teacher education should focus on practically wise teaching practices and educational exemplars. However, he admits that phronesis cannot be taught by philosophers or anyone else. According to Kerdeman (2001),

The problem is that phronesis is practical understanding in-situ (situated understanding). It therefore cannot be realized in advance or outside of the experiences that require it. Put differently, the kinds of experiences in which phronesis comes into play are understood only insofar as we actually live through them. (p.100)

But the question here is how teacher educators might practically educate such understanding if phronesis cannot be taught. According to Eisner (2002), a part of the answer is through deliberation, artistry, critical, and aesthetic considerations.

This way of looking at the teacher education is an attempt to develop an alternative language in which the terms ethics, deliberative excellence, poetics, critical reflexivity and rhetoric occupy center stage (McLaren, 2000; Eisner, 2002).

In the following section of this paper, I explore the nature of the phronetic teacher education from the five theoretical constructs mentioned above: ethics, deliberative excellence, poetics, and critical reflexivity. The following discussion explores these four theoretical constructs which extends our discussion of teaching as phronesis as practical hermeneutics.

Ethics

A practical philosophy is first an ethics of judgment. It is a theory of good judgment relevant to every instance of reflection and teaching. Practical knowledge is not acquired in making some kind of product, or solving some kind of problem, disconnected from teachers' way of being in the world. Rather it is existential accomplishment involves a social, moral and political understanding that is not required in technical view of teaching and teacher education. Technique requires clever application of skills; practical wisdom requires understanding. Teaching as practical philosophy is not a cognitive capacity that one can use at one's choosing, but a way of knowing bound up with who we are and what we want to become. It is particularly related to questions of the human goodness.

The notion of caring plays an important role in understanding of ethical dimensions of practical philosophy in teacher education. To care as a teacher is to be ethically bound to understand one's students. The teacher probes gently for clarification, interpretation and contribution from what students' say, whether it is right or wrong. Ethics of caring is practiced through confirmation, which stresses that teachers must take time to listen and help students; dialogue, where teachers and students engage in an honest and open communication as an appropriate and integral tool of learning; and cooperative practice, which stresses that practical personal confirmation and honest dialogue with students can be practiced only by working cooperatively with students, e.g., teachers acting as advisors in their subject field, not just imparters of knowledge.

Practically wise teaching is enhanced by the ethics of care attitude toward education, which involves taking a questioning, pondering, democratic perspective on the personal and public values of teaching and learning. Teachers seek out opportunities to dialogue with students, colleague, and society.

According to Noddings (1988), teaching from the perspective of an ethic of caring involves: (a) teacher models that pattern intellectual activity and desirable ways of interacting with people; (b) a search for problem solution through open and honest communication with students; (c) practice in caring by encouraging quality interaction between students, between teachers and students, and between parents and teachers; (d) confirmation of the cared for by revealing to him an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts.

Howe (1986, p.6) indicated that for teachers to be able to cope with their function as moral educators they need to exhibit the following six characteristics of the ethics of teaching: (a) appreciation for moral deliberate or the recognition that individuals' interests might conflict, (b) empathy or the ability to assume the viewpoints and imagine the feelings of others, (c) interpersonal skills, the capacity to sensitively and humanly interact with others, (d) knowledge needed to formulate reasonable strategies and anticipate their consequences, (e) ability to reason through a conclusion and (f) courage to convert conclusion to action.

Deliberative Excellence

Practical wisdom is variously identified as wisdom, wise judgment, or deliberative excellence. It is also characterized as "ethical know-how" (Bernstein, 1983, p. 147). According to Schwandt,

Even so, it does not simply mean knowledge of ethical behavior. It points to a union of ethics and politics. It is a kind of knowledge that is embedded in praxis and distinguishable from technical knowledge guaranteed by method. Deliberation means choosing a course of action and defending one's choice by means of a practical argument that is concrete, temporal, and refers to actual events. (p.50)

Deliberative excellence therefore requires a different approach towards relationship between means and ends than that found in technical view of teacher education. In deliberative excellence, "there can be no prior knowledge of the right means by which we realize the end in a particular situation. For the end itself is only concretely specified in deliberating about the means appropriate to a particular situation" (Bernstein, 1983, p. 147).

Deliberative excellence in teaching and teacher education is not a monological act; it is dialogic in nature. The rule in the deliberative teaching is that the other person might be right, and that one takes the reasoning of the other person seriously. The possibility that one might be wrong, or might learn something new from a conversation, is not a risk but a gain. But one must be open to the Other in conversation. This is what Gadamer (1975) and Dewey (1958) called "Openness." It is an ethics of rightly understanding a topic or a situation and working to change it if it is wrong.

If teachers and preservice teachers do not question the goals, values, and assumptions that guide their work and do not examine the context in which they teach, then they are not engaged in good deliberative teaching.

Poetics

This artistic ability of making good educational judgments can be identified as the poetics of practical reasoning in teacher education. This poetic ability invokes images of a creative, inventive, imaginative teaching and teacher education. According to Schwandt (2002), "the use of the term poetics is intended to signal a sharp contrast with epistemology. It indicates that practical reasoning is more art than science"(p.53).

Within the traditional tradition that dominated most teacher education programs for a century, the domain of aesthetics is often overshadowed in the bright light of more "scientific" considerations. Dewey (1934), Jackson (1994), Eisner (1990) and others remind us, however, that powerful experiences are inherently aesthetic in nature. Aesthetic qualities such as beauty, rhythm, and the integration of sight and sound have everything to do with the power and meaning of an experience. The teachers' ability to make critical aesthetic distinctions and judgments in the field of teacher education has become more important than ever.

Eisner (1979) believes teaching "is an art in the sense that teaching can be performed with such skill and grace that, for the student as well as for the teacher, the experience can be justifiably characterized as aesthetic" (p. 153). The aesthetic quality of experience can be witnessed in the dialogue taking place between the teacher and his or her students. It is also present when the act of teaching "provides intrinsic forms of satisfaction" (p. 153). Artistically and practically wise teachers are masterful at conceiving, planning, and executing lessons with unusual imagination and brilliance. Artistic wisdom

in the classroom is more than motivation and dramatization. "It is an extraordinary level of performance, bred out of personal commitment which elevates the state of the art" (Rubin, 1985, p. 159).

Critical Reflexivity

Traditionally, the relationship between phronesis and critical reflection has been identified in terms of communicative and social democratic practice. From one perspective, theorists articulate critical knowledge as a means for transmitting the deliberations of the practically and critically wise teachers and teacher educators to students and preservice teachers. From this angle, the phronesis/critical knowledge relationship is negotiated by addressing the practical question of how well the teacher educators might share their excellent deliberations and lead the public through transformative, revolutionary consensus. Critical knowledge, in this view, refers to the ability to move an audience to revolutionary practice. From another perspective, critical knowledge promotes, rather than merely transmits, critical deliberation. In this second view, critical knowledge and practical reasoning generate local and practical rather than universal conclusions about teaching and teacher education based on problems of the moment experienced by teachers with the members of the school communities in a particular place and time. And both critical knowledge and practical reasoning aim to persuade students and preservice teachers about the rightness of a decision while considering the issues of social justice, equality, and freedom.

These characteristics of phronesis should not to be seen as hierarchical "layers" or "levels", but rather as forming a multi-dimensional approach depicting the terrain of teacher education and, therefore, its discourse. This multi-dimensional approach first is occupied by the preservice teachers' social and cultural background, their material reality, and their actions. In this approach, preservice teachers must have a chance to explore their beliefs and pre-understanding about teaching and being a good teacher at both local and global context; through a study of practices or beliefs in the local school communities, and in other foreign; or it could involve comparisons between classrooms in different schools serving children from different social classes; or between educational beliefs held by various teachers.

Teacher education programs in this multi-dimensional approach would provide practical opportunities for preservice teachers to understand and explore the ontological, epistemological, political, economical, ideological, technical and historical issues of teaching and teacher education to develop their sense of practical and critical wisdom (Figure 1).

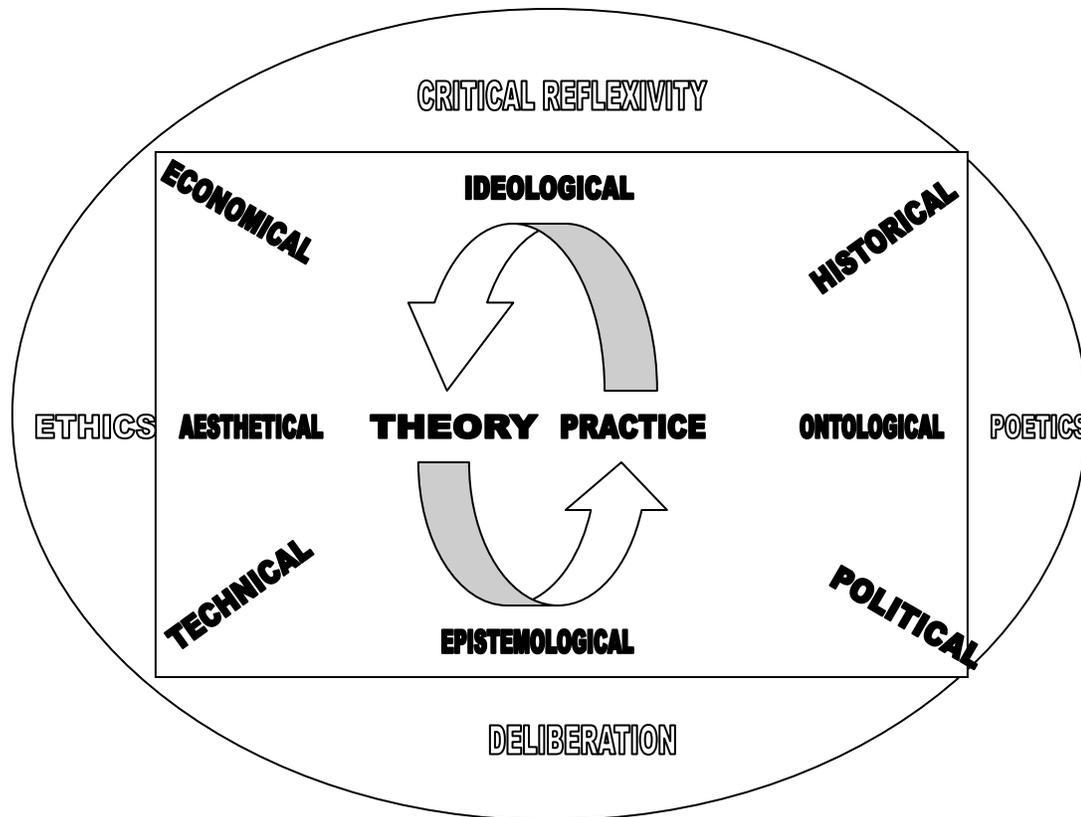


Figure 1. Multidimensional teacher education.

Investigating the ontological issues would provide preservice teacher to become critical about how classroom discourse shape and construct teachers' practices and identities and their ways of being in the world. Thus, preservice teachers can seek to continuously adapt the curriculum to students' backgrounds, interest and needs; seek new ways to get their students involved; and constantly exercise good judgement, imagination and flexibility to produce quality education when they start practicing teaching.

Analysis of the epistemological issues would help preservice teachers analyze what should count as knowledge and as knowing. Thus preservice teachers can consider the relationship between what they are trying to teach and students' past experiences (backgrounds) and a personal needs and interests.

The exploration of political issues in the multidimensional teacher education would enable preservice teachers to recognize their power to reconstitute social, educational and political and practical life by the way they participate in communication, decision-making and social-political action. According to Giroux and McLaren (1987), if teacher education is to contribute toward a more just, and equitable social order, then it should be seen as a form of cultural politics based on the study of such themes as language, history, culture, and politics:

The project of doing a teacher education program based on cultural politics consists of linking critical social theory to a set of stipulated practices through which student teachers are able to dismantle and critically examine preferred educational and cultural traditions, many of which have fallen prey to instrumental rationality that either limits or ignores democratic ideals and principles. One of our main concerns focuses on developing a language of critique and

demystification that is capable of analyzing the latent interests and ideologies that work to socialize students in a manner compatible with the dominant culture. We are equally concerned however, with creating alternative teaching practices capable of empowering students both inside and outside schools. (p. 173)

Investigating the economical issues would provide preservice teacher practical opportunities to analyze how the control of language and discursive practices linked to the existing and unequal distribution of power, goods, and services in school, and how global market economy and capitalist system impact on the policies and practices of educational system.

The exploration of ideological issues of teaching and schooling in the multidimensional teacher education model would enable preservice teachers to critically analyze what knowledge is of most worth to teach, and whose knowledge is it in education. Thus they can reflection on the social and political context of schooling and the assessment of classroom actions for their ability to enhance equality, justice, and more humane conditions in the schools and society. Teacher education for political and ideological consciousness should also provide opportunities for preservice teachers to construct tangible results of the ideological reconfigurations that are part of critical reflection so that they can assess the quality of their efforts and continue to improve them. Turning critical thoughts into transformative actions helps preservice teachers internalize the process so that it can be replicated in future practices.

The analysis of the technical issues would help preservice teachers to learn how curricular knowledge could be made accessible to their students and by using what types of teaching techniques and strategies in their teaching experiences. Thus, they can become experts in subject matter, time management, classroom discipline, instructional methods, interpersonal communication, and learning theory.

The exploration of ethical issues of teaching and education would help preservice teachers understand how they could treat others responsibly and justly in education, and what the link between moral responsibilities and discursive practices of students and teachers in classrooms is.

Finally, understanding historical dimensions of teaching would provide preservice teacher practical opportunities to explore what ongoing and historical Conversations in the field of teaching and teacher education already exist on issues of teaching and being a good teacher, and what other resources they need to go further.

This multidimensional approach towards understanding teaching and teacher education with its transformative, moral, and practical functions can play a reflexive role, enabling preservice teachers to understand and cope with technical, moral, socio-cultural and socio-political structures and practices that directly or indirectly shape the character and content of classroom discourse, and develop practically wise practices to generate genuine teaching strategies.

Conclusion

A dominant notion of self is that of an individual cognizing agent. Reflection is characterized by self-awareness. A self as agent with self-awareness can reflect on his or her practice in order to generate knowledge. Reflection is systematic and problem-focused. The reflective teacher is one who poses and solves practical problems. *Techné*, or skillful knowledge of the craft, guides teaching practice. Dialogue is a procedural process of making individual knowledge public. Schon offered us a way of speaking about teaching practice that is different from technical rationality. The literature presented here shows that in spite of this, the notion of reflective practice has been instrumentalized.

An alternative view provided by practical and critical hermeneutics offers a way of thinking about reflective practice differently. In this view, agency and self-awareness are part of a larger sense of self. Central to this notion of self is the idea that humans are self-interpreting beings. A self is situated in moral space and a self is embodied in social space. Because our way of speaking about ourselves constitutes who we are, the self is understood dialogically. Ongoing exchanges with others form identity. Self-understanding positions reflection on practice as *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. What if we looked at reflective teaching this alternate way? What if instead of reflecting on our beliefs (metacognition), we reflected on what it means to be an agent in the world (what it means to be a teacher)? What if instead of seeing reflection as problem-solving, we saw it as practical wisdom? What if, instead of monologic selves coordinating work with others, teaching was dialogic?

According to Gallagher (1992), “Interpretation consists of an interchange that involves not only a questioning of subject matter between interpreter and interpreted, but a self questioning” (p. 157). Questions occur to us or arise more than it is the case that we raise questions. This questioning, to be reflective, is dialogical. It is understanding ourselves in relation to practice, but also in respect to our circumstances. Self-understanding involves dialogical questioning in order to understand others. Self-understanding is to understand oneself in relation to the object of interpretation. “Self-understanding is another aspect of *phronesis* or moral knowledge. . .the subject matter is not something external to an inner process. To the extent that we are involved in it we must find ourselves in it” (p. 187). *Phronesis* is developed through the dialogic encounter as a mode of reflective practice.

Gallagher (1992) drew on Geertz’s cultural hermeneutics, to explain practices by “placing them in local frames of awareness” (p. 335). In this light, reflective teaching might be seen as a situation of local hermeneutics. In a local hermeneutics, teachers analyze the existing interpretational practices in a specific site. Traditions, language use, prejudices, and applications are always local (p. 334). The method of reflection is not pre-determined or instrumentalized. Given a specific local teaching situation, questions arise or occur to the teacher. Reflection does not pertain to selecting from or applying pre-existing rules or canons, but would pertain to developing them in context. Pendlebury (1995) argued that practical wisdom, more than anything else, depends upon “situational appreciation” (p. 55). She referred to “a loving dialogue between principles and particulars, responsibility and perception” (p. 55). This dialogue is what makes *phronesis* possible.

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Book Review

Dyson, A. H. (1993). *The social worlds of children learning to write in an urban primary school*. New York: Teacher College Press.

Reviewed by

Dr. Pragasit Sitthitikul*

Walailak University, Thailand

Dyson, the author of the book, was born in a small farming village in America. Her worldview at that time limited her to think that the social world was divided into the Catholics and the Publics. There was the Catholics' school and the Publics' school. She reported that she usually tried to find out how social world worked and how she would fit into the world. Thus, when she met someone new, she wanted to know, "Are you Catholic or Public?"

To her, she was interested in the research that focused on how young children living in a different time developed their worldview through social activities. The research in childhood, language, and social belonging were rooted in her own experiences with family, friends, colleagues, and students, who had broadened and made more complex her own worldview. Through the window of the children's composing, she hoped to understand not only how the children were learning to write, but also how they were learning to compose social places for themselves at school. Composing such places involved negotiating complex identities as students, peers, and members of their home communities.

Dyson aimed to counteract visions of literacy learning and teaching with the purpose to document how children build literacy tools from social and language resources that include those rooted in children's experiences with popular and folk traditions. A second goal was to illustrate the sociocultural intelligence of young child composers because the child's composing processes were a distinctly sociocultural process that involved making decisions about how one figured into the social world at any one point in time. The final objective was to allow insight into the successes and the challenges confronted by teachers and children as they worked to construct a shared universe in school.

In achieving the research objectives, Dyson basically used the children's talk-filled worlds, the complex landscape of discourse described by Bakhtin (1981), and the "imaginative universe" (Geertz, 1973) to help her conceptualize children's learning processes in making sense of the social world in her research. To illustrate, In Bakhtin's view, when people speak or write, they position themselves within these relationships, responding to and anticipating a response from others; each text is "dialogic", meaning that there are no integrated cultural or language worlds. Children participated in different imaginative universes, different social dialogues. The "imaginative universe" as described by Geertz is that symbolic worlds can do their social work if the speaker or writer share, which can be achieved only through public means, through shared ways of interpreting symbol.

In her research, Dyson did a nice job in exploring how young used varied kinds of language art forms and traditions, oral and written, as they constructed and participated in the complicated world of school. To be specific, there were six children taking part in the study: Lamar and Anthony (kindergartners); Eugene and Jameel (first graders); William and Ayesha (third graders). All participants were in Louise's classroom in a school in the San Francisco East Bay, serving both a low-income and working-class African-American community. The students in this study came from African-American community.

Dyson tried to capture something of the intensity of the learning, the joy of language, and the sense of social commitment evident in Louise's classroom because classrooms are the place where young children learn to participate in various activities with their peers. Through negotiation, children draw on

diverse cultural resources such as oral folk traditions learned at home, the popular or common traditions that pervaded all of their lives, and the written traditions they experienced at school or at home. In other words, Dyson looked into these children's social places to see how they were engaged in social work, using story and other verbal art forms to manage their social relationships with others.

The book is divided into 9 chapters. Chapters 1-3 basically deal with a general framework to explore children's social world, cultural traditions, literacy development, and these children's official community and unofficial social worlds. More details of these chapters are discussed in detail below in the section titled "Important Themes"/

Chapters 4-8 focus on literacy histories of individual students. This book ends with the implications for literacy teaching and learning in socioculturally diverse classrooms in Chapter 9.

Important Themes

Framing Child Texts With Child Worlds

The story was excellent in developing the themes. For instance, the chapter starts with the general concept of Framing Child Texts With Child Worlds in Chapter 1. It provided a theoretical framework for the exploration of children's social worlds, cultural traditions, and literacy development. This section described ways of studying language, literacy, and diversity such as learning to write as social work, cultural traditions in school worlds, children discovering and crossing cultural boundaries, and studying children's social and text worlds. Dyson was very coherent in presenting the theme embedded in each chapter. She basically presented an overview of each chapter pertaining to the significant concepts. She appropriately used examples from her observation of the children to clarify her point. She would relate the illustrated examples to the theories she used for this research to back up her points. For example, Dyson used an example of a dramatic performance by first grader Jameel as he stood in front of his K/1 class and read his text to present the concept of children's learning to write as social work as follows:

Sat on Cat. Sat on Hat.

Hat Sat on CAT.

CAt GoN. 911 for CAAt.

After Jameel read the story, there were some comments from his friends. For example, one of his friends commented that it sounded like a poem while the other said the story did not make any sense. The purpose of Jameel's story was that, he wanted to talk about his wounded cat. But to some of his friends, they viewed it differently. They constructed the meanings of the story and interpreted it in a different way.

From this example, Dyson appropriately used Bakhtin's vision of texts as embedded in social dialogue to explain Jameel's anecdote. That is each time speakers or writers compose a fictional story or any kind of text, they temporarily crystallize a network of relations between themselves and other people. Dyson used this notion to explain that Jameel had certain notions of his power and status as a composer and certain notions of appropriate conversational responses.

The chapter ends with the description of the procedures and certain key analytic constructs to study children's social and text worlds in Louise's school. This technique was unique because readers felt that what they read was useful. Although it was based upon a research study, the way Dyson presented her ideas was simple to follow and did not sound like a research report. In sum, from the study, she aimed to identify the kinds of social work or goals that energized children's oral and written composing of texts in official and unofficial social spheres, to understand the interrelationships between children's social work and their ways of participating in composing activities, and to reveal changes over time in how children used the genre themes, styles, or structures of one social sphere to take action in another, that is, to understand the social and discourse processes through which children differentiate and connect their social worlds.

In the subsequent chapters, Dyson concentrated on Louise's K/1 classroom, exploring how school literacy emerged within the context of children's social world.

Other issues presented in the chapters included learning to write as social work, cultural traditions in school worlds, children discovering and crossing cultural boundaries, and studying children's social and text world.

The Official Classroom World vs. Unofficial Worlds

Official classroom world. Dyson took readers into Louise's school, describing the physical face with which it greeted the children each morning. She then introduced Louise's classroom and described her curriculum. She finally allowed readers a close-up view of Louise's language arts program. In sum, Louise began the day by leading the children in song, accompanying their voices on her guitar. After morning singing, she led the children in a variety of whole class activities on the rug. Then Louise brought out adult authors' stories and poems to share. Next, Louise led the children in a discussion of their study unit and language arts followed. During this period, a variety of reading and writing activities occurred. During composing activities, the first graders typically drew and wrote. For morning reading instruction, the first graders gathered in small groups to read storybooks from the literature reader. In addition, the children read classroom library books, did puzzles, etc.

In the afternoon, there was another hour of language arts activities. During this time, the first graders again read in small groups or with partners. While Louise had a schedule, she was also very flexible. She was open to unexpected child requests. For example, when Louise walked into her classroom one morning and discovered Easter eggs in strange places, hidden by a secret friend, she immediately planned a morning egg hunt, accompanied by much talking, drawing, and writing about who the secret friend might be. The curricular activities in Louise's room were dialogic in that there was space for child choice as well as for adult plans and a willingness to consider changing adult plans at a child's suggestion. At this point, Dyson nicely pursued a more deeply the dialogic nature of Louise's curriculum by looking at its enactment through teacher and child dialogue. It was within this dialogue that the children were introduced to school literacy.

From the illustrations in the book, Louise created a permeable curriculum, which invited the children in as individual decision-makers and social actors, as did, in fact, the school as a whole. But when the focal children entered, they brought unanticipated genres and unexpected social goals.

Unofficial classroom worlds. In managing unofficial social worlds, Lamar and his friends used talk to organize their social worlds, that is, to articulate who they were relative to others. Dyson allowed insight into the unofficial social dynamics that undergirded the school experiences of Louise's children. She examined the interaction of Jameel, Lamar, Eugenie, Anthony, and their classmates in unofficial worlds. She emphasized the kinds of social work that children accomplished through their talk, especially through their use of popular and folk art forms. In the peer social arena, children often jointly reconstructed stories from the popular media. From the example in the book, Lamar, James, and Tyler collaboratively reconstructed a Batman movie, replaying funny or engaging moments. While the three boys were close neighborhood friends, Lamar carried on similar conversations with many children in the room. Such story making was especially common among the boys. Such affirmations and negotiated recollections of a common experience like "Remember when?", "Hugh?" meaning "Isn't that right?" were a way in which children declared and enacted their own social bonds.

Composing the Classroom Neighborhood

A sense of classroom community, of neighborhood, was not easily achieved, because the classroom itself was not a homogeneous world. Children negotiated membership in overlapping, sometimes contradictory worlds governed by imaginative universes, or shared ways of infusing objects and actions with meaning. Dyson acknowledged that it seemed to be a critical first step in respectful relationships between the teachers and students and in the building of a shared life. Dyson clearly

described what children encountered when entering school. In school, literacy had been conceptualized as something apart from social dialogue; it had become defined as decontextualized knowledge validated through text performances. The definition of literacy potentially makes problematic children's diverse ways of entering school literacy. Individual expressions of information were valued. Seeing each child's behavior as a situated response in a moment in time allows us to create classroom contexts in which we could value a diversity of language and social powers, and the diversity of the child. Jameel's performative stories and songs, Lamar's collaboratively constructed tales, and Eugenie's collegial expressions of affection all seemed valid ways of entering the ongoing literacy life of the classroom.

My Overall Impression

To conclude, Dyson had clearly developed the research themes based on what she observed from the children's literacy learning experiences to show how their worldviews were developed through their meaning-making negotiations and constructions with people around them. She was very deliberate and detailed in explaining the literacy world of children. She had done a very good job in associating children's literate behaviors with Bakhtin's concept of language as social dialogues Geertz's concept of "imaginative universe".

To clarify, Dyson provided a clear picture of the curriculum that Louise used to illustrate the dialogic curriculum that built up a solid background for children to make connections their world to the world around them. From the structure and principle of the curriculum, it truly allowed children how to learn, to interact with others and at the same time to develop their own worldviews.

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Miscellany

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International Journal of Progressive Education (IJPE) (ISSN 1554-5210) is a peer reviewed interactive electronic journal sponsored by the International Association of Educators and in part by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IJPE is a core partner of the Community Informatics Initiative and a major user/developer of the Community Inquiry Laboratories. IJPE takes an interdisciplinary approach to its general aim of promoting an open and continuing dialogue about the current educational issues and future conceptions of educational theory and practice in an international context. In order to achieve that aim, IJPE seeks to publish thoughtful articles that present empirical research, theoretical statements, and philosophical arguments on the issues of educational theory, policy, and practice. IJPE is published three times a year in four different languages; Chinese, Turkish, Spanish and English.

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