

# Approaches to Multicultural Education in Preservice Teacher Education

## Philosophical Frameworks and Models for Teaching

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### Introduction

Today's startling classroom diversity reflects a major United States demographic shift. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, by the year 2040, White non-Hispanics will make up less than half of the school-aged population. By the year 2010, Hispanics are projected to account for 43% of United States population growth. The Hispanic school-aged population is predicted to increase by 64% over the next 20 years. The proportion of school-aged population that is Asian non-Hispanic was estimated at 4% in 2000 and is projected to rise to 6.6% by 2025. On the other hand, the percentage of the school-aged population that is African-American or Native American is predicted to remain stable (2000).

Nieto (2004) wrote that this increase in ethnic diversity has caused many educators to recognize the need to expand their knowledge of multicultural education in the public schools. The success or failure of multicultural education depends upon the effective preparation of teachers and administrators. These teachers must be competent in the courses they teach if their students are to be academically successful (Ogbu, 1992). Further, teachers must be non-biased and have an understanding and sensitivity toward the various cultures reflected in the student population. Administrators should recognize and reinforce throughout the curriculum the increasing diversity in society as it relates to race and ethnicity (Razik & Swanson, 2001).

The greatest wave of immigration since the turn of the century, combined with escalating birth rates, is creating

a society with no distinct majority—one characterized by multicultural enclaves, enormously mixed, encompassing an array of races, cultures, and languages never before seen in schools.

Teachers face multiple and complex issues that challenge many of their traditional educational practices and assumptions. For example, majority-minority relations, long a focus of concern in urban classrooms, are at the very least reconfigured and may, in fact, be moot. In many schools, there is no longer a majority group; in others, the traditional White dominant, Black minority nature of the racial composition may instead be Latino-Black or Chinese-Latino.

### Focusing on Teachers

Teachers must understand students' home lives, too. The hardships faced by youngsters in urban housing projects, for example, or the struggles between generations in otherwise strong immigrant families profoundly influence a student's motivation and ability to succeed in school. Moreover, the cultural norms students bring from home add new subtleties to such issues as those stemming from socioeconomic class and gender. Regardless of the reform initiatives invoked to focus the country's attention on how poorly some of our nation's schools are educating our children, teacher preparedness has consistently emerged as a central issue in educational reform initiatives that began ostensibly with *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and continues with *No Child Left Behind* (United States Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2002).

The preparation of America's teachers has remained the driving force behind the most recent educational reforms that began in the early 1980s. These changes have emphasized the need for all teachers to have the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with racially, ethnically,

linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students (Banks, 2000).

Few cases have come before the nation's Supreme Court that so directly affected the minds, hearts, and daily lives of so many Americans as the 1954 landmark Civil Rights case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (Ethridge, 1979). The case's outcome barred the segregation of students by race in public schools. This decision continues to be important to the education reform movement for two reasons: (a) Constitutionally sanctioned racially diverse classes exist as a result of integration, and (b) The preparation of teachers to effectively and respectfully teach all students is an absolute necessity.

We are still searching for what works in school classrooms and for effective programs to prepare teachers for working with diverse learners. Over the years our school systems have struggled to be successful at educating the large numbers of students who are not from the dominant culture. As the percentage of diverse students grows, it becomes increasingly important to sensitize teachers to the importance of culture and how it impacts the teaching and learning process.

### A Cautionary Note

However, I must add a precautionary note: Even though we are talking about culture, it is important to remember that children are individuals and cannot be made to fit into any preconceived mold of how they are "supposed" to act. The question is not necessarily how to create the perfect "culturally matched" learning situation for each ethnic group, but rather how to recognize when there is a problem for a particular child and how to seek its cause in the most broadly conceived fashion.

Knowledge about culture is but one tool that educators may make use of when devising solutions for a school's difficulty in educating diverse children. Effective teachers in a diverse world need an edu-

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cation that enables them to attain new knowledge, paradigms, and perspectives on the United States and the world, and to deal effectively with both the challenges and opportunities of diversity. There is increasing diversity as well as increasing recognition of diversity in nation-states throughout the world. Racial, cultural, ethnic, language, and religious diversity is increasing in schools in the United States as well as in other nations. This diversity provides an excellent context for students to acquire the multicultural understandings and skills needed to function effectively in their local communities, the nation, and the world.

### **Constructing a Curriculum**

It is significant to construct a curriculum that supports student teachers with full acknowledgement of differences in race, culture, and gender to interrogate their experiences, understand schools as sites for struggles over power, and become better prepared to teach in an increasingly multiracial and multicultural society (Weinstein, Tomlinson, & Curran, 2004). These opportunities must always be connected to larger understandings of the histories of oppression and privilege, and must always be couched in understandings of institutional and organizational racism.

The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate how implementing a multicultural education philosophy supported by immersion experience models can help classroom teachers promote educational equity and social justice while helping all students reach their academic and social potential. However, for this article, I focused on published data-based research studies that examine the preparation of teachers for schools that serve historically underserved, multicultural student populations.

### **The Need for Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will all have an equal chance to achieve academically in school. The challenge is to help new teachers become more aware of and understand the ethnic, racial, and cultural expressions of diverse students in their classrooms.

Teachers need to think about different ways of teaching that might enable them

to create better classroom activities for particular students and tailor instruction to their needs. The relationship between teacher and student involves not just instruction, but interaction. When interaction fails because of teacher misperceptions of student behavior, instructional failure will often follow.

The increasing diversity within the nation's schools provides both opportunities and challenges. Diverse classrooms and schools make it possible to teach students from many different cultures and groups how to live together cooperatively and productively. However, racial prejudice and discrimination are challenges that arise when people from diverse groups come together.

### **Maximize and Minimize**

Teachers need to acquire knowledge and skills that maximize the opportunities diversity offers and minimize its challenges. Teacher education programs should help teachers attain the knowledge and behaviors needed to work effectively with students from diverse groups, as well as help students from mainstream groups develop cross-cultural knowledge, values, and competence (Moule, 2004; Merryfield, 2000).

Multicultural education supports teachers to understand and appreciate cultural differences and similarities, and to recognize the accomplishments of diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. Teachers' classroom materials should portray these diverse groups realistically and from a variety of perspectives.

Educators tend to take one of two approaches to multicultural education. Teachers using the "multicultural festival" approach have students celebrate ethnic diversity through "foods, fun, and festivals," conveying the notion that "diversity issues come into play only during celebratory moments." In contrast, teachers applying the "transformative" approach weave a range of cultural perspectives throughout the curriculum (Moule, 2004; Gay, 2000).

### **Growing out of Social Ferment**

Multicultural education grew out of the social ferment of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. During that decade, African Americans embarked on a quest for their rights that was unprecedented in the United States. A major goal of the Civil Rights Movement was to eliminate discrimination in public accommodations, housing, employment, and education. The consequences of the Civil

Rights Movement had a significant influence on educational institutions, as ethnic groups—first African Americans and then other groups—demanded that the schools and other educational institutions reform curricula to reflect their experiences, histories, cultures, and perspectives.

Ethnic groups also demanded that the schools hire more minority teachers and administrators, so that their children would have more successful role models. Ethnic groups pushed for community control of schools in their neighborhood and for the revision of textbooks to make them reflect the diversity of all peoples in the United States.

### **The School as a Social System**

It is necessary to conceptualize the school as a social system in order to implement multicultural education successfully. Each major variable in the school, such as its culture, its power relationships, the curriculum and materials, and the attitudes and beliefs of the staff, must be changed in ways that will allow the school to promote educational equality for students from diverse groups. To approach school reform with a multicultural perspective, we need to begin with an understanding of multicultural education within its sociopolitical context (Nieto, 2004).

Such a sociopolitical context underscores that education is part of larger societal and political forces, such as inequality based on stratification due to race, social class, gender, and other differences. Given this perspective, decisions concerning such practices as ability tracking, testing, native-language instruction, retention, curriculum reform, and pedagogy are all influenced by broader social policies. As Banks (2007) states, "every educational decision, whether made at the classroom, city, state, or national level, is imbedded within a particular ideological framework."

Such decisions can be as simple as whether a classroom should be arranged in rows with all students facing the teacher, or in tables with groups of students to encourage cooperative work, or in other ways depending on the task at hand. Alternatively, these decisions can be as far-reaching as eliminating tracking in an entire school system, or teaching language-minority students by using both their native language and English, or by using English only.

### **Challenging Assumptions**

Within each educational decision are

assumptions about the nature of learning, about what particular students are capable of achieving, about whose language is valued, and about who should be at the center of the educational process. Even seemingly innocent decisions carry an enormous amount of ideological and philosophical baggage, which is in turn communicated to students either directly or indirectly.

For our purposes here, let us borrow from Nieto (2004) to define multicultural education within a sociopolitical context:

A process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Multicultural education permeates the schools' curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice. (p. 346)

This definition of multicultural education assumes a comprehensive school reform effort rather than superficial additions to the curriculum or one-shot treatments about diversity, such as workshops for teachers or assembly programs for students. As such, I propose this definition as a lens to view conditions for systematic school reform that can improve the learning of all students.

Multicultural education is seeing, thinking, reading, writing, listening, and discussing in ways that critically confront and bridge social, cultural, and personal differences. It goes beyond a "tourist" view of cultures and encourages engagement with cultural issues in all content areas and in all classrooms. Most importantly, multicultural teacher education is an affirming of what this country stands for: opportunity, equality, and the realization of students' dreams (Pederson, 2000).

### **Creating Caring Professionals**

The purpose of teacher education is to create caring, reflective professionals who are committed to building a democratic, multicultural society that enhances economic equity and cultural pluralism. It is well documented that preservice teachers have difficulty transferring their formal

knowledge from teacher education courses to complex teaching practices (Black & Halliwell, 2000; Xu, 2000). Despite a repeated emphasis seeking more inclusion, teacher candidates are still leaving their preparation programs without the skills, knowledge, or attitudes needed to work with all of their future students (Jones & Fuller, 2003).

Some teacher candidates have a heart for diversity instruction, but lack the knowledge and skills of how to go beyond scratching the surface with students. The primarily White and middle class teachers in our nation's schools are ill prepared in knowledge, skills, and attitudes to teach for equity and excellence in multicultural classrooms. They cannot teach for cross-cultural competency when they lack it themselves.

Teacher education programs intent on changing this situation must recognize the necessity of providing learning experiences that increase the likelihood that pre-service teachers will undergo transformative learning regarding multicultural education (Moule, 2004). Such learning can stimulate critical reflection regarding one's own philosophical position, moral commitment, and readiness to teach for equity and excellence. For it is only through study and self-reflection when confronted with perspectives that challenge preconceived assumptions that significant changes in beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge can occur.

Multicultural preservice teacher education aims to prepare teachers to work with culturally diverse students. Teacher educators draw heavily from the multicultural education literature to organize the curricula and other elements in their programs (Merryfield, 2000). One course cannot do it all. Multicultural teacher education courses can, however, build on both pedagogical and psychological theories in ways that will better prepare teacher candidates who can engage and learn with students from diverse backgrounds.

### **Teacher Perceptions and Beliefs about Culturally, Racially and Linguistically Diverse Students**

Much of the research on preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs about teaching suggests that altering those beliefs is a difficult, if not impossible, task (Moule & Waldschmidt, 2003; Merryfield, 2000). On the other hand, we know that beliefs influence teacher behavior and expectations (Cooper, Baron, & Lowe, 1975), and that an important goal of teacher education is to lead prospective teachers toward

developing beliefs about teaching that will maximize learning for all students.

Teacher preparation programs must begin to ensure that students not only have content-specific pedagogical skills, but also culture-specific pedagogical skills (Hogan-Garcia, 2003). Preservice programs tend to take two rather different lines of action to address the cultural gap between teachers and children in schools: (a) bringing into the teaching profession more teachers who are from culturally diverse communities, and (b) trying to develop the attitudes and multicultural knowledge base of predominantly White cohorts of preservice students (Swartz, 2003; Sleeter, 2001).

Meanwhile, the ethnic and cultural composition of the teaching force remains relatively unchanged. It is important to convey to student teachers that the beliefs of the person who performs the role of teacher, and understanding the cultural contexts in which they teach, are as crucial to instructional effectiveness with diverse students as the mastery of content knowledge and pedagogical techniques.

### **Cultural Competence and Context**

Artiles (1998) locates competence within one's culture and emphasizes that we must deepen our understanding about how teachers deal with student diversity in the classroom. The message of contemporary work on multicultural education is not primarily fixed on remediation of racial discrimination and adoption of unbiased educational practices in schools and classrooms, although this is a part of what needs to be done whenever such discrimination and bias exist.

Rather, current multicultural education theory and practice highlight pedagogy in cultural context and prescribe a future classroom and school in which culturally diverse learners will find educational practices that value and develop their individual behavioral styles and culture-specific knowledge base (Banks & Banks, 2007). Furthermore, research by Cronin (1998), Townsend (1998), and Webb-Johnson (1999) that examines the clash in cultural repertoire between teacher and child represents an important step in resolving the place of African American and other culturally diverse students in today's classrooms (Irvine, 2002).

However, even more fundamental reform at the preservice teacher education level will be required if the result is to be an educational system that no longer continues to discriminate by institutionalizing

“dominant” Western cultural structures, values, and practices. Research by Artiles and Trent and their colleagues examines the process of learning to teach in culturally diverse schools (Artiles & Mc Clafferty, 1998; Artiles & Trent, 1994, 1997; Trent, Artiles, & Englert, 1998). Their approach is data based, whereby strategies are ultimately informed by evidence regarding outcomes rather than by professional opinion about what teachers need to know and do, an approach I strongly support.

### Recent Reports

There have been recent reports on undergraduate education that have addressed the challenges of meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Furman, 2007; Gay, 2000). Hooks (1994) has also suggested that in order for teachers to meet the needs of a diverse range of children in public schools, they must understand the concept of multicultural education, show sensitivity toward cultural diversity, capitalize on strengths, and avoid accentuating weaknesses of culturally diverse groups.

The multicultural classroom, which is relatively new to the educational system, creates a demand for teachers who are aware of the cultural differences within the student population, “differences that affect learning styles, behaviors, mannerisms, and relationships with school and home” (Furman, 2007; Banks, 2001). The identification of such problems can lead to viable solutions. If teachers are to work effectively in diverse classrooms, their attitudes and beliefs must be understood.

According to Banks (2007), multicultural education no longer consists of lessons about Martin Luther King Jr. or separate lessons about ethnic minorities within the classroom. Yet, according to Irvin (2002), despite the evidence regarding the increasing amount of diversity in our schools, the idea of implementing multicultural education in our schools still generates clashes of opinions.

However, researching the perceptions of pre-service teachers concerning their views of multicultural education may add new insight to the existing subject matter. Also added to the teacher preparation equation is the notion of preparing teachers who can function effectively in schools that are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, language, socioeconomics, family configurations, etc. Many times, the teachers who are being prepared to teach in these settings are limited in their

understanding and appreciation of these diverse communities.

### Stressing Critical Reflection

To achieve this goal, teacher educators must contextualize teacher candidates’ increased knowledge of content and pedagogy and engage teachers in critical reflection. This idea is firmly supported by scholars such as Swartz, (2003), Gay, (2000), and Ladson-Billings (2001). Gay and Kirkland (2003) stress this call by asserting that such instruction must include the fundamental element of critical cultural self-reflection that takes place in a context of guided practice in realistic situations and with authentic examples.

Some teacher educators are focusing on service learning as a means for providing teacher candidates with opportunities for authentic learning experiences in diverse settings. Also, teacher education programs can include field experiences in urban settings in which students directly observe the need for multicultural education and pedagogy in schools with diverse student populations (Moule, 2004).

Prospective teachers should also become knowledgeable regarding curriculum publications that can assist them in teaching multicultural issues. Gay (2000) notes that teachers often focus on what their students “don’t have and can’t do” while claiming cultural neutrality, believing that their own more provincial personal experiences are normal.

### Developing Questions

In developing projects for teacher education methods courses that stress the service learning structures of action and reflection, it is important to ask the following questions:

1. What developmental stages could be identified in our teacher candidates’ process of learning to teach in culturally responsive ways?
2. What impact, if any, could be identified that experiential education might have on teacher education candidates’ process of adopting culturally responsive teaching strategies?
3. What issues could we, the teacher educators, discover in our process of attempting to model and promote culturally responsive pedagogy? and
4. Given the nature of teacher education programs, what can teacher educators do to lead candidates toward specific strategies for culturally relevant teaching?

I believe that the inclusion of video cases used to model both strategies and teachers’ thinking that is required to modify approaches in response to students may bolster teacher candidates’ understandings of teachers’ specific strategies for culturally responsive teaching. Perhaps a more thorough knowledge base, which includes a working knowledge of local history and culture, may enable the translation of that knowledge base into planned activities.

In addition, teacher candidates may be better able to personally consider culturally responsive approaches to instruction if they are provided with simulated cultural experiences and community experiences during methods courses, which would build both their general community knowledge base and provide a scaffold for building future relationships. Given the current time limitations of the teacher education methods experience, however, it is unlikely that these modifications will quickly or easily be incorporated into existing coursework.

### Types of Multicultural Programs

This experience has reminded us that teacher candidates must know that the process of becoming a culturally responsive teacher is nurtured by living, experimenting, traveling, and reading. Teacher candidates who graduate from our institutions must acknowledge that they are works in progress so that they may continue to develop in their awareness of and ability to enact cultural responsive pedagogy (Moule, 2004; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000). What we have learned is that we must continue to do what we passionately believe is planting the seeds of possibility into the habits and minds of our students. Our scholarship does not reside so much in the pursuit of doing things differently, but perhaps rather in the restructuring of our programs to include the critical elements we know have an impact on the future of our profession.

Diversity calls up the most deeply felt passions about who we are as individuals and as members of multiple groups, and the kind of society we aspire to shape. Therefore, to meet the challenges of diversity in classrooms, multicultural teacher education programs committed to preparing preservice teachers need to continue to be imbued with the objective of changing beliefs, attitudes, knowledge base, and pedagogical skills. Zollers, Albert, and Cochran-Smith (2000) state that if the multicultural education field is to move forward there is a need to develop assessments that provide more opportunities

for reflection, attitude change, and organization of new knowledge on the part of preservice teachers.

### A New Mission

The new mission for education requires substantially more knowledge and radically different skills for teachers. If all children are to be effectively taught, teachers must be prepared to address the substantial diversity in experiences children bring with them to school—the wide range of languages, cultures, exceptionalities, learning styles, talents, and intelligences that in turn require an equally rich and varied repertoire of teaching strategies. In addition, teaching for universal learning demands a highly developed ability to discover what children know and can do, as well as how they think and how they learn, and to match learning and performance opportunities to the needs of individual children.

It is the responsibility of teacher educators to help all teachers, novice and experienced, acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions needed to work effectively with a diverse student population. Demographic projections suggest that, in the coming years, students in U.S. schools will be ever increasingly different in background from their teachers, making the task of teacher education one of educating largely “typical” teacher candidates—Caucasian, monolingual, middle class—to teach an increasingly diverse student body composed of many poor students of color.

Overall, the immersion of preservice teachers into an urban setting has many benefits. The most important one, however, is learning the culture and pedagogy of the students whom one will teach. By working hand in hand with urban students, the preservice teachers learn lessons that cannot be learned in a lecture hall. The immersion experience provides student teachers the opportunity to learn about children in urban settings and to become more empowered in reaching and teaching them on a daily basis (Moule, 2004).

### Future Challenges

The concern for preparing all teachers for diversity has not emerged as a result of the current interest in education reform. Nearly 30 years ago, Smith's *Teachers for the Real World* (1969) identified three problems in preparing teachers to teach poor students: (a) teachers were unfamiliar with the backgrounds of poor students and the communities where they lived;

(b) teacher education programs ordinarily did little to sensitize teachers to their own prejudices and values; and, (c) teachers lacked preparation in the skills needed to perform effectively in the classroom.

Smith concluded that most teacher education programs prepared students to teach children much like themselves, and he called for a major overhaul of teacher education programs with respect to diversity and equity issues. Despite the passage of time, little has changed. Most teacher education programs acknowledge in principle the importance of pluralistic preparation, but in practice most are characterized by what Swartz (2003) has called a monocultural approach.

Such programs perpetuate the kinds of teaching practices that have historically benefited middle-class, White students but have largely failed to provide quality instruction for poor, ethnic, and linguistic minority students. Teacher candidates in the teacher education programs are encouraged through program content, instructional strategies, and group discussion to make connections between teaching practice and the principles of multicultural education and critical pedagogy.

I believe the components that have proven successful can be adapted or recreated in a variety of contexts. It is suggested that effective programs for teachers planning to work in diverse communities must include the following elements: (1) A clear philosophical framework, discussed, understood, and affirmed by all candidates; (2) A program structure that embodies the philosophical principles and presents clear models for their implementation; and, (3) A practical fieldwork component that provides teacher candidates with the opportunity to apply and recreate what they are learning (Sleeter, 2001).

### Becoming Change Agents

The goal of a multicultural teacher education program is to help prospective teachers become change agents who can impact and alter power relationships through curriculum, instructional practices, and individual and collective action toward more personal and structural relationships in schools, districts, and communities (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). Hiring community members and/or school staff as adjunct teacher education faculty is one example of how teacher education programs have accessed practitioner knowledge. Using the writings of teachers and community members about schooling

and culture in teacher education courses is another way. School-based teacher educators should participate in all aspects of the teacher education program, including admissions decisions, program development and evaluation work, and instruction in campus courses (Diller & Moule, 2005).

In conclusion, multicultural education is an instrument of educational equity and excellence. Over the past four decades, the multicultural movement has emerged as a powerful force in the fields of education and counseling. In an increasingly diverse society, a multicultural approach to training educators and practitioners is essential. Professionals, from all fields, should be able to respond effectively to people from diverse backgrounds.

### The Debate Continues

As the interminable debate continues to focus on the issue of race, multiculturalists must rethink their cause and revise their agenda and strategies. It may be that multicultural education must return to its original thrust of ensuring that “diverse groups experience educational equality” (King & Howard, 2000). Those in the multicultural education movement may have to throw the weight of their support toward reinforcing the work of ethnic and gender studies programs in higher education. The task ahead would thus be to initiate and sustain scholarly efforts challenging present and historical notions of race and racism, and expanding the parameters of discussion.

Multicultural education involves teaching and learning about the equal human worth of all individuals and groups of people acting in customary spheres of social life. Equal human worth is the core of civil rights concerns. So, too is it of multicultural education. Mere plurality of cultures is not the heart of the matter. Diversity without equality is oppression.

Visionary leadership is needed in the education of preservice teachers. Most importantly, recognizing that a crucial factor in the ultimate success or failure of multicultural education in our schools is the teacher, it becomes important to determine: (a) what preservice teachers regard as the most desirable goal for multicultural education, and (b) what colleges of education should do regarding the multicultural education curriculum of preservice teachers.

Within the multicultural literature, Banks defines the goal of multicultural education as that of helping students “develop cross-cultural competency within the

American national culture, with their own subculture and within and across different subsocieties and cultures" (Banks, 1994, p. 9). The development of such competency involves: knowledge of cultural and racial differences and issues; the critical examination of one's beliefs and values regarding culture, race, and social class; and an understanding of how knowledge, beliefs, and values determine who enters the profession able to provide equitable opportunities for academic success, personal development, and individual fulfillment for all students (Gutmann, 2004; Gay, 2000).

If we are to successfully educate all of our children, we must work to remove the blinders built of stereotypes, monocultural instructional methodologies, ignorance, social distance, biased research, and racism. We must work to destroy those blinders so that it is possible to really know the students we teach. Yes, if we are to be successful at educating diverse children, we must accomplish the Herculean feat of developing their clear-sightedness, for in the words of a wonderful Native Alaskan educator: "In order to teach, I must know you. I pray for all of us the strength to fight to teach our children what they must learn, and the humility and wisdom to learn from them so that we might better teach."

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