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What student teachers learn about multicultural education from their cooperating teachers[☆]

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Abstract

Teacher education has struggled to better prepare beginning teachers for an increasingly diverse student population. This research examines the role that cooperating teachers play in developing multicultural/equity pedagogy knowledge and skills among student teachers. Five cooperating teachers working in California, USA, each of whom had extensive and successful experiences teaching multicultural/equity pedagogy curricula, were asked to describe how they encourage their student teachers to engage in the materials and strategies they promote. Generally, the cooperating teachers reported that their most successful student teachers were those who came to understand the difference between expecting high-quality work from their students and sympathizing and identifying with their students' plight as low-income Latino children. More specifically, they noted that student teachers had difficulty leading instructional conversations in small groups of students.

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Keywords: Multicultural education; Student teachers; Cooperating teachers

1. Introduction

Teacher educators now understand that a beginning educator's knowledge about teaching is drawn from many sources (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Smylie, 1989; Wilson & Berne, 1999). They have also come to understand that many of those sources do not include university-based coursework.

In the 1970s, for instance, those who trusted in a competency-based teacher education believed that professional knowledge was gained largely through mastery of discrete skills specially prepared for the

classroom context but practised at the university (Houston & Howsam, 1974). This effort was short-lived, and the decline and eventual fall of competency-based teacher education turned on several factors, but it failed chiefly because it underestimated the importance of context in learning to teach. No amount of programmed instruction on specific "teaching behaviors" could convince educators, preservice or in-service, that such skills would generalize.

More recent work in the area of "reflective teacher preparation" suggests that even after competency-based programs had withered and a new kind of teacher education—one less determinate and more styled to encourage student teachers to consider teaching's larger social implications—had taken its place, the effects of university-based

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1 teacher preparation were again “washed out” by
2 direct work in the schools (Zeichner & Tabachnik,
3 1981).

4 We teacher educators should not be surprised
5 that the practice context of teaching—where we find
6 the children and youth who new teachers routinely
7 claim are the primary reasons they want to teach—is
8 capable of steamrolling whatever knowledge uni-
9 versity-driven teacher education has had to offer
10 (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). But what
11 specific features of the practice context seem to have
12 the greatest effect on student teachers?

13 Student teachers (STs) generally report that their
14 cooperating teacher (CT) most influenced their
15 development as educators (Guyton & McIntyre,
16 1990; McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996).¹ Yet, for
17 many years, only a handful of studies examined why
18 CTs (e.g., Brimfield & Leonard, 1983; Freibus,
19 1977; Iannacone, 1963; Price, 1961) serve as such an
20 important source of professional knowledge. These
21 early studies found that cooperating or “master”
22 teachers became the focal point for beginning
23 educators; STs understood and relied upon the tacit
24 agreements common to most mentor–apprentice
25 relationships (Coy, 1989), and they took direction
26 from their CT. CTs, for the most part, knew how to
27 teach the students the STs would soon face. They
28 modeled for the ST the pedagogy that seemed to
29 work, and STs were told to emulate the strategies
30 and tactics of their CTs. The traditional mentor–
31 apprentice relationship was serving its historical
32 purpose, even if some teacher educators worried
33 that such preparation failed to distinguish teacher
34 education from the “trades”.

35 These studies pointed the way toward a broader
36 research agenda that included a partitioning of the
37 pedagogical influences on a ST. Yet even later
38 studies generally left unexamined the influence of a
39 CT. To wit, Griffin’s (1989) widely cited and
40 comprehensive work on student teaching only
41 marginally addressed the influence of the CT, and
42 recent ethnographic research on student teaching
43 (e.g., Head, 1992) has not placed the CT in a
44 primary role during student teaching.² This lapse in
45

46 ¹Of course, asking novices their views on the value of the
47 components of their preparation program is just one source of
48 data, but such a finding is worthy of attention if only because a
49 participant’s belief about the value of a particular component
50 may drive one’s commitment to the skills and concepts learned
51 from that component.

²The lack of focus is surprising, given the surge of interest in
framing teacher development as a community of practice (Lave &

52 attention seems now to have been reversed as recent
53 research and policy has once again placed the CT at
54 the center of the learning-to-teach puzzle (Borko &
55 Mayfield, 1995; Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs,
56 & Stokes, 1997; Cope & Stephen, 2001; Koerner,
57 1992; Ritchie, Rigano, Lowry, 2000; Shantz &
58 Ward, 2000).

59 Such a renewed focus is warranted. What a ST
60 finds in an effective CT is a deep familiarity with a
61 highly localized knowledge—those pedagogical
62 techniques that work at *this* school, for *these* kids,
63 at *this* grade level, and so on. The typical practicum
64 in teacher education elevates, perhaps inadvertently,
65 the status of this local knowledge.

66 When teacher educators set as the primary task
67 for preservice teachers the mastery of teaching in a
68 single teacher’s classroom (i.e., student teaching),
69 the direct experience in a specific context with a
70 specific group of children counts as crucial knowl-
71 edge for STs. The CT who understands the school’s
72 cranky laminating machine (the purely technical),
73 who can recognize at once why a particular student
74 has missed an algebraic concept (reflection-on-
75 action) or who can cut right to the heart of a
76 playground argument and render quick justice
77 (reflection-in-action) holds the keys to the knowl-
78 edge that beginning teachers want and need. The
79 range of highly contextualized skills that effective
80 veteran teachers develop in their STs is exactly the
81 type of yet-to-be-coded expert knowledge teacher
82 education must impart to its charges. STs seem to
83 agree that this knowledge is best learned from a CT.

84 But what of the generalized, so-called theoretical
85 knowledge that emerging teachers explore in their
86 university-based courses? In most cases, STs will not
87 begin their careers in the schools where they student
88 taught, the precise classroom **a fortiori**, so it seems
89 reasonable that they would show a deep interest in
90 curriculum and instruction that promises to work in
91 many contexts. Teacher educators who encourage a
92 strong foundational understanding of learning and
93 teaching presume that such knowledge will ensure
94 that their students can succeed in a wide range of
95 teaching contexts. Yet in spite of the hopes of
96 teacher educators, graduates from their programs
97 have not typically agreed, and beginning teachers
98 have been less than enthusiastic—and in some cases
99 scathing—about what they learned (or failed to
100

(footnote continued)

101 Wenger, 1991; Wang & Odell, 2002). Is a community of practice
102 not what forms the CT/ST relationship?

1 learn) in university courses, arguing that the
 2 university played little role in preparing them to
 3 teach (Ada, 1986; Martin, 1997). CTs, for their part,
 4 often share this view and routinely call for a larger
 5 role in the development and implementation of
 6 teacher education (Kahn, 1999). Veal and Rikard
 7 (1998) found that many CTs believe that the
 8 university supervisor, as well as most of what STs
 9 learned at the university, was superfluous in
 10 learning to teach. In sum, a common view among
 11 many teachers is that experience in front of a
 12 classroom of students is the *only* fruitful method for
 13 learning to teach.

14 In the past decade or so, teacher educators have
 15 recognized anew that the local knowledge STs
 16 gained from their CTs or from simple experience
 17 teaching had trumped university-based coursework.
 18 Consequently, teacher educators, policy-makers and
 19 K12 (i.e., primary and secondary) educators began
 20 to reconsider seriously the role of the university in
 21 preparing teachers. One response common in the
 22 USA was the initiation of professional development
 23 schools (see Abdal-Haqq, 1998, for a review).
 24 Professional development schools became the most
 25 forthright manner by which university-based tea-
 26 cher educators tried to inject, vis-à-vis CTs, “their”
 27 knowledge into student teaching (Carnate, Newell,
 28 Hoffman, & Moots, 2000; Dever, Hager, & Klein,
 29 2003).

30 A second response, again based on the primacy of
 31 the practice context, has come from a large and
 32 growing number of policy-makers and analysts
 33 (mostly from outside the field of teacher education)
 34 who suggest that university-based teacher prepara-
 35 tion be scrapped altogether. Arguing that learning
 36 to teach is largely experiential and that teacher
 37 education actually prevents potentially expert tea-
 38 chers from earning a state license, policy groups
 39 such as the Abell Foundation (2001) have spent
 40 their considerable resources trying to undermine the
 41 value of university-based teacher education.

42 This movement appears to be gaining momen-
 43 tum. For instance, a new organization in the USA,
 44 the American Board for Certification of Teacher
 45 Excellence, is already offering the teaching license
 46 by examination only in several states, with plans to
 47 expand nationwide. Most troubling for university-
 48 based teacher educators perhaps is that the US
 49 Department of Education has chosen to fund this
 50 organization (http://www.abcte.org/press_releases.html).
 51

52 A third response has seen teacher educators
 53 carving out new spaces in teacher preparation that
 54 they believe are crucial to educational practice but
 55 that are not yet part of most CTs’ knowledge base.
 56 In other words, teacher educators now recognize
 57 that the many of the principles and skills beginning
 58 teachers must learn are learned best—or at least
 59 preferred to be learned—from a CT in a practice
 60 context. In response, teacher educators have devel-
 61 oped courses and topics that are not yet part of the
 62 broad range of skills that CTs routinely share with
 63 preservice teachers. Instructional technology is one
 64 example of such knowledge (Dexter & Riedel,
 65 2003). Multicultural education is another.

66 The development of knowledge in multicultural
 67 education, in particular, has become a primary
 68 theme in contemporary university-based teacher
 69 education (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Cockrell, Placier,
 70 Cockrell, & Middleton, 1999; Villegas & Lucas,
 71 2002). Even more to the point, the study of
 72 multicultural education, as well as great attention
 73 to the structural inequities and biases in schools, has
 74 become largely the domain of university-based
 75 courses in teacher preparation.

76 For the teacher education program seeking to
 77 prepare its students for culturally and linguistically
 78 diverse students, two components are particularly
 79 common: one, a placement in culturally and
 80 linguistically diverse schools, and two, university
 81 coursework that devotes special attention to multi-
 82 cultural education and educational equity (e.g.,
 83 Bennett, 2002; Grant, 1994). Some might agree that
 84 university-based teacher educators do not routinely
 85 believe that CTs or other educators working in the
 86 K12 setting ~~routinely~~ impart their version of multi-
 87 cultural education to their ST. Recent research has
 88 discovered that CTs do not generally focus on social
 89 reform or justice when working with their STs
 90 (Clarke & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005), and teacher
 91 educators have been quick to point out the
 92 contemporary schools’ failures with regard to
 93 the implementation of a multicultural education (Ban-
 94 ister & Maher, 1998; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999).
 95

96 Not all university-based teacher educators think
 97 this way, but many university-based writers and
 98 policy analysts, who may also work with beginning
 99 teachers, have been highly critical of the way in
 100 which schools have failed low-income students of
 101 color (e.g., Gitlin, Buendia, Crosland, & Doumbia,
 102 2003). Teacher educators have so far chosen the
 103 university classroom to address the deeper and
 104 critical knowledge required for making education

1 more meaningful for such students (King, Hollins,
2 & Hayman, 1997).

3 Some might also agree that university-based
4 teacher educators have come to see the preparation
5 of teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse
6 students as a *moral* purpose (cf. Barrage, 1993).
7 Indeed, Birmingham (2003) has recently argued that
8 placing STs in culturally diverse schools links
9 teacher education to a large and important moral
10 question, one that may require an entirely new
11 method for reflecting on what STs find in such
12 schools. Johnson (2003) pointed out how efforts to
13 implement multicultural education quickly trans-
14 form into forms of social activism.

15 The structures and standards in teacher education
16 have also been shaped to better serve the prepara-
17 tion of teachers for diverse students. In the USA, for
18 instance, the last 10 years have seen remarkable
19 changes in the accreditation requirements for
20 teacher education programs. The National Council
21 for the Accreditation of Teacher Education stan-
22 dards clearly mandate an extensive set of knowledge
23 and experiences preservice teachers must have
24 before they are licensed (NCATE, 2001).

25 In response to the wider expectations for prepar-
26 ing teachers to work with children of color, the
27 curriculum in teacher education is now well
28 represented by a wide set of books and papers on
29 multicultural education, all designed to engage
30 preservice teachers in a discussion about what is
31 needed to help erase the achievement gap for low-
32 income students of color (Bennett, 2003; Cochran-
33 Smith, 2004; Fecho, 2004; Grant, 2003; Nieto, 2004;
34 Sleeter, 2003); it might seem surprising that some of
35 these texts are now in their fourth or even fifth
36 editions. The development of these new curricula is
37 quite remarkable. In the span of less than two
38 decades, teacher educators found a new focus and a
39 nascent if inchoate moral vision for their work, one
40 that held a particular attraction for new academics
41 in teacher education—increasingly of color them-
42 selves—who had taken full advantage of graduate
43 preparation in well-developed ethnic studies pro-
44 grams and who were inspired by the work of the
45 critical theorists in education.

46 To my mind, there is no need to argue whether
47 teacher education should maintain a focus on the
48 preparation of teachers who can better serve diverse
49 students. The long-standing achievement gap be-
50 tween White, native English-speaking students and
51 bilingual or bidialectal students of color should
52 trouble those in the USA and elsewhere, where the

53 public schools are yoked to the belief that academic
54 achievement is the most effective—and maybe
55 only—way to liquefy racial and class divisions.
56 Teacher education, which serves to introduce and
57 indoctrinate new professionals to the classroom,
58 should certainly play a role in advancing such a
59 hope.

60 Of course, not all teacher educators have been
61 successful in this effort, and teacher educators
62 themselves have reported these failures in no
63 uncertain terms (Goodwin, 2002; Ladson-Billings,
64 1999; Shor, 1987), but the energy given to helping
65 preservice teachers become more effective and
66 devoted teachers for low-income children of color
67 should be considered one of the greatest—yet still
68 unfulfilled—dreams of higher education in the
69 USA.

70 Given the moral importance of this topic and the
71 fact that so many teacher educators have embraced
72 multicultural education as a knowledge base they
73 wish to share, it is important to understand the
74 specific contours of this knowledge and how
75 preservice teachers may come to understand it.
76 Specifically, how do university-based courses and
77 experiences in multicultural education enhance,
78 undermine or, more likely, work in some combina-
79 tion of the two, to shape what STs learn in their
80 ubiquitous student teaching experience? In particu-
81 lar, what are the insights STs gain directly from
82 their CTs?

83 Over a decade ago, Grant (1994) argued that
84 multicultural education must be infused throughout
85 a total teacher education program rather than being
86 addressed through an add-on workshop or single-
87 course approach. Preservice programs, he sug-
88 gested, should include an immersed field experience
89 with CTs who have a thorough knowledge of
90 multicultural education. This recommendation
91 seems incontrovertible, but few, if any, studies have
92 examined what CTs with such knowledge attempt to
93 share and why.

94 I have noted that teacher education strategies for
95 preparing new teachers for student diversity include
96 a wide range of curricular initiatives (e.g., King et
97 al., 1997; Larkin & Sleeter, 1995), field placements
98 (Zetlin, MacLeod, & Michener, 1998), and a range
99 of techniques for “reflecting” on the subjugation of
100 minority students in US schools (Zeichner & Liston,
101 1987), but the role of the CT in advancing such
102 knowledge has not been examined.

103 This topic deserves attention for two reasons. The
104 first is the evidence demonstrating the importance of

1 the CT in the development of the beginning
 2 teachers' knowledge base. We know that STs are
 3 paying close attention to the pedagogy of their CTs;
 4 therefore, if CTs offer STs a view of multicultural
 5 education at odds with the universities, history
 6 suggests that the CTs' view will carry the day. The
 7 second is the general belief that teachers (both ST
 8 and CT) often view courses on multicultural
 9 education as superfluous (Chan & Treacy, 1996;
 10 Téllez & O'Malley, 1997). The latter finding is
 11 especially troublesome because the principles shared
 12 in such a teacher education course (i.e., the use of
 13 subject matter related to student culture, as well as a
 14 critical perspective on race and class issues in US
 15 society) seem to be effective instructional strategies
 16 for improving student achievement among students
 17 of color (Au, 2000). This kind of schooling is the
 18 goal of many thoughtful and transformative teacher
 19 education programs in the USA and elsewhere
 20 (Santoro & Allard, 2005).

21 If preservice teacher education is unsuccessful in
 22 providing new teachers with the knowledge and
 23 skills needed to implement multicultural education,
 24 the prospects for poor students of color are further
 25 dimmed. This potential fate, combined with the
 26 renewed interest in what STs learn from their CTs,
 27 led me to wonder about the role CTs might play in
 28 fitting new teachers with the capacity to engage in a
 29 multicultural education. How might CTs, those
 30 with years of experience in developing curricula and
 31 methods to better meet the needs of English-
 32 learning students of color, alter the student teaching
 33 experience? Do they focus primarily on technical
 34 aspects of multicultural education or are the larger
 35 issues of inequity addressed? Moreover, do CTs
 36 promote a multicultural education that corrobo-
 37 rates or contradicts what STs learn in the university
 38 classroom? Through this study, I sought to under-
 39 stand how experienced CTs assist STs in learning to
 40 teach multicultural education.

41 2. Methods and data collection

42 2.1. The CTs

43 No scale exists to rate teachers on the quality or
 44 quantity of their knowledge of, skill for or dedica-
 45 tion to multicultural education. Thus, one educa-
 46 tor's definition of *effective* multicultural education
 47 will surely be different from another's. Conse-
 48 quently, a chief limitation of this article is its
 49 inability to verify the quality of the CTs' vision of

50 multicultural education, the implementation of that
 51 vision, or the capacity to share what CTs know with
 52 their STs.

53 Further, I can offer no guarantee that the CT I
 54 chose to interview represented the most exemplary
 55 or even used the most common pedagogy represen-
 56 tative of multicultural education. However, I can
 57 share a description of these teachers' experiences
 58 and preparation in multicultural education (most of
 59 them preferred the definition *equity pedagogy*) and
 60 provide examples of what they considered to be
 61 successful experiences in multicultural/equity peda-
 62 gogy. With such descriptions, circumspect readers
 63 can assess for themselves whether these CTs were
 64 engaging in an adequate version of multicultural/
 65 equity pedagogy.

66 First, the CTs selected all worked at a school
 67 where multicultural/equity pedagogy represented a
 68 significant professional development priority. The
 69 school had been a professional development school
 70 affiliated with a university for more than 7 years.
 71 This affiliation brought with it a full-time curricu-
 72 lum coordinator position whose primary role was
 73 the development of instructional and pedagogical
 74 techniques designed for cultural relevance and
 75 critical awareness. In addition, the school had close
 76 and lasting ties with the Center for Research on
 77 Education, Diversity, and Excellence, acting as a
 78 testing ground for many of the center's initiatives.

79 Both the curriculum coordinator and several
 80 experts in multicultural/equity pedagogy, who were
 81 either affiliated with the university or independent
 82 experts, guided the development of the multicultural
 83 education/equity pedagogy curriculum at the
 84 school. The curriculum and instructional design
 85 became part of a curriculum demonstration project
 86 illustrating multicultural/equity pedagogy (Sleeter,
 87 2001). In fact, the school's professional develop-
 88 ment program had recently received a federal award
 89 for its work in teacher learning.³

90 The specific CTs were chosen on the advice of
 91 school's curriculum coordinator and the building
 92 principal, each of whom indicated that each of the
 93 CTs had been active in the equity pedagogy
 94 curriculum development project. Six teachers were
 95 recommended for the study; one chose not to
 96 participate owing to a lack of time in her schedule
 97 (Table 1).

98 ³Additional information could further support the extraordin-
 99 ary efforts of these teachers, but such information could
 100 compromise the promise of confidentiality.

Table 1
Relevant demographic features of the CTs included in the study

Teacher ^a	Years teaching	Student teachers (career)	Ethnicity	Grade level	Language program
FAITH	6	4	European-American	4	SEI
SOCORRO	29	20	Mexican-American	1	TWI
CARIDAD	3	1	Chilean-American	4	BE
HOPE	10	7	European-American	5	BE
ESPERANZA	25	9	Mexican-American	1	BE

All are women.

^aAll names are pseudonyms.

2.2. Interviews

In order to understand the guidance CTs provided in fostering multicultural/equity pedagogy among STs, each CT was interviewed on two separate occasions. A skeletal interview protocol (see Appendix A) was used to open the interviews, but other issues and questions emerged as the CTs and researcher asked for clarifications about the questions and answers given.

The overarching process for the interviews was guided by Wengraf's (2001) biographic-narrative-interpretive method for lightly structured interviews. Whereas the interview method often resulted in biographically structured data, the goal of the study was not to uncover the CT's biography—although this information became both interesting and important—the primary purpose of the interview was to elicit the CT's vision of equity pedagogy and capacity to share this vision with their STs. A biographic structure to the interview, however, grew in value as the CTs tended to weave their own experiences into the ways they worked with their STs. Indeed, their responses around multicultural education took on the gravity of a deeply held moral purpose, a theme to be more fully examined later in the article.

The first interview lasted between 1.5 and 2 h. Those interviews were then transcribed and analyzed using the techniques for theme discovery in qualitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After deriving several themes from the data, each CT was interviewed a second time and given a chance to read over her earlier responses as a form of member checking. Questions and clarifications that emerged from the initial interview were also included in the second.

The second interview focused more on specific interview questions that were designed to elicit

questions that addressed the CTs' beliefs about their capacity to share their knowledge of equity pedagogy with their STs. The interview data from the second response was then analyzed and organized by themes and categories.

Interviews took place at the school, local coffee shops, or the teachers' homes and were audio-recorded while I took notes. Each CT received a \$50 gift certificate to a local bookstore for her effort. Finally, the researcher made several visits to two of the CTs' classes, making field notes on features of their curriculum. These visits were designed not to inventory systematically the curriculum of the CTs' (such a task would demand an entirely different study), but rather to understand more fully the form of instructional conversations the CTs promoted.

2.2.1. The school

The 688-student school serves a largely Latino (Mexican-American) student body in grades PK-6 (93% "Hispanic"). Eighty percent of the school's students participate in the federal free or reduced-price lunch program and more than 65% of the students are classified as English Language Learners. Although these figures are similar to those of many other schools in California, Las Lomas⁴ is unique because many of the students' parents are year-round, local employees in agribusiness, with jobs ranging from picking strawberries to line workers in canneries who might thus be considered "migrant" workers. Nearly half of the parents reported having less than a high school education.

The school's language-teaching programs reflect the ambitious goals of educators who want to meet the language needs of all students. Three different "streams" (traditional bilingual education, two-way immersion, and structured English immersion) offer

⁴A pseudonym.

1 parents a wide range of options.⁵ The school's
 3 commitment to developing students' skills in Span-
 5 ish is reflected in its devotion to bilingual and two-
 7 way immersion education. This commitment, how-
 9 ever, is not recognized in post-Proposition 227
 11 California, where the standardized tests are given
 13 only in English. Consequently, the school's achieve-
 15 ment data reveal scores in the bottom 10 percentile
 17 of all California schools. The advent of No Child
 19 Left Behind legislation was to have dramatic
 21 consequences for the school curriculum, an issue
 23 examined later in the article.

2.3. Equity pedagogy: definitions/practices

17 In response to a question inviting them to
 19 respond to the conception of multicultural educa-
 21 tion, each CT said that she preferred to use the term
 23 *equity pedagogy* because it more accurately de-
 25 scribed their policies and instructional programs. In
 27 order for readers to gauge their own definitions of
 29 equity pedagogy against those of the CTs, I present
 31 the following comments taken from the interviews.
 33 Naturally, the CTs reported much more than the
 35 following points, but these statements are emble-
 37 matic of their views.

3. Conceptions of multicultural education/equity pedagogy

31 *HOPE*: [Equity pedagogy is a] curriculum that
 33 draws upon and affirms language, culture, experi-
 35 ences that includes class, race, poverty, and
 37 language. That's the first piece. You need to know
 39 them. You need to know them first hand. My
 41 second one is know thyself. You need to be
 43 continually examining your life experiences, your
 45 culture, your class, your race. And then you need to
 47 examine how your work in the classroom affects
 49 your perspectives of history. I struggle with this
 every day that I wake up. You know, I come from a
 highly affluent community. I have had a ton of
 opportunities in my life to travel between the
 classes.

47 *CARIDAD*: We were working up towards writing
 49 an expository essay, and we had read about
 different immigrant groups from different time
 periods. One group we had read about was Mexican

⁵Although Proposition 227 in California legislatively erased
 bilingual education in the state, schools may still apply for a
 waiver to conduct bilingual or two-way immersion programs.

immigrants in the 1920s. Another was Chinese 53
 immigrants. And the third was European Russian 55
 Jews. They were to choose among these groups to 57
 write a five-paragraph essay. [I want the class to 59
 think of] writing as way to get your voice out in the 61
 world. It was really powerful about what they said
 regarding the particular history they chose to study.
 And some of them referenced their own family
 history: "This is just like my family", they said.

61 *SOCORRO*: I base it on my vision of the world.
 63 We are all special as we were meant to be. Life is a
 65 gift. [We need] caring and love so that we can all be
 67 all that we can be. And for each of us to define what
 69 we want to be. And so taken that, I listen to what
 needs to done as far as the standards are concerned.
 And then I ask the children what they are interested
 in.

69 *FAITH*: We do a constitution study in which [try
 71 to combine] the ideal together with the reality. They
 73 [students] just cannot understand how we could
 75 have this constitution and have slavery or have this
 77 constitution and not allow women to vote. It is so
 79 fascinating and in the Instructional Conversation
 (IC) is where you can see that. It's just they are
 trying to put the ideal together with the reality. And
 they're so intelligent. We don't give 4th and 5th
 graders the credit they deserve. What they can figure
 out and understand is pretty amazing. Plus they
 bring their background into it. That's one of the
 reasons why the ICs are so powerful and relevant to
 them because they guide them with their questions.

81 *ESPERANZA*: I always start with what they
 83 know. I always infuse my curriculum with the
 85 knowledge the kids bring to school. It begins and it
 87 ends with them. In my classroom, you are going to
 89 see a lot of the kids' culture reflected, but you are
 91 also going to see real mainstream American
 reflected there because I think that our kids have
 to have that. Because otherwise they are dead in the
 water.

93 These brief explanations offer only a glimpse into
 95 the work of these teachers. Their instructional
 97 program came as a result of years of work on a
 99 curriculum that assisted their students in under-
 101 standing the pernicious ways racism altered social
 103 relations. The upper grade CT made a particular
 effort to assist students in understanding how
 economies were related to the subjugation of
 minority people. Generally, however, their instruc-
 tion revealed a combination of using student
 knowledge as one foundation for instruction and
 carefully designed lessons in equity pedagogy as

1 another. My observations in two of the CTs'
2 classrooms corroborated their descriptions. And
3 although a complete treatment of the curriculum is
4 beyond the scale and scope of this article, these brief
5 descriptions should be an indication of a larger
6 vision, one that worked on ST knowledge develop-
7 ment as well, the focus of this research.

8 I should also note that all but one CT specifically
9 commented that her own success in equity pedagogy
10 was a work in progress and could never be fully
11 complete. Each admitted some success in preparing
12 STs who understood and could implement multi-
13 cultural/equity pedagogy, but they were also clear in
14 pointing out their own remaining challenges. To
15 wit, each CT (including the 25-year veteran)
16 reported that creating a pedagogy that both
17 advances academic skills and connects students to
18 their culture is their greatest professional challenge.
19 Nevertheless, each believed in the importance of
20 assisting STs towards this goal, even if the time they
21 spent supervising STs was insufficient to ensure
22 expert skill. Esperanza shared this theme:

23 It is all individualized. It's all the pieces of the
24 teaching practice. You know, I've been teaching
25 for 25 years, and I still don't have it all
26 understood. Just being able to put all those
27 pieces in place. It's so layered.

29 4. Results

31 Analyzing the results of the interview data was
32 particularly challenging. The interview topics rang-
33 ed over several compelling topics as the teachers
34 took care to describe not only how they came to
35 engage in their pedagogy but also how their own
36 background and preparation had produced it.

37 However, when the data analysis was sharpened
38 to focus primarily on the skills of STs, three primary
39 themes emerged.

41 *Maintaining high standards/caring paradox:* Each
42 of the CTs reported that their STs commonly had
43 problems distinguishing between demanding high
44 quality work from the students and recognizing the
45 economic and educational challenges that the
46 students faced. One CT was particularly cogent in
47 representing this theme:

49 SOCORRO: I know that any people who are
50 vulnerable... if you do too much for them they
51 will say, "Oh, okay, somebody else will do this
for me." I tell them that the kids are doing so
much for each other that when you [i.e., the ST]

52 come in beginning to do too much for them, they
53 just go *incapacitado* (limp). And when I begin to
54 call them on it, they get the sense that I am being
55 too mean because there is a myth about
56 *Mexicanos* being too harsh on other *Mexicanos*.
57 I have always said, "Paint this kid a different
58 colour and what would you do? Would you do
59 the same thing to that child?"

61 This comment was, of course, made by one of the
62 Mexican-American CTs, who had experienced this
63 attitude among her STs, irrespective of their
64 ethnicity.

65 It is not uncommon, of course, for STs to be
66 challenged by a balance between genuinely friendly
67 relations with students and the maintenance of high
68 standards for both academic work and behavior (a
69 challenge that is often described as failing in the
70 area of classroom management or discipline), but
71 these CTs addressed this theme with a much larger
72 social context.

73 As this theme emerged in the data, I wondered if
74 the CTs had noticed differences between their ST of
75 color, particularly those who are Mexican-Amer-
76 ican. Surprisingly, none of the CTs reported that
77 being of color or bilingual seemed to alter this
78 challenge.

79 Another CT had noticed this same difficulty
80 among STs—the inability to distinguish between
81 high expectations and caring—and shared with me,
82 in no uncertain terms, the same language she
83 reported using with her ST.

85 HOPE: STs are less likely to give strict limits,
86 strict consequences, have high expectations,
87 which is actually a huge disservice. [Teachers
88 must be able to say] this is what I want, and you
89 are going to do it. They sometimes perceive of
90 that as being the big white "meanie." But we
91 can't allow the system to dumb down instruction
92 because they are poor impoverished kids. Screw
93 that.

95 This finding corroborates Thompson's (2002) con-
96 clusion that many beginning teachers tend to
97 develop curricula and expectations for low-income
98 students of color that underestimate their academic
99 capacities.

101 Another one of the CTs reflected this view,
102 reporting that STs often "think that what these
103 kids need is more love" (Socorro). Even as she is
careful to point out to her STs that her students did
need to be loved, she argued that many STs

1 misunderstood what that meant. She then related
 2 her own experience as a Mexican-American parent,
 3 recalling telling her son's teachers, "You teach
 4 them, and I'll love them". More importantly, she
 5 widened the scope of this sentiment when speaking
 6 to her STs and suggested that her attitude was
 7 similar to many of the parents at the school. The
 8 families at the school, she shared, are typically two-
 9 parent households, with the support of grand-
 10 parents and other relatives. They are poor, she
 11 admits, but the children are generally well adjusted,
 12 cared for, and loved. Therefore, she argued that STs
 13 are quite wrong in assuming that additional love
 14 and caring are needed to improve the children's
 15 educational experiences.

16 Stone's (1981) visionary book, *The Education of*
 17 *the Black Child in Britain: The Myth of Multiracial*
 18 *Education* underscores this point, suggesting that
 19 promoting the self-concept of students of color (a
 20 lesser type of "love" I would argue) in place of
 21 academic standards "becomes a way of evading the
 22 real, and uncomfortable, issues of class and
 23 privilege in our society" (p. 8). One cannot know
 24 for certain that the STs who worked with Socorro
 25 and the other CTs in this study were displacing the
 26 uncomfortable issues of race and class with a focus
 27 on student self-esteem, but their attention on caring
 28 for the children prior to considering their academic
 29 needs is noteworthy.

30 In a related point, another CT suggested that ST
 31 "can get real idealistic", which is, of course, not an
 32 uncommon criticism of ST working in any context.
 33 But their criticism was more to a point than typical.
 34 Three CTs reported frustration with university
 35 coursework that seems to discourage skills practice
 36 (e.g., word recognition and letter-sound exercises,
 37 mathematics facts and drills) STs, they argued,
 38 often entered the classroom with the view that all
 39 skill instruction was a way of being "mean" to the
 40 kids. It took months, one CT lamented, to convince
 41 her STs that "Drill and fill is different than drill and
 42 kill".

43 Hope, who taught in the upper grades, was even
 44 more unambiguous about ST and their propensity
 45 to mistake high standards for a lack of caring.

46 HOPE: They often approach the students in my
 47 class as "quaint impoverishment." They look at
 48 the students and think that "■■■■" be the remedia-
 49 tion to this is about a cookie. The idea that
 50 charity with love is what the oppressed need.

51 She then went even further, exasperated over her
 52 frustration that "STs can make themselves feel good
 53 by doing something charitable".

54 Yet in spite of their early unbalance between high
 55 expectations and caring for children of color, the
 56 CTs reported that nearly all STs came to under-
 57 stand the importance of both.

58 *Instructional conversations:* The second major
 59 finding suggested a more specific challenge faced
 60 by the STs. Because the school had spent great time
 61 and energy developing a culturally responsive
 62 curriculum, their version of equity pedagogy in-
 63 cluded IC as a primary element in connecting
 64 student culture to school knowledge (cf. Gallimore
 65 & Goldenberg, 1992). Three of the five CTs
 66 (generally those who taught the upper grades)
 67 interviewed indicated that ST faced great difficulty
 68 conducting the IC portion of the curriculum. Each
 69 of the CTs relied on IC at a particular stage of their
 70 social studies units. They reported that their STs
 71 faced challenges in building on student input during
 72 the lesson itself. The STs lacked a deep under-
 73 standing of the lives of the students; consequently,
 74 they often failed to make connections between the
 75 topic at hand and student comments.

76 In particular, the STs were challenged, it seems,
 77 by (a) their desire to dominate the IC and (b) their
 78 inability to recognize when the students were using
 79 their own culture to connect with the content, and
 80 to pursue that line of thought. One of the upper
 81 grade teachers was clear on this point.

82 FAITH: This is probably the most successful and
 83 the most difficult part: leading the IC. They really
 84 enjoy that, partially because they can do it four
 85 times, the same one four times. I mean the same
 86 topic. We will have 4-5 groups of kids that will
 87 go through it so they can refine their skill and so
 88 that's really helpful, I think. Because the first
 89 time it might be a little difficult or they might not,
 90 like if we are using the social studies text for
 91 instance, they might not know that this phrase is
 92 really confusing to the kids or the kids don't
 93 know this word, so that by the time they have
 94 done it the fifth time, they are right there. So
 95 that's been very helpful for them. And also on a
 96 small scale it's much easier to teach a small group
 97 and have the other teacher be managing the rest
 98 of the class. Just logistically it's been the
 99 management has allowed them to get into the
 100 deeper, more difficult parts of the conversation
 101
 102
 103

1 where they are trying to pull out the views and
the information from the kids.

3 Another one of the CTs connected the IC portion of
5 the lesson to the challenge of recognizing student
culture.

7 CARIDAD: STs must ask, “What do the
9 children bring [to the lesson]?”, and they have
to learn to value their knowledge. Especially
11 when you are having IC. It’s hard because the
students will come up with things that are
13 tangential to the topic, from where the teacher
wants to go. IC are a very refined form of
15 teaching. It’s hard to follow and then see where
they are coming from and where they are leading
17 to. It’s both their lack of familiarity with IC and
the challenge of not understanding culture. It’s
19 not knowing even where that question is coming
from, that cultural gap. She [a particular student
21 teacher] couldn’t take the lesson in the direction
the kids were leading. She couldn’t make the
23 connection.”

Finally, one of the CT put it even more plainly.

25 FAITH: It’s kind of hard to see that your own
27 racism and background can influence how you
lead a conversation. They [STs] want to talk too
29 much.

31 The overarching problem of diffusing and diversify-
ing the sources of knowledge presented problems
for the lower grade STs as well, illustrated by the
33 following comment made by one of the first-grade
CTs:

35 SOCORRO: I really believe that we are in the
37 classroom to be both teachers and learners. And
I’m not “ichiban” in this classroom. I’m only
39 number one when it comes to crises and that kind
of stuff. So when the child needs an answer, I will
41 say, go ask Juan. And so they know that
everyone and everything in the class is a resource.
43 STs come in and when I begin to direct them in
that way, it’s like “What about me? What about
45 my role? Aren’t I the teacher? Who is supposed
to be teaching these kids?”

47 The fact that STs had difficulty in implementing IC
is not all that surprising; after all, other researchers
49 (e.g., Bean, 1997) found that IC challenged even
experienced teachers who shared a common ethnic
51 background with their students. What is unique
about the CTs’ comments are the contours of the

problems. General classroom management, for 53
instance, did not come up as a challenge for their 55
STs. It was more about the failure to build on the
cultural knowledge the students brought to the IC.

57 *Relationship to student culture.* The third theme
the CTs developed was the degree to which the STs 59
came to understand the wider cultural background
of the students, with a particular emphasis on the 61
manner in which STs understood parents at Las
Lomas.

63 Research has demonstrated that working with
parents is a challenge nearly all beginning teachers 65
face (Meister & Melnick, 2003), but the need to
understand the role of parents often presented a
67 particular challenge to the ST in this context.

69 In spite of this fact, the CTs did not shield their
STs from the challenges, even though they had high 71
expectations for the teacher’s role in working with
parents. One CT, in response to question about how 73
she worked with parents who may not participate in
their child’s schooling, reported:

75 ESPERANZA: I don’t let them get there, Kip. I
77 have collaboration meetings with my parents. Six
to seven of them at a time. Parents are standard 79
bearers. We are partners. I make them a promise:
This is what I’m going to do, this is what you are 81
going to do. I guarantee that if you work with
me, if you guarantee that you are going to come 83
to these meetings, in equal partnership. I
guarantee them that if they work with me, that 85
their child will be reading at or above the first-
grade level by the end of the year.

87 What is most interesting about her comments is
both the emphasis she places on partnering and the 89
seemingly contradictory demands she makes on
parents. While she argues that parents are partners,
91 she also makes clear who is making the decisions
 (“This is what I’m going to do, and this is what you
93 are going to do”). She is certainly partnering with
the parents in the education of their children, but
95 she is not necessarily inviting them for their input.
An earlier study found a similar phenomenon in
97 which experienced Latino teachers made demands
of the parents, who accepted the uneven power
99 balance because of the deep trust they held for
teachers (Ensle, 1996).

101 With regard to her STs, Esperanza related that
many had trouble relating to this somewhat 103
authoritative style in dealing with parents. They
failed to understand why she took such a different
approach from what they had heard and read about

1 at the university, in which a “partner” approach
 3 was mandatory. She admitted that many STs leave
 her tutelage still quite unsure that they can manage
 such a relationship with parents.

5 This lack of confidence stems from the STs and
 their new and unfamiliar role in the community.
 7 Esperanza argued that *could* manage such a
 relationship because the parents knew and trusted
 her. Although she understood this challenge she
 9 believed that her STs must someday learn her
 11 methods.

13 In addition to challenges in developing a relation-
 ship with parents, this theme also revealed several
 challenges that simply seemed to relate to culture in
 15 general. Hope, in particular, suggested that her STs
 were challenged to reconcile the value she placed on
 17 the students’ cultural heritage and her capacity to
 treat them as individuals.

19 HOPE: It’s incumbent upon me as the CT to
 21 broaden their interests, and broaden their under-
 standing of the kids. I also find it hard to help
 23 them to understand that we do not treat all
 students equally. Equity in teaching is doing
 25 whatever it takes to get everyone to the same
 place. I spend a lot of time talking about my
 27 students and their lives. I want you to understand
 that this is why I do this with Ramon and why I
 29 don’t do it with everybody else.

31 Fatih, too, was often troubled by her STs’ inability
 to learn culture. They always began their lessons on
 what they would say. She implored them that
 33 although planning is critical, a teacher must “step
 back and really let the kids talk. It’s okay to sit there
 35 for a moment and not say anything.” Only the best
 of her STs learned to balance student culture and
 37 their teaching.

39 One of the CTs further complicated the student
 culture her STs must learn by altering her normal
 holiday celebrations out of respect for a few
 41 students in her class. Listening to her story, it is
 no wonder her ST at the time appeared confused by
 43 her decision. Because the school is largely Mexican-
 American, the staff made a point of celebrating *Día*
 45 *de los Muertos*. One year, however, Socorro
 47 reported a conflict:

49 SOCORRO: I also have some very religious
 Christian families who are very wonderful and
 caring and they have their children learning
 51 Spanish here in the classroom. But when they
 asked me what we were going to do for

Halloween. And then we had parent conferences 53
 and they were thinking of pulling their children 55
 out; they didn’t want the costume parade. They 57
 don’t mind the children doing the cute Halloween 59
 stuff. But no skeletons. So then she [a parent] 61
 asked about *Día de los Muertos* more in detail, 63
 and I could sense that they didn’t want that to 65
 happen. And so I said to her I have no need to do 67
 it. And I said this might be a wonderful time to 69
 show, to do a whole lesson on being *aliados* 71
 (allies) to each other. We agreed (the children 73
 and I) that we were going to be allies to these five 75
 children. We had play centers. The children saw 77
 it as fun, not as a punishment.

When STs learn about the importance of creating 69
 culturally relevant curricula, one might expect them 71
 to understand that the *Día de los Muertos* festival 73
 would fit this view exactly. Yet this CT seemed to 75
 cater to a small group of students, complicating the 77
 entire notion of multicultural education.

As this question of gaining culture grew in 79
 prominence and the CTs began to reflect more 81
 deeply on it, Esperanza, nearing the end of her 83
 second interview, paused, sighed, and said:

85 ESPERANZA: The best student teachers that I
 have seen have become bicultural, multicultural. 87
 Not only do they learn the language, they learn 89
 about the traditions... It’s not something you are 91
 doing because you want children to learn, it is 93
 something you do because you want to.

This quote, among all the others, seemed to best 95
 represent what the CTs wanted to convey to their 97
 STs: that learning the culture of the students, a 99
 mandatory task in their view, was not something 101
 you could take on as though you were learning how 103
 to design a lesson. For the CTs, this is not a
professional undertaking; it is a *moral* one.

5. Discussion

The expert CTs in this study found their 95
 protégées troubled, at least initially, by the balance 97
 between holding high expectations and caring for 99
 the largely poor, Mexican-American children at Los 101
 Lomas. STs also were challenged to conduct IC with 103
 students whose culture was often unfamiliar to
 them. And finally, the larger task of learning/
 acquiring culture seemed to be most confusing.
 The CTs suggested that STs sometimes failed to
 understand that acquiring a new culture was far

1 more than simply “linking” new lessons to prior
2 knowledge.

3 These findings point to several issues teacher
4 educators may wish to consider, yet the study is not
5 without limitations. I have already suggested one,
6 but others come to mind. The most obvious
7 shortcoming is that I did not talk with STs for their
8 views on what *they* learned (or failed to learn) from
9 their CTs. I agree that interviews with ST may yield
10 compelling data regarding their experiences with
11 their CTs, but I did not interview the STs for two
12 reasons. First, I did not want the CTs to focus on
13 any particular ST. Instead, I wanted them to
14 consider their broad experiences with STs and think
15 about their general success. Even when I asked them
16 directly to compare their **ST** of color with those who
17 are white, they rarely mentioned a difference. I also
18 wanted them to speak as candidly as possible
19 regarding their STs’ acquisition of multicultural
20 education/equity pedagogy. Had I told them that I
21 was going to speak later with some of their former
22 **ST**, I believe that they might have been troubled by
23 the juxtaposition of their intentions as CTs and
24 what STs believed they learned from them. (In fact,
25 I told them explicitly that I would not be talking to
26 any STs regarding this study.)

27 Another limitation turns on the study’s lack of
28 generalizability, and I freely admit that this sample
29 of CTs is not at all representative. Recall that these
30 teachers had the benefit of direct and intense
31 scrutiny of their curricula over several years, partly
32 the consequence of having a full-time curriculum
33 director on-site who helped coordinate readings,
34 speakers and curriculum development conferences,
35 all oriented towards developing more equitable and
36 multicultural instruction.

37 On the other hand, it would not be very
38 productive to talk with CTs who had made no
39 efforts to alter their curriculum and instruction on
40 the basis of their students’ ethnicity and class. By
41 interviewing these CTs, I was guaranteed thoughtful
42 and comprehensive responses to questions about
43 STs’ success in learning to teach equitably. Perhaps
44 these CTs offer teacher educators a look at what
45 *could* be the case, a goal to work toward rather than
46 the common experience.

47 With these limitations in mind, I believe that the
48 results have relevance for university-based teacher
49 educators. The first question is whether we find
50 coherence between what these CTs promote and the
51 focus of university-based courses on multicultural
52 education. Like all learners, teacher education

53 students look for coherence in what they are
54 learning.⁶ They actively seek out information that
55 triangulates for them, input that squares with their
56 experiences, and, like their in-service counterparts,
57 they search primarily for “what works”.

58 Based on my own teaching and a review of the
59 general texts and syllabi in the field, I suggest that
60 these CTs present as strong a moral case for equity
61 pedagogy as I have heard. On this score, it would be
62 hard to find a contradiction between these CTs and
63 university-based teacher educators. This finding
64 supports *Grant’s (1994)* hypothesis; that is, a truly
65 multicultural teacher education program must place
66 STs with expert CTs to achieve genuine reform. The
67 data seem to suggest that not only were the STs
68 gaining knowledge and skills but that the CTs made
69 very clear the larger social goals of equity pedagogy.

70 But beyond a general moral obligation to equity
71 pedagogy, the CTs in this study taught their STs
72 using strategies quite different than what one finds
73 in university-based courses. And in many ways, the
74 CTs were carrying out their traditional role: they
75 were sharing local methods and strategies, coaching
76 their STs towards skill in working with a specific set
77 of children, helping them to understand a specific
78 curriculum in a particular context. Except that
79 instead of general strategies, they were working
80 towards competence—even excellence—in multi-
81 cultural education. Again, the importance of the
82 CTs’ local knowledge is crucial (cf. *Clarke & Jarvis-
83 Selinger, 2005*).

84 Unlike traditional courses in multicultural educa-
85 tion, the CTs could draw their STs’ attention to case
86 of the classroom, the very place that the STs wanted
87 to be successful. In contrast to a generalized
88 approach, the STs learned how to conduct IC via
89 direct modeling and coaching. The CTs also
90 demonstrated nuances to equity pedagogy that a
91 more generalized approach could never do. For
92 instance, when Socorro decided to skip her *Día de
93 Los Muertos* celebration in response to a concern by
94 a minority of her parents, one can understand why.
95 She mentioned that her ST at the time understood

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⁶Sometimes in teacher education we want our students to face
compelling contradictions (cf. *McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001*),
but contradictions between university instructors and CTs are not
of this variety. Regardless of the indeterminacies of equity
pedagogy, *Ritchie et al. (2000)* suggested that STs can develop
wisdom from CTs through observation, inquiry, reflection and
practice within a community where members are prepared for
“positioning” and shifting power relations.

1 exactly why she took such action, and I have no
2 reason to doubt her.

3 Given the depth and immediacy of the knowledge
4 these CTs shared with their STs, could university
5 teacher education still have a role to play? I have
6 argued that university coursework can attend to the
7 generalizable skills new teachers miss by spending
8 the bulk of their time in one or two teachers'
9 classrooms. Yet it seems that the skills, strategies,
10 curricula, and moral imperatives the CTs were
11 sharing would transfer to other student populations.
12 Moreover, given the CTs' success in promoting
13 equity pedagogy, teacher educators might ask that if
14 all STs could be placed in classrooms like these,
15 what could the university course offer them?

16 Perhaps this is the point: If we could promise that
17 all STs would have the quality of experience these
18 CTs provide, then university courses in multicultur-
19 al education or equity pedagogy might become
20 redundant. But not all STs have such a classroom
21 placement, and thus we carry on, imparting our
22 moral and pedagogical advice about the importance
23 of meeting the needs of all diverse students when the
24 STs are typically more interested in what to teach
25 tomorrow. Tensions between the moral and the
26 technical, the specific and the generalizable, the
27 procedural and the novel will vex us always.

28 At this point, I believe that many university
29 teacher educators might be willing to face a difficult
30 question: If I were successful in developing or
31 finding CTs who can do what these CTs did, would
32 I relinquish my program's course or courses in
33 multicultural education? If the answer is *no*, we risk
34 redundancy or irrelevance. If it is *yes*, then it might
35 be wise to consider how we can take advantage of
36 our special and privileged position in the university.
37 Not tethered to a single school or even school
38 system, we can work across systems, even nations,
39 to share what we have learned in these varied
40 contexts and make those contexts meaningful for
41 our students. At the least we can help set the context
42 for the specific, technical, procedural and, yes,
43 moral knowledge they will gain from an expert
44 CTs. And we should consider how much time they
45 need to spend at the university, remembering that
46 CTs are generally pleased when STs are in the
47 classroom more than in university courses (Kahn,
48 1999). Might these practices gather into the next
49 wave of reform in teacher education?

50 In spite of the promises found in curricular and
51 policy reforms, teacher education in the US and
52 Europe now faces an uncertain future (see Furlong,

Barton, Miles, Whiting, & Whitty, 2000 for a review 53
of challenges faced in the UK). Teaching internships 54
and alternative licensing, both of which largely 55
detour teacher education, are finding favor as 56
effective ways to advance the educational achieve- 57
ment of low-income students of color in the USA 58
(Hawk, Burke, Brent, Warren, & McCarley, 1998). 59
Consequently, teacher education must reappraise its 60
efforts to prepare teachers for diverse students or 61
face irrelevancy.

62 Controversy over the causes of the achievement 63
gap between the dominant culture and those who 64
are marginalized is most pronounced in the USA, 65
but this is probably only because of its role as a 66
well-developed democracy. And although we might 67
not all agree that a US-style democracy is worth 68
exporting, democracies are now flourishing in some 69
unlikely places. For instance, Clarkson (2005) 70
describes the redesign of a teacher education 71
program in Macedonia where ethnic tensions rose 72
to the surface more than once. Democracies depend 73
largely on the public (i.e., free or very low-cost) 74
schools to create an equitable society; therefore, 75
who is privileged to teach and how they are 76
prepared features prominently in any democratic 77
effort. We must wonder, however, if formal profes- 78
sional schoolteacher education is a necessary 79
ingredient.

80 Teacher educators must now justify their role as 81
never before. The argument that teaching is best 82
learned through "practical" experiences continues 83
to gain ground. If university-based teacher educa- 84
tors are once again undermined by the practice 85
context, this time on the multicultural education 86
score, what is left? Time alone will tell whether 87
multicultural education will be added to the list of 88
skills "best" learned during student teaching. 89

90 The CTs' fate in this story is more certain. Soon 91
after I completed the interviews, Las Lomas came 92
under intense pressure to raise its standardized test 93
scores, which had been both very low and very flat 94
over the past several years. Recently, the district 95
leadership, in response to both the school board and 96
the state, has enforced a "scripted" curriculum in 97
literacy. The curriculum director, so important to 98
the school's development, retired early to avoid 99
enforcing the new materials. STs placed at the 100
school now ask why they learn about so many 101
diverse literacy practices at the university when all 102
they are asked to do is follow the textbook's 103
instructions. Perhaps all teacher educators, univer-

sity and school-based alike, have found a new moral purpose.

Appendix A. Interview Protocol

1. How do you, when you are teaching, engage in equity pedagogy?
2. What do you believe have been your successes in engaging in this form of teaching?
3. What do you believe have been your challenges in this area?
4. What initial strengths do ST seem to have in equity pedagogy?
5. What initial weaknesses do they seem to have in equity pedagogy?
6. What are the primary goals for your ST in the area of equity pedagogy?
7. What do they seem to have the most trouble with?
8. What do you seem to be most successful in imparting and why?

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