

POWERPLAY

A JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE

Volume 2 • Number 1 • 2010

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PowerPlay is published by the College of Education at Eastern Michigan University. *PowerPlay* is published twice yearly in the Summer (June/July) and Winter (January/February). Editorial office is located in the Department of Teacher Education, John W. Porter Building, Suite 313, College of Education, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197. Phone 734.487.3260. Email: power.play@emich.edu. Website: www.powerplayjournal.org.

Editors' Note

Surfacing in educational discourse over the last decade or so, “disproportionality” rings curiously, if not disturbingly, to students attentive to the democratic purposes of education. On one hand, disproportionality seems to be another term for inequality: In relation to their representative populations, one group of students is getting more (or less) of something in schools than another group of students. In this way, disproportionality clearly affronts one of the hallowed tenets (myths?) of public schooling in democratic societies—that public schools provide equality of opportunity. On the other hand, the fact that disproportionality is used frequently—and needs to be used—in place of inequality suggests that there is something else at work in schools and society: Is there a kind of inequality more pernicious, more intense than the inequality that liberal and conservative students of education generally assume to be an inherent part of schooling in a society so riddled by gender, race, and class divisions? If so, what does such an inequality portend for the viability of democratic life, and what sorts of challenges does disproportionality pose to educational justice? The articles published in this themed issue of *PowerPlay* clearly help us understand various dimensions of disproportionality as an inequality-more-intolerable-than-inequality. They nudge us to think more deeply about the true possibility of democratic life as we ponder educational justice.

Ranging from a case study on “how to construct a delinquent” (Sayman, this issue) to an analysis of discourses operating in reference to the Columbine tragedy (Ehrensals, this issue) and from a study of bilingual education and language politics in Japan (Takeuchi and Romano, this issue) to a case study of racial and ethnic disproportionality in special education placement in Arizona (Marks, et al, this issue), the authors identify the multi-faceted characteristics of disproportionality and show the difficulties attendant to analyzing and understanding such a corrosive feature of contemporary schooling. Linking these various articles are the pedagogical insights of teacher educator Dr. Beth Harry, documenting one of her talks during her work as the Porter Chair at Eastern Michigan University during 2008-2009 academic year. She shows us how she meticulously helps teacher candidates begin to understand the complexity of disproportionality through the lens of race, gender, class, and ability. Two “Views” written by Margaret Turner and Elijah Church, who are students in Eastern Michigan’s initial certification program, serve two purposes: These views help us understand the ideas animating the thoughts of some of our future teachers, and they serve as, yet again, another invitation to writers and thinkers, of various positions in society (e.g., student, teacher, cultural worker, advocate, activist, scholar, poet, visual artist, parent/caregiver...), to submit review essays or opinion pieces to us for consideration in our “Views and Reviews” section.

Sadly, one of the journal’s biggest advocates, Dr. Vernon C. Polite (Dean, College of Education, Eastern Michigan University), passed away this past winter after a courageous battle with a difficult disease. This issue is dedicated to him, as he would see that the articles in this issue speak to a range of issues he ardently

tried to address in his work. We are fortunate to have Dr. Eboni Zamani-Gallaher, one of Dean Polite's mentees and confidants, reflect on his accomplished life.

Leader of a Lifetime: In Memory of Dean Vernon C. Polite¹

Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher
Eastern Michigan University

"When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight." -Kahlil Gibran

It is with delight that I celebrate a man who was guided by instinct, lead with love, and set minds aflame with a passion for learning. Dr. Vernon C. Polite had a life well lived. He was a man guided by faith who actively listened to the still, small voice from within to embark on a journey from darkness into light. Given the unexpected adversities that were presented to him as a young child, having tragically lost both parents, he realized through the nurturance of his Aunt Beraline, the ethos of care. It was through Aunt Beraline's loving care and guidance that Vernon experienced a river of kindness, and he positioned himself to make sure that others like him would never walk alone.

Vernon's journey in the educational realm began with his formative years in parochial schools in Detroit, Michigan. It was within the context of his Catholic schooling that he was exposed to *Catholic Social Teaching*, which fosters concern for the poorest members of society. It was his years growing up Black in Catholic schools that was key in later shaping his research agenda and call to social justice work.

During his secondary years, he became interested in issues of race, class, inequity, and the disproportionate numbers of at-risk students that did not have access to the repositories of social capital. Hence, he pursued sociology as an undergraduate major and graduate work in secondary education and doctoral studies in educational administration. For nearly four decades, he made the development of young minds his main concern. From his appointments as a high school teacher, to school principal, to a professor that climbed to the top of the academic ranks at Catholic University to becoming the founding Dean of Bowie State University, Vernon sought to enrich the lives of young people.

Upon assuming what would be his last post as Dean of the College of Education at Eastern Michigan University, Dr. Vernon C. Polite hit the ground running in becoming a change agent on our campus, which did not differ from his record of exemplary contributions over the last 30+ years. If one were to describe

¹ Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in Higher Education Administration in the Department of Leadership and Counseling at Eastern Michigan University.

Vernon, they would readily admit that he was a consummate professional, charismatic leader, and one of the most grounded people you will ever come across. He never lost sight of the fact that for many members of disenfranchised groups, opportunities for self-actualization are not easy to come by and often thwarted from the onset. Always the humanitarian in personal and professional regards, he avidly exposed forms of oppression and inequality, as he understood fully that one way dominance functions is by remaining unexamined. In short, Polite's career marked an administrative leader who was a staunch student advocate, a trailblazer for social justice, and the epitome of a servant leader. Vernon always sought to lift others as he climbed.

Vernon was also a wonderful example of the practitioner-scholar. While the challenges of administrative work can often hamper scholarly productivity for some, the role of educational leader only furthered his commitment to produce relevant scholarship; and he was held in high esteem for producing research of high value to our field. His numerous publications are poised to continue generating greater awareness of issues facing racial/ethnic minority students, schooling in urban enclaves, parochial education, and leadership in transition. It came as no surprise when Dr. Polite rallied support for the launch of a new, refereed publication housed at Eastern Michigan University. *PowerPlay: A Journal of Educational Justice* is the embodiment of his passion for social justice, his commitment to urban education, and his facilitation of school, community, and university partnerships that advocate for educational equity. His life and his work exemplified that of an activist leader, one whose theory and practice, rhetoric and response were in alignment with the tenets of social justice, particularly in education. Correspondingly, the journal fosters an interdisciplinary dialogue that engages practitioners, scholars, and policymakers, across local, state, national, and international contexts.

All told, Dr. Vernon C. Polite was an unmistakably remarkable man. He lived a life rich with character, integrity, and exhibited one of his favorite organizing conceptual frameworks: "resiliency theory. He was indeed resilient over the course of his life. He empowered many others to have that self-determination which he modeled so well. Dean Polite embodied a popular axiom in African American culture of "each one, reach one, and teach one". He was a wise, generous, and nurturing man, always extending himself to help others and offer gestures of support.

Eastern Michigan University and the academic community at large join Dr. Polite's family as loved ones saddened by his passing. Nonetheless, I count all the moments of joy as he was someone that really lived every day to the fullest. I was fortunate to have known him as my dean, mentor, colleague, collaborator, and friend. From him I learned that hope has a face; and when troubles come, they can be redeemed into opportunities for our spirits to be lifted, our faith to be

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renewed, and for our wisdom to take root. Dr. Polite touched many people's lives as he has mine. Others have often shared with me how blessed they have been to have worked with him, be impacted by his research, be students under his tutelage, or have the gift of his friendship.

In closing, as I have walked the halls of the College of Education at EMU over the past few months since the passing of Dr. Polite, I feel a great paradox exists. On one hand, the halls seem hollow and a notable absence lingers in the air. On the other hand, I take pleasure in knowing that Dr. Vernon C. Polite once graced the halls, the personification of the ultimate guide to lift and change lives. He was a brave traveler in this voyage called life. He will be remembered as one whose journey was coarse initially but eventually led to a triumphant, velvety existence that transformed others lives for the better, as he inspired us all to be brave explorers in navigating the varied seascapes of life.

The Persistent Issue of Disproportionality in Special Education and Why it Hasn't Gone Away¹

Susan Unok Marks, Ph.D.
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Disproportionality reflects over- and under-representation of specific racial and ethnic groups within special education. Disproportionality highlights some important assumptions about the practice of special education, which differentially impacts students of color. Despite the fact that disproportionality has been identified and discussed for the past four decades, these inequities persist. When members of certain minority groups are more likely to be placed in the most restrictive environments and be identified within the more negative disability categories, disproportionality in special education can be viewed as a key feature undermining equity in our schools, and subsequently, within the larger U.S. society.

The existence of disproportionality within special education has been widely acknowledged and continues to be a source of concern (Brantlinger, 2006; Ferri & Connor, 2006; Skiba, Poloni-Staudinger, Gallini, Simmons, & Feggins-Azziz, 2006; Skiba et al., 2008). We argue that this issue of disproportionality has not gone away because of how the public, educators, and policymakers continue to construct disability as an individual impairment. Drawing on the fields of Disability Studies (DS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT), we position the persistent problem of disproportionality in teachers' assumptions and practices that continue to name disability as an individual impairment without recognizing the ways in which schooling and societal contexts disable students. Furthermore, we argue the ways in which a majority of educators fail to consider how race and racism are embedded within identification procedures, assignment to disability categories, and placement decisions and testing, which perpetuate segregated schooling (Ferri & Connor, 2006). In turn, the intersection of race and disability

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results in the consolidation of White privilege, thus targeting students of color disproportionately for special education (Blanchett, 2006).

In this article, we begin by articulating disproportionality within special education through the perspectives of Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory. Next, we examine the problem inherent in disproportionality within special education and present how disproportionality plays out in Arizona. We conclude by analyzing disproportionality and why it continues to be a persistent problem, along with some potential solutions.

Examining Disproportionality in Special Education through Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory

We utilize both Disability Studies (DS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) to frame this paper. DS scholars (e.g., Barnes, Ervelles, Ferri, and many others) have rejected a medical model of disability that associates deviance with physiology and other personal characteristics and have instead put forth a social construction model of disability where disability is produced through social, economic, and discursive limitations placed upon people with some form of physical or mental impairment (Barnes, Mercer, & Shakespeare, 1999). Within this medical model, which is often prevalent in special education, disability operates to highlight the impairment rather than the social environments in which these impairments take on specific meanings.

Drawing on CRT (e.g., Crenshaw, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), we recognize that the meanings of impairment are historically constituted in U.S. society through the endemic nature of racism. With the construct of race, deficit models have ascribed people of color as less intelligent, less able and less equipped to succeed than their White classmates (Erevelles, Kanga & Middleton, 2006). In light of this reality, students from racial, ethnic and linguistic minority groups are often misdiagnosed and overrepresented in special education (Fierros & Conroy, 2002). This deficit model is intimately connected with how normative discourses in U.S. society construct disability.

The palpable reality of a majority of the U.S. population categorizing race and disability as “other” provides a backdrop for understanding the current situation of disproportionality for both of these populations (those from minority backgrounds and those with disabilities) in self-contained classes instead of the “least restrictive environment” (LRE) as mandated by federal laws. The processes and practice associated with LRE placement continue to segregate students of color, placing them in special education classrooms and nonacademic tracks, maintaining the status quo to advantage that which has been deemed by society as “normal” and disadvantage that which has been identified as “different.”

From the perspective of DS and CRT, an examination of practices in the field of special education must, on a moral and political basis, focus on and address the issue of disproportionality. This focus must critically examine two practices in special education that are salient to this issue: 1) Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are often disproportionately represented within certain disability categories for special education services; and 2) Certain disability categories are more likely to result in more restrictive educational placements, with differential funding levels across disability categories which translates to differing levels of resources and services.

Disproportionality in Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) is the most recent reauthorization of the federal law governing special education practices. This federal legislation provides guidelines and funding on what disability categories qualify for special education services. Key to this legislation is also the requirement of states to report progress on a series of indicators that are established by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Another key feature is the mandate for students to be provided with services in the "least restrictive environment" which means as close to the settings in which nondisabled students receive their education. Since the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997, states have been required to collect data for the purpose of monitoring disproportionality within special education (Coutinho & Oswald, 2000). And, since 2004, OSEP, as part of the IDEA legislation requires that states monitor and report on two indicators associated with disproportionality: Indicator #9 and Indicator #10 (Burdette, 2007). Indicator #9 refers to whether the percentage of students from certain ethnic/racial groups who qualify for special education services is disproportionate; and Indicator #10 refers to whether the percentage of students from certain ethnic/racial groups are disproportionately represented within specific disability categories. These indicators, however, stipulate that the disproportionality must be due to inappropriate identification procedures, meaning that even if a district's percentages are disproportionate, there must be evidence that the district used inappropriate procedures for identifying students for special education services or for identifying them within a certain disability category (Burdette, 2007). Interestingly, no federal indicator targets the disproportionate placement of students in more restrictive educational environments. OSEP does collect data on placement for students from each ethnic group, but fails to report placement of students according to disability category *and* ethnicity. In fact, from the data available, it cannot be determined to what

extent this is an issue. Instead, one must look at each data set separately and then extrapolate whether students from certain ethnic groups who are also classified within a specific disability category are more likely to receive their education in more restrictive environments. In other words, if Black/African American students tend to be assigned to the “Mental Retardation” category and we know that most students in this category are provided services within segregated self-contained classroom settings, then we can extrapolate that Black/African American students are more likely to receive their education in a segregated setting in the schools that have achieved moderate degree of racial integration.

The “Risk Ratio”

Publicly available data (see IDEAdata.org) can be used to examine the extent to which students from each ethnic/racial group are represented within each disability category and the extent to which these students are represented across various educational settings. The risk ratio developed by Westat is a common way used by most states to determine disproportionality (Bollmer, Bethel, Garrison-Mogren, & Brauen, 2007). The *National Institute for Urban School Improvement* (<http://www.urbanschools.org>) has created a series of data maps to provide national and statewide data on disproportionality by race and disability. Essentially, the risk ratio is calculated by dividing the percentage of students from a certain ethnic/racial group within a specific category (placement or disability) by the percentage of students who are within that ethnic/racial group in the general population. For example, to calculate the risk ratio for Asian students who have the label of autism, you would divide the percentage of students who are Asian within the category of autism by the percentage of Asian students in the general population. This ratio indicates whether the percentage of Asians in the category of autism is higher than would be expected. A score of “1” would actually mean that there is no risk or overrepresentation, and the higher the number, the higher the risk. As the risk ratio approaches “0”, it would indicate potential underrepresentation.

An Examination of Disproportionality in Arizona

We have chosen to focus on Arizona because we have been examining statewide data for states within this region. We also live in Arizona, and one of the authors has had the opportunity to observe special education practices within this state. Arizona has a diverse student population, even though the ethnic/racial composition may not be representative of the nation as a whole. In Arizona, the

percentage within each ethnic/race category is lower than the national average. However, the percentages of Hispanic/Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native are higher than the national average (see Table 1). Our intent is to use Arizona’s data as a point of discussion on the topic of disproportionality.

Table 1. General and Special Education Percentages (Students, ages 6-21) by Ethnic/Race for Arizona and the U.S. (2007)

	American Indian/ Alaska Native		Asian/ Pacific Islander		Black/ African American (not Hispanic)		Hispanic		White (not Hispanic)	
	General	Special	General	Special	General	Special	General	Special	General	Special
Arizona	6%	7%	2%	1%	4%	7%	39%	39%	48%	46%
U.S.	1%	2%	4%	2%	15%	21%	19%	18%	61%	58%

Source: IDEAdata.org

Disproportionality within Disability Categories

In order to report on the federal indicators, each state defines disproportionality and reports on the percentage of districts within the state that are found to have disproportionality present. As would be expected, state determinations of disproportionality along with how to calculate disproportionality can vary (Burdette, 2007; Westat, 2008). Each state must report on whether there was disproportionality of students for each ethnic/racial group being categorized as having a disability (all categories combined) and whether there is disproportionality of students for each ethnic/racial group within certain disability categories. In addition, the disproportionality must be due to inappropriate identification procedures. Arizona’s most recent annual performance report identified 0% of districts reporting disproportionality of students categorized as having a disability (all categories combined). However, Arizona also reported that disproportionality within certain disability categories was evident in nine districts, but only two districts were reported to have disproportionality due to inappropriate identification procedures.

Table 2 lists the risk ratios for disability categories by ethnicity/race for Arizona and the U.S. as a whole. We have chosen only six out of twelve disability categories for which to calculate risk ratios, because these categories are the ones for which disproportionality is often observed. Overall, the risk ratios would indicate no *significant* disproportionality (greater than twice the risk) for total number of students identified for special education services. However, Black/African American students have the highest risk ratio in Arizona, and American Indian/Alaska Native students have the highest risk ratio nationally. Black/African American students show a higher risk ratio for two disability categories: Mental Retardation (2.07 for Arizona and 2.64 for the US) and

Emotional Disturbance (2.84 for Arizona and 2.29 for the US). The only other group to approach a score close to these is the Other Health Impairments (OHI) and Autism categories for White (not Hispanic) students (2.04 and 1.92 respectively), but only for Arizona.

Table 2. Risk Ratios for Disability Categories Based on Ethnicity for Students, Ages 6-21 (2007)

	American Indian / Alaska Native		Asian / Pacific Islander		Black/ African American (not Hispanic)		Hispanic		White (not Hispanic)	
	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US
Students with Disabilities	1.20	1.62	0.62	0.53	1.61	1.45	0.99	0.94	0.90	0.88
Mental Retardation ¹	1.21	1.38	0.74	0.51	2.07*	2.64*	1.33	0.76	0.62	0.63
Speech or Language Impairments ²	0.99	1.45	0.96	0.77	1.19	1.03	0.96	0.96	1.02	1.03
Emotional Disturbance ³	0.80	1.69	0.36	0.26	2.84*	2.29*	0.41	0.56	1.76	0.84
Other Health Impairments ⁴	0.66	1.34	0.49	0.35	1.66	1.22	0.45	0.50	2.04*	1.42
Specific Learning Disabilities ⁵	1.46	1.84	0.39	0.40	1.59	1.22	1.24	1.22	0.70	0.74
Autism ⁶	0.39	0.77	1.68	1.32	1.45	0.93	0.48	0.61	1.92*	1.32

Source: IDEAdata.org

In addition to comparing an individual state's risk ratio to the national risk ratio, it can be helpful to examine changes in the risk ratio over time. Table 3 shows the differences in risk ratio between 2004 and 2007 for Arizona. As can be seen, in 2004, the risk ratios were also high for Black/African American students in the "Mental Retardation" and "Emotional Disturbance" disability categories. Interestingly, the risk ratios were also high for both years for White students in the "Other Health Impairment" and "Autism" disability categories. This would appear to indicate that the risk ratios are fairly stable for these student populations within these disability categories. Also, as shown in the table, American Indian/Alaska Native students are underrepresented in the "Autism" category (.39) for Arizona.

Table 3. Risk Ratio for Students, Ages 6-21, 2004 & 2007 (Arizona)

	American Indian / Alaska Native		Asian / Pacific Islander		Black/ African American (not Hispanic)		Hispanic		White (not Hispanic)	
	2007	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004
Students with Disabilities	1.20	1.24	0.62	0.67	1.61	1.64	0.99	0.99	0.90	0.94
Mental Retardation	1.21	1.18	0.74	0.80	2.07*	2.43*	1.33	1.27	0.62	0.63
Speech or Language Impairments	0.99	1.49	0.96	0.47	1.19	1.65	0.96	1.17	1.02	0.73
Emotional Disturbance	0.80	0.81	0.36	0.35	2.84*	2.78*	0.41	0.41	1.76	1.78
Other Health Impairments	0.66	0.59	0.49	0.71	1.66	1.62	0.45	0.46	2.04*	1.99*
Specific Learning Disabilities	1.46	1.83	0.39	0.47	1.59	1.61	1.24	1.10	0.70	0.84
Autism	0.39	0.33	1.68	1.73	1.45	1.72	0.48	0.48	1.92*	1.90*

Source: IDEAdata.org

Disproportionality within Placement Categories

Determination of placement settings for students with disabilities continues to be a contentious issue in the field. Although the principle of the LRE is stated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004), researchers, policymakers, families, and school personnel vary in their interpretation of the meaning of this term. However, for the most part, the “continuum of placement” options continue to define the categories of educational placements (see footnotes). These range from more restrictive (i.e., separate schools, residential facilities, and correctional facilities) to less restrictive (i.e., the general education class for at least 80% of the day). There are also degrees of restrictiveness, such as more or less time spent in the regular class, ranging from less than 40% to more than 80%. In general, the more time that a student spends away from the typical environment, the greater the level of restrictiveness.

It should be noted that states are not required to report on disproportionality associated with placement. However, they are required to report placement percentages by disability category as well as by ethnicity/race. This means that if there is disproportionality within certain types of placements, it is not necessarily viewed as problematic for reporting purposes, and this issue is not a focus within the state. Nevertheless, overall placement for students receiving special education services are reported and tracked by the Office of Special Education Programs. Each state also includes a performance indicator for placements.

Table 4 lists these placement categories by level of restrictiveness and lists the risk ratio for that placement for each ethnic/race category. As can be seen, in Arizona, the risk ratio for American Indian/Alaska Native students to receive educational services within a residential facility indicates disproportionality (4.24). For Black/African American students, the risk ratio scores for Arizona are high for the following placements: Separate school (2.53) and residential facility (2.03). For all placement categories, the U.S. risk ratios are much lower than for Arizona, indicating no significant disproportionality.

Table 4. Risk Ratios for Educational Placement Based on Ethnicity, for Students Ages 6-21 (2007)

	Inside Regular Class 80% or more of the Day		Inside Regular Class 40% to 79% of the Day		Inside Regular Class less than 40% of the Day		Separate School		Residential Facility		Parentally Placed in Private Schools		Correctional Facility	
	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US	AZ	US
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.96	0.51	1.25	.60	0.82	0.37	0.62	0.26	4.24*	0.55	0	0.15	0	0.36
Asian/ Pacific Islander	1.07	0.46	0.73	0.43	1.28	0.68	1.01	0.60	0	0.37	0	0.47	0	0.19
Black/ African American (not Hispanic)	0.85	0.37	1.07	0.44	1.28	0.63	2.53*	0.67	2.03*	0.61	0	0.24	0.57	1.41
Hispanic	0.94	0.43	1.19	0.44	1.03	0.55	0.59	0.38	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.15	0.16	0
White (not Hispanic)	1.13	0.33	0.80	0.27	0.95	0.20	1.27	0.26	1.18	0.30	1.04	0.57	0.08	0.14

Source: IDEAdata.org

The Problem with Disproportionality in Special Education

Although special education, in theory, was intended to provide support for students with disabilities to more fully benefit from schooling, special education has faced a number of criticisms. First, the attention to individual deficits and the reliance on a medical model of disability whereby special education teachers can diagnose and “treat” the impairment through more individualized interventions fails to account for the overrepresentation of students of color and the social construction of the categories, assumptions about the categories, and assumptions about students of color.

Foregrounding the work of DS and CRT scholars, special educators need to consider the implications of a social model of disability whereby impairments take on increasing significance in environments where the impairment becomes central to being successful. As can be seen, even the ways in which disproportionality is determined relies heavily on the medical model. The assessment and identification procedures remain largely unquestioned in determining disproportionality. Second and related to the first, special education practices often rely on separating students to treat the disabling condition rather than addressing the environments that disable students. Third, the view of students who are identified with a negative disability label may lead to adverse placements or differential treatment or expectations. Fourth, students who are identified or labeled with a particular disability category are more likely to be educated in different environments and according to a different curriculum. Fifth, we discuss further points two to four, noting that all four points expand on the frameworks of DS and CRT.

Separate Does not Mean Better

Historically, the question of whether a separate setting can actually result in better or equal educational services has been largely dismissed. Yet, when it comes to special education, there is a tendency to believe that separation will result in better education. The irony is that the more time students spend in these “specialized” environments, the less likely it is that they will be able to attend classes with their typical peers, and the more likely the knowledge and skill gap between them and their nondisabled peers will increase. This fact was widely publicized in a 1993 news article in the *U.S. News & World Report* (Shapiro, Loeb, & Bowermaster, 1993) titled “Separate and unequal: How special education programs are cheating our children and costing taxpayers billions each year.” The reporters highlighted many of the basic inequities of a dual system (one system serving those without disabilities, the other serving those with disabilities) and the inherent failures of special education.

It is no wonder that once students begin their schooling in a separate setting, they rarely leave that setting and, in fact, they often begin to prefer to remain there. They have learned well what the special education system has taught them; that they need to remain within the safety of other students who are “like them” and with the special professionals who can understand them. Unfortunately, this view is further perpetuated by the professionals and parents. Educators must realize that special services, rather than supporting, can actually be more “disabling” (Kauffman, McGee, & Brigham, 2004), in that few students receiving special education services ever truly catch up with their nondisabled peers. In other words, special education becomes a lifelong “track” that is supported by the structures of schooling.

The Effect of Negative Labels

Although being perceived differently does not necessarily lead to adverse consequences, being provided with services according to a perceived negative disability label typically does result in adverse (even if unintended) consequences. Just as educators may respond to students differentially according to socio-economic status, gender, and ethnicity, we should not be surprised that they would respond differentially to students according to their disability labels. We believe that the labels of “Emotional Disturbance” and “Mental Retardation” are probably the two labels that conjure up the most negative images: those of an out-of-control student or a student whose intellectual abilities would preclude any

abilities to learn academic content. Most educators typically imagine a student who will probably not be able to learn, or at least, they would have great difficulty teaching them. Unfortunately, the reality is that most of these students could indeed learn but are given limited opportunities because of their disability label. Most of the general public may not realize that a high percentage of the students who are provided services under the IDEA category of “Mental Retardation” actually fall within the category of “Mild Mental Retardation” (close to 80%). Historically, the distinction between “Mild Mental Retardation” and “Specific Learning Disability” has been argued because it is often difficult to distinguish the learning profiles of these two groups of students (Jenkins, Pious, & Petersen, 1988). Yet, being assigned to the “Mental Retardation” rather than the “Specific Learning Disability” category can make a big difference in which educational environment one will be placed.

In reviewing the risk ratios for “Autism” and “Other Health Impairment” (see Table 2), it may seem odd that White students would be disproportionately represented in those categories for Arizona. Although autism has historically meant a disability with extremely negative connotations, recently, the trend has shifted as awareness of autism and the significant investments in research and services has skyrocketed. The distinction between the label of “Autism” and “Mental Retardation” can also be blurred since many students in the “Autism” disability category also meet the criteria for “Mental Retardation.” The disability category of “Other Health Impairment” is also interesting because this category is largely made up of students with the diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). As most people would assume, these students for the most part will be provided services within the regular classroom, and this disability label carries fewer negative connotations than “Specific Learning Disability.” It appears as if White students are receiving disability labels that are less stigmatizing and that come with more desirable resources; and Black/African American students are receiving disability labels that are the most stigmatizing.¹

Exposure to Different Placements and Curricula

Most of the specialized environments do not teach the general education curriculum, at least, not to the degree that a student leaving such an environment would be able to keep pace with his/her peers. Given that the disability category of “Mental Retardation” and “Emotional Disturbance” are two categories that tend to result in a greater likelihood of spending most of the day away from typical peers (more restrictive), we could say that being assigned these disability categories can have the worst potential effects on one’s education. The distinction between “Mild MR” and “Learning Disability” is often difficult to make. Yet, in

Arizona, close to 74% of students who are classified in the “Mental Retardation” category spend most of their day in self-contained special education classrooms, whereas only 6% of students who are classified in the “Specific Learning Disability” category spend most of their day in self-contained special education classrooms. Only about 7% of students classified in the “Mental Retardation” category spend most of their day in general education classrooms, whereas close to 52% of students classified in the “Specific Learning Disability” category spend most of their day within general education classrooms (<http://www.ideadata.org>). In fact, in many districts, simply being assigned to the “Mental Retardation” disability category automatically qualifies the student for a more restrictive educational placement.

The use of more restrictive and separate educational placements reflects the ongoing unequal and inequitable distribution of opportunities for students with disabilities. Teacher expectations and the kind of work students are exposed to vary considerably from one academic track to another and reflect the preparation of students for specific social classes and future roles in life (Anyon, 1983). The uneven and inequitable distribution of knowledge in these different academic tracks closely parallels the experiences of students in self-contained classrooms across the country who have been deemed uneducable (Oakes, 1983). Students in self-contained special education classrooms are often exposed to a watered down curriculum, which limits their future life opportunities because of the lack of rigorous preparation. Simply stated, it is clear that *where* one is taught matters a great deal.

Why Disproportionality in Special Education Hasn’t Gone Away

By viewing the issue of disproportionality through the fields of DS and CRT, we argue that this problem persists because special education remains grounded in medical model assumptions and practices that are premised on racialized assumptions inherent or naturalized within specific racial groups (Baker, 2002; Goldberg, 1994). Furthermore, as the risk ratio demonstrates, the problematic construction of disability is racially encoded through deficit and deviance shaped discourses about “normalcy.” Framing this discussion around disproportionality in Arizona, we can begin to understand how these social constructions of disability reflect the ways in which differences are situated and negotiated within particular contexts. In addition, this issue has not gone away because as the case of Arizona highlights, policies continue to sidestep the inequities posed by identification and placement patterns for racially, ethnic, and linguistically marginalized populations. The presence of two U.S. Department of Education state performance indicators would appear to acknowledge the importance of the

issue of disproportionality. However, when a state determines that disproportionality is only minimally present, it becomes difficult to call attention to the issue at the school and district levels. As mentioned previously, in Arizona, although the state did not meet the target of 0% of districts exhibiting disproportionality within certain disability categories, the presence of only two districts being identified as not having met the indicator implies that the issue is neither substantial nor critical. One of the challenges for educators, researchers, and policymakers concerned with equity in schools, is to highlight a problem when people do not perceive that a problem actually exists. Certainly schools have a myriad of issues that they are addressing, and issues tend to take center stage depending on prominence and severity.

As the data on disproportionality suggest, it is time to rethink some of the basic assumptions about special education. When it comes to special education and the education of minority students who have a disability, our schools and society perpetuate a set of assumptions based on a belief that failure to learn or behave resides solely in the individual student. Unfortunately, these assumptions and beliefs are often left unexamined. General education teachers may not realize the unintended consequences of referring a student for special education services; and special educators may believe that providing such services is the most compassionate thing to do. Jenkins, Pious, and Peterson (1988) note that the issue of labeling students will depend on resolving two validity issues: “The first is instructional, the second is political” (p. 148). Focusing more specifically on this second aspect, political validity relates to whether students have access to quality services while having their rights protected. Jenkins et al. proposed the following:

One possible solution to this problem is simply to recognize, by policy, that *any* child not performing well in the regular classroom is *entitled* to receive appropriate special services. If our data are correct in suggesting that the instructional needs of the members of this more broadly defined group of children are not distinct enough to warrant separate categorical programs, there is hardly any logic in fragmenting the programs to serve them. (p. 157)

Perhaps, it is also time to rethink some of the meanings connected to the various disability categories. One long-standing issue in the field of special education is to what extent the disability categories actually point to real disabilities, particularly for the disabilities referred to as “high incidence disabilities” such as learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, and other health impairments. In examining the official definitions (see footnotes), it may appear as though these definitions are actually describing *real* disabilities. However, in practice, it is often difficult to distinguish students

with these disability labels from those who may have experienced fewer opportunities to learn or who learn differently (Gallego, Duran, & Reyes, 2006).

Educators need to become aware that the process of being placed within a certain disability category should be scrutinized. For example, although there are different labels (i.e., Mental Retardation, Emotional Disturbance, and Specific Learning Disabilities), the criteria by which a student is assigned such labels can often be quite arbitrary depending on the skills of the assessment team and the biases and experiences of the individuals conducting the assessments (Gallego, Duran, & Reyes, 2006; Ladner & Hammons, 2001). Like race, disability is socially constructed. One possibly telling fact is that in the past, the “Mental Retardation” category was often distinguished even further into two troubling subcategories: “trainable” and “educable.” Even though special educators no longer use such distinctions, it appears that the practices in schools still reflect this past view of subcategories as if there actually were such identifiable distinctions between students capable of being “educated” versus “trained.” Current practice now has “trainable” replaced with “moderate” and “educable” with “mild.” Not only does the positive or negative disability category impact perceptions, these disability categories also reflect different material circumstances in terms of restrictiveness of placement, access to general curriculum, and degree of success in life.

By looking at *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), we can learn why disproportionality in special education persists. In *Brown*, the Supreme Court found that separate was inherently unequal. While the implications of IDEA in providing equal educational opportunities cannot be overlooked, IDEA purports to provide accommodations for students with disabilities in the “least restrictive environment” possible (Ferri & Connor, 2006). However, students with disabilities continue to be placed in self-contained classrooms, often excluded from participation in mainstream classrooms. Paralleling the idea that separate is inherently unequal, the intersections of race and disability demonstrate how special education perpetuates the idea of segregation of a “class” of children – children with disabilities. In examining the relationship between IDEA and *Brown*, Ferri & Connor (2006) argue:

Moreover, by labeling disproportionate numbers of students of color and placing them in restrictive placements, special education undercuts desegregation efforts and legitimizes the ongoing segregation of students from non-dominant backgrounds. In other words, one of the ways schools maintained segregated classrooms after *Brown* is by placing large numbers of students of color in special education classroom and in nonacademic tracks. Thus, rather than simply thinking about IDEA as a proud legacy of

Brown, we must also consider the role special education has played in the failure of *Brown*. (p. 4)

Framing the persistence of disproportionality in special education as a political problem instead of an instructional one requires acknowledging the construction of disability as a way of maintaining racial and social class boundaries under the guise of protecting and helping children who need individual treatments. As Smith and Kozleski (2005) suggest, we must begin to consider how the inclusion of students with disabilities corresponds historically to the racial desegregation of schools. In many ways, the failure of *Brown* and the failure of IDEA are intricately connected. However, one could argue that students of color who also have a disability are the most marginalized despite presumably being protected by two federal mandates.

Potential Solutions

If we can accept that disproportionality is a problem due to some basic assumptions regarding the practice of special education and the allocation of resources and opportunities, we will dismantle the process of "...classifying, sorting, and hierarchizing human beings, reduced in the end of ability levels or test scores" (Baker, 2004, p. 696). We believe educators should advocate for those who have been historically marginalized so that they have a chance to access equitable educational services and learn to talk back to and against a system that continues to oppress them so that persistent issues like disproportionality will go away.

Instead of looking for the problems of learning as residing within the individual student, we can avoid some of the inherent pitfalls of classifying and labeling by increased efforts to better equip schools to handle and respond to differences. The recent push and interest in "Response to Intervention" (RtI) efforts on a school-wide level appears to address what Jenkins, Pious & Peterson (1988) proposed, and it certainly is strong justification for schools to use RtI as a way to minimize disproportionality while providing necessary assistance to students who need them (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2007; Gallego et al., 2006; Samuels, 2006). RtI is a schoolwide approach to meeting the needs of all students prior to identifying them for special education services. In other words, schools implementing RtI attempt to improve the context in which students learn, rather than assuming the problem of learning resides within the student.

As schools begin to work for more students, perhaps we can begin to minimize the need to remove any student, and at least begin to make schools more equitable. Cartledge (2005) suggests that "Perhaps one of the most direct ways to

reduce the disproportionate restrictiveness for racial minorities is for schools to mandate that the initial placement for *all* students should be in the least restrictive placement” (p.28). Finally, Coutinho and Oswald (2000) remind us that:

IDEA mandates nondiscriminatory assessment, identification, and placement of children with disabilities. The prescribed evaluation procedures and the definitions of disability conditions in IDEA make it clear that children who achieve poorly because of differences related to environmental disadvantage or ethnic, linguistic or racial difference are not to be identified as disabled. The *entitlement* to special educational services in IDEA is accompanied by a mandate of *equity* (emphasis original, p.136).

Endnotes

¹ Anecdotally, one of the authors has heard of more savvy families pushing for an autism classification because of the awareness that services and resources would be greater. She has also observed that in some districts, significant resources for materials and training for school personnel are being funneled towards “Autism programs” while teachers of students in “MR programs” express that they are being given access to far less training and resources.

² A student who has “significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.” (NICHCY, n.d.).

³ A student with “a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance: (a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; (e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes schizophrenia.” (NICHCY, n.d.).

⁴ “A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance: (a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; (e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.” (NICHCY, n.d.).

⁵ A student who has “limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that: (a) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and (b) adversely affects a child's educational performance." (NICHCY, n.d.).

⁶A "disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia." (NICHCY, n.d.).

⁷ A student who has "a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences." (NICHCY, n.d.).

⁸ Student "who received education programs and lived in public or private residential facilities during the school week." (Office of Special Education Programs, n.d.)

⁹ Students who "have been enrolled by their parents or guardians in regular parochial or other private schools and whose basic education is paid through private resources and who receive special education and related services at public expense from a local educational agency or intermediate educational unit under a service plan. Include children whose parents chose to home-school them, but who receive special education and related services at the public expense. Do not include children who are placed in private schools by the LEA [school district]" (Office of Special Education Programs, n.d.)

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How to Build a Delinquent: An Analysis of the Emotionally Disturbed Label in Special Education

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Introduction

On Tommy's first day of school, I introduced myself to him as his special education teacher. I explained that records had just arrived from his previous school district and I was going to have him re-evaluated. He looked down at the ground and asked, "It's 'cause I'm crazy, ain't it?" His previous district had begun the process for psychological testing and informed his mother that he needed to be re-classified from "learning disabled" to "emotionally disturbed" due to his erratic and oppositional behavior. I was unaware of the other district's intent to change his qualifying condition during the three weeks it took to receive their records but had certainly not noticed any indications of emotional or behavioral disturbance in this kind, soft-spoken 8th grade boy. More than a change of school district had occurred in Tommy's life. He had also moved into the home of his loving grandparents and away from his abusive older brother and father. My school district's psychologist administered a rigorous series of testing and observations and it was determined that Tommy was not emotionally disturbed. He went on successfully to complete his high school education by receiving adaptations and modifications as a learning disabled student. Occasionally, Tommy would relay his success in football or in passing a difficult academic class. He would always end his retellings with a grin and the statement, "Not bad for a crazy kid!" Even though he was never officially labeled as emotionally disturbed, he still felt the stigma attached to the suggestion made years ago.

The Emotionally/Behaviorally Disturbed (E/BD) label is one of 13 categories of disability identified by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The U.S. Department of Education (2001) estimates that 475,000 individuals with a mean age of 15 years old are served in special education under this eligibility category. Teachers often refer students for testing based on subjective observation (Della Toffalo & Pederson, 2005), and these children may or may not have a psychiatric diagnosis. Students labeled as emotionally disturbed are also more likely to receive their education in segregated classes that often have a lower-level knowledge-base curriculum than the mainstream, regular education classes (Ferguson, 2001; Kutash & Duchnowski, 2004; Sherwin, 2003).

Central to special education services is the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The objective of the IEP is to measure the child's existing levels of performance and create goals for academic, behavioral, and life-skills progress. It also dictates a rigorous plan as to how these goals will be measured. It is promoted as a positive contract between the school district, the child, and the parents. The IEP is painstaking in its precision and execution for delivering the ideal educational plan for that child. The stated purpose is to document progress and prescribe modifications and adaptations that will permit the student to achieve success in their education and achieve normalization. Bateman & Herr (2003) described, as a key component of the IEP, an emphasis on "accurately and objectively measuring student progress" (p. 11). The IEP will follow a child through their entire educational track, from school to school, and from district to district, providing a complete, detailed account of all of the child's strengths and weaknesses.

Problem Statement and Purpose

The IEP is the definitive social technology of surveillance of a child labeled with an emotional disability and may be an ominous portent to the process of normalization because it holds the individual responsible for their "lack" rather than society. The problem with an E/BD label is that the IEP may become a document that is used as a control standard by which the special needs individual is constantly being compared to their peers in regular education who societal standards construct as normal. Foucault (1995) described this process as documenting for the creation of objectification and subjection and may be a significant step in the creation of a delinquent.

The purpose of this paper is to discern how the label of Emotional/Behaviorally Disturbed in special education contributes to the formation of delinquency as Foucault (1995) theorized the concept. The E/BD label is potentially detrimental in that it may lead to a lifetime of failure, poverty, joblessness and, perhaps, incarceration. Eventually, the child who is so labeled may begin to identify the pathology as part of their persona and possibly become immersed in a miasma of hopelessness and failure that the school system sanctions. This child may perceive that he or she has failed or has not measured up to societal expectations. The child might imagine that he or she has made mistakes that have resulted in his or her inability to succeed, and may embrace an identity of 'crazy,' as Tommy had done. These children may perceive that they have no opportunity to break free from the chains of inferiority assigned to them.

Research Question

This paper is a content analysis of the IEP, psychiatric and academic testing results, along with the behavior and intervention plans of Roger, a different student in the same school system as Tommy, who was diagnosed as emotionally disturbed while in elementary school. The records chronicle his educational modifications and adaptations from elementary through his freshman year in high school. An examination of these records was made through a Foucauldian lens using, in particular, Foucault's concept of delinquency. The purpose was to determine whether this child eventually embraced a pathology that crystallized as an "institutional product" (Foucault, 1995, p. 301) or was this child able to become successful in his educational pursuits? It is hoped that this investigation will illuminate the embedded constructs of the E/BD label and provide a voice for all those students like Roger and Tommy. An analysis of the IEP process of an emotionally disturbed child through the theoretical lens of Foucault's elucidation of deviant allows a critical panorama of just how destructive this label is for children. Foucault (1995) posited that the police, prison, and delinquent make up an ensemble that "support one another and form a circuit that is never interrupted" (p. 282). Is this what special education is creating through the child with an emotionally disturbed label but a never ending cycle of cataloging, surveillance, and punishment for not measuring up to a normative ideal?

Theoretical Lens

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) defined the concept of delinquency and explained how delinquency is used by the dominant social classes to perpetuate a cycle of "disciplinary careers" (p. 300). He portrayed delinquency as a socially-constructed phenomenon where the delinquent is labeled, observed, and judged in order to assure that individual's "subjection and objectification" (p. 305). Through the constant use of disciplining mechanisms and "rigorous channels, which within the system, inculcated docility and produced delinquency by the same mechanism" (p. 300), the individual assumes an identity of incorrigible: delinquent. Delinquents are created to maintain the power and profit of the dominant class in a society because the acts of delinquents mask the "illegalities" committed by members of the dominant class. Foucault portrayed the delinquent as an "institutional product" stemming from the continuity of the institutions' use of surveillance, control, and discipline. These institutions, school, hospital, prison, and others work together in a subtle form of subjugation he names the "carceral archipelago" (1995, p. 301).

This theory is echoed by Ferguson (2001) in what she described as “disciplinary power” (p. 53) which the dominant social class uses to maintain hegemonic control to preserve and perpetuate class differences. This system of domination manages those who otherwise may question their station in life. Foucault (1995) called the result of this domination “useful delinquency” (p. 280) because it solidifies social class and constructs those who will fill the lower-skilled jobs and prisons. Creating delinquents is necessary for maintaining existing class structures as they provide a need to conceal the malefactions of those in power. Delinquents carry on the function as members of society who enable surveillance, and profit the elite by maintaining class structures. As Foucault chronicled, delinquents perpetuate the corruption of those in the dominant class by conforming to their expectations and assisting them as “a clandestine police force and standby army at the disposal of the state” (1995, p. 280).

Looking at the IEP of an E/BD child through a Foucauldean lens, it is possible to understand the ramifications of how this label may help create a delinquent. The first step in the process for referral to special education is normally initiated through teacher recommendation, but may also come at the request of a parent. A team consisting of parents, counselor, administrator, and the teacher convene to discuss the problems the child is having and document reasons the child is not achieving success within the regular classroom. The team then recommends modifications and adaptations that are to be utilized in the classroom. It is the responsibility of the regular education teacher to document all modifications implemented, the amount of time given for success, and the outcomes. After a specified period of time, if the child does not show evidence of success with the previous modifications and adaptations, the team will reconvene and recommend testing for special education. For a child with a suspected emotional or behavioral disturbance, a referral for psychological testing will be made. This “normalizing judgment” identified by Foucault (1995, p. 183) is used as a means of control and punishes the child who does not conform to the ideal model set forth by the school.

Foucault (1995) characterized the delinquent as different from the convict by virtue of “his life that is relevant in characterizing him” (p. 251). This process is occurring for a child undergoing testing for emotional/behavioral disturbance eligibility and services. The child’s life comes under scrutiny and his label not only characterizes him, but places him on a path to a specific identity. Foucault stated that while the delinquent is responsible for his actions, these actions are also intertwined through instinct, drive, and character. He explained that a part of the penitentiary system is to re-educate that person through extensive examination and punishment. Applying Foucault’s image of delinquent to the E/BD child reveals similarities between the educational system and the penal organization.

Both use constant re-examination and punishment for failing to measure up to normative standards. A child who may be having problems related to poverty, drug abuse, or myriad other complications can be diagnosed as emotionally disturbed and may subsequently identify themselves as aberrant.

In an organization that models Foucault's carceral archipelago, Emerson (1991) discovered the use of referral to "interconnected institutions" that work together in a subtle ballet to assure control within society by assessing an individual who is not conforming to the norm as a "case" and one who is in need of assistance through one or more of the agencies (p.199). As with the carceral archipelago, the school is the starting point where children are segregated, tested, labeled, and observed. Scientifically-based knowledge of human behavior dictates a behavioral norm. Children who perform outside of any of the constructed normed parameters are deemed as lacking. They are given a prescription for achieving success and if that does not correct them into conforming to the standard, they are disciplined, punished, and placed under even more surveillance. Foucault described this process that society uses to build a penal system and the delinquents that institution creates. The pattern he illustrated holds true in the case of those students with an E/BD label. Normalizing judgments constitute these children as deviant and, when compared to the norm, are found to be lacking in their conduct, behavior, or academic achievement. Foucault (1995) stated that "all surveillances presuppose the organization of a hierarchy. . ." (p. 281), and this is exquisitely achieved in the IEP which comprises a documentary history of the child's every misdeed, every poor test grade, and every failure. Foucault outlined this documentary evidence as having the effect of molding that individual into a "case," an object rather than seeing the child as a unique human being. This "case" is then able to be "described, judged, measured, and compared with others" (p. 191). The IEP's of most emotionally disturbed children contain one or more Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA), and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPS), detailing undesired behaviors and plotting out, in excruciating detail, how "bad" behaviors can be dealt with and changed into the desired "correct" behavior. As with the IEP, the BIP is reviewed on a regular basis, often monthly, and modifications are made as needed, commensurate with the child's progress or lack thereof.

Another important detriment for children labeled E/BD is the receiving of the majority of their academic and social instruction in a self-contained classroom segregated from the regular education environment. Kutash and Duchnowski (2004) posit that 52 percent of E/BD students spend between 61 and 100 percent of their day in a special education classroom. The implications of this statistic are staggering. Not only is an E/BD child not allowed to interact with their "normal" peers, but the amount of surveillance and discipline increases. Foucault (1995) stated that the prison cannot fail to produce delinquents because of unity and

association similar to “social clubs” (p. 267). A similar situation occurs by subjecting a student to a self-contained classroom with others who have been identified and treated as delinquent. There exists no modeling of expected “normal” behavior, no interaction with the “good” children and subsequently, these students do not learn the social skills vital to success beyond the segregated school walls.

Apple (2004) argued that the use of labeling in education is a vital component of power and social control. Power is most effectively created when the claims of science are given to justify the processes of evaluation and surveillance. Warner (1999) discussed how most people desire “individuality... but they want their individuality to be the normal kind” (p. 53). The assumed alternative to *normal* would be *abnormal* and individuals do not want to be identified as aberrant. Foucault (1995) chronicled the historical processes that lead to the “power of the Norm” and impose homogeneity (p.184). This power becomes insidious throughout every level of hierarchal organizations and is given authority through the supposed certainty of science as well as deference to those individuals who are considered scientific experts. When a child is determined eligible for an E/BD label by an IEP committee formed of parents, teachers and specialists, it is accomplished with all the weight of federal and state law and based on evidence from experts. The process of normalization focuses on individual disorders rather than on societal or cultural issues as this alleviates the state from any responsibility in the making of a delinquent and places the blame directly on the victim (Ferguson, 2001). Foucault described the institution of the school as a place where the creation of ‘normal’ occurs quite robustly (p. 146). Through the control of school space, E/BD students are subjected to surveillance and evaluation which effectively operates to segregate similar to the carceral archipelago and school “functions like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding” (p. 147).

Review of Literature

Currently, there exists no clear or unified federal or state definition of the qualifications that identify a child as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed. The standards for eligibility are subjective and may paint an unreliable picture of the child’s true level of functioning. Kauffman (2001) portrayed the difficulties in definition as one of “a nebulous and constantly shifting standard” (p. 25). Sherwin (2003) recognized that speech patterns and slang usage from diverse racial backgrounds may lead to a misdiagnosis of emotionally disturbed for children of color. Aggressive acts are the primary reason for referring a child for special needs testing; however, culturally-specific aggression is little understood by

educators. What is acceptable in African-American families may be deemed deviant to a European-American educator. This correlates with Banks' (2001) findings that a disproportionate number of African-American boys are labeled as emotionally disturbed. Research by Ferguson (2001) confirmed this trend which tracks African-American boys into an emotionally disturbed label. Eskenazi, Eddins, and Beam (2003) discovered disturbing evidence that the New York City Public school system may refer students to special education services in error or even as a punitive measure, rather than based on actual disability. This same study identified that these "inappropriate referrals tend to target black, Hispanic, and low-income students" (p. 25). Their research indicated that as few as 15% of the total special education population actually qualified for services and 53% of those labeled as emotionally disturbed were African-American children.

Children may be incorrectly referred for special education testing because of economic disadvantages or lack of cultural capital rather than true developmental or behavioral disabilities (Grossman, 2002). Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, and Sumi (2005) reported that several longitudinal studies indicated the majority of children with an E/BD label live in homes that contain multiple risk factors for "poor life outcomes" such as: living below the poverty level, living in a single-parent household, parents who have not graduated from high school or living in a home where one or more parents are unemployed (p. 80). Their analysis in the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study and the National Longitudinal Transitional Study-2 showed that the majority of students receiving special education services and living in poverty are predominantly African-American and Hispanic. Kutash and Duchnowski (2004) also suggested a possible link between poverty and ethnicity in the overrepresentation of children of color with an emotionally disturbed label. Kincheloe (1999) recognized that "educators mistake lower-socioeconomic-class manners, attitudes, and speech for lack of academic ability" (p.245).

Many states have their own subjective guidelines for referring children to special education, and these guidelines comprise a vast array of symptoms and definitions. In the State of Oklahoma where the researcher is currently teaching, a child with an emotional disturbance may include those who have been identified as: schizophrenic, bipolar, depressed, oppositional defiant, unable to maintain social relationships, or an "inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factor" (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2002). While every effort is made to assure that classification of a disability is not based on race, socioeconomic status, or gender, a disproportionate number of children labeled as emotionally disturbed are poor, African-American boys (Kutash & Duchnowski, 2004; Sherwin, 2003; Wagner, et al., 2005). Eligibility factors may or may not include a psychiatric diagnosis, but are largely comprised of teacher and parent behavioral rating scales that are highly subjective and

ambiguous. The majority of these psychological tests require filling out a standardized instrument, often no more than one or two pages in length, which rates behaviors on a Likert-like scale (Della Toffalo & Pederson, 2005). Some teachers may see the behavior of one student quite differently than similar behaviors in other students. Myra and David Sadker (1994) documented this in their classic study of gender and how teacher interactions differ greatly when dealing with boys as compared to girls. Key components in determining eligibility are performance on achievement and cognitive/intellectual ability tests. While these instruments are not as fuzzy and subjective as the behavioral scales, nonetheless, they have a lengthy history of bias against minorities (Grossman, 2002).

Rafalovich (2005) discovered that teachers have a great deal of influence in determining the labeling of disruptive students. In his remarkable research on medication for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), he found that the majority of referrals came from school teachers. Rafalovich continues: “Provided that parents comply, the ADHD know-how of teachers is integral in moving children down the path to an ADHD diagnosis” (p. 35). In this same study, clinicians commonly saw that a child was already casually diagnosed by the teacher and only sent to a therapist with the expressed intent of obtaining medication. Within special education laws, a teacher alone can not make a determination for eligibility. However, they are a strong part of the team and are often responsible for completing rating scales that may strongly influence the determination of the psychologist or clinician in making a diagnosis.

Sadly, a child identified with an E/BD label may begin their school career on a fast track to failure. (Harvey, 2001; Keman, Griswold, & Wagner, 2003; Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004; Sinclair, Christenson, & Thurlow, 2005) They often come to embrace the role of delinquent Foucault described and often hold little hope for a successful future. Noguera (2003) detailed how students identified as high risk are most likely to be excluded from their mainstream peers through suspension, detention, or expulsion. He found the most severe punishment is given to students with disabilities and those from a lower-economic status. These exclusionary practices may begin as early as the kindergarten years for some children and once they are labeled as trouble-makers by teachers and administrators, the student finds themselves marginalized and begins a journey of push-out and exclusion. Noguera (2003) also revealed that “disciplinary practices in schools often bear a striking similarity to the strategies used to punish adults in society” (p. 2). Robbins’ (2008) research on the effectivity of zero-tolerance policies determined that students with special needs were often punished more harshly than their regular education peers and further, these disciplinary measures were for behavior that was previously addressed and accommodated for in their I.E.P. Students who are “channeled” into special education tracks are frequently

assigned a different curriculum and taught in a segregated facility with limited resources as compared to their regular education peers (Robbins, 2008, p.77). As Eskenazi, Eddins, and Beam (2003) reported, students in special education have a lower rate of returning to the mainstream classroom with their regular education peers and a significantly lower graduation rate.

Landrum, Tankersley, and Kauffman (2003) realized that while in school the E/BD labeled child may experience higher rates of academic failure, obtain lower grades than students in other special education categories, and experience an increased rate of grade retention. As Kozol (2005) stated, a child who has been held back has a greater likelihood of dropping out of school and those who have been held back twice have a 90% chance of incompleting. Cullinan and Sabornie (2004) also note that over half of those students labeled E/BD are educated in separate facilities as compared to learning disabled students. Educating a child in a separate building or self-contained classroom for the majority of the day only increases their feelings of being treated as a “case” and not an individual. The surveillance of these students also increases when they are separated from their peers as they are often placed in a much smaller classroom environment containing a special education teacher and one or more assistants.

Students labeled as emotionally-disturbed have a higher drop-out rate compared to regular students and a higher incidence of drop-out compared to other disabled students. National data reports have shown that dropout rates for youths with disabilities is at 42% compared with a 31% for nondisabled youth in the general population with similar demographic characteristics (Harvey, 2001). Students who drop out of school soon realize they are unprepared to compete in today’s highly technological, global economy and they may have very few options available to them. Sinclair, Christenson, and Thurlow (2005) discovered that E/BD students have higher post-school incarceration rates and greater incidences of unemployment. Sherwin (2003) documented an even more devastating statistic for African-American youth identified as E/BD. The arrest rate for European-American males with this label is 27% compared to 40% for African American E/BD males.

Once an E/BD child enters the penal system, there is little hope for a successful future. Clear (1996) revealed how rather than rehabilitating, incarceration actually increases the crime rate citing findings that 7% of offenders commit 70% of all crime. Foucault (1995) detailed how a person identified as delinquent eventually develops into a “pathologized subject” (p. 277). He contended that the prison does not correct behavior, only punishes it. Children who are deemed eligible for the E/BD label are exponentially at risk of becoming pathologized by the schools and society. They may eventually see themselves as so severely emotionally disturbed that they are beyond redemption. Schools have not come close to correcting or modifying E/BD children’s behavior and may

actually exacerbate the misbehavior. Keman, Griswold, and Wagner (2003) stated that mental health services for E/BD children are inadequate for their needs due to high cost or availability. Many school districts do not provide in-depth counseling services on a regular basis for these students. Landrum, Tankersley and Kauffman (2003) found that most individualized education plans are never put into practice by teachers. The document meets state and federal standards and complies with all regulations, but is worthless unless it is implemented. They also discovered that most teachers are inadequately trained to deal with adolescents diagnosed as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed in the general classroom and these teachers fail to modify their teaching style or curriculum to accommodate students with special needs.

Case Study

Roger was first referred for special education testing when he was 5-years of age and had just entered kindergarten. A teacher checklist reported that his disruptive behaviors included: being uncooperative, quick to anger, name caller, stubborn, hard to please, and making noises. Other behavioral concerns were that he “questions everything and wants attention often asking, ‘Do you love me?’” Roger had come to live with his maternal grandmother and her husband a month prior to entering school. His biological mother, who abused drugs, lived in a home with several other people not related to her. She was described in Roger’s files as schizophrenic and an alcoholic. Roger was removed from the home by the Department of Human Services. The case report indicated that his previous home life was traumatic with numerous incidents of physical and sexual abuse. Roger was given a series of tests to determine if he qualified as eligible under the emotionally disturbed label and if he qualified for special education services. The first test given was to determine his academic achievement and intellectual cognition. His broad cognitive ability was in the high average range. He also scored within average limits on his academic testing. Testing and interviews were completed by a licensed psychologist at the county health department to determine if he met the criteria for the E/BD label. The doctor’s summary indicated that Roger did not meet eligibility because he attributed social maladjustment as the cause of his behavior and made additional recommendations for both the parents and school. The IEP team met in December and determined that he did not meet the criteria for E/BD and was not eligible for services. The grandmother took him to a private psychiatrist where he was diagnosed and put on medication for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This was accomplished with the rating scales provided by Roger’s teachers.

His conduct in school continued to deteriorate and his grandmother asked the school for additional testing. She had him hospitalized several times during the school year due to self-destructive mutilation behaviors that were increasing in severity, but she was not consistent with maintaining counseling service appointments or with administering his medication. He was admitted to various hospital settings for short periods of time in an effort to control his behavior and was placed on an aggressive regimen of medications. Now armed with abundant evidence from medical experts, the school district re-tested Roger and determined eligibility for the E/BD label and placed him in special education.

The researcher first met Roger in 2001. He attended no classes but was cloistered in a small room in back of the registrar's office with a personal assistant giving him activities and minimal amounts of academic work. His lunches were brought to him and recess time was spent alone when the other children were in class. He did not participate in assemblies or any other activities with his peers. Documentation in his IEP stated, "Roger does not *do* assemblies" (Italics not in original). This was an agreed upon decision by a previous IEP team. Psychological testing in 2003 indicated that he "had failed to bond in early childhood to an immediate family member and had difficulty with peer relationships and interactions with others." He was diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder as he was "insolent to authority figures, blamed others for his mistakes, and was quick to lose his temper." Cognitive testing continued to indicate that his General Intellectual Ability (GIA) fell within the high-average range at a standard score of 104-114. His academic achievement scores were also in the high-average range although he had attended very few academic classes.

The special education teacher felt that it was crucial to slowly integrate Roger into the mainstream regular education classes with his peers in order to benefit his socialization. It was discovered that he felt a strong attachment to the World History teacher. This kindly man welcomed Roger into his classroom for one class period a day allowing him to sit at the teacher's desk and modified the regular education curriculum. Roger was highly successful in this class and even began to build limited friendships with other students. The special education teacher encouraged him to eat lunch in the cafeteria and together with his full time teaching assistant he could leave the lunch room to go to the playground with the other students. There was a remarkable increase in Roger's self-esteem and independence. Other classes were slowly introduced and he was given options to attend assemblies, school dances, and pep rallies. He began to attend these extracurricular events at a greater frequency. By the end of his eighth grade year he attended half of his academic day in a regular education room and half in a special education lab room. He did still require the assistance of a one-on-one teacher's aide but was not segregated by himself for any portion of the school day.

The IEP team prepared to transition him to the high school setting when he was 15 years old. He enjoyed working with animals, so he was enrolled in one class period of agriscience and took a bus to the high school campus while continuing his academics in the middle school. He experienced a mild level of anxiety with this move so the team provided counseling in order to ease the transition. This schedule continued throughout the last year he attended middle school. He entered high school when he was 16 years old and appeared confident enough to enroll in only one special needs class and three regular education classes. He continued with agriscience and was placed in physical education, and creative writing. In October of that year, he began to digress despite the gains he had made during his middle school years. He had enjoyed classes that required hands-on activities, but felt uncomfortable and afraid in classroom environments. The team met regularly in order to find a solution and meet his needs in school, but Roger crept further into despair and hopelessness. Special needs classes were quickly replacing his attendance in regular education and his self-mutilation behavior increased in intensity and violence. He discussed with the researcher his hopes for the future but he knew that his dream of owning a farm and working with animals would never occur. When asked why, he replied that he would never be “normal” and sunk deeper into depression. It seemed that he cloaked himself as “deviant” in keeping with Foucault’s definition and could not struggle free from this identification. Many of the teachers and all of the administrators treated him as a “case” and rolled their eyes or sighed when there was an “incident” centered on him. His grandmother had him institutionalized during the winter break of his freshman year in high school for acute self-mutilation behaviors. He was withdrawn from school and remains hospitalized in another state. He was not able to return to school to complete his degree.

This is not an unusual story. Unfortunately, it is all too common for students with an E/BD label to meet with failure and disappointment. McCaughey and Strohmer (2005) found in their research with undergraduate students majoring in psychology that blatant stereotypes of persons with disabilities were very clearly evident. Societal perceptions of people with emotional disabilities are key indicators of that person obtaining a job, attending college, and maintaining positive long-term relationships.

Analysis

This paper provided a brief glimpse at one child identified as E/BD who did embrace his pathology and left school to be institutionalized. His story is only one of the many untold tales of failure and grief. A major paradigm shift in the use of the E/BD label is needed in order to prevent the creation of delinquents through

the misuse of labeling. It may be necessary to reconsider the use of the E/BD label within special education. Determination criteria must be held to a higher standard than those of other disabilities. Nelson, Benner, Lane, and Smith (2004) concluded that very few studies have been conducted to determine the efficacy of academic interventions with E/BD children. Cullinan and Sabornie (2004) also notice a critical lack of research on E/BD adolescents and need for documentation of the long-term effects the labeling criteria has on students.

It is critical for schools to reverse the trend which views a child with an emotional disability as aberrant and in need of punishment. As Ruddick (2006) observed, schools are seeking to contain misbehavior and are too quick to medicate the child or to segregate them rather than to examine the environmental causes behind the child's actions. Counseling services are rarely provided in schools and the same psychologists who are swift to make a diagnosis of abnormal are slow to volunteer their time to provide therapy or counseling to those students most in need of support. Lam (2005) contended that an interdisciplinary course that involves families and professionals such as: social workers, school psychologists, counselors, and nurses are integral to the overarching success of the student. This collaboration needs to focus on the success of the child and not become a further instrument of surveillance. The "world view of families from different cultures" (p. 1) must be taken into account by all stakeholders. She discovered that when school professionals and families work together, misconceptions and assumptions are often ameliorated. There is also a greater sense of self-esteem and confidence for the disabled student as he or she may realize that he or she is not the only one with a specific problem and that there is help available. It is critical that such services be provided to families prior to the rush to label a child as having a disability. Ruddick (2006) contended that other environmental factors need to be considered as to the cause of a student's alleged misbehavior prior to the assumption of emotional disability, such as malnutrition, over-crowded classrooms, lack of parental support, bullying, abuse, or need of medical care.

Educators are participating in entrenched discourses about normalcy and deviance that have profound consequences for the children. There is too much power given to schools to arbitrarily determine which children are "maladjusted" and which children are "normal." As Warner (1999) stated in his study of the political element of sexual shame, "variations from the norm...are not necessarily a sign of pathology. They can become new norms" (p. 58). Teachers are often the gatekeepers of a child's social construction of what is considered a "defective child" (Ruddick, 2006). It is our responsibility in special education to recognize the harm the E/BD label may be inflicting on students and stop the cycle of shame and hopelessness.

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Bursting Bubbles in Teacher Education: Reflections on a Pre-Service Course for General Educators in a Diverse Urban School System¹

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At my high school we always said we live in a bubble, just a much smaller one than I do at the private university I attend now. Everyone had money, everyone was smart, and pretty much everyone was White. . . . Since I was in a White school, it was hard for me to even recognize the influence that my race has on my identity... The first time I made my web I did not include race in it because I rarely think of it as part of my identity. I now see the privileges and power I have simply for being White. According to McIntosh and our other readings, race did not seem like a big part to me because my race is the majority...However, after learning more about race and society I understand that my Whiteness is essential in my identity and plays an important role in my life. (Bachman, 2008)

The debate around American identity, seen as so provocative by late twentieth century scholars such as Bloom (1987) and Schlesinger (1992), has moved forward in ways that make it clear that there can be no turning back from a multicultural America. In education, the requirement for attention to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners from low socioeconomic circumstances is now enshrined in two key education laws – the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). As Trent, Kea, and Oh (2008) observed, the enactment of these laws reflects the urgent concern over the issue of poor academic achievement of certain groups of CLD students in general education, as well as their disproportionately high rate of placement in high-incidence disability categories served by special education. Despite the difficulties of implementation that have been noted particularly in the NCLB Act, the intent of the law indicates the explicit national concern over the disparities in educational outcomes for minority groups. As the history of the civil rights movement clearly demonstrates, legislation can, and often must lead the way to the elimination of social injustice. Yet, as always, the devil lies in implementation of the legal mandate. The field of multicultural education has emerged over the past 40 years as one response to the

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challenge of weaving the civil rights agenda into the nation's public education system (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2007).

One aspect of the challenge of educating teachers for diversity is the need for teachers themselves to become knowledgeable and comfortable not only with the material they will teach but, first and foremost, with themselves as the promulgators of that knowledge. The purpose of this article is to outline and reflect on the process and content of a course on diversity that I have taught at a private University for over 15 years, and to highlight key principles and strategies that have worked well toward the goal of prejudice reduction for pre-service teacher candidates. Following Banks and McGee-Banks' (2007) five-dimensional model of multicultural education, I identify the main purpose of the course as prejudice reduction because my main goal is to "help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups" (p. 21). To this list I would add socioeconomic status and language, as key aspects of identity that frequently provoke deep-seated prejudices, as well as the issue of diversity in ability and aptitude.

One caveat regarding my approach in this paper is that it represents my own and my students' reflections on the effectiveness of the course in achieving the objective of prejudice reduction. I have not subjected the content to a systematic research oriented process; rather, I base my observations and conclusions on a series of reflective papers required of all the students and in this article I rely mainly on one student's work as an exemplar of commonly occurring themes across the class papers.

Our Bubble Society

Jonathon Kozol (2005) presented a chilling portrait of the extent of racial and socioeconomic segregation in urban school districts in the US. Based on intensive case studies in urban schools, Kozol concluded that, "the demarcations between separate worlds of education are assuming sharper lines. There is a new emboldenment among the relatively privileged to isolate their children as completely as they can from more than token numbers of minorities" (p. 135). This trend, which Kozol calls "apartheid schooling" has serious consequences for children raised in both worlds.

Hilary, the young lady who wrote the statement that introduces this article, was a junior with a major in history and a minor in secondary education at this expensive, private university, located in an extremely diverse urban school district. Along with her peers in this class, Hilary had been asked to construct a pie chart displaying various aspects of her personal identity and to reflect on how this model might influence her functioning as a teacher of children from diverse

cultural and economic backgrounds. What was common across all the students was how their own backgrounds and experiences dominated their assumptions about themselves, others, and education generally. A few who had considerable cross-cultural experience took a broader view, but the majority of students were all coming from some particular “bubble” in which they had been enculturated. The students who identified as “White” often made statements similar to the one above, initially assuming that their racial identity was not important. Those who were Hispanic/Latino tended to see ethnicity, nationality and language as more important than race, while those who identified as Black saw race as a crucial aspect of their identity.

Hillary and several of her classmates could be viewed as mirror images of the child, Pineapple, in Kozol’s (2005) study. Kozol described how he was taken aback by this third grader’s sudden question, “What’s it like over there where you live?” When Kozol hesitated awkwardly, Pineapple explained, “You know...over there - where other people are” (pp. 15-16). Pineapple’s bubble was one in which all children were Black or Latino, where most families lived below the poverty line, and where schooling was a process of drill and test that could do little but reproduce the status quo of the sharply segregated communities of schooling in which Pineapple and Hillary live their separate lives.

My concern in this course has been to integrate information, personal reflection, and action in such a way as to move pre-service teachers out of their personal ethnic and socioeconomic “bubbles” into an awareness and appreciation of the multiple perspectives of others and the range of lived experience that will be represented by the children they will teach. I believe that without a shift in the most deep-seated race and SES-based beliefs of these teacher candidates, all the pedagogy in the world will not make a difference.

Dimensions of Diversity

When we speak of diversity in the demographic sense, we usually include those aspects that relate to group identity: nationality, culture, race, ethnicity, language, gender, and social class. To some extent we could say that these features are relatively easy to identify since they are generally readily visible in one’s self-presentation. Even these features, however, whose appearance makes us think we know which “group” we or others belong to, can be very complex, as in the case of students who are of mixed race, students whose social/economic circumstances may have changed over time, or those who are in the process of blending one or more cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Just as importantly, diversity also includes the invisible aspects of self, which most people do not state, and which may take much longer to be revealed, such as intellectual abilities, learning

aptitudes, and behavioral and personality orientations. For prospective teachers, both in general and special education, these aspects are equally important, not only because many of their students will be seen as having cognitive, physical, or behavioral difficulties, but also because those who are referred to and placed in special education are disproportionately representative of racial/ethnic minority groups. The fact that we utilize disability diagnoses to make these decisions tends to obscure the sometimes arbitrary and ambiguous nature of the diagnostic process (Donovan & Cross, 2002), especially as it relates to students with “high-incidence” disabilities such as Specific Learning Disability, Emotional/Behavioral Disorder and Mild Intellectual Impairment. As Grant and Sleeter (2009) stated, “Special education constitutes a track below the lower track for students whom the regular program is unable to accommodate...” (p. 5).

My reflections in this paper are broadly constructed so as to be applicable to any pre-service education student, since I believe that these issues are foundational to the study of education today and should be part of all teachers’ preparation. I will begin with an outline of the coursework on demographic diversity and, in the second part of the paper, I will relate these issues to special education, emphasizing that, for children with high incidence disabilities it is the general education teacher’s perception of deficiency that has traditionally initiated the process of referral to special education. Students are introduced to the concept of Response to Intervention (RTI), as the field’s effort to treat learning difficulties as part of a continuum, rather than a separate world of education. Further, while the course cannot go into detail on the full array of disabling conditions, the central point is that, regardless of disability, issues of demographic diversity are equally important to all children’s identity.

Process and Content in Teacher Preparation for Diversity

There have been several on-going points of debate in the field of multicultural education since its inception more than four decades ago. One concern has been the challenge of moving on from early formulations that focused mainly on teaching ethnic content, often through single-group studies that tended to ignore the complexity of within-group variation and the numerous nuances of socioeconomic status, geographical location, immigration status, and individual variation (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2007). While the information gained in such courses is important, it can be misinterpreted as static and stereotypical. Trent et al., (2009) argued that a more dynamic approach can be gained by application of the principles of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), which emphasizes the interplay between individuals and groups and their various histories.

Another concern has been to clarify the overall goals of the field. To this end, Grant and Sleeter (2009) outlined five different approaches to multicultural education and concluded that two key ideals lie at the heart of the project: “equal opportunity and cultural pluralism” (p. 177). Similarly, Nieto and Bode (2008) emphasized that teacher preparation for diversity must target a solid understanding of the broad sociopolitical context in which education occurs. Banks and McGee-Banks’ (2007) model of the big picture, mentioned previously, calls for close attention to five dimensions of learning environments: prejudice reduction, content integration, the knowledge construction process, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture.

A third concern has been the structure of teacher preparation programs. Recent reviews of literature on teacher preparation for diversity (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Grant, Elsbree, & Fondrie, 2004; Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008) have emphasized a concern over the continuing existence of stand-alone courses, which often depend on the availability of a particular instructor who is comfortable with the material and dedicated to the purpose of preparing teachers for diversity. Rather, as Trent et al., argue, diversity should be broadly addressed at the programmatic level, “in ways that promote integration and synthesis of a broad knowledge and skill base” (p. 345). In my own institution, this goal continues to present a challenge, and the attempt to develop a more integrated and sustainable approach is still a work in progress. The course I describe here has been for many years a “stand-alone” course, but in our current revisions of our program we are moving toward a sequence of courses that will reinforce and extend this learning. Despite the limitations of the stand-alone nature of this course, I believe that its focus on personal values and prejudice reduction has been very effective. The review conducted by Trent et al., (2009) shows that many institutions have prioritized this goal in their efforts to address diversity: Their review focused on both general and special education, and identified three key foci of the studies – (a) attitudes and beliefs, (b) curriculum/instruction, and (c) effects on teacher candidates and teacher educators. Of 46 studies reviewed, 61% focused on teacher candidates’ “attitudes and beliefs about self, program efficacy, and complexity of teaching in culturally diverse environments” (p. 333).

The framework for the course reflects my attempt to integrate content, reflection and practice within the overall goal of “prejudice reduction.” In a review of literature on parent-professional collaboration in special education (Harry, 2008), I proposed five main areas of focus needed to attain this goal: Personal values clarification, information on the histories and current status of marginalized and oppressed groups, critical perspectives on the assumptions and practices of special education, preparation and practice in cross-cultural communication, and practicum placements in diverse racial and socioeconomic educational or community settings. In the course being described here, I offer a

modified version of this vision by subsuming these five areas under the three umbrellas of “head”, “heart”, and “hands.” By this I mean that, while students can begin to move beyond their personal “bubbles” by learning factual information about the histories of oppressed peoples and continuing socioeconomic inequities in our society, this by itself cannot be enough. Students must also care about what they have learned and be willing to be changed by that knowledge. According to Noddings (2003), caring includes not just empathy, but self-awareness and self-critique in the presence of others, as well as a commitment to moving from simply caring *about* to caring *for*. So caring must be put into practice. All too often we meet professionals with much book learning and positive values, yet are limited by lack of on-your-feet skills – the quick thinking that is needed when taken by surprise, the “with-it-ness” (Kounin, 1977) needed to scan a classroom and figure out the peer dynamics, or the confidence to know the difference between being authoritative and authoritarian (Delpit, 1998). I describe the three types of learning as follows, with the caveat that, in reality, they must be interwoven into learning, not presented separately:

- Heart Work: Personal values clarification regarding diversity
- Head Work: The study of key issues in the histories and current status of oppressed groups and of critical perspectives on the assumptions and processes by which children are perceived to be “disabled”
- Hand Work: Preparation in the actual communication processes needed in cross-cultural situations and real-world practice through internships or practicum placements in diverse racial and socioeconomic settings

Heart Work

I begin with heart work, by which I mean paying attention to those beliefs, values, and sensibilities that we hold most dear or to which we are most accustomed. These aspects of the heart are the source of the gut-reaction we experience when we immediately approve or disapprove of something. Such reactions, referred to by Nosek, Banaji, and Greenwald (2002) as “implicit biases” (p. 111), may be so deeply embedded as to be unconscious, and may represent beliefs we have never thought about explicitly but have simply assumed to be correct. Whatever the source of these attitudes, the gut-reaction is visceral. We find ourselves comfortable or uncomfortable without having to review the information.

I begin by describing heart work because it must be interwoven, sometimes, inconspicuously, sometimes explicitly, into the considerable body of

head and hand work that we will address. The introduction to heart work will depend on the courage and skill of the instructor and his/her perception of the readiness of the students. The notion of needing to be courageous about conversations about race has been discussed at length by Singleton and Linton (2006), who has outlined four principles of such conversations: The need to stay engaged, speak your truth, experience discomfort, and expect and accept non-closure. I agree with these principles but also feel strongly that teachers of pre-service teacher candidates have the responsibility to lead students out of their bubbles in ways that allow them to feel safe. I see nothing to be gained by shocking students' sense of identity so fiercely as to alienate them from learning. Thus, it is often "safer" to begin with head work, which students can approach by treating as if it is simply factual information. While this illusion will rapidly disappear (since no information is really neutral), there is also the advantage that facts give everyone an equal and apparently neutral place to start. Nevertheless, I will propose here that the first step be a gentle stab at opening students' minds to the possibility of examining their own identities, in an atmosphere of safety where their proposals are not to be judged, simply explored.

I begin the course with personal introductions and, if class-size allows, with circular or U-shaped seating, which sends the message that discussion is expected and that everyone is to be heard. Spending time in the first class or two encouraging everyone's voices opens the door to the first step in heart work – the construction of a tentative identity web, to be shared with a partner or small group of three and to be seen as an on-going project for reflection, which will be completed and submitted with an extensive personal reflection perhaps after the mid-term or even later, depending on the course content.

The central rule of heart work in groups must be explicit: an atmosphere of respect for diverse views which allows no personal attacks and no attempts to deny the truth or importance of experiences others have described. At the same time, we must acknowledge that any statement might have unintended impact on others, and a simple strategy for encouraging awareness of this is to introduce the "ouch" response, whereby someone who feels hurt by another's comment utters a quiet "ouch!" and the instructor facilitates a conversation about why the statement was hurtful, and an opportunity for the speaker to clarify his/her meaning or find an alternate way to state the sentiment.

In teacher preparation, the purpose of heart work is not therapy or "sensitivity training"! The process is reflective but the goal is practical: To heighten self-awareness in order to prepare prospective teachers for the range of experiences, perspectives, and sensibilities of the students they will teach and the families they will try to reach. The ultimate question the students will be asked to address is: "*How will these features of my identity influence my effectiveness as a teacher in diverse schools?*"

Head Work

By head work I mean information that belongs in the public sphere. Historical, geographical, research-based information that is factual and accessible to all. I will first describe the head work related to demographic diversity and will then address how these interact with special education.

Diversity as Demographics.

In the course, I focus on five key aspects of group identity mentioned previously: Race, ethnicity, nationality, language, and socioeconomic status. While I acknowledge that religion may be of equal importance, especially in the present political climate, I have not so far included a specific focus on this in my teaching, perhaps because of my own squeamishness on the topic. While we also discuss gender, this receives a lesser focus since I believe that prejudices based on gender are not particularly salient for the college students I teach. For the purposes of analysis in this paper, I will present the content areas as “head work”, but in reality, the challenge will be to weave the heart work and the hand work seamlessly throughout this content.

Culture and Nationality.

I have found that culture and nationality are the safest places to begin. This is by no means a new observation, as scholars such as Trent et al., (2008) noted that White students in particular are frequently only too happy to choose “culture” rather than “race” as a focus of study. This is understandable, since the concept of culture goes beyond the individual and does not necessarily assume a value judgment. Students can readily see that because culture is learned, it is different from the identity features that seem to “come with” the individual so, as Case and Hemmings (2005) observed, students can use this to distance themselves from the topic. If acknowledged as an initial, tentative response, I do not see this kind of distancing as detrimental, but rather as an instinctive defense mechanism that may be necessary before a student moves towards engagement with information that will challenge his/her identity. This process can be used as a stepping stone to more challenging learning. For example, a quick conversation can establish, that a person of any color who is born and/or raised in China by a Chinese family will learn the cultural traditions, beliefs, practices of that group. His nationality will also be Chinese. There are no value judgments here, therefore no need to assume

a defensive posture. I see no harm, and much advantage in starting at a point that can be treated in a relatively neutral manner.

Discussions of culture, however, must not stop at the superficial features of this concept. *Rather, the central question for this topic should be, how does culture affect us as individuals?* I always begin with having students figure out what constitutes American culture. Of course, the most common response is that we don't have much of it and that maybe it's represented in things like McDonald's, baseball, or better still, democracy. Democracy, of course, is where we would want the discussion to go, since students must learn that culture exists on many levels, and that the deepest aspects of culture are those principles on which a society is built. Using excerpts from political anthropologists such as Spindler and Spindler (1990) I have students examine central principles, such as independence, individuality, hard work, social mobility, and equality. They have no problem exploring how, for example, the hard work ethic is represented in a drive for efficiency and speed, and how this may relate to a more concrete manifestation of culture, such as fast food services like McDonald's. Going even deeper, we may explore how principles such as equality or democracy may have affected child rearing practices over time, and how these may differ according to the extent to which a family buys into such beliefs.

This is where students can begin thinking about their personal identity. Students are usually open to discussions about how they were raised in terms of family relationships and authority and responsibility patterns. As they enjoy sharing their stories and listening to each other, they begin to look beyond their personal bubbles and see that very different life histories have brought them all to the same place - a college classroom that will move them toward the American dream of autonomy and freedom of choice. The importance of nationality becomes readily evident in the sense of patriotism - at the very least a sense of pride in one's homeland, which many students will share. The nuances of being an "American", however, are by no means neutral and this conversation should begin to introduce the idea of differing views of pride in nationality. For example, when Michelle Obama said, during her husband's presidential nomination campaign, that she was for the first time proud to be an American, she reflected the view of someone whose group's history was based on marginalization and exclusion. Her ambivalence should provide a point for discussion, as might the views of students from immigrant families, who should be encouraged to relate their own experiences of pride in their parents' home cultures combined with the acculturation process they have inevitably experienced in becoming Americans.

Moving on from nationality, students begin to gain a relative understanding of the impact of culture on child-rearing by reading research pieces such as Ballenger's (1994), "Because you like us: The language of control", in which the author contrasts the group-oriented expectations of Haitian

preschoolers to the more individualistic style in which most American children are raised. This lively portrait shows how a group of Haitian children changed their behavior in response to authoritative yet loving appeals to the norms of the group, which was the disciplinary style typically used in their homes and communities.

Learning about the power of culture and nationality is learning that we are largely products of our environments. Within any nation there is a core set of cultural beliefs, but these may be greatly modified by smaller configurations as can be seen in ethnic and/or racial groupings within one nation or one overarching culture. Banks and McGee-Banks' (2008) model of overlapping micro-cultural groups within a larger macro-culture is very useful in demonstrating this to students. Students enjoy creating this model for themselves, examining the extent to which they tend to participate in the life of mainstream America, the life of sub-cultures within that larger body, and overlap with other sub-cultures. Some students have considerable overlap in their models; others may display a more homogenous experience. All are acceptable. All are worth discussing and comparing.

Race and Ethnicity.

Against this background, we can then move on to consider the more sensitive concepts of race and ethnicity. *The most important question is - what is the meaning of race?* What is its basis in biology, geography, and social context? This question must be central to work on diversity since racial attitudes are so ingrained as to be difficult to deconstruct. Once students come to understand the social rather than biological basis of race, it becomes impossible for them not to challenge the very basis of racism.

I have had considerable success with this topic by beginning with a video that shocks the students into a set of questions most have never asked. The provocative three-part documentary, *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (California Newsreel, 2003) engages students immediately by presenting a classroom-based study in which a diverse group of students do an experiment to trace their own DNA. Expecting that their DNA and the lineage they trace will be most similar among apparent racial groups, the students are shocked to find that they bear as much genetic similarity to students of "other" races as their own, and that physical indicators of "race" are more related to geography than biology. The second part of this video series traces the history of the American obsession with racial classification and its relationship to the eugenics movement.

The third part of the video series overlaps with and may be saved for the topic of socioeconomic status, since it brings into sharp focus the intertwining of social class with the social construction of race, showing how public policy

reinforced the privilege of Whiteness and the oppression of people of color, for example, through the development of suburbia and the racially discriminatory “red-lining” real estate practices that lingered on after the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Students come to see that the challenge “My grandfather made it, why can’t yours?” has many answers, which may have little or nothing to do with the nature, ambition, or perseverance of individual effort. Through discussions around these facts and this history, students come to realize the socially constructed nature of race and racism. Central to the discussion, however, is acknowledgement of the continuing power of this construction. This means that, despite our acknowledgement of the superficiality of biologically based racial features, we also note that our society is still immersed in the use of these categories for classifying and valuing groups of people. A reading of Peggy McIntosh’s (1989) classic discussion of the privileges endowed by the “invisible knapsack” of Whiteness, is accessible to all, mainly because of the fact that McIntosh begins by pointing out gender privileges and moves the argument seamlessly toward the analogy of race. Having the students actually fill out the simple questionnaire in McIntosh’s article drives the point home, usually without offense to anyone.

What is the difference between race, ethnicity, and nationality? The confusion surrounding this distinction is readily evident in students’ self-identifications. “Hispanic” or “Asian” students often use these terms as a racial qualifier, while students who claim African origin vacillate between “Black”, “African American” or “biracial”, and White students, like the one quoted at the introduction to this paper claim no race, insisting that they are “just American.”

Accepting all self-descriptions offered by students, I then introduce the official racial categorization proposed by the census in 2000, which now must be updated to the 2010 version. A quick read of both versions (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 and 2010) is enough to demonstrate the total confusion of ethnicity, nationality, and race in this system, while the evidence of changing definitions over time confirms the social construction process at work. In the 2010 version, for example, an effort has been made to separate race and ethnicity, but only for Hispanics, who may choose a Hispanic/Latino nationality in one section and a racial identity in another. For Blacks, however, there are no ethnic or national categories offered. The Asian category is even more confounded, with individuals being instructed that they may select one of many nationalities as a “race.”

Understanding the social and political nature of these classifications makes it easier for the students to return to their personal identifications and analyze not only the meanings of large-group designations, but also the within-group differences that defy outsiders’ classifications. For example, students become aware that “African American” is an ethnic rather than racial designation, since many students who are of African origin do not share American roots. Further complicated by language and cultural practices, the difference between

race and ethnicity becomes more evident in the example of immigrant students from the Caribbean who identify as Black racially, but may be native speakers of English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, or any number of French or English-based Creoles, or complex Creoles such as Papiamentu, spoken in the Dutch Antilles (Aruba and Curacao).

Deconstructing the “One-Drop-of-Blood” Rule: Who is Black?

More intriguing is the challenge of facing the meaninglessness of racial categories in the presence of mixed race. The discussion then focuses on where the distinction between “Black” and “White” lies. Once students become aware of the influence of the “one drop of blood” rule by which even the most light-skinned American will be described as “Black”, the fun begins! My favorite activity for this purpose is to show photos of a range of “Black” celebrities, such as Beyonce, Mariah Carey, Halle Berry, Colin Powell, and now of course, President Barack Obama. Once I am certain that the “one drop of blood” rule is understood as an arbitrary, politically based criterion, I move on to an imaginative activity. I ask the students to imagine a scenario where African slaves had overthrown their masters and become the ruling class, thereby imposing the equivalent, but opposite, one-drop of blood rule to determine who would be eligible to claim “Black” identity. I emphasize that, under this reversal, one must be perceived as 100% Black in order to be called “Black.” Students have fun with this conversation, as they propose numerous celebrities who, under this reversed rule would most certainly be seen as “White” rather than “Black”: The easy ones are the clearly bi-racial individuals such as Halle Berry, President Obama, and Mariah Carey. More challenging is pressing the students to consider whether very dark skinned individuals, such as Denzel Washington, for example, is of mixed racial heritage; if he is, which seems very likely, then he would also have to be “White”! These conversations typically end in a moment of epiphany when one or more students propose an individual that shocks and disturbs previously clear race categories, such as one class when a White young man from Atlanta suddenly exclaimed, “So guess what! Bob Marley is White!” In another class, an African American young woman declared, “Darn! You know, the only Black person left is Seal!”

The term “Hispanic/Latino” is no less confusing since the traditional official identification for that category included the phrase “regardless of race” (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990) and the current census tries to resolve it by separating ethnic from racial affiliation for Hispanics/Latinos. Yet, any honest exploration of social attitudes in Caribbean, South, or Central American countries reveals the salience of light versus dark skin in the racial pecking-order (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Despite this fact, it is also true that in many “Hispanic/Latino

societies, the topic of race is still relatively taboo and many will deny the presence of any kind of racism or even racial classification. Even more complicated is the differential preference for the terms “Hispanic” or “Latino” by different groups. To a large extent this seems to reflect a political perspective: Cuban Americans, for example, consistently prefer the term “Hispanic”, explaining that it represents their strong affiliation with their Spanish roots, while many people who prefer “Latino” do so for exactly the opposite reason – a desire to disassociate from what they see as an imperialist history. The politics of the argument are further reinforced by a historical racial preference among colonial peoples for light skin and a repudiation of African roots. Thus, the term “Latino”, used mainly by Central American groups (in particular, Mexico), comes to be associated with the brown skin of people with origins either in indigenous peoples of the Americas or in Africa.

The term “Asian: is, of course, no clearer, since it is basically a geographical reference that includes people of widely varying racial features, such as Asian Indians, Japanese, and Pacific Islanders. Even within India, racial appearance ranges from very dark skin and broad facial features to those light skinned Northern groups traditionally included in the “Aryan” category. Native Americans have traditionally described themselves by their tribal affiliations and also show a great deal of within-group variation.

The fact that the discussion of race/ethnicity results in confusion is not a problem. In fact, it underscores the fact that these categories are socially constructed. Moreover, class discussions that include personal examples of racial awareness and prejudice will make it clear that these categories continue to be salient in our race-conscious world.

Socioeconomic Status.

Addressing issues of socioeconomic status (SES) can be just as sensitive as race/ethnicity. Given our traditional American commitment to the principles of hard work and individual responsibility, many students do not like to acknowledge the importance of socioeconomic status. Moreover, when they do focus on SES, it is often with a deficit orientation based on a deeply embedded concept of a culture of poverty and its more recent restatement in the well-known but much contested work of Payne (2005; Gorski, 2006; Kunjufu, 2006). Thus, students may be reluctant to make the connections between social and educational opportunity and success, preferring to believe that it is all up to the individual and his/her determination to conquer the vicissitudes of poverty (Gorski, 2006; Kunjufu, 2006).

The key concept here is meritocracy. Because of individual success stories, best illustrated in these days by the personal histories of President Barack

Obama and his wife, Michelle, students are more ready than ever to affirm the principle of pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps. Indeed, the first couple's histories support the belief that both race and SES can be overcome by personal effort and family strength. Their stories confirm the possibility of such success, indeed, that it can be the personal and possible goal of every American. Nevertheless, what is possible by certain individuals is not necessarily possible for everyone. Whether because of individual, intrinsic gifts, outstanding family supports, or social opportunities, there are some individuals who will rise above it all.

We are left with the question: How uneven is the playing field from which children try to achieve the "American dream"? The aim, students should come to realize, is not necessarily that everyone will attain the same status, but that the demographic factors that come with one's identity will no longer be the predictors of success. To address this question, students need a heavy dose of information on the facts of SES in our society.

Our society's current economic downturn underscores how vastly askew the fortunes of Americans have become over the past few decades. A simple pie-chart in Gollnick and Chinn's (2008) text displays the painful truth that almost half of America's income is earned by about 20% of the population. Another chart shows that the wealth of the nation (as distinct from income) is even more unequal. To underscore the meaning of such distributions, I come to class with a box of chocolates enough for each person to have one. But then I offer half the chocolates to one fifth of the class and tell the rest that they must share the balance, with the further restriction that the last fifth of the class will have only about 5% of the chocolates as their share. Students usually gasp at my blatant unfairness.

Two readings that work very well in relating these facts to education are Jean Anyon's (1981) seminal study of the relationship of social class and schooling and Kozol's (2005) *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. Anyon's study is a great place to begin since students readily begin to try to place their own experience in one or another of the levels in the study. They can also compare these levels to the schools in which they are doing a field placement for this course. The fact that Anyon's study is now almost three decades old, yet still easily recognizable, strikes home the fact that our society seems to be committed to this model. Reinforcing the point, although by providing a stark contrast, is even one chapter from Jonathon Kozol's (2005) descriptions of inner-city public schools. As Kozol cites the relative funding base for school districts within and around New York City and other cities, the inequity of using property taxes to provide almost half of school funding comes to life as students learn that a child in the Bronx may have approximately \$11,000 spent on her schooling while a child in Manhasset will be

allocated \$22,000 per year. In my classes, there are always at least a couple of students from one of the areas described by Kozol, (Chicago, Boston, or New York), whose acknowledgement of the disparities brings the text directly into the realm of reality for their peers.

Language.

In some states, such as Florida, teacher certification requires some amount of preparation in ESOL/ESL. In any case, I believe this should be the topic of a full course on its own, while also being included, perhaps in an ‘infusion’ approach in any courses on diversity. Thus, I will not focus on this here, since the technical aspects of teaching English to speakers of other languages are beyond the scope of this paper.

What is salient about language in a course on diversity is the question of attitudes to various languages and various dialects. *The key point for students to recognize is that the value placed on a language is a direct reflection of the social value placed on its speakers.* This point is quite easily recognized in South Florida, where the high status of Spanish reflects the relatively high status of its speakers. Students discuss this and the fact that in parts of the country where Spanish speakers have little social and political clout, the language does not enjoy such widespread acceptance.

Students also readily recognize the issue of language status in the case of dialect variation within English. Variation within the language is often a greater target of prejudice than is another language. Because everything in our education system and our social pecking order reflects the intense value placed the correct standard form, it is difficult for students to understand that a standard dialect, let us say, Standard American English, is not inherently superior to any of its regional or ethnic group dialects.

Introducing this idea is often helped by a good video that illustrates the wide variety of English dialects used across America and the relative values placed on each. In a video entitled “American Tongues” (Alvarez & Kolker, 1987) for example, the point is wonderfully made (despite its dated images) that although all regional and ethnic groups are strongly attached to their own dialects and may hold intense prejudice against the dialect of any group it dislikes, the dialect used by those with education and power still holds sway as the “correct” form of the language. A key point that will help students review their negative attitudes towards non-standard dialects is information on the rule-governed nature of all dialects, for example, Southern vowels, Bostonian omission of the “r”, structural rules regarding the use of “be” in Ebonics as an indicator of habitual action, and so on (for wonderful examples, see Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 1999).

In addressing the challenges faced by English Language Learners, the main concern is that students should understand the key features of second language learning that might serve as a barrier to effective teaching: Specifically, basic stages of language learning, such as the possibility of a silent period for new learners that might last up to six months, as well as Cummins' (1984) well known distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), and Cognitive Linguistic Academic Proficiency (CLAP). Class groups that include members whose native language is not English are at a huge advantage since those students are usually happy to discuss their own experience of language learning.

Head Work Continued: Diversity as Intellectual and Behavioral

What is the relationship between demographic diversity and special education? In this course I address two key concerns: First, the conceptualization of the field has traditionally been deeply rooted in an objectivist view of knowledge, which tends to place limited, if any, emphasis on contextual aspects of human development and learning. Thus, special education policy and practice tend to focus on a search for and attention to intrinsic deficits within children. By excluding the variations brought about by context and culture, this search finds a disproportionate amount of deficits within children who have not been prepared for the established norms of academic and behavioral attainment. Thus, the second concern is the continuing disproportionate placement of students of color in the high incidence disability categories of special education.

Teacher Preparation as Education or Indoctrination?

We must begin by recognizing the importance of helping prospective students to develop a critical perspective toward special education policy and practice. *The key challenge here is to engage in an explicit examination of the premises of our field.*

Many curriculum theorists have pointed out that teacher preparation often involves a covert or tacit process of inculcation into a set of beliefs and behaviors without any critical explicit examination of their source (Apple & Beane, 1995; Giroux, 1993). Bowers (1995) for example, argued that some “taken for granted beliefs” are so embedded in our thinking as to be unacknowledged even by those who teach them. In preparing teachers to be reflective about special education, the most important of these beliefs may be the belief in disability as a factual feature of an individual’s intrinsic make-up. While this is clearly true for those disabilities that are biologically or physiologically based, such as Down Syndrome or cerebral palsy, students must learn that identification of such

disabilities does not define the person or his/her abilities. Further, the logic of biology has been uncritically transposed to the full range of “disabilities” conceptualized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This process tends to ignore the fact that the high incidence disabilities, including Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Mild Intellectual Impairment (MII), and Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD, excluding major mental illnesses), are generally determined by clinical judgment without the benefit of any scientific evidence. Yet, these “soft” categories come to be interpreted as factual characteristics that belong to individuals, with little consideration of the role of context or culture. This process has been referred to as “reification” whereby a concept is transformed into a “thing” (Bogdan & Knoll, 1995), losing sight of its abstract and inferential nature.

According to Skrtic (1991), the reification perspective has been reinforced by special education’s grounding in the “functionalist paradigm”, which assumes that objective reality exists regardless of human perspective. In special education, this paradigm is expressed in beliefs and practices such as behaviorism and experimental psychology. It is not hard to see the influence of these perspectives in traditionally emphasized technical aspects of the field, such as how to assess a student’s achievement level and cognitive potential, how to build step-by-step, scaffolded instruction that responds to individual levels, and how to implement behavior modification procedures based on stimulus-response theory. While these approaches are undoubtedly useful, Skrtic argued that an almost exclusive emphasis on such approaches has resulted in special education occupying “the most extreme objectivist region of the functionalist paradigm” (1991, p. 106). As Kalyanpur and Harry (1999) observed, an example of this characteristic would be:

prospective teachers may be asked to evaluate the efficacy of a tool, such as a psychometric test, for identifying a disability, but they are not asked to examine the underlying belief that disabilities are objective phenomena that can be objectively and accurately diagnosed by such a test. (p.11)

This approach to teacher preparation can have serious consequences for practice.

The Disproportionate Placement of Minorities in Special Education.

The disproportionately high rates of special education placement of African American, Native American, and, in some parts of the nation, Hispanic/Latino students continues to be of grave concern to education. The fact that this phenomenon is observed mainly in the high-incidence categories, which rely on clinical judgment rather than biological evidence, raises serious questions about the possibility of bias as well as of ecological risks to which these groups may be disproportionately exposed. A study by the National Academy of Sciences

(Donovan & Cross, 2002) argued that both types of risk are at work in the process. The fact that ecological risks such as lead in the environment, and biological risks such as iron deficiencies, can be counted and measured resulted in a great deal of attention being paid to these sources in the Donovan and Cross report. Social process risks, such as poor clinical judgment, cultural, racial or SES biases are harder to prove and thus are considered by some to be less explanatory of disproportionality.

While both points of view must be presented to prospective teachers, those who have engaged in the study of the impact of diversity on our societal values and expectations will be ready to grasp what Harry and Klingner (2006) have described as the ambiguous nature of the placement process. *At the heart of the conversation is the intractability of our nation's commitment to the concept of IQ as a meaningful estimate of intrinsic intelligence.* Most of the pre-service teachers I encounter are convinced of this belief and, despite their politically correct responses about the value of all human beings, the high priority they give to the notion of intelligence is inescapable. The challenge is to develop an awareness of the cultural and experiential base of knowledge. A few key examples from any popular IQ test is usually enough to demonstrate this point. The very best example I had of this was from an African American young man who was unique among his middle and upper-class peers by virtue of his self-identification as being "from the ghetto." Marcus (pseudonym) shocked the class by his response to the question "What is the right thing to do if you find a wallet on the floor of a department store?" While everyone else replied that they should turn it in to the manager or try to contact the owner, Marcus exclaimed, "What're you all talking about? I'd leave it right there! I'm not gonna be picking it up for folks to say I'm stealing it!" This and just a couple other well chosen examples from an unidentified IQ test are sufficient to demonstrate that these items test learned knowledge or perspective, not intrinsic ability or aptitude.

A brief introduction to cross-cultural views of disability and intelligence drive this point home. For example, Serpell's (1994) report of the relative skill of British and Zambian boys in utilizing different kinds of materials for constructing models shows how even the so-called "performance" aspects of intelligence testing relies on experience with different kinds of tasks and materials. Reports of the arithmetic skills of Brazilian child-vendors (Saxe, 1988) startles pre-service teachers into a recognition that paper-pencil tasks represent only one way of showing mental mastery of the basics of arithmetic.

What does this have to do with special education? Once students understand how difficult it can be to assess the meaning of low school achievement, they are ready to move toward a critical understanding of the slippery slope between low achievement and perceived disability. While the benefits of appropriate and well-designed special education services are

emphasized, students learn that there is more to responding to a child's needs than simply referring him/her to special education. The roles of general educators are highlighted and the implications of current attempts to develop meaningful Response to Intervention (RTI) models emphasize that learning is a continuum for which all teachers are responsible.

With this information established, we can then introduce students to patterns of ethnic group placement in SLD, MII, and EBD programs. The reason that the preparation outlined prior to this point in the paper is so important is that, without it, we may run the risk of simply reinforcing students' often unacknowledged or covert assumptions that Whites are superior in intellect to minorities (with the exception perhaps of the popular view of Asians as the "model minority"), and that this explains disproportionately high rates of disability identification among minorities. Students will learn that the disproportionate placement of minorities, in particular, Black students, occurs in those categories that rely on clinical judgment, such as SLD, MII, and EBD. While SLD has not been, historically, a location of overrepresentation, the general over-use of this category is causing it to become problematic for all groups (Donovan & Cross, 2002). The categories MII and EBD, on the other hand, display serious and on-going overrepresentation and undue restrictiveness of placement for Black students across the country, although with some variation from state to state (Fierros & Conroy, 2002). It is important for students to understand the ambiguous nature of these categorical definitions, the strong potential for bias in the intelligence testing that underpins the category of MII, and the lack of reliability and huge potential for subjectivity in assessment of EBD. Moreover, the course introduces them to excerpts from critical pieces that trace the relationship between segregation and the early, discriminatory uses of special education (Ferri & Connor, 2004; Sleeter, 1986).

A collection of research-based case studies by Harry, Klingner, and Cramer (2007) can be helpful in illustrating the processes by which students with difficulties in general education classes come to be seen as having deficiencies that might be caused by "disabilities." The collection begins with a succinct summary of the disproportionality issue and the case studies are supported by guiding questions and activities for students. Students have responded very well to these cases.

Hand Work: Applying Learning in Field Placements

For Hilary, the student who described her personal "bubble" at the beginning of this paper, hand work in the real world came as a shock. Based on all her reflective papers and her interactions in class discussions it was clear to me that Hilary was a respectful and thoughtful young woman with solid values related to

equity, and a sincere interest in learning how she could make a contribution through teaching. She was also a rather shy person, with a tendency to blush whenever she spoke up in class. In her web paper at mid-term, she wrote:

Doing my field experience in a public school has been a total shock. I knew not every school was like mine but I did not realize how different public schools are. My students are disrespectful and act out in class. In my middle school and high school this was never tolerated. I am worried how this will affect me as a teacher since in my school the teachers only had to deal with teaching and classroom management was never an issue.

Our program's emphasis on diversity requires that students do a different field placement of 15-20 hours for each education course. These placements are always in schools that have considerable diversity, and while some are in upper-income neighborhoods, the majority of schools serve children from a wide array of socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Totally committed to this practice, I find that there are two essential requirements for these placements to be productive: The first is selecting teachers whose classrooms are well run and productive. It is good to have a range of teaching styles, from authoritative to more child-centered, but effective management is essential so that students can see beyond what they see as "disrespectful" or "acting out" students. Hilary's placement, it seems, did not meet the extent of teacher management that I would hope for. Nevertheless, she came to appreciate the teacher's dedication but was encouraged to critique the lack of consistency in his discipline approach.

The second requirement is arranging assignments very early on that require the teacher candidates to work one-on-one in an assistive capacity with one or two students throughout the semester. They begin by conducting an informal interview with the student and observing him/her in at least 2 different school settings. With the supervising teacher's guidance, they then set some goals for one-to-one tutoring of the child. They must keep a log that documents every working session with details of the work done and reflections on how it went. Ideally, the child selected should be of an ethnic/racial group other than that of the college student and should be a student who is having difficulty either academically or behaviorally. The purpose of the assignment is to have an opportunity to get beyond stereotypical reactions to children's selves or behaviors by getting to know the whole child – not just to deliver pre-planned instruction.

After the interview with the student, Hilary noted that the student "really opened up once we got some time to talk." In her final paper, Hillary concluded:

During my entire first week there, I was beginning to re-think my future as a teacher. By the end of my field experience, my views of the school and the class completely changed. I assumed the school was going to be wealthy since it is in [this area], however they have students from all over and the majority of students are on the free lunch program. The students in my classes were extremely intimidating in the beginning, but as I got to know them that changed. While there were still moments where I was appalled at their behavior, I realized that they are smart students who can do well if they are given the opportunity. I also learned how easy it is to talk to the students and that I do not need to be intimidated by them. By simply paying attention to the students, they are more than willing to talk about just about anything. It definitely seems worthwhile... to get to know them.

Besides acknowledging that she would have a lot to learn about classroom management, Hillary noted one of the lessons she learned about race/ethnicity:

My web sketch had a big influence on my reactions to a lot of the classroom situations. I was finally the minority and that was an unusual experience. The students would frequently speak Spanish around me and of course I had no idea what they were saying. This made me feel left out and insecure since I assume they were talking about me (they were aware of my lack of Spanish). However, this is probably how other minority students feel when they are around a large number of White people. The web allowed me to recognize the benefits of my Whiteness and [this school] put me in a new setting where I was, for once, not the majority.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I return to the notion of helping prospective teachers to break through the limited bubbles that have defined their social experiences prior to beginning teaching. In these difficult yet hopeful times in our society, with the image of an African American breaking the ultimate glass ceiling to attain the highest position in the nation, the irony of segregated schools in our most powerful cities (Kozol, 2005) underscores the uniqueness of President Obama's victory. Many of our budding teachers are growing up in diverse settings that challenge traditional boundaries of race and social class, but a great many are still limited to their own bubbles. Whether those bubbles have been ones of privilege or of limited advantage, the challenge for them as teachers will be to see beyond those boundaries and learn to appreciate and respond to the vast array of

experiences, values, and practices reflected in their students' abilities and behaviors. America is truly a great multicultural experiment in which the cultural landscape is constantly changing. I think it is true to say that education has, traditionally, been designed to be responsive to a particular group – those who have grown up within the mainstream of the society. Our task as teacher educators is to prepare teachers who can be responsive to the changing cultural landscape rather than recoil from it.

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Missing in Action: Where Are the Services for Minority Students in Japanese Schools?¹

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Introduction

In Japan over recent years, growing numbers of newcomer migrant workers have changed the demographics of many cities and towns. The children of these migrant workers are enrolled in public schools and study with their Japanese classmates. Since the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) conducted a survey of foreign students (non-Japanese, including old-timers and newcomers) in 1991, the numbers of foreign students needing Japanese as second-language (JSL) instruction in public schools has increased every year (MEXT, 2008c, August). The latest data from the MEXT (2008b August & 2008c August) show Japanese instruction was needed by 25,411 students (hereinafter called JSL students), a 13.4% increase from 22,413 students in 2006. The major native languages of these JSL students are: Portuguese (10,206, 38.5%), followed by Chinese (5,051, 19.9%), and Spanish (3,484, 14.6%). To summarize, Japanese schools have dramatically changed from a homogeneous population with Japanese as the only language of instruction to sites of heterogeneous populations of Japanese as second-language learners. This has put new pressures on Japanese classrooms, teachers and students. How are Japanese teachers meeting this new educational challenge as they teach the formal curriculum?

Crystallization of Problems

As the student body in Japanese schools becomes more multi-cultural and multi-ethnic than ever in current history, many students have little or no proficiency in Japanese, the language used in the curriculum, textbooks, and instruction, as well as for communication in schools. Since compulsory education applies only to Japanese nationals, not foreign students (MEXT, 2008a, June), the language barrier is increased when or if foreign students do attend school. This puts them at risk of being unsuccessful in their academics, which impacts their entry and acceptance into the greater society. Moreover, when foreign students do enter school, they are often marginalized amongst their Japan-born peers, if they do not

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have Japanese language proficiency.

Simultaneously, the presence of foreign students forces schools to confront something unfamiliar in responding to their needs (Hirota, 1996). In other words, the enrollment of JSL students challenges Japanese teachers, and JSL students encounter various diversity-related problems in schools. Kojima (2007) asks:

Why does the encounter between [JSL] students and teachers frequently make both sides unhappy? To make a long story short, these encounters are very new for Japanese schools and the educational system. In other words, they have not had experiences of accepting the significant foreignness these [JSL] children show, to begin with. When foreign children enroll in the school, a new environment is definitely created. The foreignness visibly stands out, even if they do not intend to create things in tacit school cultures. In this way, they are the mirror that portrays the Japanese school culture. (p. 8)

As Kojima (2007) argues, when non-Japanese-speaking children enter school, they are confronted by cultural differences as well as linguistic ones. These differences impact a school community and change the status quo. A factor that is embedded in most institutions, the status quo is usually invisibly running in the background of each institution and assumes that everyone there knows the unspoken, the unwritten ways of behaving and speaking within that institution's culture. This assumption, of course, is neither acted upon nor recognized by newcomers in Japanese schools. The mirror that portrays the Japanese school culture reveals what the Japanese culture is not and does not do.

The Study Rationale

How do Japanese teachers respond to linguistic and cultural differences in their students? How do teachers manage the needs of these students while meeting the needs of Japanese students within the current school setting? How are language counselors involved in schools to help JSL students? This study was conducted at Sakura Junior High School in Midori City of the Tokai Area of Japan.² It explores how teachers deal with the challenges that JSL students bring on being enrolled in a previously homogeneous junior high school. Moreover, this study focuses on the role of language counselors in meeting the needs of JSL students who tend to be marginalized in the Japanese school culture. Language counselors, sent from the Board of Education, visit schools to provide various services: Advice on JSL curriculum; counseling services for JSL students; translation between school teachers and JSL parents; translation of school announcements; assistance in creating teachers' manuals and handouts; helping at school events; and advising at

1. All names in this study, including schools, teachers, language counselors, and students, have been changed to protect privacy.

teachers' seminars (Aichi Board of Education, 2007).

The significance of this study is to illuminate teachers' challenges in teaching or working with JSL students. Unlike multicultural schools in large cities, homogeneous schools lack infrastructure to support JSL students and teachers are inexperienced in managing students with limited Japanese language skills. Thus, the role of language counselors demonstrates more than ever the need for more diverse and flexible services as the numbers of JSL students increase in schools. The study is intended to inform teachers, parents, school administrators, and policymakers about how challenging the teachers' regular guidance is for non-Japanese students who do not understand either Japanese or the school culture. The study aims at improving conditions and circumstances of JSL students to ensure that they are not marginalized in the schools.

Literature Review:

Cultural Assimilation and Cultural Pluralism in American Schools

Accommodation of growing numbers of immigrants at schools is a common issue in many countries. In the United States immigrant students have a higher dropout rate than native-born students (Rumberger, 1995). For instance, Hispanic students have between 14% and 30% dropout rates (Zehr, 2003).

On the topic of educating immigrant students, one major discussion centers on the stance between cultural assimilation and cultural pluralism in the host country. "Cultural assimilation" is defined as "policies and practices that seek the integration and participation of linguistically and culturally diverse students only under the condition that these students give up their cultural traditions, value systems, and language practices and replace them with those deemed to be American" (Arias, Faltis, & Cohen, 2008, p. 103). School policies regarded as assimilation include disregarding home language, holidays and cultural practices, and previous school experiences of immigrant students, while focusing on educating them to become "American."

In contrast, "cultural pluralism" in American schools is seen as "policies and practices that seek the integration and participation of students from diverse language and cultural backgrounds in ways to enable these students to maintain their language and cultural identities and practices while they acquire English and learn academic content" (Arias et al., 2008, p. 103). The cultural pluralism approach allows immigrant students to maintain their home languages and ethnic cultures at schools by giving credits of their home language as language proficiency toward graduation and helping them maintain two languages. Between these two perspectives, many studies showed that the longer immigrant students are required to learn Standard English only and lose their home language and cultural practices in the United States, the more negative they become toward school and additive acculturation (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

Banks (1996) recalls cultural practices at home as personal and cultural knowledge defined as "[t]he concepts, explanations, and interpretations that students derive from personal experiences in their homes, families, and

community cultures” (p. 9). Each student’s personal and cultural knowledge out of school shapes particular principles, assumptions, perspectives, and ideological positions (West, Leon-Guerrero, & Stevens, 2007) which are different from the mainstream school culture. Thus, understanding the gap between home and school cultures among teachers and immigrant students themselves and allowing these students to maintain their personal and cultural knowledge is important for them to be successful academically and socially (West, Leon-Guerrero, & Stevens, 2007).

The schools that meet the educational and social needs of immigrants and their families in relation to their cultural identities and practices, home languages and English proficiency, and their past and present school experiences, are the schools that enable many immigrant students to be successful (California Tomorrow, 2004; Faltis, 2006; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990). Moreover, the study shows that successful schools for immigrant students are those that encourage and sustain positive intergroup relations between immigrant and nonimmigrant students by developing acceptance and facilitating intergroup contact and understanding (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Stephan, 1999). A safe learning environment provides immigrants space and time to grow new identities as members of academic communities, to be literate in the society’s primary or dominating language, and to become citizens without losing their cultural heritage (Brittain, 2002; Valdés, 2001).

School Provisions for Immigrant Students

The presence of immigrant students who do not understand the language of instruction is a common issue all over the world. Castellanos (1983) categorizes American school responses to this issue in the 1950s into five levels: (1) ‘Sink or Swim’ approach to a regular class with no support from or preparation by the teacher; (2) ‘Downgrading’ approach that placed students in classes several years below that indicated by the age of the pupil; (3) “Slow Learner,” or placement in a group of low-intelligence; (4) Language-Osmosis approach that stresses exposure to the language of instruction as the solution; and (5) “Vocabulary-building” strategies that assumed that language-learning was primarily a matter of acquiring necessary vocabulary in English (pp. 54-56).

In contrast, three alternatives were available in Germany from the mid-1980s due to an awareness of the needs of special measures for immigrant students: “(1) assignment to a regular German class, with the possibility of supplemental ‘home language’ instruction, (2) assignment to a separate bilingual class with other pupils of the same nationality, or (3) assignment to a reception class for intensive instruction in German” (Harant, 1987, pp. 253-255, cited in Glenn, 1996, p. 406). Supplemental language classes in addition to regular classes are available for immigrant students in most countries (e.g., Glenn, 1996, pp. 411-413).

The Case of Immigrants in Japanese Schools

Banks (2000) argues that “[g]roups holding political and economic power construct racial categories to privilege members of their groups and marginalize outside groups” (p. 29, cited in West et al., 2007). In the Japanese concept, race and ethnicity are synonymous and the group holding political and economic power is ethnic Japanese. This group has maintained a homogeneous discourse, which is based on shared cultural values and practices, and embedded in the national curriculum, called the government teaching guidelines.

The 1989 government teaching guidelines on moral education assumed that all students enrolled in Japanese schools were mainstream ethnic Japanese (Parmenter, 1999). It stated that the MEXT assumes “the students were born and have been brought up in Japan” (the Ministry of Education Junior High School Guidelines: Moral Education, 1989, p. 12, & Junior High School Teaching Guidelines, 1998, p. 1, cited in Parmenter, 1999). But the assumption that all students attending Japanese schools are Japanese citizens (Parmenter, 1999) is a myth from the past. The domestic minority/indigenous groups, such as *Ainu*, Okinawan, and *Burakumin*, are incorporated into the Japanese citizen category; yet, their minority status with consequent stigmatization has remained. Foreign residents do not meet the assumption that “the students were born and have been brought up in Japan” (the Ministry of Education Junior High School Guidelines: Moral Education, 1989, p. 12, & Junior High School Teaching Guidelines, 1998, p. 1, cited in Parmenter, 1999).

On one hand, long-lasting domestic/indigenous minority groups who hold Japanese citizenship, including indigenous *Ainu* and Okinawan, and descendants of federal outcaste *Burakumin*, are all assimilated into mainstream Japanese culture. On the other hand, foreigners are categorized as either old-timers or newcomers. The majority group among the old-timers are Koreans who have been in Japan for over a half-century. By the mid-1970s, over three-fourths of resident Koreans were born in Japan and spoke Japanese as the first language. By 1985, 70% of Koreans had married ethnic Japanese (Lie, 2004). The majority group of newcomers is *Nikkeijin* (Japanese descendants of South Americans). According to Murphy-Shigematsu (2006), the 300,000 *Nikkeijin* are the foreigners most welcomed by the ethnic Japanese. These descendants of South Americans who had been born in Japan but migrated to South America seeking better opportunities are the most advantaged foreigners in terms of their legal status to live and work in Japan. Since the implementation of the 1990 immigration law, any *Nikkeijin* with a Japanese parent or grandparent has been allowed to enter Japan to work as cheap labor. To sum up, the myth that all children in Japanese schools are mainstream Japanese has been created under the pressure of silencing the ethnic heritages and backgrounds of minority groups in schools.

In addition to the myth of homogeneous student population, an egalitarian educational philosophy that “all children are treated the same” prevails in the schools (Tsuneyoshi, 2003). Egalitarianism allows schools to provide the same materials, teach at the same pace, and often offer no additional support for particular students (Gordon, 2006). In other words, students need to share a high

level of commonalities, such as a common language, a shared belief system and behavioral norms, family stability, and a sense of belonging (Tsuneyoshi, 2001). Shimizu, Sakai, Shimizu, and Dotera (1999, cited in Gordon, 2006) also mention that the belief of egalitarianism makes it difficult for teachers to recognize the unique qualities and needs of each student.

Shimizu (2000) illustrates how the traditional view of education among teachers influences their judgment of students. The traditional view includes de-contextualization, homogenization, and individualization. De-contextualization means that teachers try to exclude rather than utilize differences among students, such as the family background and culture that each student brings to the classroom. Based on that exclusion, teachers try to treat all students as members of a homogeneous group. Expressions such as “my class” or “our school” are examples of such homogenization. In addition to de-contextualization and homogenization, teachers regard each student’s problem as stemming from the student himself or herself, i.e., individualizing the problem of each student. Therefore, teachers urge students to seek their own solutions through further effort. Singleton (1989, cited in Gordon, 2006) also observes that teachers believe that the ethic of hard work will bring success regardless of the children’s backgrounds. Shimizu warns that these features contain the risk of trying to make children fit an ideal student model and of evaluating them without considering differences and personalities. From another angle, teachers would evaluate positively students’ efforts to perform better under the same instruction for everybody. It also means that teachers would not try to find reasons in familial backgrounds and sociocultural contexts for those students who perform poorly.

How does this traditional view of education, de-contextualization, homogenization, and individualism affect the education for immigrant students whose personal and cultural knowledge is very distinct from their Japanese peers? As Shimizu (2000) argues, this view of education might lack understanding of individual differences and personalities beyond an ideal student model created by teachers. It means that this view of education could be considered a concept of cultural assimilation of immigrant students. How, then, are their differences treated in schools?

Kojima (2002) claims that teachers manage the differences of JSL students in two ways: unification and fixed. The unification of the management of differences means that any situations JSL students have are managed in the same ways they are for Japanese students. Unification of differences is a strategy to ignore any differences in the school culture through forced assimilation. If JSL students show outcomes different from those of Japanese students such as low motivation to learn in response to the same management by teachers, this is seen as the result of individual personalities and efforts as mentioned above. Kojima’s second point of fixed management takes place when JSL students’ actions go beyond the school framework of adaptation to the school culture. When teachers failed to consider their differences, JSL students no longer tried to conform in general. Their actions were seen as peculiar behavior and were allowed in the name of cultural differences. Basically, the students were excluded from the framework of school culture. Their deviation from Japanese culture was fixed and

emphasized as the teachers' justification for exclusion. Furthermore, teachers' management of difference is used as a means to rationalize guidance for the Japanese students. A successful outcome for JSL students is of secondary importance for teachers (Kojima, 2002).

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted social reproduction theory in order to explore challenges to teachers in meeting needs of JSL students in comparison to Japanese students. Gramsci (1971), Giddens (1984), and Bourdieu (1977) show that social reproduction occurs when subordinate groups of people consider inequality of power as a reality of daily life and maintain daily values and behaviors as subordinate groups. The reality of inequality is constructed by ideologies of the ruling or dominant class so as to secure their own benefits. Langman (1998) explains Gramsci's argument in the following:

Ruling class intellectuals articulated and disseminated world views in which ruling class truths defined reality, provided meanings and standards of morality so that their interests were mystified as normal, logical and 'the general good.' Elite interests were embedded in speech, the semiotics of meaning, and understandings that framed the perceptions of reality while their normative positions regulated behavior. Their authority claims were rendered 'common sense' so arbitrary social arrangements were 'naturalized' and unquestioned. The everyday life experiences and understandings of the masses gave rise to perceptions, values, judgments, and behaviors that continually reproduced structural arrangements. (p. 186)

All three authors describe how social reproduction occurs by a gradual penetration of the ruling class ideology into subordinate groups. The process of penetration spreads as the subordinate groups consciously or unconsciously accept the ruling class ideology and interest as their daily realities, buying into hidden messages and necessary behaviors so the ruling class maintains inequality of power in society.

The social reproduction theory situates Japanese teachers and Japanese students as the ruling class and JSL students as the subordinate group. This power structure is created by the compulsory education requirement that applies to Japanese nationals (MEXT, 2008a, June) and excludes foreign nationals. Thus, this structure itself involves the system of reproducing Japanese citizens through education.

Method

The duration of this study was from mid-November 2007 to early February 2008. Sites selected for the study included Sakura Junior High School. School-related documents included the weekly academic schedules of all homerooms from seventh to ninth grade, the seating arrangement of teachers in the teacher's room, and numbers of students enrolled in Sakura. Classroom observations were done for a total of two periods (one period was 50 minutes) in JSL instruction.

Interviews were done with eight informants: one social studies teacher, one Japanese teacher, one English teacher, one math teacher, one language counselor, and one Brazilian student as well as the parents of a ninth-grade student. Interviews with teachers at school lasted from 40 minutes to two hours. An interview with one language counselor was conducted twice: The first interview took place at school for two hours and a follow-up interview was done at her Board of Education office for another two hours. An interview with one Brazilian student at school lasted for 30 minutes. The interview with the parents of a ninth-grade student lasted for 3 hours at their house. All interviews were tape-recorded and notes were taken in the process. The field notes were re-written right after the interview to incorporate everything heard during the interview. All interviews were conducted in Japanese. These data were triangulated with materials from a JSL workshop held at one of the schools appointed by MEXT to implement the JSL curriculum.

All interviews were transcribed first in Japanese. To validate the data, interview scripts were sent to informants either face-to-face or via emails to confirm each story and to ask for clarification and additional information. After these scripts were translated into English verbatim, a bilingual person checked the accuracy of the English translation of the interview scripts and documents. Then an editor checked contexts in the English text. All these data were analyzed inductively through the framework of the literature review and social reproduction theory.

Discussion

Sakura Junior High School had an enrollment of 896 students (445 males and 443 females), and 60 teachers. The student population included 12 foreign students with the legal status of foreign residents (nationals or citizens) (as of January 7, 2008). All other students, including the children of mainstream ethnic Japanese and minority groups, such as *Ainu*, Okinawan, *Burakumin*, and naturalized Japanese (ex-foreigners) were called "Japanese students."

Because school policies adopted the population dichotomy between Japanese and foreigners, no one, except for some school administrators, knew whether or not students from these Japanese minorities were present in Sakura. If there were any, teachers and students could not tell who they were because these groups are Japanese citizens, look like ethnic Japanese, and have Japanese names. Only if the minority students themselves revealed their ethnic

background would the teachers and other students know of it.

Most foreign students in Sakura also had physical features similar to ethnic Japanese because most of them were *Nikkei* (Japanese-descendant) Brazilians. However, either their non-Japanese names or their enrollment in the JSL instruction informed teachers and students of their foreign student status.

The JSL instruction started with an assigned room and teachers with about 10 foreign students in April, 2007. Ms. Tomita, who also taught ninth-grade Japanese, was the first chairperson of the JSL curriculum, collaborating with homeroom teachers and coordinating with three language counselors sent from the Board of Education.

Classification of Foreign Students

Foreign students' knowledge of the Japanese language varied individually, based on the number of years spent living and studying in Japan. Out of the 12 foreign students, seven were required to take JSL classes. Brazilian students were a majority of four, followed by one Bolivian, one Filipino and one Turk. The other five foreign students, who did not need JSL instruction, were originally from Brazil, but had lived in Japan for a long time. Most Brazilian and Bolivian students were *Nikkeijin*.

Sakura adopted a combined method of separate intensive JSL classes and team teaching (T2) in the classrooms. During the schedule for the first to sixth periods, separate intensive JSL classes were offered four times per week, with a twice-per-week class for one ninth-grade student. The JSL students attended supplemental JSL classes out of homeroom, while their classmates were studying Japanese in their homerooms.

However, observation showed that the academic time schedule often shifted within a day, for example, switching fifth period to first or *vice versa*, for various reasons. The JSL timetable, however, did not switch along with the general schedule in the homeroom. As a result, supplementary JSL instruction was offered when various subject areas other than Japanese were taught in homerooms.

The separate intensive JSL class was a tutoring system where one teacher tutored one or two students per period. Six teachers were assigned to teach seven JSL students. Teachers were chosen mainly because their teaching assignments in the regular classes were not tight, nor did they have homeroom duties.

According to Ms. Tomita, in earlier times all six teachers taught Japanese at the beginning of the first semester. However, they gradually switched their teaching subjects from just Japanese to their areas of expertise. For instance, an English teacher tutored previews and reviews of an English textbook and assignments. A vice principal taught math because of his past teaching experience with core subjects, including math, in elementary schools.

The change of subject in tutoring was due to the realization that many JSL students needed assistance not only with Japanese, but also with other core

subjects, including social studies, English, and math. During the tutoring session, JSL students did some homework and read aloud under supervision of the teacher. The atmosphere of the JSL classroom was very different from regular classrooms, in terms of the tutoring system, the curriculum, its location at the periphery of the school building, students speaking different languages, a wall-mounted *hiragana* (a Japanese syllabary) chart, a world map, and photographs of people from around the world. Ōta's description of the JSL classrooms, "obviously different time and space from regular classrooms," fit the JSL classroom in this school (Ōta, 2000, p. 203).

Team teaching (T2) was a system in which JSL students no longer needed intensive JSL instruction but did need additional academic support to catch up with class materials. In some regular classes, one teacher lectured 39 Japanese students and one JSL student. A T2 teacher seated near this JSL student guided him or her. The issue of a T2 teacher for a foreign student was that the class subject often was not the T2 teacher's subject of expertise. It was even reported that one English teacher kept checking a teacher's manual on Japanese when Japanese classics was the subject of study.

Although JSL students had extra support related to language, they took the same mid-term and final exams as their Japanese peers. Ms. Tomita listed JSL students whose exams needed to have *hiragana* written above the *kanji* (Chinese) characters to help them read exam questions by themselves. However, though this helped the JSL students to read exam questions, it did not necessarily help them to understand the meaning of the questions due to limited language proficiency.

In general, *hiragana* includes the first 48 syllabic characters any Japanese first graders learn at first. They then switch *hiragana* words into *kanji* characters for advanced learning. A native speaker of Japanese is expected to master 1,006 *kanji* characters by sixth grade of elementary school. Thus, it was common for junior high school textbooks and documents in this study to be written in basic *kanji* characters without *hiragana*.

In contrast to learning written Japanese from the first grade, JSL students migrated from their home countries to Japan, transferred to Japanese elementary or junior high schools, and started learning Japanese as their second language. As they did not have a *kanji* orthographic background, *kanji* was one of the most challenging parts of Japanese learning for them (Mori, 1999; Mori, Satō, & Shimizu, 2007; Yamashita & Maru, 2000). *Kanji* is a logographic character holding both meanings and sounds. One *kanji* has more than one meaning and one pronunciation. *Kanji* words with multiple meanings and sounds also feature linguistic functions, visual complexity, and some combinations of several *kanji* words necessary to represent concepts existing in the Japanese language (Coulmas, 1989; Just & Carpenter, 1987; Mori, Satō, & Shimizu, 2007). As this linguistic system of *kanji* shows, *hiragana* only helps with the pronunciation of *kanji* on an exam without any assistance to its meaning. Yet, there was no assistance for JSL students except for *hiragana*. The contents of exams were the same as for other students.

One social studies teacher, Mr. Egawa, told us how Pacheco, his JSL

student from Bolivia, was doing in his class. He said:

Well, I feel that Pacheco does not have much problem about oral communication. But, reading and writing are tough for him, especially because he cannot read *kanji*, things without *hiragana*. That's why I guess Pacheco probably does not understand the tests, although the tests have *hiragana* written above *kanji*. He probably does not understand meanings even though he can read the questions. In that sense, it's pitiful. That's why we have Ms. Tomita's supplemental Japanese education. I think it is good to have that option. After all, among 40 students, it is difficult to deal only with him.

Teachers' Fairness of Care

In interviews, some teachers mentioned their fairness to all students when we asked about their support for JSL students. Mr. Egawa, who gave a positive evaluation of Ms. Tomita's efforts in JSL instruction, continued:

Well, if he is in class, at least Pacheco can enjoy the learning environment together which will help him participate in questions he can answer. It is very difficult that we have not just foreign students, but also students who are poor at reading and writing. So, the situation is the same. It would be great to be able to explain to him each time, but it is quite difficult to do that...So, I do not do like to say 'You alone do not need to turn it in,' or something like that.

In terms of fairness to all students in the classroom, Shimizu (2000) observed that many elementary school teachers told him during interviews that they could not provide special care for foreign students merely because they were foreigners. In the eyes of homeroom teachers, many students had various issues, so the teachers could not pay special attention only to foreign students. This applies to Kojima's (2002) observation that there are students who are poor at reading and writing regardless of nationality. Therefore, as the Japanese students try to understand the class in their ways, the foreign students have to deal with it in theirs. This comment also links to Shimizu's de-contextualization that Mr. Egawa's view is limited to similarities in reading and writing skills between Japanese and JSL students, not to cultural or familial backgrounds.

We suppose that cultural and familial backgrounds play a vital role in understanding social studies content because textbooks presuppose that readers are Japanese and so embrace common cultural values and behaviors. The shared life experiences of the Japanese are the foundation of learning about social studies and the foreign students lack them. Therefore, the difference between remedial Japanese students and foreign students is their fundamental life experiences in understanding Japanese social studies classes. We conclude that Tsuneyoshi's (2001) claim of need for a high level of commonalities in schools applies to

learning of subject matter, as well as to school life in general.

The following comment from Mr. Egawa showed the class structure of one teacher and all students in his social studies class:

...I want students to take classes seriously, we set up rules, students take notes on one page per class and earn one point [toward the grade]...In any case, even if they do not understand meanings, [students] just copy things written on the blackboard. I evaluate the copy, regardless of whether [a foreign student] understands the copied notes or not. Pacheco does that. It might just be to copy some figures in his mind. Then, he turns in his notes... he brings in notes full of correct answers written in red. We need to help him be able to do that.

This comment implies Shimizu's (2000) argument of individualization. Whether the notebook is full of blackboard notes depends on an individual student's effort (individualization). Mr. Egawa evaluates the individual efforts by giving students partial points. His comment also illustrates the case of assimilation that Mr. Egawa believes is needed to help JSL students learn.

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Absences

Ms. Noda, a second-generation *Nikkei* Brazilian, works as a language counselor, visiting over 80 elementary and junior high schools in the region. She sensed the distance between teachers and JSL students. Teachers supported JSL students formally, but did not touch their hearts. She felt that teachers treated JSL students differently from Japanese students. One example was teachers' action about students' absences. When she visited the Sakura school, Ms. Noda was told that one Brazilian female student, Ishizuka, had been absent for almost 20 days but until Ms. Noda's visit, her absence was ignored by teachers and students. Ms. Noda knew that teachers in other schools checked JSL students' attendance and contacted the families to learn the reasons for absences. She also knew that homeroom teachers usually visited homes of students who were absent from school without notification. Ms. Noda saw this as a double standard concerning Japanese and foreign students.

According to Ms. Tomita, ten years ago some language counselors had visited the school, but during her tenure, she had not been involved with foreign students and therefore did not know anything about them. She told us that because Sakura had so many students, there were many things teachers would not know if they did not care about them. She thought that some present-day teachers would not know about foreign students. Here is her comment:

With our teachers, because [foreign students] look like the Japanese [due partly to *Nikkeijin*, except a few exceptions], there would be people who do not know about them. If they really have foreign faces, it is easy to know. But if [the face] is mixed with Japanese, it is not noticeable.

In fact, Mr. Yamano, a math teacher and ninth-grade homeroom teacher, knew of only two foreign students in the ninth grade and did not know the total number of foreigners in the school. His response to our question symbolized two things. First, the attention of teachers seemed to be limited to students of the grades they taught and were responsible for in the homeroom. Second, the presence of foreign students was a peripheral matter for teachers.

These two reasons explain with which students teachers interact on a daily basis. Observation of the typical full-time teachers who had duties in their homerooms, and classes to teach, as well as club activities to supervise, showed that priority went to students in their homerooms and to club activities. If one were to rank these the following would emerge: Homeroom and club activity as either first or second responsibilities, the third position would go to subject-area teaching. The last would be the grade level assigned to teachers. Thus students falling outside these parameters were ostensibly outside the teachers' purview, and foreign students, who might not be involved in these ranked activities, would be unknown to the teachers.

The different levels of duty meant that different roles were played among teachers when one student caused a problem and teachers had to solve it. The student's homeroom teacher holds the primary responsibility to make decisions with school administrators and parents. If that teacher is unavailable for an emergency, teachers from the same grade share the responsibility, including a team leader of teachers of a specific grade, and a vice-team leader. Only if they, too, are unavailable can teachers from other grades take on the responsibility. In other words, as long as the homeroom teacher is present, other teachers cannot interfere in his or her management of the student, and it is therefore difficult for language counselors, who are seen as outsiders by the teachers, to intervene in such situations. Thus if a language barrier exists and the foreign student has a problem, it may go unnoticed, unresolved, or simply ignored.

When Ms. Noda was told that Ms. Tomita thought that JSL students were usually absent from school because of their parents' issues, Ms. Noda said that she wanted teachers to actually find out the reasons for the absences instead of just resorting to "parental matters (private matters at home)" or "cultural differences," which Ms. Noda felt were teachers' excuses.

Kojima's (2002) fixed management in teachers' guidance of differences in foreign students applies to teachers' double standard toward absences. Teachers do not care when foreign students are absent because such students are not required by law, the Constitution of Japan and the Fundamental Law of Education to finish compulsory education (MEXT, 2008a, June). The lack of law enforcement means that foreign students do not have to meet a required number of days of attendance to graduate from junior high school. Without such enforcement, absence is not a school's concern. Therefore, foreign students who disappear from school would not be managed as would be students in general. As Ms. Noda pointed out, Ms. Tomita's explanation of cultural differences or parental matters is an example of Japanese teachers' justification for the exemption from school rules for foreign students in Kojima's (2002) fixed management.

The story of one Japanese ninth-grade male truant, Mr. and Mrs. Doi's son, supported Ms. Noda's claim of a double standard. The child's success in overcoming truancy was the result of a cooperative effort involving him, Mrs. Doi, and his homeroom teachers. He had stopped going to school during the eighth grade. Looking back, Mrs. Doi reflected that the parents were not able to persuade him, but only to keep an eye on him. She worked hard with his seventh- and eighth-grade homeroom teachers to figure out what happened to him in school. Although these teachers could find no reasons for his truancy, Mrs. Doi appreciated their willingness to work with her for her son. She also knew that Mr. Yamano, his seventh-grade homeroom teacher, always talked to the boy in math class.

At Mrs. Doi's suggestion, she and her son went to a temple to meditate until he said he wanted to go back to school. It took two weeks of meditation until he finally said that he should go back to school, though it was a challenge for him to exchange his life of temporary freedom for attending school five days per week. During the transition period, his homeroom teachers advised him to come only for a club activity if he was not ready for classes, which he did.

By the time he moved to the ninth grade half a year later, he was able to attend school five days a week. Mr. Yamano, who became his homeroom teacher again, told Mrs. Doi, "Everything is all right with him." In addition to that, Mr. Yamano also took note every time the boy was absent from school, offering to give him a ride in the morning. The child's three absences during his ninth grade were because of sickness. Mrs. Doi felt that her son was finally aware that he needed to attend school unless he had a valid reason for being absent.

This story shows how closely two homeroom teachers were involved and committed to help one truant student, based not on nationality, but from the perspective that the child had different needs from regular Japanese students. Neither the homeroom teachers who would know him the best nor the parents knew what made him avoid school. However, teachers were supportive and provided special treatment to get him to come to school every day as a routine.

The key to understanding his case would be the relationship between homeroom teachers and parents, in addition to the rules of compulsory education. Parents asked for help and kept communication open with homeroom teachers. Moreover, Mr. Doi was a vice-president of the Parent-Teacher Association at that time and Mrs. Doi supported school and community events. That kind of close relationship with the school enabled teachers and parents to work together.

Conversely, one factor of ignoring foreign students' absences would be the lack of connection and communication between the school and the families due to the language barrier.

A Language Barrier

As the case of the truant boy demonstrated, the relationship between the school and parents plays a vital role in Japanese schooling, with parent-teacher conferences and homeroom teachers' yearly home visits to meet the parents. In

reality, the JSL students' parents were not necessarily proficient in Japanese so communication between homeroom teachers and foreign parents was a major problem. Teachers were concerned whether school announcements were understood by these parents. Because of the language barrier, the parent-teacher conferences were scheduled to coincide with the language counselor's visits, for translation.

Language counselors from the Board of Education played important roles in helping these kinds of communication and relational problems between teachers, JSL students and their parents. The language counselors were not multilingual and so were unable to communicate with every foreign student in his or her native language, but they supported foreign students as a whole. I observed that none of the language counselors for the Sakura school spoke Tagalog or Turkish so Filipino and Turkish students who do not become fluent in Japanese are literally on their own.

Language Counselors' Academic and Social Support

In Ms. Noda's story, the job of language counselors was to visit schools and be a bridge between teachers and JSL students/parents. They were officially the counselors for language-related matters but, in fact, counseled foreign students on all issues. They developed counseling skills through their daily jobs. In addition, they presented their experiences in JSL-related seminars for teachers and multicultural meetings for citizens.

At Sakura, one language counselor, Ms. Yamada, visited every month. She suggested that the foreign students take the Japanese Language Proficiency Test as a goal in learning Japanese and was closely involved in helping foreign students apply for and take the test. Another counselor, Ms. Noda, was the only non-Japanese language counselor. According to Ms. Tomita, "Ms. Noda is their senior in terms of living in Japan as a foreign resident. She talks about stories as the senior of foreign residents in Japan, something like caring for their hearts."

Another language counselor, Ms. Shimano, was fluent in Spanish. Pacheco, a Bolivian student whose native language was Spanish, could not even join in conversation with the foreign students, including JSL students, most of whom spoke Portuguese. So, when Ms. Shimano visited school, the child was very happy. Here is Ms. Tomita's story:

When Ms. Shimano visits the school, Pacheco talks with her in Spanish like a machine gun. As expected, his facial appearance is different. When chatting with her, his face looks bright. Of course, Pacheco can speak Japanese. But, he is not able to express the nuances of his feelings in detail. When Ms. Shimano comes, he is able to talk about it. Also, he knows that the language counselor will not scold him if he says something inappropriate. It really looks like he opens his heart and talks with her. I have heard that Pacheco is waiting for Ms. Shimano's next visit. So, I think that what she does is not necessarily language

instruction, but, so to speak, represent mental stability for him. That is quite a big deal for him.

As shown in this example, communication in one's native language plays an important role in opening up the hearts of JSL students and letting them speak up about problems they face at school. In one case, when Ms. Noda visited Sakura in December, Wakayama, a Brazilian girl enrolled in JSL instruction, mentioned that she was not getting along with her classmates. Once Ms. Noda heard the story in Portuguese she mentioned the issue to Ms. Tomita, and she told Wakayama's homeroom teacher about it. Until Ms. Noda's visit, neither Ms. Tomita nor the homeroom teacher realized bullying was happening. The child's parents came to school to discuss the matter with Ms. Tomita and the homeroom teacher. Ms. Noda translated the conversation between parents and teachers and talked about provisions.

This incident indicated that Wakayama shared her experience regarding bullying only with the language counselor. Why didn't she tell her homeroom teacher about it or go to Ms. Tomita with whom she interacted on a daily basis at school? Was it simply her lack of vocabulary to describe it in Japanese or a lack of relationship with these teachers that made her not feel safe to talk to them? At least, Wakayama said that her homeroom teacher was supportive of her in general and the bullying episode ended after the teacher brought up the issue in class. She also said she enjoyed talking with her friends during break and wanted to have more time in her classroom than in the JSL class.

Summary of Major Findings

To sum up, themes that emerged were: Teachers' perspectives on fairness of care; teachers' perspectives toward absences of the JSL and Japanese remedial students; a language barrier between teachers and JSL students and their families; and the language counselors' academic and social support for JSL students.

In the first theme, emphasis on the fairness of care showed that JSL students were treated in the same way as Japanese students, as long as JSL students' differences were manageable by teachers' guidance. Teachers' main concern was to be "fair" to Japanese students. In contrast, in the second theme, teachers' attitudes towards student absences showed differences in treatment of JSL and Japanese students for truancy due to the relationship between homeroom teachers and parents and the influence of the Constitution of Japan and the Fundamental Law of Education. Teachers are aware of Japanese schools' limitations in providing guidance to unconventional and peculiar behavior of JSL students whose education is not compulsory by these laws (MEXT, 2008a, June). The third theme clarified how the language barrier makes it difficult for JSL parents to build relationships with the homeroom teachers of their children. In the last theme, language counselors' main jobs, such as language translations, mental care for JSL students, and the role of mediator between teachers and JSL students/parents, play a vital role in filling the gap between the traditional school

system and the needs of JSL students/parents. The counselors' jobs also illuminate what new challenges the Japanese teachers and JSL students are facing in one school under the traditional school system and customs.

Framing our analysis using social reproduction theory, the data provided various examples of how Japanese education reproduces the next generation of Japanese citizens through schooling and treats foreign students as second-class citizens. Based on the assumption of homogeneous student populations, assimilation policies and provisions were used for JSL students whose differences were manageable to teachers. Assimilation policies and provisions included giving JSL students the same mid-term and final exams and the same instruction at regular classes. The example of teachers' management of the truancy case for Doi demonstrated the importance of teachers' managing the Japanese students' attendance at Sakura. The lack of attention to Ishizuka's truancy clearly showed the gap for the similar issue due to a different status based on nationality, either as a citizen or a "temporary visitor." This gap of treatment illustrates how Japanese education is provided for Japanese citizens. Teachers' major focus on the fairness to Japanese students despite recognizing different needs of JSL students also demonstrated that their attention to JSL students might be secondary and peripheral to teachers. On the contrary, language counselors who did not belong to this homogeneous school culture were able to provide necessary support services to JSL students and their families.

Conclusion

This study explored how teachers dealt with challenges of JSL students, in contrast to Japanese students in a homogeneous junior high school. The focus was to understand teachers' attitudes toward Japanese and JSL students. In addition, the study examined the role of language counselors in order to understand what kinds of services were useful to meet the needs of JSL students who tend to be marginalized in the Japanese school culture. Findings of this study were: Teachers' fairness to all students; teachers' different attitudes toward absences; a language barrier between teachers and JSL students/parents; and language counselors' supplemental support for JSL students.

No compulsory education requirement for foreign students tended to be the ultimate barrier for teachers managing foreign students. They at least tried to manage it in the same way by providing assimilation policies to foreign students. Teachers' emphasis on their fairness of care between the JSL students and Japanese remedial students was an example of the same guidance. As long as JSL students' differences were manageable by the teachers, these differences, including behavior and cultural practices, became invisible. This analysis accorded with the unification of teachers' guidance proposed by Kojima (2002).

In contrast, teachers' reactions to truancy of Japanese students and JSL students clarified how teachers could treat a similar issue differently because there is no law enforcing compulsory education for JSL students. This is exacerbated by the lack of communication between the school and foreign parents. Kojima's

(2002) fixed management in teachers' guidance of the differences of JSL students applied to teachers' contradictory attitudes toward absences.

Unlike limitations of services for foreign students in the public schools, the jobs of language counselors illuminated how to manage new needs and challenges for public schools related to foreign students. Their main jobs, such as language translation, mental care for foreign students, and the role of mediator between teachers and JSL students/parents, play a vital role in filling the gap between the traditional school system and the needs of foreign students/parents.

In fact, the need for language translation, mainly between teachers and parents of foreign students, was very high due to the lack of a common language. Teachers were concerned whether or not school announcements were understood by these parents. In providing a conversation bridge between these two parties as translators, language counselors also played an important role in helping relational problems between teachers and foreign parents. Analysis showed that a common language was the first step to building a good relationship between two parties. Without it, how do both parties, teachers and foreign parents, communicate and relate in order to educate foreign students? There are many tasks to be conducted by language counselors who have the skill to translate, and guide people to relate to each other.

The case of Wakayama who shared her experiences of being bullied only with Ms. Noda also illuminated the importance of giving JSL students a chance to communicate with language counselors in their native language. Her example showed that some JSL students open their hearts more to language counselors than to their homeroom teachers or the JSL teacher who interacted with them on a daily basis at school. Ms. Tomita confirmed this point when she told us about Pacheco's facial expressions and gestures when he spoke with Ms. Shimano in Spanish. Communication in their native language itself was a great part of counseling services that the language counselor provided for foreign students.

Despite various new challenges brought by JSL students, Ms. Noda considers these challenges in a positive light. The growing enrollment of JSL students in Japanese schools will work to transform the conventional homogeneous school system. The presence of JSL students makes teachers realize diverse ways of dealing with students' problems beyond their own experiences and imagination. She believes that other options for handling issues would be beneficial not only to JSL students, but also to others who need extra help from teachers, including remedial students, students with special needs, and truants.

The challenges brought by JSL students might be a wake-up call that the homogeneous school system based, on the assimilation policy, is under pressure due to growing numbers of immigrant students in rural schools. They are at high risk of failing under this system since they do not fit in the unspoken and unwritten ways of behaving and speaking within this school culture. Thus, the basic premise of reproducing the next generation of Japanese citizens through education would also create foreign residents who might not acquire basic literacy in Japanese, math, and science in schools to survive in their host country. This is not just an issue of Japan, but all host countries. The host countries are pressed to re-define the beneficiary of education—their own citizens or beyond.

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You Can't Blame This One on the Schools: Constructing Columbine and Justifying Organizational Inertia¹

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In the months and years following the tragic shootings at Columbine High School, throughout the U.S. there was much hand wringing and questioning: "Could this happen in our school?" While the real risks are minimal, overwhelming public opinion seems to indicate that the answer to this question is "yes." Consequently, attention has been sharply focused on how to prevent such tragedies in local schools. Following the lead set by President Clinton and the U.S. Department of Education, there was a proliferation of "town hall" style meetings in which school officials and community members discuss and attempt to work out strategies to prevent violence in their schools.

These local discussions of violence in school took place in the context of a larger national discourse. Causes and solutions for school violence were debated by the administration, in the Congress, and in state legislatures. The news media not only devoted significant "air-time" to covering the events at Columbine, but also discussions of the causes and the means to prevent such incidents took place on such programs as *Nightline*, the "Sunday morning talk shows," afternoon talk shows, and televangelists' sermons. In short, this national discussion was so pervasive, there was no escaping it.

Since the tragedy occurred, the images of the students being evacuated from Columbine High School, with the yearbook pictures of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris superimposed on them, have been used extensively by the media when presenting stories or reports on problems of school violence in the U.S. Arguably, popular media more often depicts African-Americans and Latinos, especially boys and men, as violent (see for example, Giroux, 2000). Additionally, not only has violence long been a tragic part of life in urban schools (Spina, 2000; Kellner, 2008), African-American and Latino students (especially boys) are more likely to be punished – including suspended and expelled – not only for breaking school rules, but also under *zero tolerance* policies (Spina, 2000; Akom, 2001; Casella, 2001; Noguera, 2003; Meiners, 2007; Kellner, 2008). However, what has bewildered the public about the Columbine shooting is that, unlike the African-American students in Larson's study (1997), Eric and Dylan were *native sons* of

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the *Land of Oz*. As Dorn (2001) writes:

The Columbine school shooting tragedy expanded the previous national, racially coded pandemonium about youth violence. To some extent the criminalization of children was qualitatively transformed, temporarily recasting the examination of youth violence into white, upper-middle-class discourse on alienation and isolation. School shootings became a trope – an inspiration for politicians, funding streams, educational abdication, and law enforcement expansion. (p. 89)

Eric and Dylan, because they were white, male and middle-class, as well as being comfortably situated in a “safe” suburban school, were expected to accept the “natural” order of society and embrace their position in it. However, they struck at not only one of the core institutions—schools—in an extremely violent manner, but by taking their own lives in the end, they refused to take their assigned position in it. In this way then, the tragedy at Columbine High School has become the symbol of, and Eric and Dylan have become the *poster children* for all that is wrong with education and youth in U.S. society.

In the 10 years since the tragedy at Columbine, there have been several books published by scholars and journalists (see for example, Cullen, 2009; Lebrun, 2009; Larkin, 2007). Additionally, Columbine-like shootings have been depicted as plot lines in such television drama as *Law & Order*, *Numb3rs*, and *One Treehill*. Thus, the tragic events of Columbine still disturb and concern not only educators and law enforcement, but also the general public.

While scholarly authors such as Lebrun (2009) and Larkin (2007) attempt to explain the complexity of the event (including school-based reasons for it), Cullen (2009), a journalist, views the event as the psychopathic actions of Dylan and Eric. This view of disturbed-shooter is also played out in the television dramas. In short, the dominant discourse fosters the constructs of bad (individual) kids in good schools.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the discourse of a *town hall* meeting, which took place in the October following the Columbine tragedy in response to the call for such meetings by then President Clinton. It examines how the *problem* of school violence in general, and the Columbine shootings in specific, was constructed. It also examines the solutions offered by the panel of *experts* that was assembled. In doing so, the possibility for organizational change will be explored.

The discourse of this town-hall meeting, and others like it, not only emerged from the macro-discourse of the time, they also directed future discourse through the legitimation of particular constructs of school, students, and violence, as well as the disproportionate focus of strategies on containing and controlling

children in schools. Thus, if one wishes to understand why strategies such as lock-downs, swat-team drills are privileged, while not questioning school organizational arrangements, it is useful to examine the discourse from which they emerged.

Theoretical Perspectives and Method

The approach this paper takes is grounded in critical theory and analysis. Of particular interest will be the issue of power relationships and dominance within the school organization. Thus, the paper will draw from Foucault's (1972) work on power/knowledge, Habermas's (1987) theories of communicative action, Mumby's (1988) work on organizational discourse, power and ideology, and Flyvbjerg's (1998) discussion on rationality and power in public policy decision making. Additionally, this paper will draw on the analysis of micro-discourse of organizations within the context of macro-discourses of politics presented in the media (Keenoy, Oswick & Grant, 1997; Phillips & Hardy, 1997; Hardy & Phillips, 1999).

The micro-discourse data here was gathered by participant observation (Merriam, 1988; Fetterman, 1989) at one particular town hall meeting. The macro-discourse data was gathered from newspaper articles on both the events at Columbine High School, as well as on school violence in general. These data will then be analyzed through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Furlough & Wodak, 1997; Morrow, 1994). Discourse here:

is an integration of sentences that produces a global meaning that is more than that contained in the sentences viewed independently. There are various kinds of discourses, and each kind links the sentences that compose it according to distinct patterns (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 31).

Gee (1999) distinguishes between big "D" Discourse and little "d" discourse. Big "D" discourses are the "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting, in the 'right' places and at the 'right' times with the 'right' objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network')" (p. 17). He defines little "d" discourse as "language-in-use or stretches of languages" (p. 17). Here then, the little "d" discourse of a particular townhall meeting will be examined within the context of the big "D" discourse of school shootings and violence, in particular the discourse of the Columbine school shooting. This will be done through critical discourse analysis (CDA).

CDA has two defining traits. "[F]irst, interpretations of meaning are

sensitized to detecting forms of distorted communication linked to power and strategic (or manipulative) forms of interaction; second, discourses eventually are recontextualized with reference to the historical social relations through which they are constituted” (Morrow, 1994, p. 262). Thus, CDA is concerned with the uncovering of the power relationships and ideologies that both constitute and are constituted by the discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

The Forum

In October 1999, a local chapter of the *American Association of University Women* (AAUW) sponsored a forum (Forum) on youth violence, which had an emphasis on violence in schools. The Forum was held in a large all-purpose room on the campus of the local community college. Two sections of seating with a center aisle were arranged for the audience. At the top of the room were four long tables draped with white cloths and pots of autumn flowers arranged in front of them. These tables not only served as seating for the panel of experts, but also acted as a barrier between them and the members of the audience, adding significantly to the formal and serious tone of the Forum.

The panel was made up of representatives from three of the area's school districts, and two members of the clergy. The school staff members included four guidance counselors (one of whom also served as his district's safe and drug-free school coordinator), one elementary teacher, one principal, and two law enforcement officers who were assigned full time to two of the districts' high schools as "deans of students." The clergy included the Rabbi of the local Synagogue, and a Lutheran Minister, who is also the director of the youth group in his parish. The final member of the panel was a representative of the State education department.

Five of the school staff members were from the same school district (District 1). This group included the principal, two guidance counselors from the district's middle school, the safe and drug-free school coordinator, and one of the law enforcement officers. This school district has the least number of students attending it. However, it has the most diverse student population, in terms of race and socio-economic status, of the three districts represented. While District 1 is located in a small town, it is considered an “urban” district (read, children from minority groups attended its schools). Additionally, the community college, where the forum was held, is located within this district's catchment area. However, it should be noted that the other two school districts are only a few miles from the community college.

One school district (District 2) had two staff members on the panel; a first grade teacher, and the law enforcement officer. District 2 has a larger and less

diverse, both racially and socio-economically, student population than that of District 1. The catchment area of this district is suburban.

The final school district (District 3) was represented only by a guidance counselor. This is the largest of the three districts, with a catchment area that includes a small town (although smaller than that of District 1), suburban and rural areas. While the student population is mostly white, the socio-economic status of the households includes poor rural, working class, and suburban middle-income families.

Finally, of the 11 members of the panel, there were 6 men and 5 women. The men included the two clergy, two law enforcement officers, the principal, and one guidance counselor who was the safe and drug-free school coordinator. The women included the representative from the state department of education, the first grade teacher, and three guidance counselors.

The Discourse

During the formal presentations of the panelists and the question/answer period that followed, two "competing discourses" (Watson, 1994, p. 114) emerged.² The primary discourse was that of school safety and security. The safe and drug-free schools coordinator emphasized the need to develop a comprehensive safe school plan. This plan should include procedures for ensuring safety and security both inside and outside of school. Such safe school plans include the use of metal detectors and "lock downs" when drug and bomb sniffing dogs are brought in to check lockers and students. The comprehensive safe schools plan for District 1 also included the SWAT team drill held at the high school prior to the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year. The purpose of this drill was to prepare school officials and law enforcement agencies *before* the occurrence of a Columbine like event. It was noted that the implementation of these plans depends on sufficient staff in the schools. Additionally, according to this discourse, schools are unsafe because of the children in them. Thus, it is important to identify and carefully watch children who are potentially violent to eliminate fear in the school. Finally, such comprehensive safe school plans should foster a school climate in which children feel safe and secure.

This assumption that it is the children that make schools unsafe, therefore the first order of business is to sure up security was echoed by the middle school principal of District 1. The middle school takes all the children from the Districts'

² Competing discourses offer differing interpretations, perceptions of realities, strategies, and solutions problems, which vie for legitimacy and primacy in managerial decision-making processes.

neighborhood based elementary schools. Thus, it is the first experience that children have attending school with children from other sections of the district. For many, according to the principal, it is their first real experience with diversity. Additionally, he continued, as this is a period of transition and change (middle school children are classified as adolescent), conflict is to be expected. This is especially true if a particular child is perceived as *different*. Such children are seen as *at risk* by the school staff.

Given the “impulsive” nature of middle school children, the principal stated that the primary goal was to make schools a safe haven for children. Only when that goal has been accomplished can the staff begin look at programs like conflict resolution, curricular issues, and making the school a caring environment for the students.

The dean of students (police officer) assigned to District 1 also spoke of the need to maintain security in schools. He stated that his role ranges from the duties of a vice principal to that of a law enforcement officer. As a law enforcement officer it is his job to enforce the *zero tolerance* policy for fighting. If a fight should take place, not only are *all* the students involved suspended, but they also receive citations from and are taken by the dean of students to a local magistrate to be sentenced to community service as punishment. Thus, because of the flexible role of the dean of students, students receive both a school (suspension) and criminal (community service) punishment for fighting. Further, as the *zero tolerance* policy includes all those who were fighting, regardless of mitigating circumstances, everyone is equally punished.

Finally, the Rabbi, before making his formal presentation, offered an interesting observation regarding the presence of police officers as deans of students in the school districts. He noted that the continual presence of a police officer in the schools serves as a constant reminder of the *alternative* to good behavior to the students. That is, if students did not behave and comply with school rules, the criminal justice system awaits them. In this way then, the Rabbi called attention to the role of the dean of students as panopticon.

The primary discourse of the Forum was the need to establish and maintain security in schools. This is to be accomplished through various surveillance methods, as well as through *zero tolerance* policies, which bring swift and indiscriminate retribution. The secondary discourse focused on *skills building* in individual or small groups of children. At the individual level, the guidance counselor from District 3 spoke of working with children to improve their behavior through behavior modification. One of the middle school guidance counselors from District 1 spoke of student assessment programs, which help individual students and their families to get counseling services outside of the school.

However, most of this discourse centered on working with groups of

children. The major emphasis here was the establishment of *conflict resolution* programs. The guidance counselor from District 3 spoke of her work with elementary level children. Here the thrust was on teaching children the skills to "fight fair." These included listening skills, which focused on teaching children to listen to what the other child was saying. Adequate listening skills were purported to help children to avoid getting angry which leads to fighting. "Fighting fair" also included teaching children not to use inflammatory language, which could quickly lead to escalation into a physical fight. These skills were taught through role-playing activities.

The first grade teacher from District 2 spoke of the importance of caring and character education as a means of preventing violence in the elementary schools. She stated that such things are not taught in the home, thus it becomes the job of the schools to teach character and caring. Particular social skills are chosen at the beginning of the year and the children work on developing those skills during the course of the school year. Additionally, this educational program emphasizes relationship building between older and younger students. Students from the high school come to the elementary school to work on projects with the children.

One of the middle school guidance counselors from District 1 spoke of the *Choices* program instituted there. This program is to help children understand the consequences of underage drinking. The activities in this program include having a police officer give talks, showing videos to scare the kids, and playing games, all of which were designed to teach children the dangers of alcohol consumption before the age of 21.

The other District 1 middle school guidance counselor spoke of the *Cycle Jumpin* program in which a counselor from a local center comes in each day to work with children. The thrust of this program is to get children to discuss their feelings and help them resolve various conflicts. Additionally, the District 1 middle school principal spoke of the importance of the team approach in this school. This approach not only helped foster a sense of community in the school, but also allowed teachers to get to know the students, which in turn helps them spot trouble before it goes too far.

At the high school level the emphasis is on peer-mediation, or letting the students sort out the conflicts on their own. In this program students volunteer (or are volunteered) to become *peer-mediators*. They attend a 3-day training program to prepare them for their mediation duties. It is then the job of these *peer-mediators* to help fellow students work through a conflict at the *verbal stage* and avoid a physical fight. The supervision of these programs is done by the deans of students (the police officers) in both District 1 and 2. The dean of students in District 2 stated that they have had a 100% success rate in this program. When asked if the problems were really solved, or were the resolutions for the parties to

avoid one another, he stated that he did not know.

There was an interesting difference in the two programs. In District 2 the dean of students stated that he recruited "Joe average kids." This was done to ensure that the *peer-mediators* were representative of the entire student body. In District 1 high profile students such as honor students, basketball players, cheerleaders, and chorus students were chosen to be *peer-mediators*. The dean of students did not give reasons for this choice.

The secondary discourse of the Forum then was one of moderating the behavior of children. This was accomplished through some individual intervention, but mostly through group activities. Further, it would seem from this discussion and the programs outlined, that real intervention could only be made at the elementary and middle school levels. At the high school level the preferred strategies were letting the students sort themselves out, and if that failed letting a magistrate sort them out.

These competing discourses "are two ways of looking at the world, two frames of reference, two orientations towards action. They are both ways of talking about, thinking about and acting towards" (Watson, 1994, p. 114) the students, conflicts and the school environment. Thus:

[i]n a sense, two scripts which are available to players on the managerial stage.... They mix descriptions of perceived realities, how things are, with notions of how things *ought* to be.... These discourses, like all human language, are tools, which the managers use not just to communicate with each other and pursue personal projects, but also to make sense of the world around them. (Watson, 1994, p. 117)

Further, these scripts become more revealing when one looks at how and when they are employed and by whom.

The primary discourse of security was employed directly by District 1's safe and drug-free schools coordinator, middle school principal and dean of students. There are two points of interest here. First, they function at an administrative (managerial) or quasi-administrative level. That is, to these "archetypal administrators rules and policies provide action-guiding principles: How people ought to behave is defined in the rules and policies of the organization. What *ought to be*, as well as *what counts as problems*, is embedded in the rules and protections of the bureaucratic system" (Larson, 1997, p. 323). Thus, it would seem that they are viewing the issues of violence through a managerialist lens, with its emphasis on control. Consequently, their first reaction is to contain the problem and then (perhaps, that is if another crisis does not emerge) seek long-range solutions. Second, as stated earlier, District 1 has the most racially, ethnically and socio-economically diverse student body of the three

districts represented at the Forum. Additionally, it is considered an “urban” school district. Larson (1997) posits that good schools “are often seen as places where conflict of any kind is absent or disposed of quickly. These expectations often encourage administrators to oversimplify complex social, racial, and political problems” (p. 325). Consequently, “they reach for technical solutions.... However, these responses often fail to surface the causes and address the complexities of deeply rooted social problems within schools” (p. 325). Further, one cannot help but wonder how much the politics and fear of the *other* influences their assessment of the potential for violence in their schools (see MacLeod, 1987; Miller, 1996; Solomos, 1988; Weis, 1988).

The guidance counselors primarily deployed the secondary discourse of skills building. On one level, it is easy to explain, as it is the job of the guidance counselors to intervene at the individual level. Therefore, their training and experience teaches them to focus on individual and small group dynamics. However, understanding the role of guidance counselors in the school organization sheds light on this discourse.

Guidance counselors are specialized staff members in the school organization. While they may be asked for their *expert* opinions, and are portrayed as important members of the *administrative team*, they are in fact marginal to the real power structure in any school organization. Thus, the discourse of intervention at the individual or small group level is often relegated to pure lip service. The secondary nature of this discourse is further illustrated by the fact that the guidance counselors themselves state that until schools are safe and secure, they cannot introduce their interventions.

What's the Matter With Kids Today?

A View From the Adults

What emerges from these two discourses is that the problem of violence in schools lies with the children. The reason offered for this was bad parenting.

In her formal presentation, the first grade teacher stated that children were no longer being given character and caring education in the home. Therefore, it has become the job of the schools to do so. In the informal question/answer period, the group consensus was that this was due to the increase in single family and dysfunctional households, as well as general bad parenting. Parents were not teaching their children proper behavior and therefore there is an inherent conflict between home rules and values and those at school. The dean of students from District 2 stated that parents are not teaching their children to respect authority, therefore when they come to school they are defiant and show no fear. These

administrators' and counselors' perception of reality is embedded in the rules and policies of the bureaucratic organizational arrangement of schools (Larson, 1997). However, Noguera (2003) suggests that the "repeated violations suggest that the students understand completely that the social contract underlying their education has been broken. By their actions it appears they have decided to make the lives of adults and other students miserable as their way of obtaining retribution for a failed education" (p. 344).

Several solutions were offered to counter these problems. The first, and "most important" solution offered by the educators on the panel was a shift in emphasis from drugs and alcohol awareness to violence awareness. It was concluded that school staff needed to identify *problem* students before they committed a violent act. Additionally, as many parents do not have insurance to cover counseling services, more counselors are needed in the schools to work with these problem children. Second, school officials need to *empower* students to keep schools safe. This should begin in the elementary grades by teaching children the importance of obeying school rules and good behavior. The third solution offered was the involvement of community members. Adults should volunteer to come into the schools as mentors and role models for children, to make up for the bad parenting they are getting at home. Finally, schools and communities should establish parenting programs to teach the needed skills to *empower* people to be *good parents*.

This need to counteract the lack of proper home life was echoed by the Lutheran Minister on the panel. In his work with youth groups in his congregation, the Minister explained how he tries to form a sense of community. Additionally, he taught children the importance of and how to forgive to maintain community. He also reminded them that God not only loves them, but also is always watching. The Minister also spoke of the need to teach not only awareness but also tolerance of differences. He did this through experiential exercises.

The Rabbi took up this issue of differences and teaching tolerance, and offered a different way of thinking about it. He observed that those very things, which make us unique, are also those things that can provoke difficulties. Additionally, we (educators) teach tolerance, but in fact do not want to be merely tolerated. Tolerance is offered as a means of getting something desired -- in the case here difference is tolerated as a means of preventing violence. Respect, however, is an acceptance of a person for who/what s/he is. What needed to be taught then, in the Rabbi's view, was respect not tolerance.

While the Rabbi did attempt to take the discussion to this level of teaching mutual respect, the discourse still centered on teaching students to tolerate one another and respect authority figures. Salient to this study, however, is that the Rabbi, like the other panelists focused on the *student problem*. The prevailing opinion was that the children were the problem, and therefore attention should be

focused on fixing them.

A View From the Students

Conspicuous by its absence was the view of students in the Forum. Students were not invited to participate as panelists or audience members. Hence, students' experiences and behaviors are interpreted by adults, through the filters of adult experiences and values (Thorne, 1987). Also absent from the discourse of the Forum was any discussion of the motives, actions or experiences of Dylan and Eric.

The absence of Dylan and Eric's voices from the discourse was not because they were silent. Rather, they were available if sought. Eric certainly was vocal on his website and in his diaries. Excerpts from these sources were widely reported in the media, and several *Denver Post* articles containing them are still available on that newspaper's web site. Additionally, articles including eyewitness accounts of the shootings, and profiles of Dylan and Eric can still be found on the *Denver Post* web site.

The stories profiling Dylan and Eric (Briggs & Blevins, 1999; Hughes, 1999; Simpson, Callahan, & Lowe, 1999) spoke of bright, yet quiet boys who were viewed as marginal by the student body, as well as the teachers. One of Eric's teachers remarked after the shooting: "I just remember him as the kid in the corner with his hand up all the time" (Briggs & Blevins, 1999). They were constantly bullied by the athletes, even in the presence of teachers. While they were bright, and capable in several subjects, they were not honor students, thus academically, athletically, and socially they did not live up to the standards that would allow them to become more integrated with the school community. This only deepened their frustration and sense of alienation.

Their disaffection was noted by Eric on the "mission logs" section of his website.

We [Eric and Dylan] are more of a gang. We plan out and execute missions. Anyone pisses us off, we do a little deed to their house. We have many enemies in our school, therefore, we make many missions (Briggs & Blevins, 1999).

These *missions* were petty pranks such as wrapping neighbors' trees with toilet paper, or setting off firecrackers on doorsteps (Briggs & Blevins, 1999). Additionally, classmates spoke of Dylan's angry outbursts, as well as his and Eric's exchanges of Nazi salutes. Thus, Eric and Dylan's *voiced* their anger and frustration; the problem was that no one paid attention.

You Can't Blame This One on the Schools

During the Forum, the voices of Eric, Dylan or any other student were absent. This, however, was consistent with the macro-discourse that took place after the tragedy at Columbine. The conversation of the macro-discourse quickly turned to how Eric and Dylan got the guns and learned to make pipe bombs. Once again talk of gun control legislation and limiting children's Internet access dominated and did not allow for the possibility of alternative discourses.

Salient to this study, however, is the lack of conversation about the *targets* chosen by Dylan and Eric. Dressed in black trench coats, wearing masks, and armed with guns and bombs, Dylan and Eric entered Columbine High School on the morning of 20 April. They specifically targeted athletes. Eyewitnesses reported that they made statements like: "All the jocks stand up. We are going to kill you," and "It's revenge time on jocks for making us outcasts" (Obmascik, 1999). Another eyewitness stated, "They yelled, 'This is revenge.' They asked people if they were jocks. If they were wearing a sports hat, they would shoot them" (Obmascik, 1999).

Kellner (2008) argues that perceiving that they are losing their position of dominance, some white men "defend their own prerogatives with... violent expressions of hypermasculinity" (p. 91). Further, his "studies lead [him] to the conclusion that male rage is part of significant numbers of acts of domestic terrorism and school shootings" (p.121). Eric and Dylan had long been relegated to the "outcast student" group (Larkin, 2007). Continually harassed by members of the "in crowd"—especially the "jocks"—and ignored and avoided by the "inbetweeners" (the vast majority of students in the middle level of student hierarchy), this small group of students was indeed powerless in the school organization. Additionally, by *appearing* to be unaware of this harassment, or their lack of intervention if they were, teachers and administrators sent a clear message to the outcast student group that either their authority was not strong enough to stop this behavior, or worse, they would not invoke that authority to protect these powerless students. Consequently, outcast student groups not only are powerless to protect themselves, they have no recourse or refuge in the school organization. Kellner (2008) asserts that Eric and Dylan "[m]aking up for their inability to play out the normative macho male role, the two compensated through excessive play of ultraviolent games of Doom and Quake..., and amassed an arsenal of guns and bombs, immersing themselves in paramilitary culture" (p. 121). For Kellner then, Eric and Dylan's actions were an assertion of their male identity. Kellner's conclusions offer important insights into the actions of Timothy McVeigh, Ted Kaczynski, Seung-Hui Cho, and indeed Eric and Dylan. However,

I argue that for Eric and Dylan's rage had a particular source giving them a specific target—the school organization.

In addition to seeking out athletes as victims, Dylan and Eric left 30 bombs throughout the school, clearly intending to completely destroy it. One classmate reported: "They hate our school. They hate everything about it" (Obmascik, 1999).

Dylan and Eric's target that day was the school in which they were frustrated and angry outcasts. Athletes, as icons of the school organization were also targets. In U.S. high schools, athletes are the embodiment of school values. They hold privileged positions in the school organization. Teachers and administrators are often willing to dismiss their actions, which would normally carry severe consequences, as *boyish pranks* (Green, 1999; Foley, 1990; Miracle & Rees, 1994). Thus, being bullied by athletes, especially in the plain view of teachers, Dylan and Eric were being told that they had no place at Columbine High School. It was this rejection that led them to take their revenge on the school organization.

However, this "systemic violence" (Epp & Watkinson, 1996) experienced by Dylan and Eric through the school organization, is obfuscated in the macro-discourse. In this discourse children are constructed as *threats* to adults, and therefore must be carefully watched and controlled (Ehrensals, 2003). However, schools with 1800 students (children) present many difficulties for teachers and administrators (adults) to watch and control on their own. Therefore, they allow for informal systems of control to emerge; one of which is students sorting themselves into hierarchical groups/cliques. In doing so, the students sort themselves into these roles (Milner, 2004), the roles that have actually endured across time and space, and each cohort of students learns (knows) what these roles are and how they interact with each other and the school organization (Giddens 1979; 1984). Said another way, these roles and their function are part of the structure of the school organization.

These roles have become a part of the structure of the school organization because they serve the needs of school officials (adults) (Milner, 2004) in two ways. First, these roles allow school officials to more easily control the students (Milner, 2004), and second, they help foster the hidden curriculum of schools (Giroux & Penna, 1979).

By allowing for only particular roles, and exact constructions of those roles, student behavior becomes more predictable and therefore more controllable. In fixating on class rank, the "nerds" will study, and avoid behaviors that will distract them from getting good grades. Popular girls are focused on social events and clothes. Additionally, as they demean other girls by labeling them "sluts," they ensure their own reputations through self-control and self-monitoring. Jocks will strut and be competitive in physical activities (sports and gym class).

Athletes, who are also *winners*, are focused on maintaining rank and status. This involves training and concentration. Those hoping for scholarships are less likely to engage in behavior that would endanger their “ride” to university. However, by sorting themselves into roles, the students are responsible for their actions, behaviors and relationships while performing these roles. In the macro-discourse, schools and school officials are not blamed for the “negative behaviors” of the students they educate.

These roles are also allowed to exist because they foster the hidden curriculum of school organizations. Jocks are the *ideal* gender role model for boys in the school organization (Griffin, 1993). Further, they are the embodiment of the norms values and beliefs of the school organization: discipline, deferred gratification, importance of teamwork and cooperation (Foley, 1990; Miracle & Rees, 1994). Thus, they “teach” what a good (active) leader is and the attributes that every male student should strive to attain. Popular girls also demonstrate the gendered *ideal*. They demonstrate correct consumer and reproductive behaviors (Griffin, 1997) that is they purchase consumer goods and do not engage in sexual activity. Additionally, they take on service activities (passive leadership) to support the school organization. Through the pep club, they support the boys in their athletic exploits, and through the prom and other dance committees, ensure that everyone will have a good time at the socials. Finally, they are concerned about their looks, especially in terms of being attractive to their male fellow students. Hence, they are the embodiment of the school organizations norms for girl’s gendered behavior, and what is expected (and rewarded) of good suburban middle-class corporate wives (Kenny, 2000).

The students in the in-crowd are “innovative messages” (Bernstein, 1977). They demonstrate what the students should aspire to be. They are the embodiment of the norms, values and beliefs of the school organization. In other words, they are the *icons* of those organizations. Outcast students such as Eric and Dylan are also “innovative messages.” They however, teach students what they certainly do not want to be losers, sluts, and weird. Further, these lessons are legitimated by teachers and administrators reluctance or refusal to discipline the jocks and popular girls from harassing the outcast students simply because they refuse to conform to school ideals of behavior, dress, and attitude.

Teachers and administrators allow (encourage?) students sorting themselves into hierarchical groups because it serves the school organization’s needs to control and to teach proper means of conforming to established ideals. In other words, it reproduces and reinforces the asymmetrical relationships in schools and societies, and makes the students agents of their own hegemony.

Outcast students, such as Eric and Dylan, however, openly reject these ideologies and see the hypocrisy in the values and behaviors of the in-crowd, and consequently the school organization. On April 20, 1999, Eric and Dylan did not

go to the mall or some other public place where they were sure to meet with the students who harassed them. Rather, they went to school. They planted bombs in the school, and carried out their violent plan in school. They did not target individuals, rather those who took on particular organizational roles, those who symbolized the norms, values, and beliefs of the school organization. On that day, Eric and Dylan violently attacked the school organization that devalued and dehumanized them. Additionally, by taking their own lives, they violently played their role as outcast, and refused to continue playing it. They violently committed an act of self-determination in resistance to an organization that demands self-control and self-monitoring to ensure conformity. The tragedy of Columbine was “an *effect* of the hidden curriculum in schooling” (emphasis original) (Webber, 2003, p. 190).

Discourses and Organizational Inertia

The discourse of the Forum did not include how the organizational arrangements of Columbine High School contributed to the actions of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris. More importantly, there was no reflection on the panelists' own school organizations and how they may be contributing to the disaffection of students. Rather, they blame external causes such as bad parenting, lack of respect for authority, and violent video games, TV shows and movies for the behavior of students. The reason for this lack of reflection and subsequent discourse is an absence of *codes*, and “[w]e can't refer to concepts we don't have codes for” (Perin, 1998, p. 79). The power relationships within school organizations only allow discourses that at once maintain and reinforce these relationships (Foucault, 1980). Additionally, as school organizations reinforce and reproduce power relations within society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) the macro-discourses surrounding schools must also fulfill this purpose. Thus, it is not surprising that the discourses concerning school violence, both at the macro-level and as witnessed at the Forum lead school organizations into states of inertia, rather than change.

The school officials at this town-hall meeting argued, and sincerely believed, that not only what they had done and continued to do was the right thing, but that they were also acting in the best interest of the children in their charge. I will argue that this inability to neither *see* the issues differently nor recognize the unintended consequences of their actions is a function of the social construction of children and how this *shapes* the school officials' role as teachers and administrators.

Social Construction of Children and Organizational Inertia

Children and childhood are social constructions (Jenks, 1996). Biology plays a considerable role in this social construction. That is, “the physical signs of anatomical change that accompany childhood are taken to be indicators of a social transition, so that the conflation of the realms of the ‘natural’ and the ‘social’ is perpetually reinforced” (Jenks, 1996, p.7). Jenks (1996) further argues that childhood is spoken of as a state of becoming, growing up, etc. Thus, childhood is not conceptualized as a “social practice nor as a location for the self” (p.12), rather it is about *becoming* an adult. Children then, are *adults in training*. They are not perceived in terms of who they *are*, rather who they *will become*.

Thorne (1987) posits that children are mostly invisible to society until a problem brings them to the attention of adults. When they do enter into adult consciousness it is “[a]dults [who] do the defining, using imagery that vacillates between two sometimes interrelated poles; children as a threat to adult society and children as victims of adults” (p. 89). Thus, adults construct children in adult-determined terms. I argue that the construction of children as adults-in-training and threats to adults *is* at the basis of this organizational inertia. Further, the systemic violence, which is perpetuated by this inertia, continues to make children victims of adults. However the children are blamed for their own victimhood.

The storm and stress model of youth/adolescence posited by Hall at the turn of the 20th Century continues to be the foundation of the social construction of this age-stage. During this period a certain level of rebellion is to be expected (Griffin, 1993; Lesko, 2001). However, through careful combinations of control and freedom, maturation will be achieved (Griffin, 1993, 1997). Children then, need to be socialized to take them from the child/savage/animal state described in recapitulation theory to that of rational mature adult. “Successful socialization into mature adult involve[s] the internalizations of a conflict-free set of social values and behaviours which [can] be presented as universal and ahistorical due to the biological determinism of the storm-and-stress model of adolescence” (Griffin, 1993, p. 21).

Griffin further argues that the *model* adult is based on a white, middle-class, male, athletic, and Christian construction. Youth/adolescence of color and/or the working class are viewed as deficient. These deficiencies however, are seen to be correctable through training and education. Thus, educators are charged with transitioning rebellious youth/adolescence into the adult cycle of production/reproduction/consumption, i.e. to workers, parents and consumers (Griffin, 1997). As such, children in schools “are constructed as the ‘project’ of adult work – the work of education – and children come to view themselves as the ‘object’ of this project” (Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998, p. 20).

Griffin (1993) also argues that youth/adolescence are treated “as key indicators of the state of the nation itself. [Consequently,] [t]he treatment and

management of 'youth' is expected to provide a solution to the nation's 'problems....' The young are assumed to hold the key to the nation's future; if official levels of unemployment rise or incidences of violent crime increases, this can be attributed to 'problem youth'" (p. 198). Studies of youth then, are as much about adult angst as they are about youth.

Drawing from Douglas's (1966) work, I have argued that owing to their liminal construction (being neither adult nor child) youth/adolescence are also constructed as dangerous (Ehrensals, 2003). As such, this particular age-stage is constructed as a particular threat to adults. Indeed, the middle school principal of District 1 confirmed this when he proclaimed that the reason why schools are dangerous is because of the kids in them. To him and the other school officials in the Forum kids *are* the threat/danger. Further, following from Sapienza's (1985) argument that believing is seeing, because school officials *believe* that the children are a threat, they *see* their behavior as (potentially) dangerous.

The liminal construction imposed on youth/adolescence is indeed threatening, however it is they who are threatened. Youth/adolescence are expected to "act their age" (Lesko, 2001), however adults determine that "age." That is, they are to act like children or adults depending on what adults *need* them to be in that moment. Further, "[w]hen teenagers take on forbidden adult behaviors, from having sex to breaking laws, they become monstrous. The boys who killed people in American schools in the late 1990's, for example, could only be understood as inhuman and outside of society and human relations, as criminals who were banished and punished" (Lesko, 2001, p.190).

The projection of adult angst (Griffin, 1993) is also a threat to youth/adolescence. Giroux (2009) argues that, with the emergence of neoliberal market ideologies, the United States "became increasingly more authoritarian in its role as a national (in)security state" (p.12). Further, "it became clear that the current generation of young people was no longer viewed as an important social investment or as a marker for the state of democracy and moral life of the nation" (p. 12). Thus, "[y]oung people have become a generation of suspects in [the] society" (p.12).

Physical safety and economic security then are conflated. To alleviate adults' apprehensions concerning physical safety and economic security, schools are charged with preparing children to be competitive in the (global) labor market. Additionally, schools are to institute disciplinary policies, which will at once (appear to) maintain discipline and safety, while at the same time preparing children to accept authority as normal and natural. "When zero tolerance is observed in the trajectory or inertial of traditional public school organization and disciplinary objectives, it is a quite rational, though obviously not necessarily effective, approach to school violence" (Robbins, 2008, 37). Further, "zero tolerance reinforces the hierarchy of power endemic to the predominant model of

school governance” (p. 37). Robbins additionally asserts that “[z]ero tolerance is another powerful form of top-down corporate authority in public schools, not simply because it mimics that model of organization, but because public school organization and objectives are no longer systemically checked by democratic ideals, discourses, or practices” (p. 41).

Robbins (2008) argues that disciplinary practices such as zero tolerance together with neoliberal market ideologies and the discourse of global competition, reintroduce social Darwinism in schools. However, I would argue that while these have exacerbated it, social Darwinism has long been kept alive through the hierarchical clique system, which reinforces the white, middle-class, athletic, Christian, male norm posited by Griffin (1993). There exists in schools “chains of reasoning in which competition, sports, standards, and hypermasculinity are intertwined and valued, and within a school logic of dominance and absence of compassion for ‘losers,’ student-to-student harassments are simultaneously created and tolerated” (Lesko, 2001, p. 180). However, Lesko (2001) continues, when “the system erupts in public (school shootings, fights, and harassment) or private (eating disorders or self-cutting) violence, the system can only blame isolated individuals, promise to be more watchful for ‘early warning signs,’ or hire anger management experts. The system appears unwilling to examine itself” (180).

The final, and arguably most important, component is the construction of children as “other.” This classification as “other” not only imposes a discourse of inferiority, when evoked along with the construct of *child-as-threat*, children, especially youth/adolescence become *reprehensible other*. They become “bare-life” that is “a life unfit for life, unworthy of being lived” (Giroux, 2009, p. 170). Giroux (2009) further states that “[t]he biopolitics of neoliberalism as an instance of ‘bare life’ is not only coming more and more to the foreground but is also restructuring the terrain of everyday life for vast numbers of people” (172). This is certainly the case for those children who cannot live up to the constructed “norms” of masculinity and femininity.

Eric and Dylan then, were this *bare life*. Consequently, they were bullied by their peers and ignored by the adults. They were alone and vulnerable in a system, which deemed their lives as unfit to live. In striking back they were monsters, unworthy of pity and blamed for their outcast state. After all, they had a choice. They could have not acted weird, worked out, got good at sports, and gone to church – in short they could have tried to be “normal.” However, they violently chose to reject the norms of white, middle-class, Christian, suburban America. Further, this violent rejection by Eric and Dylan is seen as legitimating the discourse of fear and increased surveillance of minority children, especially boys. For if white, middle-class boys rejected these norms in such a violent manner, then schools whose populations include African-American and Latino boys need

to be hyper-vigilant, as they are constructed as an even greater threat (Giroux, 2009; Lesko, 2001; Robbins, 2008).

Thus, the solution offered to prevent school violence is to disproportionately increase the control of children, or said another way, to do more of the same. There is, however an inherent contradiction in this focus on control (McNeil, 1986). The organizational goals of school administrators are in conflict with the needs of students. School administrators need to demonstrate that their schools are effective, cost efficient, and orderly, especially in a political environment that is increasingly critical of public schools. However, the high stakes testing, large school houses, and increased surveillance and control of student behavior required to demonstrate achievement of these goals also have unintended consequences. They not only increase student stress, but salient to this paper, also increase the alienation of those students who believe that they cannot live up to the expectations set by these goals. Rather than interpreting the tragic actions of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris as the wanton act of two rogue students acting out a video game, those who are engaged in the discourses concerning violence in schools should take a closer look at who and what their intended victims and targets were. Dylan and Eric were striking at the symbols and ideals of a school organization in which they felt alienated, alone and devalued.

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Using Visual Culture, Socially Minded Projects, and Student Driven Courses to Support Democracy¹

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The mission of public schools within our society is to influence the growth and development of youth. This mission is accomplished through a variety of methods, which to a greater and lesser extent support the democratic foundations of our society and mirror accepted dominant ideologies. However, in some instances, the components that support democracy, such as debate, deliberation and listening, are viewed as peripheral or provocative to a portion of our culture. How students and citizens act upon this dissent directly influences the collective democratic experiences of our nation. When rigid, aggressive or even violent stances are taken throughout our society, schools must uphold the serious task of providing students with the proper experiences necessary to support future democratic and societal interactions.

The roles of schools encompass three forms of learning throughout our educational system. Students receive an education geared toward future employment and educational opportunities in academic subjects. Socialization is also a form of education, which instruct students on conduct that is valued by our society. As Spring (2008) asserts, students are historically taught social norms involving food, cleanliness, and proper behavior. The educational act No Child Left Behind encourages students to develop into caring, fair, respectful, responsible, and trustworthy students. By socially educating students in these areas, students will become generally adept at interactions within American society.

While academic and social education are important to student's success within the culture of the United States, education of the democratic process, thought and participation is paramount not only to the success of the student, but also our society at large. The importance of the education of democratic principles is evident in the writings of John Dewey (see Bernstein, 2000) and Horace Mann (1848). Both writers maintain that without education, citizens will be unfamiliar with the process and application of democracy. Citizens without a firm grasp of democratic concepts will resort to violent and unproductive means to influence the political process. Likewise, Mann stresses that citizens unfamiliar with the workings of our democracy would be unable to properly choose astute politicians, and instead elect officials for their auxiliary associations or passion. These politicians may be inept to lead the country. Therefore, as Dewey notes, citizens should be educated in the not only the workings of democratic processes, but also in the ways of active participation in the means and communication that support democratic involvement.

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Through engaging students in debate and deliberation as well as communicating the importance of listening, emotions and reflection, students will become familiar with the necessities of public talk within a democratic society (Barber, 1989). Student involvement in the process and action of public talk, or the talk of democracy, creates a basis for their lives as future citizens within a democratic country. Similarly, early experience in public communication allows students to understand the complexities of the individual and collective natures needed to support strong democracy. Therefore, without the experience of engaging in public talk at the elementary and secondary levels, students would be hard pressed to practice the type of communication necessary to support democracy and elect efficient leaders.

Equally important is the necessity for and experience with public talk outside of the educational environment. As more and more private and commercial spaces surpass the amount of public spaces, the community talk that is necessary to support democracy lessens. This can be witnessed in The Disney Corporation's aggressive copyright and image litigation against any author or individual who offers a critique of the Disney enterprise (Giroux, 1999). Similarly, the discussion, debate and compromise essential to support democracy is seen as suspect and even broadcast as anti-democratic when an individual's position on an issue differs from a group's stance, such as the retaliation against Bart Stupak in the form of threats and hate mail from both right and left wing citizens in response to his vote on the federal healthcare legislation (Rudin, 2010). Therefore, public talk is devalued and the processes of democracy are distorted within this current environment.

Similarly, public talk, discussion, and deliberation are also being challenged within educational venues, where teachers and students may feel bullied to support a certain issue, such as war (Noguera, 2006). In this instance, teachers and students are deterred from making arguments against military policy. However, these contentions and explanations of the war not only would help students to more readily understand the complex nature of our involvement within the Middle East, but would also strengthen the students' understanding of the mechanics of our democratic system. By valuing public talk and others' opinions, schools can create an environment that engages students in active discussion about key issues that pertain to their lives and communities. This will provide an enriching education to students, as opposed to providing an education with a one-sided focus controlled through censorship.

Likewise, the focus of socialization within schools also excludes thoughts and concepts that are not aligned with the dominant belief systems of the school, which both creates an under-represented population and also dissuades opposition of the status quo (Noguera, 2006). For instance, teachers and students in this environment who may oppose the war are ostracized and asked to hush their views and opinions. The quelling of disagreement and undisputed support of popular ideologies takes away from democratic learning because it does not support the talk, reflection, and insight on present and past experiences necessary for teachers and students to make rational, democratic decisions. Therefore, the

concepts of active democratic participation should be top priority for schools through support of discussion, reflection, and listening by students and faculty.

Specifically, engagement in visual media culture, socially and ethically minded projects, and student driven coursework would allow students to develop the skills for democratic and community participation. To more readily incorporate experiences of discussion, debate and reflection into the school environment, educators should thoughtfully and analytically consider the curriculum and concepts they are portraying within the classroom. A mode of study within art education, called visual culture education (Anderson, 2004), seeks to enhance student understanding of the effect visual media has on student lives as well as to promote the abilities necessary to support a democratic society, such as discussion, critical thinking and a respect for multiple viewpoints. Similarly, the study of visual culture supports dialogue that promotes conversations of ethics and social engagement within the student's community, which can be used by the student to engage in discussions and actions on pertinent issues, such as crime, race, or homelessness, that affect the community of the student. Therefore, the discourse of visual culture education seeks to advance the concepts of democratic and community engagement through a variety of ways and means focusing on talk and participation from the student.

Studies in visual culture allow students to break the silence of dominant ideologies and share with each other diverse opinions and critiques of their worlds (Heise, 2004). Analyzing images through historical, cultural, social, and consumer contexts allows students to see the power relations among groups and the interrelations of multiple cultures. This experience supports the deliberation and understanding of the democratic process and the ability to create and support an informed interpretation. Consequently, integrating concepts of visual culture into education assists students in developing the essential abilities that support democracy, such as debate, discussion, listening, critical thinking, and a sensitivity to multiple perspectives in light of a society and school system that lessens the importance of these skills.

One response to devaluing of public talk is to create specific avenues for this talk to safely exist. Within art discourse, artists who work through socially engaged art practices nurture democratic and collective discussion. Artists who carry out socially minded art seek to engage viewers in dialogue and ethical communication to further social and political activism as well as affirm our "interconnectedness and relationality as human beings," (Meban, 2009). In 2005, Julie Fiala and Claire Blundell Jones placed several red couches in the Hype Park area of Leeds to engage residents in dialogue concerning crime and safety. The project, titled *Lounging on Red Couches*, created a free, public space where residents could step outside of their usual, passive modes of communication to connect and discuss in creative and democratic debate and deliberation.

Learning projects that encourage community interaction and focus on pertinent issues provide students with the opportunity to create their own arena for public talk where they can also guide the community discussions. Students who engage in these projects develop an understanding of social and ethical concerns within the community as well as an appreciation for the multiple views and ideas

expressed over the course of the project. Likewise, the process of creating and executing the discussion imparts a sense of the action necessary to contribute to democracy. Participation in learning activities outside the classroom give the students a sense of relation to the community as well as a concept of what active democracy entails.

Teachers and students could become involved in projects that seek to socially create discourse about issues within the community, which would not only engage students, but also create an avenue for the public talk experience necessary for supporting future democratic encounters. To achieve these ends, students should also be active in the formulation of their own school experiences. Student driven courses provide students with an inclusive environment where they can make connections to their lives and communities as well as find a sense of purpose and responsibility, especially if the course encourages the student to engage in the wider community through projects and communications (Andrews, 2005). Student driven coursework requires responsibility and engagement by the student because he or she is accountable for the work produced, the thinking behind the project, and any connections to community organizations that would support the project.

Therefore, to promote the abilities necessary to support democracy, schools should uphold the venues of debate and deliberation. Encouraging these behaviors within students is paramount within our current society because of the pressure to suppress dissent by commercial and private interests as well as rigid organizations. To support the skills of democracy students should be using critical thinking and discussion skills in their examination of visual culture, socially and ethically minded community projects, and student driven courses. These three strategies will not only support the skills of active democratic participation, such as discussion, debate, deliberation, critical thinking and a respect for multiple perspectives, but will also engage students in the cultures and communities in which they exist, promoting them to make choices and take personal initiative based on their dual concept of themselves as an individual and as a community member. Educating students on the skills to participate in a democracy supports students who will take an active and critical role in the future of our society.

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Bilingual Education and Democracy¹

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As I work towards a degree in special education, I am required to accumulate experience through preclinical hours. In order to satisfy part of this requirement, I chose the option of working at a program called the Family Learning Institute, the purpose of which is helping students who have fallen behind in their reading and writing abilities. I have continued working there as a volunteer on a night set aside for Hispanic and Middle Eastern children in elementary school, most of whom are bilingual.

The students have quickly caught on to the fact that I don't speak anything other than English and sometimes tease me about it. I can't help but agree with them, for I feel this is a deficiency in my own education and don't particularly like the idea of being locked into thinking in one language, as I suspect that I am missing out on insights that bilingual people are able to attain. I have explained this to the students and have had some success in helping them realize the pride they should take pride in being bilingual, which is important because many of them have developed self esteem issues arising from the difficulties they are experiencing with English.

My suspicions about the advantages of being bilingual are well founded. During a joint interview with both Martha G. Abbot and Ken Stewart published by Duke University in an online newsletter for the parents of gifted youth, Therese Sullivan Caccavale (2007), president of the National Network for Early Language Learning, spoke of the cognitive advantages of learning a foreign language:

Additionally, foreign language learning is much more a cognitive problem solving activity than a linguistic activity, overall. Studies have shown repeatedly that foreign language learning increases critical thinking skills, creativity, and flexibility of mind in young children. Students who are learning a foreign language out-score their non-foreign language learning peers in the verbal and, surprisingly to some, the math sections of standardized tests. This relationship between foreign language study and increased mathematical skill development, particularly in the area of problem solving, points once again to the fact that second language learning is more of a cognitive than linguistic activity. (para. 8)

The advantages of learning more than one language are not disputed. Bilingual education, however, is hotly debated in some circles. My understanding of education pushes me towards the inclusion of bilingual education for several significant reasons, the most important of which is the development of the students themselves. The question of whether bilingual programs should be continued or adopted in public schooling forces us to ask ourselves what the goals of public education are. It is important that this question be asked continually and that our society does not shy away from it. It is directly tied to

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the nature of democracy, which also requires constant evaluation if it is to remain vibrant and true to its own cause.

The public goals of education are generally defined by politicians, educational administrators, and businessmen. That politicians and business leaders have so much sway in determining the public goals of education can be debated from many sides and isn't as important here as the conclusion they come to time and time again. Politicians and business leaders define the public interest in education "as jobs and national dominance in the global economy". (Spring, 2008, p. 5)

The private goals of education are more varied. It is very true that most parents and families of students are concerned with the child being able to attain employment and/or transitioning to college when they graduate. There are other goals though, many of which are harder to clearly define and vary from source to source. These include the improvement of a student's quality of life through education, the strengthening of the student's critical thinking skills, and the strengthening of our very democracy by creating strong citizens capable of participating fully in a government by the people and for the people. The more broadly educated students become, the more likely they will invest their energies into their role as citizens of our democracy, thereby strengthening our society.

This brings me back to the students I work with at the Family Learning Institute. In dealing with them I often ponder what the best ways to serve their interests and needs are, which also leads me to think about the best way to reach students that have cultural heritages that are different than that which dominates the public schools. This means acknowledging their realities.

The world is changing, which I perceive to be very unsettling to the interests in this country which are focused on maintaining the status quo. The generally unspoken fear is that the dominant culture itself is going to change with the demographic shifts which are occurring, which causes resistance to changes in society. According to the website of the Pew Charitable Trusts (2009), the current percentage of the United States population which is reported to be of Hispanic descent reached 15.8% as of December 7th, 2009, making them the largest minority group in the country. Projections state that by 2050, that percentage is going to double, reaching 32%. This has strong ramifications for our democracy, and by extension, our educational system. A quick check of demographics on Wikipedia.org shows that 2009 projections for the percentage of the population of the United States that defines itself as white for the year 2050 will be around 46%, a fall of 22% from the current 68%. The rules of the political game are going to change, whether the status quo is comfortable with it or not. The demographics of the United States are constantly in flux. The government, being by and for the people, needs to not only acknowledge but also embrace these changes, as they have always existed and will never stagnate. Public schooling, the largest of the government institutions, has no choice but to continually evolve. As Richard J. Bernstein (2000) notes, "Democracy is forever confronted with the task of creating and recreating *itself*" (p. 226).

It is the ethical imperative of teaching to work in the interests of our students, which in turn works towards the common good. The bilingual education programs which are under assault in the present day need instead to be reinforced and expanded upon.

John Dewey's (1897) writings in "My Pedagogic Creed" seem to defend and support the claims of the advocates of bilingual education. Dewey stresses that education needs to start with the experiences and strengths of the students, an understanding which is necessarily deeply rooted in their language and understanding of the world. Dewey understood and warned against the dangers of disconnecting what is being taught in the classroom from the comprehension of life which a student has developed. In addition, Dewey wrote that the schools should strengthen and build upon the moral framework and social connections which children develop in their homes and communities. If, as educators, we deny that schools are part of a larger ecosystem which makes up the lives of our students, all of our efforts are at risk of being compromised.

It is clear to educators that there needs to be a strong connection to the student in order for education to take hold, which is deepened by the acknowledgement of a student's culture and language. We have to honor their identities. Ignoring the essential elements of our students' cultural heritage, community, and home lives risks alienating them from the educational process which is unacceptable and foolish. Paulo Freire (1990) spoke about this mistake we so often make during an interview with Marcio D'Olne Campos:

I want to stress that teaching should always take into account the differing levels of knowledge that children bring with them when they come to school. This intellectual baggage is an expression of what might be called their cultural identity and this, of course, is linked to the sociological concept of class. The teacher must take into account this initial "reading of the world" that children bring with, or rather, within them. For each child, this has been fashioned within the setting of his or her own home, locality, and town, and is strongly influenced by social origins. Schools tend, almost invariably, to discount this prior knowledge. (p. 5)

Freire goes on to describe how dangerous it is to strip a child from a background not of the majority of the defenses, understandings, and culture which they have developed outside of their education in the schools. He brings into question both the intent of the schools in this seeming attack on their identities and cautions against the untold damages this might inflict on the students.

In response to languages in relation to immigrant and ethnic populations, people often rationalize that people should adopt the culture and language which already exists here. Integration into the fabric of the country is important, but we must be aware of the danger of minority groups losing their connection to their cultures and their identities, which are inextricably tied to language. Benjamin Barber (2004) warns of such dangers when writing about the effects of globalization, stating that "we come to resemble not Herbert Marcuse's One-Dimensional men, but no-dimensional men—creatures reflecting random brand-names and trademarks that destroy every trait generated by specific cultures. To be sure, this puts an end to hate, cultural wars and tribal conflict, but it does so by eliminating differences and annihilating character... and, along the way, destroying democracy, citizenship, and any conception of common goods" (p. 13). Those critical of immigrants maintaining culture heritages need to remember that those differences are what make democracy strong and stable. Our culture as a whole, even the English

language itself, is strengthened by the differing world views and use of language that minority groups bring to the mix. If all citizens of our country feel that the democratic process offers them a place, our society is stronger for that common bond.

E.D. Hirsch Jr. (1999) disagrees with the proponents of bilingual education. He wrote that “When this romantic, ethnic particularism is expressed as a right, it unifies the two movements of bilingualism and multiculturalism” (p. 137). He goes on to state that “This political and philosophical contradiction at the heart of American particularism is so gaping that the view cannot plausibly sustain itself. To be coherent, American particularism must either give up its claim of the ethnic and cultural essence of human nature, or else its claim to democracy and universal civic rights” (Hirsch, 1999, p. 140). I disagree and feel that bilingualism and multiculturalism are necessarily related. The cultural and historical heritage of immigrants in no way negates their abilities to act as citizens of our country and for them to celebrate the shared ideals at the core of our democracy; it is not a choice of one or the other.

What I think people are afraid of but dare not articulate, is the idea of actually having a government ruled by the people. Richard J. Bernstein (2000) talks of this when he speaks about Dewey’s concept of creative democracy and a government by, for, and of the people:

Rather it was a genuine apprehension that some of the people lack the temperament, education, stability, and public concern to be responsible citizens. Against this background, it was (and still is) a radical idea to affirm that every individual is capable of the intelligent deliberation required to be a responsible citizen in a democratic community. Dewey admits—indeed he insists that—that this attitude reflects a faith; it is not a blind faith, but rather a reflective faith in the capacities of ordinary people, if the proper social conditions are fulfilled. (p. 218)

Faith in the common person is a scary prospect, to be sure, though it is the core of democracy, and can be defined as patriotism to the highest degree. Essentially, the issue of bilingual education is related to the question of whether or not we support our citizens’ rights to retain the essence of their inherited cultures. It is not just about Latino or immigration rights, but rather a faith that democracy itself will survive when let loose, -- that humanity can govern itself. In all honesty, this is a leap of faith which our country has yet to commit to. Education is the natural battleground for this debate.

It is essential for the educators and the citizens of the United States to remember that the goals of education are not just to create a stable work force that will restore our economic dominance in the world. Education is also about maintaining and improving our democracy through the teaching of good citizenry. Education should be directed at all the needs of the students, not just those which overlap with the needs of their future employers. For many of our students, bilingual education is ideal, for it not only strengthens them intellectually, but honors the integrity of who they are. If we do our students the service of treating them humanely and embrace their identities, it is more likely that they will in turn revitalize our democracy by participating as full members of their society when they become adults. It may be difficult for some to comprehend, but the economy will also benefit if capitalism is balanced by the strengthening of our democracy and our people.

Regarding my experience with the students at the Family Learning Institute, I have no issue with extending my faith and placing democracy in their hands. These students are more than worthy. My fear is that we are not preparing them as well as we could, that we are selling out the future by not teaching the minds of the next generation to be as strong as they can be because of a deep rooted fear of change and a denial of what we know to be best.

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