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Chapter 3. Educating teachers for cultural diversity and social justice

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Introduction: the ethnocentric curriculum and the challenge of intercultural teaching

In what contexts are teachers taught how to address racism and other forms of oppression in schools and society? How do we develop culturally relevant pedagogy for all students, in the interests of equity and social justice? And when teachers do receive such training, what might it look like and how do we evaluate it?

It has been suggested that debate about multicultural education tends to take place against a background of social stability and shared debate of the kind that characterizes the wealthy countries of the 'North' (Morrow, 1996: 99). Yet it should be at the forefront of discussions in all societies seeking to teach for social justice, global perspectives and equity. Discussions of issues and strategies in multicultural teacher education seem, in the literature, to be addressing mainly the context of the white-dominant countries. Many compelling teacher education experiments in developing intercultural knowledge and skills are described, but the literature also suggests that an engagement with these issues is the exception rather than the rule.

Most teacher education courses carry out only minimally their rhetorical goals of preparing teachers to practise 'inclusive' education. Various subjects introduce the concept that teachers must strive to contribute to equity in the learning experiences of different ethnic, gender and ability groups. However, in Australia, Canada, Sweden, United Kingdom, the United States and other countries very few courses make it compulsory for all student teachers to do a systematic and critical study of how such equity can be promoted (Hickling-Hudson and McMeniman, 1996; Ghosh, 1996; Tomlinson, 1996; Zeichner, 1996). Across the globe, most teacher education courses, like most school curricula, are still founded on a model of cultural hegemony characterized by a narrowly Western ideology shaping the content, structures and processes of learning. As Willinsky (1998: 11) points out, it would be surprising, after five centuries of the educational mission that was a part of Europe's period of

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global domination, if schooling did not carry forward this cultural hegemony in former colonies and colonial powers alike. An ethnocentric Western curriculum is standard fare. It is hegemonic because it teaches no critical view of culture which would enable students to see that we are part of a global village, that all cultures need to be affirmed, that diverse cultures enrich our understanding of the world, and that people in all cultures have human strengths and weaknesses and operate within particular epistemologies. It is true that ethnocentric approaches to curriculum are increasingly being challenged, but they continue to dominate the educational scene (Coulby, 1997; Churchill, 1998; Hatton, 1996; Willinsky, 1998; Sleeter, 2001; Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist, 2003).

Multicultural teaching is not necessarily the antidote to this hegemonic curriculum. A 'soft multicultural' approach to curriculum and pedagogy might in fact promote it by trivializing or ignoring non-dominant cultures. But a 'critical multiculturalism', which I prefer to call 'interculturalism' to emphasize the mutual interrelatedness of cultures, could lead to teaching and learning that is challenging, wide-ranging, socially critical and activist (Nieto, 1999; Sleeter and Grant, 2002). The conceptual map of emphases in multicultural research and teaching proposed by Bennett (2001: 175), includes four 'genre clusters': curriculum reform, equity pedagogy, multicultural competence and societal equity. Across these clusters, a post-colonial intercultural education has to work out how to help students and teachers recognize and overcome the harmful effects of the tribalist ethnocentrism, social stratification, 'ability' streaming and tracking, racism and gender oppression perpetuated by so many educational institutions.

At any level, educators striving to promote an intercultural philosophy and environment for students face complex tasks. They must apply their intercultural perspectives to re-fashioning the concrete curricula and assessment systems in their discipline areas – language and literature, history and the social sciences, mathematics, science, the arts and physical education. This means that they must be able to recognize racism and cultural ethnocentrism, counter it in their teaching, and design new curricula that deal creatively with the controversies between shared values versus plural ways of seeing the world. They must provide students with opportunities to become multilingual, that is, fluent in the dominant language of the society, but retaining their mother tongue and learning other languages. Particular skills will be needed to counsel students and teachers in how to surmount their inter-ethnic conflicts and achieve harmonious social relations. Further, educators cannot operate effectively without multiple partnerships. These enable them to draw on the skills of parents and the community to assist in diversifying the curriculum, affirming diversity rather than ignoring or devaluing it (Nieto, 1999), and improving social relations between students. They would involve working with national or local ministries or departments of education and many other providers to develop their intercultural skills through professional development programmes.

Preparing teachers for cultural diversity is only one of the many goals of teacher education, but it is an extremely important one in the context of the harrowing ethnic conflicts and the changing ethnoscares of our globalizing era. Exploring the continuum of ethnic discourses which may inform teacher education, ranging from ethnocentrism to critical interculturalism, is necessary in order to evaluate the stage of development. The objects of study are not only the course and its various components, but also the partnerships between the course and the various organizational stakeholders. My article describes strategies and comments on factors that could make a multicultural difference in the following spheres:

1. The content of the course of study ('course' here refers to the entire degree or diploma, while 'program' or 'subject' refers to the component parts of the course).
2. The way the course is organized into experiences that promote or neglect intercultural knowledge and perspectives.
3. Training the trainers: the graduate research program.

4. The partnerships between teacher education providers, schools, government departments and other agencies in the community and how they promote or neglect intercultural understanding.

To lay a foundation for understanding how various dimensions of intercultural education could look, my article now discusses approaches relating to these categories!

Course content: life histories and the student teacher

Most teacher education institutions prepare teachers by requiring them to study the social context of teaching, psychology, curriculum theory, and one or two specialist disciplines. They spend a substantial minority of their course in field studies called 'the practicum', where they carry out practical teaching in local (and sometimes also international) settings, systematically learning how to put their chosen pedagogical theories into practice. One of the problems with many teacher education courses is that they require students to concentrate on 'Education' subjects narrowly conceived as promoting technical skills, and neglect an interdisciplinary approach which would insist that contextual / philosophical knowledge is inextricably bound up with technical skills in any educational enterprise. Aspiring teachers who have left high school with an inadequate education have no guarantee that their gaps of cultural understanding will be adequately addressed in their teacher education courses, since these courses do not always provide for the general knowledge of a 'liberal' education. A high-quality teacher education course intertwines educational and cultural theory and praxis, or reflective action on these theories.

Subjects specializing in intercultural teacher education go part of the way in helping student teachers to develop systematic and anti-racist intercultural pedagogical skills. However, as pointed out above, these subjects are often elective, taken by only a small proportion of students, and given only a small amount of time in the four-year undergraduate or one year postgraduate teacher-credentialing course. Multicultural subjects typically require students to reflect on 'life histories' in reflective autobiographies or biographies, followed by a study of how schooling is affected by issues of 'difference' – ethnicity and 'race', gender, social class, ethnicity, religion and disability prejudice.

Autobiographies shape the future stories of educators. They can be effectively used as part of a strategy of encouraging students to increase self-knowledge as a foundation for increasing their understanding of themselves in relation to other cultures. As Pinar (1981: 84) points out, "our life histories are not liabilities to be exorcised but are the very preconditions for knowing". They allow us to reflect on what forms of education and experience encourage the development of some ideologies and not others, and on how experience can be channelled into the practice of teaching. Depending on how it is set, the process of writing life histories helps students achieve three sets of insights. First, it interprets the power that schooling exerts over our lives. Second, it "identifies moments when we lived outside of the educative norm of accomplishments, grades, awards, and punishments" and third, it leads us to "review and interpret our memories as part of a larger history" (Rousmanière, 2000: 89).

In one undergraduate course described in a United States university by Kate Rousmanière, the class was set such an assignment in the following manner. "For the first half hour of each class, students write an in-class response to one stimulus question about their elementary or secondary educational experience. Describe your favourite teacher. Recall a good lesson. Explain the role of friendships in your experiences as a student." These short pieces of in-class writing are not graded, but the professor collects, reads and comments on them. When she returns them to the class, she talks generally about the themes that the articles raised. For the final course project at the end of the term, students review their informal 'thought pieces' and write a 10 to 15 page autobiography. "This final project is a synthesis

and analysis of the shorter writing assignments and is graded pass /fail” (Rousmanière, 2000: 91).

In the writing, students bring up themes which are vitally important in their reflections on what makes for good teaching and good learning experiences. These include stories of the emotional effects of school buildings and environments on student learning, of the characteristics of the best and the worst teachers, of how stereotyped masculine and feminine gender roles were embedded in curricular assumptions about course content. Through the autobiographies, the students wrestle with expressing how they have experienced issues of race and class. Rousmanière observes that many of her students start this section by thinking that these issues are not relevant to them since most went to all-white schools in a similar socio-economic area. Further reflection, however, opens up their understanding. For example, “it suddenly occurs to one student that all the black kids went to a school across town.” Students remember the power of the cultural biases that their learning showed when their plays portrayed the pilgrims as important and articulate versus the natives who were dumb and undifferentiated. They remember learning, through Black History month, “that African American issues were raised in one month only”. And they remember terrible moments “of racial harassment, teasing or stereotyping in class and responses that were or were not made by the teacher” (Rousmanière, 2000: 93-94).

Helping student teachers in Australia to link self-knowledge to an increasing understanding of their culture is also my aim in teaching the fourth-year undergraduate subject ‘cultural diversity and education’. In former years I taught this subject at my university as an in-class elective, but it is now only available as an open learning, online elective which may be selected by students in the fourth and final year of their Bachelor of Education. My approach is to set the autobiographical task in three sections. First, students do a short review (600 to 700 words) of different authors’ concepts of culture in order to arrive at their own definition, linking this discussion to how issues of race and ethnicity have been played out in Australian culture over the past two decades. Next they write a cultural autobiography or biography (2,000 words). The major focus is on experiences of ethnicity, and attention is also paid to how issues of social class and gender intersect with these experiences. They conclude with a short section (200 to 300 words) reflecting on the significance of this reflective cultural analysis to them as teachers. A set of printed subject guides take them through the readings, and they are given six weeks to complete the task. In spite of what I see as the disadvantage of not being able to teach them on site, most of the students still experience this exercise as an eye-opening and powerful one.

Throughout most of the educational experience, a superficial treatment of culture has encouraged students to look outward, seeing ethnicity as belonging to groups other than themselves. Doing this essay has led many to conclude that it is vital for them as educators to deepen their understanding of culture by doing the opposite. In the words of one student, “for students of Anglo-Celtic origin, looking inward and exploring one’s own culture and whiteness is perhaps more pertinent to an appreciation of cultural differences and the power relationships that occur within Australian society” (Hickling-Hudson, 2002 – Student Essay 1). Many students similarly considered for the first time the privileges of ‘whiteness’ and its relation to education stratification. Schooling provided an Anglo-Australian curriculum which particularly neglected or distorted Australia’s indigenous cultures. It was no wonder, observed one student, that she “spent years breezing through school without much effort at all because the curriculum and testing instruments were geared to my mainstream culture” while failing to provide for culturally different others, thus consigning them to a ‘vicious cycle of disadvantage’. This student’s reflections enabled her to see that whiteness could not be regarded as just another ethnicity:

“Every day, white privilege confronts us both personally and socially. When I was at school, I was Margaret, not ‘the white girl’. We might hear news about the crimes of ‘Lebanese Muslims’, but not about the crimes of ‘White Christians’. A label can speak a

thousand words of condemnation, and the privilege of 'white' is the privilege of going unlabelled" (Hickling-Hudson, 2002 – Student Essay 2).

Some students recalled how they were socialized from childhood to fear, ignore or abuse aboriginal people, and the extent to which these prejudices followed them through adulthood.

One student recalls that as a young child in north Queensland she was brought up to believe that Indigenous people were cannibals – dirty, primitive, frightening people. "If we hit a ball into our Indigenous neighbour's yard, that was where it stayed. Nobody was brave enough to venture into the yard, lest we be killed and eaten" (Hickling-Hudson, 2002 – Student Essay 3). This sounds extreme, but several students who were children in the 1970s and 1980s recall learning extremely negative views of indigenous people. There was a sense of hope that things were changing, however, and that there were now at least a few multicultural schools in which children could be socialized differently.

One aboriginal woman interviewed by a student recalled the contradictions she experienced between school and home, she told her interviewer (Hickling-Hudson, 2002 – Student Essay 4):

It did affect me. When you're in grade 3 or 4 you look at your teachers and think that they know everything, that they're never wrong. Then when you go home you're told different things by your parents and it's hard to know who or what to believe, but of course I believed my parents before anyone else. I remember doing an assignment in Primary school and taking a book home and showing Mum and Dad. Dad said "What are you doing?" I said "I'm doing an assignment on aborigines and our culture". He got angry. "You don't get it out of this book, that's all rubbish, it's all lies." "But the teacher said . . ." "I don't care what the teacher said, you don't get things out of this book. You've got to go and listen to your elders, and listen to our stories that we tell you, that's the truth!"

Ethnic minority students who were recent migrants reflected on the everyday racism which they encountered from peers and the school, and pondered on their attempts to come to terms with this (Hickling-Hudson, 2002 – Student Essay 5):

In those days hyphenated or hybrid ethnicity did not exist, or I had not heard of them. It took me a while to get over the fact that I would not truly belong to any ethnic group. I am not totally Vietnamese and I could never be truly 'Australian' as people judge me by my skin colour. My ethnicity is a mix of cultures. My Vietnamese side brings with it a rich history while my Australian side brings with it innovation and youthfulness.

As these examples suggest, the educational autobiography and biography comprise a journey into ways in which we have been shaped by culture, schooling, history and our lived experiences in society. Setting this as an assignment is effective for both graduate and undergraduate student teachers as long as the students are taught how to analyse their lives or the lives of others in the framework of carefully structured reading addressing anti-racist and intercultural social concepts, and as long as they are required to explore how this analysis links with concrete issues of race, social class, gender and other identity markers in education.

Designing the overall programme to promote a critical study of education in social context

If the overall teacher education course is not arranged to promote intercultural as well as gender and social class awareness and pedagogical competencies, most teachers will continue to graduate with few or no skills in culturally and linguistically relevant, global, intercultural pedagogy. To guarantee that student teachers are immersed in intercultural education, universities would have to make intercultural subjects compulsory to allow for intensive

written work in the subject, and to link them with field experiences in schools, as has been done in the secondary teacher-credentialing course at the California State University at San Jose. This one-year course is taken after the completion of a four-year degree and includes thirty units of credential coursework for prospective high-school teachers. Issues of culture, ethnicity, language, gender and ability are integrated into each of the subjects taught in the course. Each subject is grounded in a multicultural approach to teaching and learning.

One such subject, 'multicultural foundations of education' developed with faculty support and taught by Professor Roberta Ahlquist, is one of roughly eight to ten compulsory subjects. An example of one of the required subjects, this multicultural foundations class is taught for 45 hours over one semester and is worth four credits. It requires a substantial amount of reading and analytical writing from the students. A central goal of this programme is to guide students into first identifying, and next evaluating the taken-for-granted lenses through which they have learnt to judge their own worth and the worth of others. To evaluate these lenses, they must identify the effects of ways of seeing on subordinate and dominant groups. They learn to look critically at the ways that their own schooling has shaped them to be colour-blind; to see 'difference' as invisible, racism as an insignificant individual problem, and 'whiteness' as the norm. Most believe that racism is a thing of the past. Many think that poverty is an insignificant problem in the United States – not knowing that in California, for example, one third of the children under 17 years old live in poverty. They go through a sometimes painful and cathartic process of peeling off the layers of blindness, so that they can develop ways to challenge institutional racism in the interests of social justice and equity, and become allies with students who are on the downside of power (students of colour, working-class students, women, people from non-dominant native language backgrounds, gays and lesbians, people who are disabled). Secondly, they consider how learned ideas about cultures affect their relationships with students, parents and home communities, and how these ideas shape their teaching. Thirdly, they demonstrate developing culturally relevant curriculum and teaching in ways that counter injustice, building alliances across differences to construct "a more just and joyous future for all" (Ahlquist, 2003b – Interview).

The core of the programme is a book of photocopied readings (over 470 pages), which the professor has carefully selected, and updates each semester, on issues of culture including 'race' and racism, ethnicity, language, social class, sexual orientation, and gender. Students are expected to read from 50 to 70 pages each week in preparation for attending one class for four hours a week, or two classes twice a week, (four hours weekly, adding up to 45 hours). The professor supervises many of these students on teaching practice placements. Their nine assessment projects are multi-faceted and demanding, as the following list shows:

1. A journal which is part of their portfolio of work, added to every week of the semester, with reflective responses to specific readings and what they learned from the class discussions each week.
2. A cultural autobiography reflecting on personal experiences of race, racism and ethnicity.
3. A social class autobiography describing how they learnt what their position was in the class hierarchy, and how this class position affects their views of the world.
4. Papers, to be shared with classmates, discussing how a beginning teacher could respond to difficult issues brought up in selected readings, including two major books on diversity issues which change regularly (most recently, *Schoolgirls*, by Peggy Orenstein (1995), and *Nickel and Dimed*, by Barbara Ehrenreich (2001)).
5. Interviews with people of ethnicities different from their own, reflecting on the significance of what they learned for their teaching about what parents want teachers to address and teach to their children.
6. Leading, in pairs, a critical and creative class discussion on one chapter of the book that critiques the ways in which history is mistaught, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, by

James Loewen, presenting “a critical look at the dominant culture mythology that pervades U.S. history textbooks”.

7. A multicultural unit plan (done in pairs) with a rationale for why one is teaching the specific content, comprising lessons over five days in a particular subject area.
8. An audio-taped self interview at the beginning of the semester in which the students talk about their experiences, feelings, concerns and emotions about the significance of race, racism, and ethnicity in their lives.
9. A journal entry at the end of the semester analysing this self-interview together with the semester’s work, reflecting on what they have learned and in what ways they have changed or not changed and why.

What is notable about this particular class, and others like it in this course, is how it links three foundation aspects of what teachers need to study to prepare for their career. It has students do a self-analysis, which is structured in stages. Starting with the audio-taped self-reflection interview done at the very start of the semester, the students later write and share with peers, sections of their cultural autobiographies emphasizing their personal experiences of race, racism, gender and social class. Their writing is informed by their study of a wide range of readings to which they have to make a written response each week. This links a deepening of self-knowledge with an ever-increasing understanding of social culture. But it goes further – it connects all of this with practical teaching. Students, in pairs, develop a multicultural unit plan in their subject area. Then they are individually supervised and evaluated during their teaching practice. They learn how to act on the theory they have studied. Their engagement with the book by James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, makes it likely that they will be highly aware of the biases and distortions that can be pushed through the school curriculum. They are expected to act on this knowledge about social justice issues, including race, class, gender and language differences, and to teach lessons that encourage their students to think critically as well as act themselves around the crucial issues of racism and other forms of oppression in school and society (Ahlquist, 2003b – Interview).

Another example of a multi-faceted multicultural education subject within a graduate teacher-credentialing course is provided by Mary Black of the University of Texas at Austin (Black, 2000). The course designed by this professor links reading and self-reflection with information from guest speakers and field studies of a variety of locations in the city. The whole class together shares and discusses some of the field trips, and then individual students select additional field trips to do in their own time from a menu of over sixty options developed by the instructor. The field trip options include: (a) on-campus resources such as Latin American or Asian study centres; (b) community resources such as local ethnic organizations, museums, libraries, festivals and places of worship; (c) commercial resources such as an internationalized supermarket and import/export businesses; and (d) performance and visual arts options, including performances, shows and city murals.

The students are required to write two 5-page essays on topics linking readings and field trips to personal reflections, and a final 15-page essay. The synthesis of readings and experiences enable students to discuss their own personal biases and attitudes (Black, 2000: 347).

For example, the Islamic guest speakers provoked much dissonance and personal growth among the students. In their articles, many students discussed changes in their opinions towards particular ethnic groups, and their previous lack of exposure to people of non-European descent.

In the final writing project, students were asked to grapple with a difficult question central to multicultural education: does it work? (Black, 2000: 347–348).

The whole country was shaken by the vicious hate crime in Jasper, Texas in 1998, when a black man was dragged to death. Striving for authentic, relevant curriculum, the assignment

asked: “Can multicultural education prevent tragedies such as Jasper, Texas? If you do not think so, explain. If you do think so, explain how this might work.” Several students commented afterwards that this was the hardest question they had ever had to answer. It certainly made them think deeply about the power of education versus ignorance and hate.

The goal of preparing student teachers with a wide range of intercultural skills and knowledge would be well served by programmes in the style of ‘Comparative and International Education’, yet, in Australia at least, this is not offered at the undergraduate level in most education faculties. Indeed, so insular is the tradition of education studies that only a handful of the nation’s thirty-seven universities offer international education subjects even in their postgraduate master’s and doctoral courses. It is my view that until this situation improves, student teachers should be required to take global studies subjects offered in other faculties. One such undergraduate subject at QUT is ‘Introduction to International and Global Studies’, offered by the School of Humanities and Human Services. This School is not in the Faculty of Education, so most Education students do not take this subject. This is unfortunate, since it can be seen from these extracts from the subject’s rationale that such a subject would be extremely useful for student teachers seeking to develop their intercultural knowledge and skills (Queensland University of Technology unit outline, 2003):

An awareness of the positions and contemporary contexts of diverse regions and cultures around the world is essential knowledge for those likely to be working in international environments... This unit provides students with the opportunity to critically examine the origins of contemporary internationalization, the major global institutions, and the effects of these agencies on societies in different world regions. Further, the unit introduces students to a range of analytic perspectives in social science that are useful in understanding the characteristics of international and global social change.

Training the trainers – the intercultural research degree

Teacher educators are usually required to have a research-based postgraduate degree in some aspect of education. The Western-style university specifies for the doctoral and masters’ thesis a highly structured and standardized written format. The thesis must justify a particular process of research which shows that it has been based on a thorough review of relevant literature, and then it develops this research in sequential chapters and distilled conclusions. These requirements have become so typical of the research degree that they could be called ‘globalized’. What is troubling about the whole process is that it is often steeped in unexamined positivist, modernist and ethnocentric assumptions characteristic of a traditional style of Western learning. Students from the ‘South’ who study at Western-style universities either in their own countries or in the ‘North’ are usually expected to draw on these assumptions to inform their thesis. For them, as well as for many indigenous students in white-dominant societies (Morgan, 2003):

This bicultural experience forces them to live between two worlds where they do not belong in the Western context and where their education often means that they cannot belong in their own culture either – it having become the ‘other’. The resulting cultural paradox needs to be resolved.

A substantial number of teacher educators from indigenous communities in Asian and Pacific countries and in Australia have chosen to pursue their research masters or doctoral studies in the Institute of International Education of the Flinders University of South Australia. Many are attracted there by the responsive approach to cultural diversity in educational research training, developed by a team led by Dr Bob Teasdale. The starting-point of the alternative

approach is a deep conviction of the harm done by the globalized postgraduate curriculum that insists on the complete assimilation of international students, who are expected to discard the epistemologies, the deep values and the learning styles that they have brought with them from their own cultures (Teasdale, 2002).

The intercultural research degree in Education at Flinders University is built on helping international/indigenous students to negotiate their intellectual journey between the culture of learning typical of the Western university, and the cultures of their primary identity. Teasdale and his team help the postgraduate students understand the globalized Western requirements of the research process, yet negotiate and modify them in ways that both respect and explore their own deep local values, identities and years of experience. He explains this process as one of creative tension between the global and the local – not the tension of the conflict model, which expects students to choose ‘globalized’ learning and reject ‘local’ learning, but the tension that holds the two in creative balance, constantly re-tuning them to produce the resonance of meaningful scholarship (Teasdale, 2002). Describing some examples of research output produced from this creative tension shows why the approach suggests powerful ways of negotiating issues in the training of teachers for cultural diversity.

Teasdale outlines the unusual and artistic Master’s degree in Education done at the university by Helen, an indigenous student from Western Australia, after her first degree in visual arts. Helen had remarkable visual capacity, both conceptually and expressively. Ideas flowed far more powerfully from her paintbrush than from her speech or writing. The Flinders team allowed her to ‘paint’ her thesis. Helen carried out her field research in her community, a remote area of Western Australia, where she talked to her age-mates and those who had brought them up (Teasdale, 2002):

Then she came back to her studio and painted. Her studio became a laboratory where she tested and expressed her ideas. She prepared dozens of big canvases. And as she painted she talked into a tape recorder. As ideas developed on canvas, so she was able to express them in words, and to capture those words. She subsequently used edited transcripts of the words along with the pictures as the text of the thesis. The end result was an original and very powerful research report on the education of young Indigenous Australians.

Teasdale (2002) also describes the doctoral studies of two of his Ph.D. students, Wani and Paulus, both from small, remote communities in Papua New Guinea. Encouraged to blend the global and the local in their theory building, each in their field of research explored with the older adults in their home villages the oral literature and history of the community. Their literature reviews drew on these interviews as well as on printed material and so brought together both global and local perspectives. Teasdale observes that:

Wani and Paulus bring a spiritual, or metaphysical, dimension to their thinking and writing. Unlike the western with its quite narrow focus on the empirical and the rational, they are comfortable with the subjective, and with spiritual explanations of reality. Like many indigenous peoples, they have a tolerance for ambiguity. One of the important lessons for me, as I seek to accommodate to their epistemologies, is to accept this ability to hold two seemingly incompatible ways of thinking at the same time.

Paulus developed for his thesis a conceptual framework based on an explanatory device – a kind of metaphor – that his people traditionally have used to understand the processes of growing up their children. But he expanded and developed this through an exploration of Western theoretical perspectives. Wani used story-telling as her primary method of analysis, blending it, where appropriate, with Western modes of thought. Her theoretical chapters began with the telling of a story, a story that provided the conceptual framework for her thesis. The issues were not separately identified and dealt with in a linear or sequential way. Instead, Wani approached her research question by ‘walking around it’ in ever-decreasing

circles, using a holistic or integrated approach, and regularly coming back to her central story. At various stages other stories were used to clarify or explicate (Teasdale, 2002):

The end result of Wani's work was a very dynamic fusion of the local and the global. The syncretism of the two was somehow more powerful than either could have been on its own. And Wani certainly benefited in terms of affirmation of her own deep cultural identity.

Partnerships – with government, schools and community

Many agencies in the community facilitate the business of educating teachers. Government departments provide the policy framework of state-endorsed equity goals which should inform a teacher education degree or diploma course. Schools are important partners in the teacher education enterprise, for they provide the setting in which trainees practise and develop their pedagogical techniques and are a source of requests for postgraduate and professional development programmes. Community agencies such as institutions for adult literacy enter into partnerships with universities to enable them to provide students with opportunities to practise their pedagogy or conduct research in non-school settings. Multicultural teacher education can make a difference in all of these contexts.

Professional development programmes for classroom teachers are delivered not only by university schools and faculties of education through their research degrees, but also by other providers including the government and teachers' unions. A government-union partnership is working effectively in the current Labour-controlled regime in Queensland, a state with a reputation for one of the most racist histories in Australia. Queensland's State Department of Education (known as Education Queensland) has a section responsible for 'Inclusive Education' which develops concrete policies and strategies to counter racism in schools. The department's highly skilled and experienced team produces print and audiovisual materials and uses these in anti-racist seminars and workshops for teachers in schools throughout the state. Since the government found it too expensive to keep financing such workshops, the Teachers' union stepped in to fund them, paying for two-day anti-racist workshops for all teachers in the state.

An example of the materials developed and used in the workshops is *Under the skin* (Education Queensland, 1999), a kit comprising a video with an accompanying video guide and worksheets for seminar participants. Additional material used in the seminar is a nationally developed information booklet (*Racism: no way. A guide for Australian schools*). Each workshop consists of twenty-five participants, usually including at least three or four teachers from one school to make it more likely that they will collaborate in making school changes after the workshop. The workshop starts with a sharing of experiences in which participants talk about racism which they have suffered or witnessed. This establishes a sense of group focus that is built on with collaborative exercises. The video shows real incidents of racism, particularly in the social context of Queensland, and gives insight into how these affects people.

Through the booklets and questions on the worksheets, participants learn to deconstruct and challenge concepts, myths and stereotypes associated with the various kinds of racism – that directed against non-European migrants, and that directed against indigenous Australians, the aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. Participants make detailed notes and comments about the schools shown in the video – one primary and three high schools. They then critically examine the features of a supportive school environment, and discuss how they can improve these features so as to involve and benefit staff, students and the community. They end with an action plan for countering an aspect of racist behaviour that may be occurring in a particular school site. Such workshops are particularly important given

the problematic situation caused by inadequate intercultural education in most of the teacher education courses (as well as general education courses) available in Queensland. Teachers who realize that their pre-service preparation was inadequate to cope with the multicultural reality of their classrooms can start to develop their knowledge in these non-university professional development programmes. Education Queensland also provides much practical guidance to teachers trying to deal with students who are 'at risk' of poor learning outcomes, including refugee children (QPASTT, 2001).

These hands-on programmes can become part of a holistic learning experience if they collaborate with the kind of systematic courses of study delivered by universities such as the California State University at San Jose, discussed above. Partnerships can also be effective in launching new programmes that provide classroom teachers with in-service course options in intercultural studies. One such Australian partnership in which I was involved in 1998 and 1999 launched Teaching about Asia, a teacher education postgraduate level programme. The partnership was a consortium consisting of the Asia Education Foundation, based at Melbourne University, the Brisbane-based Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Education Queensland and the Association of Independent Schools in Queensland. A team of four QUT academics which I co-ordinated developed course materials and piloted their use with a group of fifteen classroom teachers over two months of weekend workshops. After the materials were finalized, they were made available electronically to universities across the nation. In the succeeding three years, fifteen Australian universities adapted the materials as the foundation for their own postgraduate programmes of 'Teaching about Asia'.

Conclusion: taking a postcolonial turn

Teacher educators arguably need to have a vision of the future that will promote programmes of lifelong learning to help students and teachers deal creatively with the changes of a globalizing era. A postcolonial view of educational institutions would see them as outdated and dysfunctional because of their ethnocentrism and structures clinging to an older era (Aviram, 1996; Coulby, 1997). From a postcolonial perspective I would argue that even if an intercultural philosophy is embedded throughout the culture of schools and teacher education programmes, they might still be operating in a constrained way that limits the intelligence and creativity of students with subject-divided timetables, rigid age-grading, gender divisions and other hierarchies. The most fundamental aspects of traditionally organized education – structure, content, epistemology, bio-regimes, selfish individualism and hierarchical practices of gender, class and ethnicity – are being challenged by post-modern and postcolonial thinking and circumstances. There is increasing recognition that the 'good life' cannot be based on unbridled consumerism, gender antagonisms and social irresponsibility (Ellyard, 1999). Exploring and developing new paradigms of educational change will be more likely to tackle both cultural and economic problems than the old paradigms of nineteenth-century education.

The intercultural experiments taking place in teacher education have to be evaluated in a framework of the problems and possibilities brought about by globalization. From a postcolonial perspective, teachers arguably need to be prepared for 'planetist' concerns that put the health of the planet above narrowly conceived goals of the nation. As Willinsky (1999: 101) observes: "The schools . . . have worked so hard at helping the young imagine themselves within a world of nations, cultures and races, they now need to afford the young a place to stand apart from this legacy of divisions and boundaries." In a globalizing future, we are likely to become less and less confined within these constructed and limiting boundaries.

Postcolonial/post-modern perspectives in the educational curriculum would rework multiculturalism (Hickling-Hudson 2003). Teachers and students alike would learn to look at and engage in issues from multiple perspectives (Bean 2004). Student teachers and their supervisors would not only take a collaborative journey into socio-cultural critiques and activism, they would also learn how to embrace a new global reality as part of their identity. As Luke, Luke and Mayer put it (2000: 9):

The challenge is to move teaching and teacher education outside of the walled space of the modernist classroom, asking it to intellectually relocate itself in relation to other civic and community, real and imagined worlds, directing it into a critical engagement with the mass civic pedagogies that regulate those worlds, and making it a motive force in the reconstitution of those worlds.

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