Educational Leadership Faculty Publications | Department of Educational Leadership

2001

Issues of Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Diversity in Preparing School Administrators

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> There are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions that result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectations.
>
> —Audra Lorde (1995, p. 285)

The four of us teach in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Dayton. Within this past year each of us has taught a course that addresses issues of diversity in schools, focusing on race, ethnicity, and gender. These courses were newly adopted in the department and were being taught for the first time. Each of us has delivered her course in a unique way and in distinct settings. In preparing this manuscript, each of us engaged in:

1. reflecting holistically on the experience of teaching the course in order to generate possible common themes explaining what the experience meant to us as individuals and as women (Blackmore & Kenway, 1993)
2. examining students' work, behaviors, communication, and attitudes in order to infer level of, as well as changes in, racial, gender, and cultural maturity
3. drawing implications for programs in educational leadership from the meaning of the experiences we have had (and, as the four of us have worked together to interpret that meaning), a model of sharing scholarship that has engaged the four of us and one we think will be useful to others.

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The purpose of this chapter is to bring together each of our stories so that we can draw conclusions about how students in educational administration might most effectively learn to understand the perspectives of those unlike themselves and might most effectively lead in the diverse communities where they will most likely serve. First, we provide the background of our department and the historical and academic genesis of the courses we taught. Second, we provide a theoretical framework that underlies our stories. Third, we tell the stories of our teaching experiences. In the fourth section is a discussion of our results and conclusions from these experiences.

BACKGROUND

Morally and legally, issues of equity and fairness are among the most critical in contemporary schooling (e.g., The Civil Rights Project, 1996; Grant, 1995; Grogan, 1996; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999; Nieto, 2000). McCarthy (1999) recently cited the increase in women in the educational leadership professoriate (to about 20 percent in 1994 from 2 percent in 1970) and the more dismal representation of people of color (11 percent in 1994). School leaders cannot ignore their obligation to face head-on the challenges of assuring social justice and equitable learning environments for racial and ethnic minorities as well as for girls and women. Despite focus on such things as school reform models, revolutionary governance systems (e.g., choice, charters), and high-stakes testing, school leaders may yet remain ill equipped to successfully lead schools unless they are willingly engaged in the human reality of schools that "continue to struggle to effectively serve *all* students" (University Council of Educational Administration's 2000 program theme statement).

In schools, the organizational context within which these obligations are faced is itself a confounding factor. That is, schools today are ironically situated at the nexus of stronger, centralized accountability pressures and decentralized, more collaborative theories of organizational power and governance (James, 1991; Murphy, 1999). Both of these dynamics challenge the professoriate in educational administration to prepare school leaders to be informed, sensitive, and mature managers of diverse school cultures so that schools can effectively serve all students. We intend to show that, as learners delve deeply into these issues, they will acquire more mature cultural identities. Such growth should lead to entry-level administrators who manage schools with care of all children central to their leadership.

Realizing a Need for Change

To explain our attempts to promote more mature cultural identities among our students, we need to step back into the history of our Department of Educational Leadership. Several years ago, we were moved to examine our own practice because most of our courses had been in place for decades. The chair of the department at

that time admitted that he himself had received a master's degree from the department many years earlier and the course list was little changed.

A committee undertook an in-depth study of our curriculum. We were not surprised to discover that we had neglected the need to address cultural diversity. While we knew cultural diversity was important for our students, the extent to which such objectives found their way into our classes was left to chance. Some instructors might include such issues; others might not. We committed ourselves to formally insure these issues were addressed and not left to chance. We wanted to better prepare school leaders for more racially and ethnically diverse schools that value the lives of women and men equally.

We were pushed not only by our good intentions but also by the changing world of schools around us. We are located in an urban area of southwest Ohio, the city of Dayton, and we serve a wide range of communities. The city school district has close ties to our university and to our department. The university is situated at the intersection that divides two communities. The community to the south is the wealthiest in the area and almost totally European American while the community to the north is one of the poorest and most diverse. In addition to teaching our core campus classes in educational leadership, faculty travel to teach in off-campus sites that vary from the rural Appalachian hills to the inner city of the state capital. Our Catholic and Marianist university devotes itself to preparation of educators for Catholic schools, as well. Particularly in the summer, Catholic educators from across the country come to Dayton to take classes in our programs.

New Programs in Educational Leadership

We began with the principal licensure program. As an outgrowth of that study we created a new set of courses for principal licensure (a 24-credit-hour post-master's program). These six new courses, including a course on issues of diversity, were pilot tested in 1995–96 with a cohort of 10 students. We learned how little these post-master's students knew and understood about such issues.

It was also clear that many of our master's students do not proceed on to principal licensure. Convinced that addressing issues of race, gender, ethnicity, physical and mental challenges, class, and sexual orientation would serve to fill a void in what we were attempting to achieve, we took the next step and incorporated that content into the master's program. We retained the principal licensure course as well, concluding a new curriculum with two courses that addressed this gap: Issues in Diversity at the master's level and Leadership in Diverse Communities at the principal licensure level.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two theoretical frameworks informed our work together on this manuscript. The first comes from the literature on life histories as strategies of research. The sec-

ond from the thoughts and writing of Janet Helms (1990, 1999; Helms & Carter, 1991) on developing mature racial identity and the work of Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2000) on confronting our blind spots when attempting to change educational programs toward more enlightened considerations of issues of identity, particularly issues of race, ethnicity, and gender.

Personal accounts and life histories served as techniques for the four of us to revisit our experiences in teaching issues of diversity (see, for example, similar work by Lather, 1991). Legitimizing our way of recounting our personal experiences, these strategies also facilitated our retelling the stories of our interactions with students. This method of inquiry helped us examine our experiences with students so that we could systematically identify students' attitudes and beliefs insofar as our second perspective (their levels of racial maturity) is concerned.

Tierney (2000) reminds us that there are numerous definitions of life history, each filling particular roles in research. One conceptualization comes from Watson and Watson-Franke (1985), who define life history as "any retrospective account by the individual of his life in whole or part, in written or oral form, that has been elicited or prompted by another person" (p. 2). As we interacted with students in our classes, the four of us assumed that their voices in both written and oral forms revealed their life histories, albeit in abbreviated and often inadvertent forms. Through their oral accounts, through their written journals, through their on-line communication, and through the changes over time in their written papers, we were able to explore themes of change in attitudes and identity.

Sofia Villenas (2000) discusses the tension that results when a researcher is studying that with which she identifies. She claims that we can be both "insiders and outsiders to a particular community of research participants at many different levels and at different times" (p. 84; see also Delgado-Gaitan, 2000). While interpreting our students' journals, written work, and what we observed in group interactions in the classroom, we brought our own personal perspectives as women to bear on those interpretations. We attempted to explore students' growth toward maturity (Helms, 1990) our second perspective.

Helms theorizes a developmental model of racial identity. She hypothesizes that White people, for example, undergo a developmental process involving six phases that move them from immaturity to maturity in their racial identity. These six phases are characterized by periods of feeling secure and periods of feeling uncertain, as well as periods of chaos and questioning, and coherence, to finally culminating in a maturity that is always undergoing question and struggle. We adapted Helms' theory as a framework for discussing our experiences as we described students' changes in racial maturity over time.

OUR STORIES

We are four white women who bring to our teaching common race and gender identities but widely different personal biographies. Alone, each narrative account

tells one perspective. From the four stories together can possibly emerge a richer meaning of preparing students to be leaders in an increasingly diverse world. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) relate the value of "social actors" telling their stories as a method of inquiry. They maintain, for example:

> Social actors organize their lives and experiences through stories and in doing so make sense of them. . . . How social actors retell their life experiences as stories can provide insight into the characters, events, and happenings central to those experiences. How the chronicle is told and how it is structured can also provide information about the perspectives of the individual in relation to the wider social grouping or cultural setting to which that individual belongs. (p. 68)

We believe, with Coffey and Atkinson, that our stories can be informative to educational administrators. Our perspectives, as they interact with and are influenced by students' awareness and understanding of issues of diversity, are important intersections to examine.

Patricia's Story

Background and Setting

I taught the course Leadership in Diverse Communities for the first time during the winter of 2000 at the Department's off-campus site in Columbus, Ohio. Columbus is a large city, our state capital, with a significant African American population and growing groups of other ethnic and racial minorities. I looked forward, therefore, to a class rich in diversity and eager to tackle our subject. Since the class is part of a post-master's principal's certification program I also assumed the students had already studied leadership theory and diversity issues in the master's level classes. None of my expectations were met. I faced 20 white students, angry at having to take the course, and without the prerequisite courses because of changes in the programs as they came through and past vagaries of scheduling at this site. Their knowledge level became plain quickly with the question, "Is Italian a race?" Their anger and attitude was unprecedented in my years as a professor. Confirming from the syllabus that one of their assignments was to shadow a societal leader of another race and opposite gender, half the class dropped the course following loud protests that there weren't any such people anywhere near where they lived. With the sullen remaining half of the class, all of whom made plain they had no choice but to stay, I began the evening's agenda.

Agendas

Since the point of the class was to explore the nexus between leadership theory and actuality and studies in the diversity of our educational communities, I had chosen two of my favorite books: *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know:*

White Teachers, Multiracial Schools by Gary R. Howard and *The Web of Inclusion: A New Architecture for Building Great Organizations* by Sally Helgesen. Additionally the plan called for the students to select and read the biography of a leader of another race and opposite gender in order to analyze the accomplishments of that person using leadership theory and readings from the first course, issues in diversity, and to share with the class via presentation and paper lessons that might be applied to educational leadership in diverse communities. The biography assignment also produced wails of "There aren't any such people!"

The shadowing experience was also to be shared with the class via presentation and paper. And as a culminating assignment the students were asked to write a reflective paper about their experiences, learning, and growth during the class. During the classes themselves I started to use film clips, short segments from films depicting the life of various racial and ethnic groups or past horrors inflicted upon various groups. Most were from popular films chosen on a browse through Blockbuster, but I used clips from documentaries also. I found the use of the film clips to be extremely effective and have continued to use them, though they were started with this particular class as a desperate way to jump-start the students' awareness of the diversity of the U.S. population.

The class also had a Web-enhanced aspect in that a class "listserv" provided for ongoing discussion and assignments were to be delivered via e-mail attachments. This detail, which I by then considered routine and which previous classes had enjoyed, also brought protests, that in retrospect I ascribe to the resistance to the course in general. Interestingly, this class used the list more than any class I have had, totaling almost 1,100 messages over the four months.

Given my assessment of the students' knowledge base during the first class, I added to the reading assignments with basic demographic data concerning diversity in the United States and chapters from selected books I use in leadership theory class. Though these added reading assignments made the total course work somewhat of a heavy burden, I felt it was not a tolerable option to allow "the luxury of ignorance" (Howard, 1999, p. 11).

Analysis of the Unfolding Events

Three phases became identifiable as the class unfolded. Phase I was characterized by the initial resistance described above, followed by the choice of passive resistance or whining. Whining was characterized by variations of "I don't need this," followed by reasons why and declarations of experience with diversity such as having a cleaning woman of another race. At this phase I thought I was lost in a time warp. Also during the first phase the complaints regarding the extra reading continued and intensified. Web-related complaints subsided as class members discovered the listserv as the perfect place to share their woes.

I knew we were in a new phase when use of the discussion list turned to engagement with the readings, sharing of arrangements made for the shadowing,

and pieces of the biographies. Everyone in the class seemed to like both books. The more scholarly chapters and articles continued to receive complaints and resistance. Some slight recognition of the need for the course appeared in "I never knew" statements, at first about the demographic materials. The climate in class meetings unfroze a degree or two. There was continued complaint over the workload but assessing this from the distance of seven months, I really feel the stress was from the resisted content of the material, rather than the number of readings and assignments. In the second phase I began to hope we might make some progress if only in recognition of all we didn't know about both diverse communities and inclusive leadership.

Phase III caught me by surprise. Final reporting and sharing activities brought with them oral and written personal revelations of growth, new knowledge, acknowledgment of the need for the course, and even statements of being glad to have done the various activities, particularly the shadowing, which had been the most intensely resisted activity. The last classes were really enjoyable, the reports were well done, and the student's seemed to learn from one another's work, particularly again from the shadowing experiences. The final written reflections still contained complaints about the workload, but since my subsequent classes in this subject were on campus and had had exposure to leadership theory and issues in diversity, I have not needed to add the extra reading. I have merely referenced it as review material.

My Reflections

I continued to be astonished at the lack of knowledge and resistance to the subject matter associated with the first phase of this class. To a lesser extent or in isolated cases it has been repeated in subsequent sections of this course. My concern revolves around the children for whom these teachers and administrators, and others like them, are responsible. It looks from these class experiences as if the children and the parents are encountering an assumption of white rightness in a "dynamic of dominance" (Howard, 1999, p. 50) as expressed in the phase-one resistance and in the loss of half the original class when it became plain the students would need to seek out and spend a day with a leader of another race and opposite gender. This worry over the racism, sexism, and class bias (intended or out of ignorance that cannot be excused), which children are meeting every day in some highly educated practitioners continues to haunt me. When teaching this class again in January 2001 (at the same site) I plan to add segments on the legal responsibilities associated with leadership in diverse communities.

With the students who finished this course I experienced great satisfaction in Phase III. The change in attitude was most striking but clearly their knowledge base was significantly expanded also. One other large concern remains. Each time I have taught this class, every student has refused to confront gender bias or acknowledge its existence. In reports the students uniformly denied that either the

leaders they shadowed or the subjects of the biographies they read had encoun-
tered any gender bias. (Having read biographies of some of these same people I
know that gender discrimination was part of their story, sometimes a large part.)
Probing questions (gently done, I believe) uniformly produced upset, particularly
from the younger women, who declared, *"Women are not discriminated against
today."* This view was often supported by older male students loudly claiming
that white men are the discriminated against group these days. I have not found a
way to deal with this resistance to discussion of gender in this class. The lack of
knowledge base regarding gender diversity and gender discrimination was even
more appalling than it was with regard to race, nationality, and class and the sub-
ject meets even more intense resistance. Clearly, as a feminist, this situation is a
distressing one for me, and one which I will continue to work on with vigor in
this class and others.

I have learned (or re-learned) two major lessons from the teaching of this
course: First, leave all expectations at home with every new group. I don't think
I can be as surprised again at either attitudes or lack of knowledge in this area.
The first time I know my surprise really showed, but perhaps that was better than
a look of acceptance. I'm still struggling with that as I prepare for January. Sec-
ond, be satisfied with a little incremental progress and with those who stay and
engage the struggle with you. The 10 people who finished this course with me the
first time really were very "nice" people. For whatever reason they had never be-
fore engaged the topic of our increasingly and joyfully diverse communities.
When they did, they achieved and shared remarkable growth.

Angela's Story

My *Issues of Diversity* class was scheduled for the winter semester in Lima, Ohio.
Lima is a city carved within a rural, farming community. The city itself reflects
racial/ethnic, gender, class, exceptionality, and religious diversity. Lima's neigh-
boring communities do not mirror the same diversity. The students in the class
were all Anglo; six were female, one was male; all were "middle" class; six grew
up in Ohio and one in Georgia. All were enrolled in the University of Dayton's
Educational Leadership program. Although the teaching site was in Lima, not all
of the students taught in the Lima school district. One student taught at the cor-
rectional institution, three taught in the Lima school district, and three taught in
more distant school districts. Of the seven students, six were teachers and one
was an assistant administrator.

The central goal of this graduate course in Educational Leadership was to en-
able students to rethink the organization of schools and curriculum in light of di-
versity issues. To accomplish this task, the course was structured on developing
a knowledge base that would educate and empower future administrators in the
skills necessary to conceptualize and actualize school change around issues of di-
versity. If schools are to change, then those who lead and teach in schools need

to change their thinking and attitudes and develop specific knowledge and skills commensurate with an attitudinal shift. Crucial to this transformation is reflection, research, and meaningful praxis.

This particular course was nontraditional in that its delivery was through on-line contact hours as well as direct classroom interfacing. In developing the course, the primary focus, then, was to accomplish my stated goals in a way that facilitated student reflection on their past and present stories (personal history), and the impact this heritage had on their present attitudes and beliefs (mature reflection). Another important consideration for me in constructing this class was how to relate the previous goal with the student's interpretation of the assigned class readings. The question then became, "How does one effectively and meaningfully connect a course's knowledge base (the assigned readings) with personal metamorphosis?"

The course design was shaped in the following ways so as to facilitate the above purpose. The on-line component (weekly readings and writing assignments) consisted of four parts. Each assignment was different, yet all were connected to the course's purpose. Two of the weekly assignments were done via e-mail and two were placed on a specifically designed chat board. The chat board, set up by the Educational Leadership department, enabled us to engage in a dialogic process of inquiry while constructing knowledge.

The e-mail tasks, which were sent directly to me, were called Written Student Logs and Growing in Knowledge. Both of these assignments were related to the student's processing and understanding of the assigned readings. In the Written Student Log, individual students responded to the readings of the week (their interpretation of the text). In Growing in Knowledge, students were asked to answer five to eight questions critically and reflectively. These questions were given to the student the week before and were directly related to the week's readings.

The chat board requirements, Personal Life Reflection and Professional Meaning, were designed to create dialogue, reflection, and mature response. All had access to the chat board postings and were required to enter a response to the question/statement posed. All were also encouraged to read and respond to what others had written. Both assignments were directly connected to the personal, cultural, and professional aspects of a student's life history and were developed so as to make explicit and practical the knowledge base assignments (Written Student Log and Growing in Knowledge) that were e-mailed to the instructor.

In Personal Life Reflection, students think back in order to think forward (personal history). An example will be useful. *Describe an event from your work that showed a cultural perspective different from your own. Explain how this event changed you, elicited new ideas and attitudes in you, and will help you to take a different stance in your school/classroom.* In Professional Meaning, students were asked to relate the assigned readings to their professional life. The questions were contextualized so as to ground reflection in the present and at a particular place. They were, however, broad enough to enable application in daily interactions.

Even further, the chat board format enabled and facilitated a responsive, responsible, and thoughtful interaction with peers (as a dialogic community). The framework not only allowed and encouraged ongoing conversations among us; it also extended and stretched the student's original perceptions or presuppositions through the process of revealment. This method can create personal growth through attitudinal and belief changes that are reflective, thoughtful, and critical/creative.

Even more important, however, were the class discussions. They were more generative and thoughtful as a result of the on-line activities. Why, one may ask? Students maintained that this phenomenon occurred because they interacted with each other in a more sensitive, responsive, and thoughtful manner first in written form and then orally. Responses were not "off the cuff" reactions. Rather, through our on-line responses, we tried to "enter into," "connect with," and "understand more deeply" what a person really was feeling or saying. As both readers and writers responding to the same questions, we recognized more acutely that each of us has presuppositions that need to be questioned and interrogated. Similarly, each of us realized that the growth process is slow, requires sensitivity, and a humane and honest response to what is perceived as the "other's bias."

An example using the Personal Life Reflection mentioned earlier makes explicit some of the dynamics that intersected on-line assignments and class discussions. The assignment was: *Describe an event from your work that showed a cultural perspective different from your own. Explain how this event changed you, elicited new ideas and attitudes in you, and will help you to take a different stance your school/classroom.* The student's response is as follows:

> I had a professor a few quarters back who spent a great deal of time poking fun at the "battle of the sexes." "Why couldn't women just give it a rest?" he would say. Even though he was kidding, I think several women took offense at his comments. I wasn't there yet, but I guess I learned that "deep down" many men of his generation truly believe these close-minded views to be OK. I hope my own three sons see the world differently in this regard someday.

Responding to the Written Student Log, Growing in Knowledge, and the Professional Meaning questions, the student's focus centered on gender issues as they relate to students and schools. She indicated that as she worked her way through the readings and assignments for the week, she realized that rather than just hoping that her sons see the world differently, her position as a teacher required that she take concrete steps to make certain that the sons of all women view the world differently. In other words, gender questions and issues are part and parcel of teaching and changes in curriculum are necessary if we are to address and transform attitudes and beliefs about gender.

Responses to the above reflection during on-line sessions and during class discussions enlarged the dialogue further. Even though this was the first class assignment, the need to incorporate other diversity issues emerged. A lively and

generative conversation which indicated attitudes and beliefs of "let it rest," "enough is enough," "too much stress on race and ethnicity, you get tired of it" allowed a larger discussion to emerge—one that incorporated other central diversity issues and the presuppositions and biases that need to be examined as we move the human community to respect subjectivity and differentiation within understandings that recognize the interdependence of all life. It was a wonderful beginning to a conversation that changed all the participants in the dialogue.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith's (2000) article, *Blind Vision: Unlearning Racism in Teacher Education,* has had a significant impact on the present writer during the progress of this course. Cochran-Smith wrote:

> To teach lessons about race and racism in teacher education is to struggle to unlearn racism itself—to interrogate the assumptions that are deeply embedded in the curriculum, to own our complicity in maintaining existing systems of privilege and oppression and to grapple with our own failure. (pp. 185–86)

One of the by-products of the course has been to prompt me to interrogate my own perceptions of the assumptions embedded in the curricula of the schools and school systems with which I have been associated throughout my career. I found myself questioning and changing along with my students.

Michelle's Story

Prior to moving to southwest Ohio, I worked as a principal in various diverse communities in Philadelphia and southern New Jersey. Having lived and worked most of my adult life in a multicultural environment, I was struck by the relative homogeneity of rural southwest Ohio. The students quoted below expressed a level of discomfort that is not surprising in light of this homogeneity.

Although students were warned that this course could, at times, make them feel uncomfortable, they were occasionally bothered and surprised by the emotions they experienced when issues of gender and race led to contentiousness. All of these students were pursuing master's degrees in educational administration. Because of infrequency of exposure to diverse cultures and relatively little experience working with diverse student populations, the majority of these teacher-students have not had the need to think deeply about these issues. It is optimistic to see that a graduate level course had the profound effect of leading so many students to begin questioning their beliefs and behaviors. The course had the impact of causing some of these adults "to interrogate the assumption" they have learned from childhood. Some of them are beginning to ask, "What can I do to make a difference?"

This class was taught at a rural off-campus site 30 minutes from downtown Dayton. There were 14 students, nine women, five men; 13 white students, one African American. They taught at schools whose students came from farming and working-class families; 11 schools were all white and three were predominantly white with less than six percent of African American students.

Teaching strategies included small group discussion, whole group instruction, PowerPoint presentations, story telling, and guest speakers. Textbooks: *Gender Tales*, Kleinfeld and Yerian (1995); *Making Meaning of Whiteness*, McIntyre (1997); *The Color of Water*, McBride (1996). Research-based articles on gender, race, and ethnicity were discussed. Students kept a weekly journal chronicling their reaction to readings and class discussions.

After reflection on class discussions and review of students' journals, I drew conclusions about the levels of cultural maturity of class members based on Helms' (1990) model of racial identity. The phases in Helm's discussion identify growth over a period of time. I found it useful to classify the expressions listed below by reference to Helm's model.

Phase 1: Contact (Lack of Awareness)

Nine of the 14 had no contact with people other than European Americans and had little awareness of diversity. Three had lived through the turbulent 1960s as college students. Of these, two were the most culturally aware and sensitive to others, while the third was relatively closed-minded. For instance, one student wrote:

> I often found myself frustrated because everything I read seemed prejudiced (against whites). I thought this class was supposed to teach us how to deal with different cultures, races and genders. But it seemed that the class was divided, instead of being united. We often got off topic, thus resulting in people sharing their thoughts and opinions. We often discussed acts that took place during the sixties and seventies. I realize that history is recorded so we can learn from it, but to harp on it is another issue. I didn't appreciate spending my time and money to (hear someone) moan and groan about how bad of a life someone had experienced. All the reading in this class had been frustrating.

Phase 2: Disintegration (Breakdown in Old Ways of Believing)

Eleven of the 14 began to question their ways of believing. Journal entries illustrate this phase; for instance, one student recorded:

> As I look back on the course, I notice a definite change in my attitude toward diversity issues. This journal has helped me sort through these feelings. It forced me to look at issues in my life and realize that while I thought of myself as nonprejudiced, my childhood rearing provided me with an environment that was prejudiced all by itself.

Phase 3: Reintegration (Blame the Victim, Flee from Responsibility)

During a heated discussion about race, one man walked out of class. He wrote,

> My departure was not directed toward any individual, but nothing more than a reflection of my frustration toward the accusations being cast throughout the room. I wanted the class to teach me how to deal with diversity, not argue about it!

Phase 4: Pseudoindependence (Move Toward New Understandings Through External Structures)

Four students were open to new ideas, eight were willing to listen, and two were closed-minded. One of the students, who I concluded was at this fourth level, wrote:

> I'm disturbed by the lack of African Americans on our National Honor Society and the high rate of failures for our black children on the state proficiency tests. Perhaps our minority students feel left out or because of their culture need to be educated somewhat differently? I'm deeply concerned and angry that most of our teaching and administrative staff don't seem concerned or to even notice. When I bring up the topic of our black students, I am either stared at as an alien or defensive, ambiguous, denying comments are made.

Phase 5: Immersion/Emersion (Exploration of All Layers and Perspectives)

One student at this level of awareness wrote in her journal:

> I found the "White Privilege" article very interesting. I had never looked at society being that way. One thing that I identify as a teacher as being "white privileged" is the Proficiency Test. I would like to know something about the people who made that test, did they come from different cultures other than the white culture.

Phase 6: Internalization of New Sense of Self

Two student journal entries reflect this high level of integrating issues of diversity into their personal perspectives:

> We need to feel uncomfortable so things will change, break the status quo. What every member of class needs to do is continue to act upon what we have learned in this class, which is a lot. We must take action. It begins with educators, I truly believe.

> Making Meaning of Whiteness reminds me of the struggle that people of color experience. It awakened in me the awareness of oppression that many people suffer in this country. More important, these readings awakened in me the sense of appreciation of the beauty of diversity and the need to work for acceptance and change.

Carolyn's Story

Sandra Parks (1999) addresses the issue of racism in schools in the April 1999 issue of *Educational Leadership*. She calls on educators to carry out some of the most difficult human activities . . . willingness "to examine unconscious, often deeply held assumptions; to acknowledge their own privilege or resentments; and

to recognize how their own values, priorities, and attitudes, and those of others of different ethnic or cultural groups, are expressed in community life and in school" (p. 14). The word "willingness" is, I think, key. Examining the unconscious is difficult enough, but perhaps, with enough tolerance and hard work, doable. But the willingness to engage in such examination is often the barrier.

In the Issues of Diversity course, perhaps the first steps for some of the educational administration students in willingness to confront the assumptions they hold, but have never examined, takes place. During the fall of 1999 I taught the Issues of Diversity course to 36 students, a class made up of both males and females, and both African American and white students. The course was structured around issues of race, gender, and ethnicity. I structured the syllabus to address gender first, because gender was a variable I had studied. I felt familiar with issues of gender; my doctoral dissertation was built on theories of gender role identity and I examined different teacher expectations for male and female students. That study, over 20 years earlier, had begun an ongoing interest in gender issues in the classroom as well as interest in women in leadership roles. Following gender as a focus, I moved into issues of race and ethnicity. Students had reading assignments, several critiques to prepare on articles describing research on issues of diversity, and a major project that each could select from several options, including an artistic creation, a miniethnographic study of a culture different from their own, a Web-sited annotated bibliography, and a set of film reviews. Each was required to keep a journal throughout the course into which to write at least twice a week. We learned from three guest lecturers as well.

One of the most productive activities was the essay during the first week, an essay identifying themselves. I asked them to write "an essay about who you are, about your culture." Many students needed to have the assignment clarified several times. They didn't understand what that assignment called for. I told them to write about "who you are, your family, where you came from, your heritage, your ethnicity, your family and what they valued, where and how you grew up."

Students wrote rich essays, many describing the focus of this writing as a new experience, many saying they hadn't thought about who they were; they hadn't considered their "identity." This was new. Advocates for antiracist schooling claim that the first step to bringing antidiscrimination and appreciation for multiculturalism to schools is for people making decisions in those schools to understand who they are. This type of activity, then, I thought, was essential. I learned a lot from the students.

I used the book of case studies, *Gender Tales* (1995), edited by Judith Kleinfeld and Suzanne Yerian. Students, in groups, discussed the cases: a girl on the wrestling team, a Hispanic girl torn between applying for college and following in her parents footsteps, bypassing higher education. The discussions were lively. My hunch that the students benefited from these case studies was borne out in the course evaluations on which several wrote that the case studies were the most powerful part of the course. A few women in the class were in their

40s or 50s. They had an awareness of discrimination against women in the job market that the younger teachers, both male and female, did not have. I had prepared a discussion on research findings related to gender differences and similarities in schools, including the areas of the lack of women at the highest levels of administrative influence, curriculum gaps in addressing women's experience, the voices of black women and black men, personnel decisions related to gender, extracurricular activities, and, probably, most important, achievement differences between males and females. Not only are girls and women ill served by stereotypical expectations, we devoted our discussions to what happens to boys in our culture when the stereotypes of masculinity restrict them. Bullying, violence, and body image problems were among the issues with which students were not aware.

Most of these data were new to the students, immediately reinforcing the need for the course. I shared the statistics on women in superintendencies and elementary and secondary principalships over the past century and a half. A few of the younger students (teachers in their late 20s or early 30s) were puzzled when I described the decision of the New York state board of education at the turn of the century to deny teaching positions to women. Cleverly, I thought, I inserted into this part of the discussion a satirical song that strong women in 1903 had written to protest their denial of these jobs. The song was "sung" by one man in the class whom I chose because he was a musician; and the refrain was sung by all of us. There were some puzzled looks among the class. After the song, as I continued with the discussion, one of the younger teachers expressed surprise and consternation as to why there would be such a policy barring women. With a look of consternation, he said he had never heard of such a thing.

The lack of awareness, let alone understanding, of the younger students about the differences in opportunities and the blatant discrimination against women was evident. They were unaware of this history and not sensitized to its continued presence. This latter came through after discussing teacher-student interaction in the classroom.

The research that shows that boys and girls are questioned differently by teachers (boys given more opportunities to talk, asked more questions, and given more substantive feedback; see, e.g., Sadker & Sadker, 1986, 1994; American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1995, 1999) was a section of this discussion. The week after that presentation, two students who were teachers reported to me during informal conversation before class. They had paid special attention to their own questioning patterns and were surprised to find that they did favor the boys.

Each of the gender issues warranted much more discussion than I allotted to them, primarily because the students in the class were so unaware of the dynamics of gender in schools. Clearly, issues of gender and race could be the center of two entire courses.

Addressing issues of race was more contentious than were issues of gender or ethnicity. The students read Martin Luther King's letter from the Birmingham jail. His eloquent prose articulating strong principles of social justice was not lost on the class. One student in the class, a woman who had previously described her experience of growing up in the South before and during the Civil Rights movement, asked me if she could bring some pictures and books to class to share some of her life experiences. She held the class spellbound as she showed several black-and-white photos of the town where she grew up. Her story of attending the "Blacks only" movie theatre and of sitting in the balcony in the white theatre, the only place she and her family were allowed, was profound for most of these students.

We read Peggy McIntosh's essay about unpacking whiteness (1989) and Alice McIntyre's *The Meaning of Whiteness* (1997). We read Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children* (1995). The discussion of all three readings was energetic, but particularly vigorous was the topic of White privilege. Peggy McIntosh lists 25 phenomena that privileges white individuals in our culture. I challenged the students to add to that list as they worked in groups. The tone of the group discussions became heated, at times, and tensions between black and white students was evident as they struggled to reach common ground. Merely agreeing on definitions of terms was fraught with dissention. There is almost nothing I could think of, I said, that is more volatile than race and that in this classroom we should feel safe to discuss it; that this was a haven for us to confront these issues in order to better understand ourselves and others and to develop a wiser perspective. Fortunately, we had agreed to endorse characteristics of a learning community that called each of us to be open, tolerant, nonjudgmental, and listening members. This helped. Some.

Two African American teachers in the class reflected in their journals that their lives had been largely unaffiliated with white people. Discussions of racial issues in schools were, for them, interesting to have with white peers in the class, but they seemed unhopeful that racism can change. At the end of the course, Linda, a white teacher in the class, came to my office to say that she'd never get over the contentious discussions of whiteness. She was disappointed, she said, that she took a class to learn about other people only to find herself accused of being racist. In her journal that she turned in at the end of class, she said she would resist talking about issues of race in the future. It was too dangerous. She was not going to try to understand it ever again.

Her discomfort must be discomfort we can bear. Parks (1999) addresses the point at which discussions of race and discrimination and oppression and unfairness become uncomfortable. Institutions (such as our educational leadership master's program) must become comfortable about their own and other people's discomfort about race. "Learning to face racism and to talk about it transformatively with others requires compassion toward oneself and others and sufficient intellectual character to not abandon the effort as it becomes distressing" (p. 18).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We have told our stories, each telling her own. Together, we have discussed what emerged as common in our experiences. Like Cochran-Smith (2000), we have experienced a wide range of reactions as we made first steps in teaching issues of diversity. We've been both stunned and reassured by our students and by ourselves. We're convinced that these issues need center stage in our program. We've learned what we might continue to do and what we might change in the future. Courses that deal with issues of diversity can create context for the entire program in preparing administrators. For example, the "unintended contradictions" (Cochran-Smith, 2000) between the mission of a program in educational leadership and what actually takes place in our students' understandings of administration, particularly as those issues of race and gender are concerned, can be specifically explored in courses like those we taught.

We wonder whether we as a faculty have committed ourselves to looking at our own attitudes and our own racism and sexism. Can we confront racism and sexism? Parks states: "White administrators, teachers, and teacher educators must largely undertake leadership responsibility" (p. 18). The burden is largely on those of us who are white (Kivel, 1996).

Managing the conflict facing issues of diversity might generate needs our continuing attention. The Florida College Student Diversity Study found in 1990 that 58 percent of the students reported that diversity education creates division and conflict (Van Norstrand, 1988). African American and Hispanic students, more than white students, believed that education for diversity was nothing more than political correctness. People of color, Parks (1999) interprets, have "an understandable skepticism about positive change in racial attitudes" (p. 16).

We are women. We are white. Our lenses begin there, but our reflections are shaped by the unique ways we facilitated these courses and the individual ways we attempted to construct meanings from our experiences with students. We learned, in many ways, what our students taught us. Sharing both the unique stories of each of us as well as the meaning that emerged from our combined effort is intended to raise issues that may be of value to those in other educational administration programs as they plan to embark on a similar journey with their students.

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