

Teaching the Teachers: Dismantling Racism and Teaching for Social Change

Elsa Cantú Ruiz · Norma E. Cantú

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Abstract As a response to the attacks on ethnic studies in Arizona and the move to ban certain books, this essay presents theoretical and pedagogical reflections from two professors and addresses the ways teacher preparation programs can offer a resistance. Based on the authors' experience in teacher preparation programs, one in the humanities and the other in mathematics, they discuss fundamental concepts that undergird social change methodology from Gloria Anzaldúa (la facultad and *co-cimiento*) and from Isabel Gunning's work (World Traveling). Ultimately, our premise is that teachers of teachers can impact the curricula in significant ways that result in dismantling racism and in teaching that is focused on positive social change. We posit that the university classroom where future teachers are trained must address (1) Equity issues, (2) Cultural identity or cultural framing, and (3) Culturally relevant strategies and teaching, modeled by the university professor.

Keywords Social change · Racism · Teacher education · Equity · Identity · Culturally relevant teaching

Introduction

Professors of future teachers preparing their students for a diverse twenty-first century global society must include issues of equity, cultural identity and be prepared to use culturally relevant strategies in their teaching. Thus they are

E. C. Ruiz (✉)
College of Education and Human Development, University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio,
TX, USA
e-mail: ELSA.RUIZ@utsa.edu

N. E. Cantú
Latina/o Studies and Department of English, University of Missouri, Kansas City, Kansas City, MO,
USA

preparing teachers to resist the erosion of the gains of the past 40 years in Latin@ civil rights struggles. The recent Arizona’s laws, SB 1467 states that public school educators at the state’s schools and universities can be fined, suspended, and ultimately fired if they engage “in speech and conduct that would violate the standards adopted by the Federal Communications Commission concerning obscenity, indecency, and profanity if that speech or conduct were broadcast on television or radio” (SB 1467 2012, p. 1). Arizona’s HB 2281 which similarly prohibits courses that allegedly “(1) promote resentment towards a race or class of people, (2) are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group, and (3) advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals” (HB 2281 2010, p. 2). These bills essentially affect teaching and curriculum in Arizona public schools and universities, and potentially elsewhere. HB 2281 targets the Mexican-American Studies Program in the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD); a number of teachers have been fired or reprimanded. In addition, Arizona Department of Education instructed school districts to remove teachers whose English was accented or ungrammatical from classes for students learning English (Jordan 2010). As engaged scholars who ground their pedagogy in Ethnic Studies issues, especially the Latin@ educational journey, and who work with future teachers of mostly Latin@ students, we seek to integrate equity concerns into our courses.

In this article we present approaches to integrating issues of equity into teacher preparation courses in English and mathematics. The first author, Ruiz, focuses on mathematics classroom pedagogies and the second author, Cantú addresses the English, specifically language and literature, pedagogies that can counter the silencing of certain texts which under that Arizona law would be rendered illegal.

As professors at a Hispanic Service Institution (HSI) in a major urban center in Texas we examined the impact the book banning in Arizona could potentially have on our efforts to institute a socially relevant and social justice focused curriculum. At first glance, the impact appears negligible, as no one is monitoring our classrooms or curtailing the textbooks we use or the topics we cover. But, the insidious aspect of Arizona’s actions, we fear, can very possibly affect our teaching; the ideas of banning and silencing history may seep through to Texas and beyond. The complexity of how textbooks are selected for the public schools, the ways that social constraints work within the school environment, and the very notion of charter schools all contribute to a form of rhizomic banning of ideas and the monitoring of teaching of certain content. Such a situation is what we feel we must resist by preparing teachers who are vigilant and aware of the racism inherent, often covert, in present day curriculum materials and policies.

When the TUSD released the list of its banned books, many were surprised to find that Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* was in the list that was prepared in an effort to avoid “biased, political and emotionally charged” teaching.¹ What they were not

¹ If one understands that Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* raises issues of equity and of subaltern subjects vis a vis power relations, it is not surprising that it would be on the list of banned books; however, it is surprising that a text from the literary canon of English Studies would appear on such a list. As Biggers explains in *State Out of the Union*, even one of the TUSD board members, Adelita Grijalva, was in “awe” of which books were on the list (2012b, p. 181).

surprised about was to find many Chicana and other non-mainstream writers on the list. Chicana literature has been suspect in various venues from the start. First, the Spanish departments often shunned teaching the literature because it was written in a non-traditional Spanish and the English departments likewise shunned the literature they deemed belonged in Spanish departments. Because of the political nature of much of Chicana literature, it has always been suspect, especially when it concerns matters of canonicity. The reason it was not a surprise is that the most recent Arizona legal move against the way teachers teach the history of the region is not the first. Two teachers were fired because of this. More recently, two other teachers, one from Michigan and one from Arizona, were fired for supporting their students against the law they see as discriminatory targeting Mexican-Americans and Latinos. Sean Arce, Tucson's head of the school district's Mexican-American Studies Program, was fired for speaking against the law that he felt was unconstitutional. Most recent attacks on Ethnic Studies are but contemporary manifestations of a long-lasting residue of the "culture wars" of the 80s and 90s that divided academic departments and scholars. But this contemporary iteration of racist positions comes at a time when the country and by extension its institutions of higher learning are no longer willing to accept and tolerate such conditions. Universities have always been the repositories of knowledge and where new epistemologies are nurtured. Thus, the banning of books and the elimination of Ethnic Studies constitute attacks on opportunities for teachers and educators to provide critical thinking to our students.

Words are powerful and books are more so. The goal of banning a book is to make it unavailable to an audience, a reader, who will take its contents and learn from it. Initially, many of these bans existed for moral reasons as sexually explicit material was deemed not appropriate for female readers, or for minors. In a country that prides itself in upholding the Bill of Rights and the freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights, it is inconceivable that its citizens are denied access to certain books. In the case of institutions of higher learning, the elimination of Ethnic Studies Programs is essentially a case of censorship as its citizens, the students, are denied access to information.

These racist bills constitute attacks on freedom of expression and are at the core a result of fear mongering, often tied to immigration (Rodriguez 2012) and sometimes tied to an ethnocentric narrow-mindedness that seeks to preserve an imagined and nostalgic past that was mostly white as some critics have claimed. But as Alcoff (2012) points out, in the *New York Times*, this constituency might want to reconsider as the demographics shift and the attitudes of younger people who do not believe that racism exists (*New York Times* 2012).

What can we as professors in universities and colleges do? We must confront the situation, and insist that we learn our own history, that if it is denied to us, we find ways to acquire the knowledge forbidden by the state's instruments of socialization, that is the school systems. Ethnic Studies is one clear way that we can insure that our history is affirmed. We must recognize that the university classroom can be the place for students to gain the *conocimiento* and to hone their *facultad*. But we must also recognize that the classroom is not the only place where learning happens.

Several grass root education projects have sprung up as a result of the situation in Arizona. In San Antonio, for example, the Southwest Workers Union project has a reading group focused on the banned books. During an early September Saturday morning, about a dozen folks gathered to discuss Chicana lesbian writer Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987, 2012). A couple of weeks later, the group met with San Antonio's poet laureate, Carmen Tafolla whose works are on the list of banned books. In Houston, Tony Diaz began the Librotraficante movement that led a caravan of writers and thinkers to Arizona bringing copies of the banned books and authors to read their work. Aside from these community led efforts, universities in and out of Arizona have also become venues for a kind of resistance.

We submit that these movements complement the university classroom experience and want to stress the connections between the formal classroom and the community classroom. Using the concepts of *la facultad* and of *conocimiento* from Anzaldúa (1987, 2012), we posit that the way to connect the classroom experience to the social justice movements is to allow future teachers to immerse themselves in the culture and life of their students. Working from Gunning's (1995) ideas, to be effective in doing this work, we must know the historical context of our own culture, and understand how the "other" may see us. When future teachers understand these concepts and have themselves come to an awareness, they will then instill in their students a sense of social justice and awareness of their place in the social system. To this end, both authors have used strategies in their classes to prepare future teachers and in-service teachers to address issues of equity in their classrooms, to break from the institutionalized environment that Arizona seeks to control by banning books and other materials and by dismantling Ethnic Studies programs that have proven successful in retaining students in school (Biggers 2012a).

But before continuing with the discussion of course content and offering specific examples, we would like to expand on the concepts of *facultad* and *conocimiento* as postulated by Anzaldúa (1987) and how we see the connection to our classroom practices to lead students to an awareness of and a transformation to a socially conscious, centered self. Anzaldúa (1987) introduces the concept of *la facultad*, in her path-breaking book, *Borderlands la frontera*, as such: "the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface...the one possessing the sensitivity is excruciatingly alive to the world" (p. 60). In the case of students of color, seeing the way deep structures shape the oppressions they have experienced may lead to *conocimiento* as well. Similarly, in her delineating the path to *conocimiento*, that is the knowledge that is born of experience and that works in conjunction with *la facultad* to enable the abject subject a way of survival, Anzaldúa seeks to define the social structures with the goal of dismantling these same structures. Our pedagogies in the teacher preparation classes render the issues of equity and social justice as focus points and function both as models and as instruction for implementing strategies for social change. We honor Anzaldúa's (2005) dictum to do work that matters in our classes rendering students who are in the process of decolonization; they in turn will decolonize their own classrooms and students.

Oftentimes glaringly absent from the course objectives in teacher preparation courses for pre-service teachers is the issue of equity, its effect on students' academic achievement, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse students, and the important role teachers play in equity pedagogy. Thus, the authors seek to insert this discussion into courses for future teachers and in that way resist attacks on Ethnic Studies and on students of color such as those that now exist in Arizona. Both authors practice culturally relevant pedagogies and exemplify, through their teaching, ways to use cultural frames and to practice decolonizing strategies when dealing with a diverse student body.

In this paper, we focus on two key courses where the impact is more evident. Ruiz's mathematics methods course (*Approaches to Teaching Mathematics*) and Cantú's senior seminar for English majors (*The Literature and Film of the US Mexico Border*) revolve around three frames of analysis: equity issues, cultural framing, and the use of culturally relevant strategies for teaching. In the following sections we demonstrate how each author's university teaching, especially of future teachers, draws upon elements that resist the Arizona (and other states') law through the Anzaldúan conceptual frameworks of *conocimiento* and *la facultad*.

Equity Issues in the Approaches to Teaching Mathematics Course

To address some of the issues presented by the Arizona legal actions against immigrants and ethnic minorities in the form of the bills, future teachers must be aware of equity issues and be conversant with the polemics around immigration and equity concerns for ethnic minority students. Texas, while not currently instituting legal bans as is Arizona, is also in some ways negating the existence of its own equity issues. Ruiz addresses equity issues in the mathematics secondary level methods course as a way of illustrating what professors in teacher preparation courses can do. She models the pedagogy that equity embraces showing her students how to implement certain strategies in their future classrooms with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

In addressing the equity issues Ruiz first introduces students to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) principles and standards, particularly to the equity principle. According to the NCTM's (2008) position on equity in the classroom,

Excellence in mathematics education rests on equity—high expectations, respect, understanding, and strong support for all students. Policies, practices, attitudes, and beliefs related to mathematics teaching and learning must be assessed continually to ensure that all students have equal access to the resources with the greatest potential to promote learning. A culture of equity maximizes the learning potential of all students (p. 1).

Additionally, throughout the semester she integrates some of the equity principles within her own assignments. For example, she has high expectations, presents culturally relevant lessons and asks students to assess curriculum and self-created

lesson plans that illustrate challenging, rigorous, and meaningful mathematics for all students.

First and foremost, Ruiz introduces her high school mathematics pre-service teachers to the equity principles and pedagogy addressed by the NCTM principles. According to Banks (2007) equity pedagogy is defined as “teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within and to help create and perpetuate a just, humane, and democratic society” (p. 92–93). Hence, she challenges the pre-service teachers to create lesson plans and develop teaching strategies that focus on “facilitating the learning process” (Banks 2007, p. 94) as they prepare to teach with equity pedagogy in mind. In addition, she invites the pre-service teachers to reflect on their own conceptions of equity issues in secondary mathematics and how these issues will be addressed by them. She asks that the students write an autohistoria, to use Anzaldúa’s term for a personal story. One student, for instance, told of her experience in elementary school when her teacher told her she was not ready to learn; the student assumed the teacher told her that because she came from a working poor family she could not possibly be ready to learn certain concepts. Microaggressions can be named and exorcised through this assignment. In another instance, a student recalled a seventh grade teacher telling him, “you’ll end up becoming a janitor, like your Dad.”

She also assigns readings on equity (e.g., Linda Darling-Hammond, Angela Valenzuela), critical race theory (e.g., Richard Delgado), multicultural education (e.g., James Banks, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Sonia Nieto, Patricia Quijada Cerecer), and culturally responsive teaching (e.g., Geneva Gay, Rosa Hernández-Sheets, Lisa D. Delpit) to pique interest and prompt discussions about all these topics and how they are related to each other and to equitable teaching practices in the mathematics classroom. One of the objectives of her course is for students to understand the philosophy behind the equity principle as noted in the NCTM standards. And more important to know how to create and sustain a culture of equity in the secondary mathematics classroom. One key element in creating and sustaining a culture of equity is to have all students respect and value each other’s work; consequently she creates a safe classroom environment where everyone is respected and valued. Her goal is to have students create, present and improve on mathematics lessons that exemplify equity for all students. Additionally, she wants her students to understand the importance of maintaining their own cultural identity and heritage without losing sight of their student’s academic achievement (Gay 2000) when creating and presenting lessons to an increasingly diverse group of students. One way that she does that with her students is to have them do a lesson study project.²

In the lesson study project students, in carefully selected groups of 6 students, are directed to plan and create a mathematics lesson that will encompass the equity principles. It must include “...high expectations, culturally relevant practices, attitudes that are free of bias, and unprejudiced beliefs that expand and maximize

² The lesson study approach is a “process that Japanese teachers engage into systematically examine their practice with the goal of becoming more effective” (Lesson Study Research Group, n.d.).

the potential for learning” (NCTM 2008). The lesson must be rigorous and meaningful and should integrate culturally relevant strategies.

One student from the group will then teach their lesson to the class while the other five students observe the lesson. At the end of the presentation the group will gather and discuss observations with the intent of making the lesson a better one in terms of equity and ultimately learn from their own examinations of practice. Discussion and reflections then follows which will show students how examining their own practices will provide them an opportunity to reflect on their culture frame and culturally relevant strategies. The students will improve the lesson based on their own and the group’s observations and reflections and will make it a more culturally relevant one for students. The “new and improved” lesson is presented one more time and another discussion/reflection will follow to see how the new lesson affected the students. In addition the lesson study gives the students a great opportunity to “share their thinking, listen to others and support and contribute to the community’s learning...All members of the classroom group must accept the responsibility to engage with and support one another throughout the learning experience” (NCTM 2008, p. 1). This is a great opportunity for students to examine their own culture frame as it relates to lesson planning and teaching practices.

Lesson study goes far beyond simply improving a lesson—it challenges teachers to improve their own classroom instruction by respecting and valuing each other’s work. By observing and analyzing the lessons the pre-service teachers will understand equity issues and what they can do in a mathematics classroom to counter the xenophobic attacks to communities of color.

Equity Issues in the English Classroom

Cantú similarly employs equity pedagogy and structures assignments and selects texts in her course that will both inform about and question the current rhetoric on issues such as immigration. The senior seminar is a course designed to be a capstone for English majors many of whom are to be English teachers at various levels from elementary to secondary; professors who teach the course choose a subtitle for the course. When Cantú teaches the course, it is often subtitled “The US-Mexico Borderlands in Literature and Film.” She has also taught the course as “Testimonio, Autobiography and Life-Writing,” and as “Coming of Age Narratives.” In all instances, and because it is the capstone course, she works within the framework of Gloria Anzaldúa’s theories of writing from the margins and centers the experience of such work. In all instances, she includes ideas of equity; the intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991) between and among class, race, sexuality, ability, and gender issues enters the discussion of literary texts and films. For example, historical novels such as Pérez’ *Forgetting the Alamo* (2010) and Paredes’ *George Washington Gomez* (1990) and González and Raleigh’s *Caballero* (1996) and novels by authors that deal with contemporary issues such as Benjamin Alire Saenz and Reyna Grande are read using a Chicana third space feminist lens that uses the work of Anzaldúa (1987, 2012), Sandoval (2000) and Pérez (1999).

In keeping with equity pedagogical practices, she assigns activities that incorporate students' perceptions and questions their assumptions. One such assignment asks students to be involved in an outside activity, such as visiting a cultural center in town, or volunteering at a venue or attending an event relevant to the topic, i.e., a lecture on immigration sponsored by the Mexico Center on campus; or volunteering in an immigrant's rights organization. Integral to the class are opportunities for shared work thus allowing students to develop affective skills and to work with each other. For example, in addition to the assigned readings, each student must select an additional novel to present to the class following a rubric that asks for an exploration of the text's place within the topic. Two or more students choose the novels from a list provided by Cantú and they then collaborate in presenting the work to the rest of the class.

Cantú has as a goal for the class that they learn to structure lessons that exemplify equity for all students while respecting and valuing each other's work. To that end, she has them present their projects as if they were teaching a class and issues of equity often arise as students design a power point to present information on topics of their choosing. Because of the topic of the class, students invariably choose topics, such as the femicides in Ciudad Juarez,³ impelled by the readings and films assigned for class. During the debates on the Arizona laws, for example, students chose topics such as the history of Ethnic Studies or the issue of banned books. Every year the American Library Association celebrates National Banned Book Week, and when the class happens in the fall, Cantú includes a discussion on books by Chican@s that have been banned, such as *Bless Me Ultima* (Anaya 1972).

Additionally, Cantú insists that her students, many of them Latin@s who do not speak Spanish and may not have had read a single book by a Latin@ author, even though they are English majors and have been reading literary texts for at least 6 courses, explore their own positionality vis-a-vis the texts; in other words, she assigns reflection papers that help them understand the importance of maintaining ones cultural identity and heritage and affirming and respecting one another's root culture.

This discussion of cultural values offers us a segue into a discussion of the cultural frame that we believe allows students and teachers to engage in actions that can counter the attacks perpetrated by laws such as those in Arizona that ban certain books from high school classrooms, or English-only laws that constitute what Anzaldúa (2012) calls a linguistic terrorism (p. 80).

Cultural Framing

One of the five ideas included in Powell and Kusuma-Powell's (2011) book, *How to teach now: Five keys to personalized learning in the global classroom* is to look at what effect the individual's cultural frame has on teaching approaches and how to uncover those effects. Thus, one of the assignments Ruiz designed for her students

³ The term "femicides" refers to the murders of over 600 women in Ciudad Juarez during the last 15 years. One of the films and two of the novels deal with this issue and thus students may choose to further research the topic.

is to read, discuss and interpret the meaning of the equity principle as it relates to their culture frame and its effect on them as mathematics students from elementary through high school and as future mathematics teachers. To illustrate the relationship of their culture to their own mathematics story they create a Pecha Kucha (a short powerpoint with voice over consisting of 20 slides, 20 s per slide). Students present their Pecha Kuchas to the class and realize how students' cultural backgrounds enhance all students' mathematical and cultural understandings. They then deconstruct the stories as a whole and do a critical analysis of any intersectionalities, such as gender, class, or race that were found within and among the presentations. This provides students with the acknowledgement that as teachers they must plan lessons that are culturally relevant to their particular students. This leads into a class discussion about students' funds of knowledge (González et al. 2005) that are a key to what and how students experience success in school.

Similarly, Cantú offers her students opportunities for relevant cultural framing that enhance the learning process and strengthens their tool box, as it were, as they prepare to go out to teach English; where invariably they will have to confront the racist assumptions of their peers. English teachers are notorious for devaluing the cultural capital that their students bring to the classroom and of perpetrating microaggressions that damage students' self-esteem. The numerous accounts of Latin@ students whose work has been challenged and assumed to be plagiarized exist as insensitive teachers accuse the competent Latin@ student of improper intellectual work. Thus, it is particularly important that future English teachers attend to the cultural frames students bring to the classroom. In the 1970s, the National Council of Teachers of English published a document, "Students' Right to their own Language" that provoked a polemic that only intensified later with the rise of Eubonics. Still, the persistence of prejudicial and biased teaching that occurs in English classrooms continues.

In Cantú's classroom, students become aware of the various ways literature and film can open up discussions of linguistic, ethnic, and racial as well as gender and sexuality issues. By engaging in the difficult discussions and unpacking the sometimes negative cultural frames in a text or a film, students are doubly served as they incorporate many of these learning strategies for themselves and are then equipped to take them into their own classrooms. One example will suffice. Cantú often has her student use drawing to explain theoretical concepts. In one such exercise, as the class using colored markers on butcher paper was drawing the various concepts in Anzaldúa's book, *Borderlands/la Frontera*, a Chinese student suddenly realized that the concept of borderlands and of bridging could apply to Hong Kong and Taiwan with the many bordered spaces inherent in that cultural frame. Thus, cultural framing for instruction in the mathematics classroom or in the English classroom will function as a shield against the homogenizing intent of the Arizona laws and will allow for differences to be taught and celebrated.

Culturally Relevant Strategies and Teaching

Because most of the students enrolled in the mathematics methods course and in the English senior seminar course will most likely be working with underachieving

minority students, especially Latin@ students, in the public schools in the region, they must be prepared to teach with these students in mind by using culturally responsive pedagogy (CRT). According to Gay (2000) CRT uses students' strengths, diverse learning styles, students' prior experiences and cultural knowledge to teach them. For pre-service students in Ruiz' classroom learning the elements of CRT is essential, for with such a concept they can not only be better teachers of mathematics, but they can be better teachers overall. We submit that they will be armed with the tools for decolonizing their classrooms, that is, by developing the *conocimiento* and using *la facultad*, they will be ready to employ culturally relevant strategies in their teaching.

According to Gay (2002) there are five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching: (1) developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, (2) including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, (3) demonstrating caring and building learning communities, (4) communicating with ethnically diverse students, and (5) responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction (p. 106). In preparing our students to teach using culturally relevant pedagogy we address each of Gay's essential elements throughout the semester. In the next section, we show how our classrooms serve as excellent locations for teaching future teachers the tools for affirming the very things that the Arizona laws seek to obliterate: culturally relevant material.

Developing a Knowledge Base About Cultural Diversity

While it is somewhat easier for English teachers to do so, oftentimes, teachers of mathematics feel that it is almost impossible to combine their subject matter with cultural diversity (Gay 2002). This is often the case when they lack knowledge about what cultural diversity means in the context of mathematics content. Consequently, in order to develop the knowledge base about cultural diversity, Ruiz structures her reading assignments to include texts (i.e., Gay, Ladson-Billings, and Lipman, among others) about cultural diversity and CRT and then directs students to reflect in writing and discuss the reading assignments within groups. Cantú also directs students to reflect on their experiences with CRT; one key assignment asks students to use Bloom's and Krathwohl's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956) and Anderson's and Krathwohl's (2001) revised Bloom's Taxonomy and design questions about their reading according to the various levels. In doing this, she inserts epistemologies drawn from Anzaldúa (1987; 2012) and other Chicana feminist thinkers such as Sandoval (2000) that elicit higher level critical thinking within a culturally relevant discourse. Additionally, Cantú inserts activities that sustain cultural expressions; her students construct an *Ofrenda*, a Day of the Dead altar, at a local community cultural center, thus, meeting one of the goals for the class: building class community. Additionally, students develop a knowledge base about cultural diversity.

Ensuring Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Content in the Curriculum

Both authors concur with Gay (2002) who claims that "Culturally responsive teachers know how to determine the multicultural strengths and weaknesses of

curriculum designs and instructional materials and make the changes necessary to improve their overall quality” (p. 108). Using the lesson study project Ruiz teaches her students to plan effective culturally relevant lessons and critically analyze the curriculum provided by surrounding districts. In addition, she makes certain that the content of the curriculum she presents to the class is ethnically and culturally diverse and uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that address different learning styles. This exercise allows for interactive learning and critical feedback to occur. Thus the students achieve the goal of ensuring ethnic and culturally diverse content in the lesson and learn a useful technique that will stay with them for the rest of their teaching careers.

Cantú by including diverse texts and exposing students to a number of novels and films (and sometimes short stories and poetry as well as plays) by Latin@ writers provides the students with relevant materials. No doubt knowing about such works will impact their own text selections as they embark on their teaching careers. In addition, the methods used to teach culturally relevant materials—such as interactive and performative methodologies—allows the future teachers to enhance their repertoire. The feedback from the professor and from their peers allows students to reflect on the content of their presentations; for example, if the novel to be presented to the class is a historical novel, the group must research both the publishing history of the book as well as the historical content of the novel and thus they successfully integrate culturally relevant content into their presentation. Ultimately, such strategies will manifest in curriculum design in their future classrooms.

Undoubtedly, the teachers in Arizona restricted as they are in terms of content will find it difficult to prepare culturally relevant content for their classrooms. However, the Arizona law that places constraints on the kind of course content would be very difficult to enforce since all teaching includes cultural references and is couched within a cultural milieu.

Demonstrating Caring and Learning Communities

Ruiz and Cantú ensure that their students understand that culturally relevant pedagogy allows for success on various levels: it is in the students best interest; it ensures that learning takes place; it makes for a smooth and successful classroom environment; and, it produces students who are responsible and caring for each other. Ruiz and Cantú insure that class meetings are based on building a caring and learning community. Therefore, during class meetings students are assigned to different collaborative groups where everyone, including the professor, works together to ensure that all members of the group have acquired the knowledge of the content presented. They are led to see that caring is “action oriented” in that it demonstrates high expectations and uses imaginative strategies to ensure academic success for ethnically diverse students (Gay 2002, p. 110). In Ruiz’s case, her students’ level of anxiety is minimized as the group coalesces into a safe and caring community where mistakes are tolerated and understood and where judgmental pronouncements are shunned. Similarly, in Cantú’s classroom, students are led, principally through a series of writing exercises, to establish strong bonds between

and among themselves.⁴ It is not uncommon for classes to bond so that they continue seeing each other after the semester is over. In one particular group—albeit not the senior seminar—the group continues meeting regularly for lunch 4 years after the course ended. Another strategy Cantú employs in an effort to create a caring classroom environment was highlighted in the book *Sentipensante Pedagogy* by Rendón (2009); the students are led through a ritual to be rid of the fears and anxiety that grammar often brings for non-English dominant students.

Communicating with Ethnically Diverse Students

Ruiz and Cantú work with the future teachers so that they have opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of ethnically diverse students as a preface to their teaching experiences. Ruiz's students participate in a field experience where they are given the opportunity to communicate with ethnically diverse students and observe in-service teachers methods of addressing their needs. For 10 weeks during their field experience they are expected to observe and reflect in writing the “patterns of task engagement and organizing ideas” (Gay 2002, p. 112), communication styles, and the overall participation of discourse of the different ethnic groups. These observations are then discussed and theorized as needed during class meetings.

In Cantú's class, students interact with each other and in their visits to cultural centers or to lectures come into close contact with diverse student populations. The literature and films provide further exposure to culturally diverse situations and allows for discussions of difference within the Latin@ communities.

Responding to Ethnic Diversity in the Delivery of Instruction

Pre-service teachers must not only be aware of cultural diversity that exists in the classroom but also how to deliver effective instruction to all students. The teaching of ethnically diverse students has to be “multiculturalized” (Gay 2002, p. 112) as it were. Again with the lesson study project, Ruiz's students learn how to change, revise and adapt lessons in order to deliver instruction that is culturally relevant to a diverse group of students. For example, when students are analyzing their lessons they focus on multicultural content. In one instance, a lesson on tessellations was revised to include quilt-making; a cultural practice often found in Latino communities. Thus, the pre-service teacher understands the importance of adapting a traditional mathematics lesson to students' cultural context.

Similarly, Cantú's students learn that the audience is a key player in any communication system, especially that of the teacher to the student. Cantú's students in their presentations are expected to insure that all student needs are met. For example, students presenting on novels about the border often add regional cultural information. Thus, when students present on Castillo's (2008) text, *The Guardians*, they often include geographical as well as cultural information alongside the literary analysis of this novel that unpacks a number of issues around

⁴ For writing exercises Cantú employs in her classes, see Johnston (2008).

immigration from a feminist perspective. In addition to the usual literary analysis, these presentations involve a culturally relevant context for both the narrative and the creation of the text. The books in many of these classes are on the TUSD list of banned books and the students are made aware of this fact with the intention of reaffirming their knowledge about conditions they may face when they become teachers.

Delivering effective classes for dismantling racism and for affirming *conocimiento* is a way to respond to the ethnic diversity in the classroom itself and when dealing with students who are to be teachers, it is a way to instill a sense of how world traveling as defined by Gunning (1995) leads to a decolonizing project. That is, knowing one's own history as well as that of other groups' instills a sense of empathy as well.

Conclusion

As we conclude this paper, we reflect on the way professors of pre-service teachers integrate (1) Equity issues, (2) Cultural identity or cultural framing, and (3) Culturally relevant strategies and teaching, modeled by the university professors, and thus allow for a resistance to the racism and socially conservative notions of education that the Arizona laws exemplify or promote. By using culturally relevant pedagogies in our mathematics and English classes, we submit, university professors can offer a resistance to the xenophobic laws and tenets of a government that will deny a people knowledge about their own history or access to literature that will affirm their existence as “othered” subjects within the U.S. as do the laws in Arizona. In Texas in particular, the onus is on the teachers to practice culturally relevant teaching since the subject of Ethnic Studies itself is not taught in the public schools and only minimally so at the college and university level.

In our courses, we advocate for teachers to be *concientes* of the insidious attacks on the education of students of color in Arizona and by extension everywhere as the ideas of curtailing and censoring knowledge appear to be spreading to other states. Arizona has become the testing ground for legal actions against people of color, especially students and potentially faculty as well. It is our contention that teachers of teachers can impact this state of affairs by instituting curricula that result in dismantling racism and in teaching that is focused on positive social change. In terms of equity principles as outlined by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and by the National Council of Teachers of English, the professor whose students will become the classroom teachers will be in the frontlines. Having a solid preparation will enable them to resist and be true to these principles. In terms of the cultural identity or cultural framing, we submit that cultural framing for instruction in the mathematics classroom or in the English classroom will function as a shield against the homogenizing intent of the Arizona laws and will allow for difference to be taught and celebrated. Finally, in preparing teachers to use culturally relevant strategies and materials we acknowledge that it is in the best interest of all students, and society at large, that the future teachers be prepared to address the concerns and needs of a growing culturally diverse student population.

The racism evident in the legal actions in Arizona against non-mainstream, or non-hegemonic, ideas and people, especially students of color draws from a history of power relations and political negotiations that harken back to the establishment of the US-Mexico border and to historical conflict between the Native American and Latin@ populations in the state. Our premise is that by teaching teachers with a culturally sensitive curriculum university professors can counter these assaults against targeted populations.

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