The New Politics of the Textbook
Problematizing the Portrayal of Marginalized Groups in Textbooks

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In an age of unprecedented corporate and political control over life inside of educational institutions, this book provides a needed intervention to investigate how the economic and political elite use traditional artifacts in K-16 schools to perpetuate their interests at the expense of minoritized social groups. The contributors provide a comprehensive examination of how textbooks, the most dominant cultural force in which corporations and political leaders impact the schooling curricula, shape students’ thoughts and behavior, perpetuate power in dominant groups, and trivialize social groups who are oppressed on the structural axes of race, class, gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability. Several contributors also generate critical insight in how power shapes the production of textbooks and evaluate whether textbooks still perpetuate dominant Western narratives that normalize and privilege patriotism, militarism, consumerism, White supremacy, heterosexism, rugged individualism, technology, and a positivistic conception of the world. Finally, the book highlights several textbooks that challenge readers to rethink their stereotypical views of the Other, to reflect upon the constitutive forces causing oppression in schools and in the wider society, and to reflect upon how to challenge corporate and political dominance over knowledge production.
THE NEW POLITICS OF THE TEXTBOOK
CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE: CURRICULUM STUDIES
IN ACTION

Volume 1

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Scope

“Curriculum” is an expansive term; it encompasses vast aspects of teaching and learning. Curriculum can be defined as broadly as, “The content of schooling in all its forms” (English, p. 4), and as narrowly as a lesson plan. Complicating matters is the fact that curricula are often organized to fit particular time frames. The incompatible and overlapping notions that curriculum involves everything that is taught and learned in a particular setting and that this learning occurs in a limited time frame reveal the nuanced complexities of curriculum studies.

“Constructing Knowledge” provides a forum for systematic reflection on the substance (subject matter, courses, programs of study), purposes, and practices used for bringing about learning in educational settings. Of concern are such fundamental issues as: What should be studied? Why? By whom? In what ways? And in what settings? Reflection upon such issues involves an inter-play among the major components of education: subject matter, learning, teaching, and the larger social, political, and economic contexts, as well as the immediate instructional situation. Historical and autobiographical analyses are central in understanding the contemporary realities of schooling and envisioning how to (re)shape schools to meet the intellectual and social needs of all societal members. Curriculum is a social construction that results from a set of decisions; it is written and enacted and both facets undergo constant change as contexts evolve.

This series aims to extend the professional conversation about curriculum in contemporary educational settings. Curriculum is a designed experience intended to promote learning. Because it is socially constructed, curriculum is subject to all the pressures and complications of the diverse communities that comprise schools and other social contexts in which citizens gain self-understanding.
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Edited by

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Textbooks, especially when found in US public school settings, are inherently political documents (Apple, 2004). In some quarters, this would be a highly controversial, nay, inflammatory statement. And yet, the history of curriculum textbooks is filled with endless examples of just how politically oriented our instructional materials have been. From US history texts that extolled the virtues of slavery in the South to biology texts that skirt discussions of evolution, one can read the history of US textbooks as a political history of who has meaningful power to shape what is taught—and who does not. Furthermore, who is being represented in texts and how various sociological groups are represented are also determined by those with political power. Consequently, many historically minoritized groups have been portrayed in texts as “other,” as being “lesser Americans” be they African Americans, Hispanic Americans, all women, queers, and going back a mere 100 years, Irish Catholics.

The authors and editors of The New Politics of the Textbook: Problematizing the Portrayal of Marginalized Groups in Textbooks unpack these dynamics of power and how they influence who gets portrayed and how. They cover an impressive amount of “ground” in their explorations, from ESL, to science and mathematics education, to the invisibility of many Americans, and beyond. Throughout the text, the authors and editors present nuanced analyses as they unpack how politics shapes the very work that teachers do. While all employ a critical frame, they each bring their own understandings to bear. It makes for a lively and engaging read.

I would suggest you consider the following issues as you move through this book.

For scholars:

1. How do the textbooks you assign in your classes marginalize historic “others?” Who is visible? Who is left invisible? What material is just flat out erroneous?
2. How do the projects (research papers, group projects and the like) similarly marginalize historic “others?” Who is visible? Who is left invisible?
3. What concrete steps can you take to readdress the political imbalances within your own curricular materials?
For educators:

1. How do the textbooks used in your classes marginalize historic “others?” Who is visible? Who is left invisible? What material is just flat out erroneous?
2. How do the projects (research papers, group projects and the like) similarly marginalize historic “others?” Who is visible? Who is left invisible?
3. Are your textbooks determined by a faculty committee, the school board, or the state board of education? What are the political processes in textbook adoption? Knowing these facts, what concrete steps can you take to readress the political imbalances within your own curricular materials?

For interested readers:

1. How do the textbooks used in your public school district marginalize historic “others?” Who is visible? Who is left invisible? What material is just flat out erroneous?
2. How do the projects (research papers, group projects and the like) similarly marginalize historic “others?” Who is visible? Who is left invisible?
3. Are your textbooks determined by a faculty committee, the school board, or the state board of education? What are the political processes in textbook adoption? Knowing these facts, what concrete steps can you take to readress the political imbalances within your own curricular materials?

There is considerable overlap in the questions I posed for each of these three audiences. But we are all political actors living in an ostensibly democratic republic and we have much in common. It is this shared ground where we can come together to work for better, more just, more accurate, textbooks. But we can only find this shared ground if we can reflect on what we know, hold in common, as well as be honest about what we don’t know, and seek to remedy that ignorance.

One large step in the remedying our various forms of ignorance is to sit back and read what these talented scholars have unpacked for us all. At times, it is a very difficult read – to realize just how badly some children (and we) are (and were) lied to (Lowen, 1995). Nevertheless, as Hannah Arendt noted, we are all moral and political actors. Therefore, we must all think, judge and then we must act upon those judgments (2006). The authors and editors of this wonderful book help us in all of these areas of thinking, judging and ultimately acting when it comes to the politics of textbooks and marginalization.
REFERENCES

CONTRIBUTORS

Faith Agostinone-Wilson is Associate Professor of Education at George Williams College of Aurora University. She is the author of *Marxism and Education beyond Identity: Sexuality and Schooling*, and has several articles published in *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies, Radical Notes*, and *Public Resistance*. A member of the Rouge Forum educational collective, Faith lives in Waukegan, Illinois and her research interests include education policy, sexuality, and counter-hegemonic research methodologies. Currently she is writing a book focusing on Marxist research methods to be published by Peter Lang as part of their Critical Qualitative Research series.

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Mary Christianakis is an Associate Professor of Critical Theory and Social Justice at Occidental College. Having received her Ph.D. in Language, Literacy, and Culture from UC Berkeley, she studies literacy development from a critical sociocultural perspective, primarily in urban and multilingual school contexts. Her work explores instructional practices related to the development of written language and, more broadly, how children negotiate academic membership within official school structures. Dr. Christianakis is also interested in literacy development in out-of-school settings, such as community and cultural centers. Her scholarly writing has focused on curriculum and instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse children.
Denise Michelle Cornish is an independent scholar whose focus is on the issues of gender, class, and race. In 2010, her Master’s thesis, “Mourning Women, Headless Monsters, and Passive Goddesses: Examining the Inclusion of Females in University Art Curriculum” was nominated for the Student Achievement Award by the College of Education: Behavioral Science and Gender Equity Studies at California State University, Sacramento. As an agent of the University of California’s Youth Development Program, she is currently designing and developing a project for youth to create hand-crafted books focusing on social justice issues which will then be displayed and entered in county and state competitions.

Kate Cummings has a passion for preserving the history and culture of her heritage and passes on these lifeways to her family and others in her spiritual community. She is active in the Indigenous recovery community and has worked in the field of addictions treatment for over 17 years. She received her Master’s degree in Human Services from Lincoln University, the oldest Black university in the country in 2005 and her Doctorate in Education from Fielding Graduate University in 2010. The topic of her dissertation was a grounded theory study of how people come to grips with loss. She hopes to offer this innovative perspective on loss to people enduring the trauma of Indigenous boarding schools and other historic or cultural losses.

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Recent honors include the Paul S. Silver Award for the outstanding article in the *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership* (with Autumn K. Tooms), the Scholar-Activist Award (AERA-Queer Studies SIG), and the William J. Davis Award for the outstanding article in *Educational Administration Quarterly* (with Autumn K. Tooms and Ira Bogtoch).

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HEATHER HICKMAN AND BRAD J. PORFILIO

INTRODUCTION

As numerous transformative scholars have correctly argued, the dominant political and economic elite at today’s historical juncture use mass media and various forms of speed technologies to inculcate globalized citizens to embrace the dominant economic structures and ideologies concentrating wealth and cultural power into the hands of a privileged few (Giroux, 1997; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Kellner, 2007; McLaren, 1995). Chief in the elites’ repertoire of gaining consent from the masses for the larger economic and social structures and their corresponding policies and practices is creating visual megaspectacles and corporate and political sound bites that characterize minoritized social groups in a degenerative light (Cortes, 2000; Fleras & Kunz, 2001; Loewen, 2007). For instance, racialized and ethnic groups are continuously vilified and positioned as the sole source of society’s problems through corporatized outlets such as newscasts, films, television shows, advertisements, blogs, and videogames. By characterizing the Other as criminals, terrorists, communists, welfare queens, Ebonic speakers, and drug addicts, the ruling elite ensures most citizens blame the victims for social and economic problems, rather than grappling with how the elite benefit from these false characterizations as well as from the economic and social systems that are responsible for a failing economy, social problems, and human suffering and misery.

Despite the needed insight of how the political and economic elite demonizes, trivializes, and miniaturizes the Other through media culture in order to garner consent for their policies, structures, and practices, critical scholars have generally failed to investigate how they use traditional artifacts in K-12 schools to perpetuate their interests at the expense of minoritized social groups. To this end, the contributors in this volume provide a comprehensive examination of how textbooks, the most dominant cultural force in which corporations and political leaders impact the schooling curricula, shape students’ thoughts and behavior, perpetuate power in dominant groups, and trivialize social groups who are oppressed on the structural axes of race, class, gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability (Apple, 2006). The contributors also generate critical insight in guiding students and preservice and inservice teachers to analyze how power shapes the production of textbooks and to evaluate whether textbooks still perpetuate dominant Western narratives that normalize and privilege patriotism, militarism, consumerism, White supremacy, heterosexism, rugged individualism, technology, and a positivistic conception of the world (Kornfeld, 1998; Wong, 1991; Lugg, 2003; Meyer, 2008). Finally, they excavate whether some textbooks provide alternative narratives to
those propagated by the majority of business and political leaders, whether they offer teachers and students counter-hegemonic views of knowledge, citizenship, minoritized groups, and the economic and social systems in North America.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this edited volume is to highlight the urgent need for educators to recognize how corporate and political powerbrokers’ desire to commodify social life and control youths’ subjectivities is leading to the regulating of knowledge production in K-16 classrooms through textbooks. The contributors of this volume critically pinpoint how commercial interests characterize the contributions, struggles, and accomplishments of historically subjugated populations in Western contexts and whether these narratives have the potential to bring awareness to and the elimination of the oppressive conditions encountered by the Other. They also take inventory of whether commercial logics, Western values, and dominant social norms are being propagated through these cultural texts. Finally, they provide pedagogical projects aimed at shedding light on how students, teachers, and other school personnel can become aware of the political and economic interests behind the production of textbooks, of the hidden agendas propagated by academic and business leaders through these political texts, and of subjugated knowledge and accomplishments and contributions of the Other that tend to be omitted from mainstream texts. This type of critical teaching is necessary to foster students’ critical understanding of the social world.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

Sadly, since 1991, there has been little research on the impact of textbook content on students (Sedgwick, 1985; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Frederickson, 2004; Woodrow, 2007). What research has been conducted remains unconnected to other recent studies. For example, Woodrow’s work (2007) considers culture as reflected in middle school science textbooks while Frederickson (2004) examines gender in history textbooks. Individually, these studies suggest the types of Othering found in textbooks. Bringing these and other stories together in this volume paints a more clear and accurate view of the impact of politics and commercialism on textbooks and students.

Given the new age of testing ushered in by No Child Left Behind, the corporate dominance over textbook production inside and outside of the US, and the US’s quest for cultural and economic dominance since 9/11 (Chomsky, 2003) it is important to examine the materials used with children in schools for the messages both explicit and implicit in the content.

For example, the decision by the Texas State Board of Education to “water down the teaching of the civil rights movement, slavery, [and] American’s relationship with the U.N.” (Castro, 2010) is one example of the conservative attitudes impacting curricula. Not coincidentally, textbook manufacturers and White elite citizens were behind the attempt to propagate lies about the nature of the US
society and to further narrow what students learn from textbooks. These groups support their own economic and social dominance when they stymie teachers from reflecting upon what groups enjoy unearned privileges and entitlements due to the institutional arrangements that have been in place in the US for over 400 years. Further, they position teachers to view textbooks as rarified forms of knowledge that not only should never be questioned, but also must be at the center of their instruction, where students continually regurgitate this information to pass a battery of high-stakes examinations and come to believe social and economic inequalities are individual rather than social and economic phenomena. In a similarly narrow move, the Arizona State Legislature passed HB 2281, which

prohibits a school district or charter school from including in its program of instruction any courses or classes that: promote the overthrow of the United States government; promote resentment toward a race or class of people; are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group; [or] advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of people as individuals (Arizona H.R., 2010, HB 2281).

This bill limits the availability of classes that might challenge the dominant Western narrative and examine the inherent privileges associated with that narrative.

In 1991, Apple and Christian-Smith in their seminal work the Politics of the Textbook recognized that “the centralization of authority over teaching and curriculum, often cleverly disguised as ‘democratic’ reforms,” were on the horizon (p. 2). Today, with the Common Core Standards adopted by 44 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands, that centralizing authority has arrived (as of October of 2011 per corestandards.org). In addition to “what knowledge” being decided on a more centralized scale, “whose knowledge” has also been centralized. Since 1991, the number of textbook publishers has shrunk significantly as companies consolidated. One major company is Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, which is comprised of not only Houghton Mifflin and Harcourt, but also Holt, and McDougal. Although the final standards were only released in June 2010, this major textbook company already has textbooks out for every grade that allege to address “all key points of the Common Core Standards” (from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s website: www.hmheducation.com/sites/na/programs/language-arts/). This feat and this claim are not unique to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

In each instance described above, states are controlling the content of what students learn in school. In each instance there are clear political, economic, and social dimensions to the decisions. This volume considers how these and other social forces impact the production and reception textbooks.

What does this mean for textbooks, students, teachers, education, and society as a whole? The authors of this volume and its partner (The New Politics of the Textbook: Critical Analyses in the Core Content Disciplines) suggest that all of this centralization requires even more vigilance on the part of educators and researchers to expose political, social, and cultural influences inherent in the textbooks of core content areas such as math, science, English, and social science. More importantly,
they suggest ways to resist the hegemony of those texts through critical analyses, critical questioning, and critical pedagogies.

This volume is broken into four sections: I. Problematizing the Portrayal of Marginalized Groups in Textbooks; II. Math and Science Education: III. Where Hegemony can Hide; English Language Arts Education: A Story of Exclusion; and IV. English Language Arts Education: A Story of Exclusion.

PART I: PROBLEMATIZING THE PORTRAYAL OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN TEXTBOOKS

In the first chapter of this section, “A Qualitative Understanding of Preservice Teachers’ Critical Examination of Textbook Curriculum Units as Political Text,” Sandra Foster argues teacher preparation programs must make it a priority to challenge preservice “teachers to be critical of the textbooks they will be using in their future classrooms because schools continue to be spaces where official knowledge is controlled by those in power and measured via standardized tests.” Through the examination of preservice teachers’ work produced in a multicultural education course, she captures how critically examining “textbook curricula helps future teachers practice the skill of questioning and recognizing the representations of dominance in the material that they will be expected to teach.” She also illustrates how students’ critical interrogation of texts ensured they were able to weave social justice themes in their own units of instruction. The author concludes the chapter by reminding us that critical pedagogy must be the foundation for teacher education programs if future teachers are to become critical of the politics behind textbooks, if they are to guide students to become critically-aware citizens, and if they are to become social justice advocates.

In the next chapter of this section, “Finding My Serpent Tongue: Do ESL Textbooks Tap the Linguistic and Cultural Capital of Our Long-Term English Language Learners?” Theresa Montaño and Rosalinda Quintanar-Sarellana critically analyze the most typical textbook used to (mis)educate ESL students, *High Point*, to determine how the publisher represents ESL students’ identity and culture. Instead of honoring the linguistic and cultural diversity of ESL students and facilitating their “the development of their critical voice and agency,” the authors demonstrate how the book promotes “a subtractive bilingualism” that devalues their culture and primary language. The authors conclude the chapter by suggesting critical scholars must examine further the institutional constraints preventing educators from selecting textbooks that foster ESL students’ critical agency, embrace their culture, and honor their language. They also document how critical literacy can promote students’ personal and cultural identity:

Critical literacy can also help to develop the academic language fluency in our students, by utilizing topics discerned from their lived realities, readings selected by them, and the writing of creative poems and stories that reflect their culture and language. Teachers can develop voice and identity by using literacy strategies like problem posing, politicizing the everyday, reflection and dialogue or engaging students in action research projects.
PART II: MATH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

In the first chapter of this section, “Women on the Margins: The Politics of Gender in the language and content of science textbooks” Racgek Sutz Pienta & Ann Marie Smith launch a discourse analysis of middle-school science textbooks to determine whether textbook publishers are representing women and girls in science fields in ways that sap girls’ desire to participate in science. After providing a review of literature that highlights what social forces are responsible for women and girls’ marginalization in scientific fields, the authors present the results from their study. They derived three themes from the textbooks: (1) Science continues to be dominated by Caucasian men; (2) Science is a process that changes over time; and (3) Effective scientists are objective.” The authors conclude the chapter by altering educators and concerned citizens that textbook publishers represent science in traditional ways and fail to “incorporate cultural and sociological ways of knowing.” They also suggest how educators can “teach students to think critically about science and processes of scientific revolutions.”

In the final chapter in this section, “Representation of Diversity in Science Textbooks,” Robert Ceglie & Vidal Olivares attempt to illuminate whether the scientific curricula in K-12 schools is becoming diversified through a critical analysis of scientific textbooks. Guided by the work of Brooks (2008) and Delgato (2008), the authors engaged in a pilot study of two commonly used science textbooks and found many consistencies of what has been generated on “textbook representation” in science.

Concerns with representation of gender appeared to be ameliorated, as women were slightly more represented than men for the two textbooks. In some areas, the textbooks “appeared to show some growth toward a more diverse representation of racial groups, at least for images of students.” The stereotyped image of the White male scientist was still dominant in these textbooks, yet some effort seemed to be placed on increasing the representation of White women scientists. Unfortunately, some racial groups were completely absent from depiction as scientists.

Interestingly, they also found there was an overrepresentation of Asian students and scientists in the books, which is probably linked to the dominant notion of Asians being the model-minority social group in North America. The authors conclude the chapter by providing steps to generate “a greater representation of diverse individuals depicted as scientists” in textbooks and to make science being available for all students.

PART III: ENGLISH AND LANGUAGE ARTS EDUCATION

In the first chapter of this section, “Handling Heteronormativity in High School Literature Texts,” Heather Hickman argues, correctly, that secondary schools in North America are “not safe for students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual (LGBT), or for those who are perceived to be LGBT.” The chapter begins with an overview of the practices and hegemonic norms that promote the “current heteronormative environment” in schools across North
America. Next, the author shares her research that pinpoints how “one high school literature textbook perpetuates heteronormativity over time.” Finally, she concludes the chapter by detailing how queer theory can be combined with critical multicultural education to make the “curriculum more inclusive of both LGBT issues as well as those of other marginalized and othered groups.”

In the next chapter, “Open Court Reality: Stories of Success for Unsuccessful Readers,” Elizabeth Jaeger supplies a case study of “the 4th grade Open Court text,” which has become the “most influential reading” program since the passage of NCLB nearly a decade ago. After detailing why McGraw-Hill Companies champion scripted reading programs in K-12 schools, the author outlines the methods employed to critically evaluate the text as well as details the findings of her study. She shows the text promotes values that inculcate students to support the economic and social structures in the North America. Students learn, incorrectly, that the economic and social structures are fair and open and that they will succeed, provided if they merely “work hard, comply, be good, don’t ask for help.” This is a neoliberal twist to an old theme, “you can expect to move from inferior to superior status whatever your origins.” She also demonstrates how the text sets up minoritized students for failure in the educational system. It ensures some students are unable “to access the curriculum even as they constantly read about the success of others. Individual success is normalized and so they are, then, by definition abnormal.” The author concludes the chapter by giving readers critical guidesposts for thinking about how a text could guide students to embrace values that differ from the jaundiced ones promoted in North America’s economic and social systems.

In the final chapter in this section, “E Pluribus Unum: Elementary School Narratives and the Making of National Identity,” Mary Christianakis & Richard Mora set out to illustrate “the often-unacknowledged relationships between political ideologies and the construction of perceived historical facts and events in textbooks and public school curricula.” Specifically, they explored “how historical women and/or persons of color are represented in textbooks assigned in California’s public elementary schools.” Using the tools of literary and document analysis, they find the textbooks “present narratives of exceptionalism and heroism to promote a unified national identity and character (the one), ignoring that the one was created at the expense of many of the many who have suffered under the United States’ enterprise of economic and cultural dominance. “ The authors conclude the chapter by outlining “future implications for educational practice and research related to diverse representations of people in children’s textbooks.”

PART IV: SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES EDUCATION

In the first chapter of this section, “Uncovering and Destabilizing Heteronormative Narratives in World History Textbooks,” Scott S. Wylie argues textbook-driven instruction in world history classrooms in the US fails to provide “students an opportunity to study social issues with any real depth, and instead define learning as the ability to memorize a linear narrative.” This form of instruction is also
complicit in fostering a “gendered and sexualized point of view that is often uncritically embraced by students.” In the remaining sections of the chapter, the author unpacks the ways in which “secondary world history textbooks are complicit in furthering a heteronormative worldview.” He also provides educators concrete steps to uncover with students how textbooks are organized, “and the ways in which that organization influences readers’ understanding.”

In the next chapter, “The Exclusion and Inclusion of Women in American Government Textbooks,” Christiane Olivo details the findings from a study of 12 introductory, college-level American government textbooks. Her content analysis of the texts finds “that most references to women in these textbooks are about white, middle-class women, which suggests incorrectly that women are a homogeneous group.” The remaining parts of the chapter give suggestions for being “inclusive of women’s experiences” in American government textbooks. For example, Olivo suggests the textbooks could pay some attention to women’s organizations that reach out to women “in developing countries or to the campaign within the U.S. related to CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979).”

In the third chapter of this section, “Context and Community: Resisting Curricular Colonization in American History Courses,” Christine Rogers Stanton argues it is possible, indeed, to promote social justice amid a textbook-driven form of instruction in K-12 schools. Through a “critical case study of a school in a town bordering a reservation in the intermountain West,” the author pinpoints how educators, administrators and community members were able to engage “in-depth learning about the role of textbooks and teaching.” Specifically, she shares teachers’ narratives to highlight how they navigated the “existing curriculum in order to provide meaningful learning for Native students.” She concludes the chapter by providing suggestions for schools and teachers to “advance critical curriculum work” in their learning communities.

In the next chapter in this section, “Textbook Orientalism: Critical Visuality and Representations of Southwest Asia and North Africa,” Lisa Zagumny & Amanda B. Richey cull data from “10 high school world geography textbooks available for adoption in Tennessee from three consecutive six-year cycles – 1996 to 2002, 2002 to 2008, and 2008 to 2014” in order to “explore how representations of people in North Africa and Southwest Asia have served to reinforce Orientalist discourse in formal curricula.” The authors argue that educators and concerned citizens must take seriously the visual representations presented of the ‘Other’ in textbooks because they “intensify the transmission of “official” knowledge, and as such deserve and require the same attention as written narrative in textbooks.” Zagumny and Richey conclude the chapter by supplying key recommendations “for acknowledging the politics of the textbook and enhancing geographic literacy in schools.”

In the fifth chapter in this section, “Swept Under the Rug,” Caroline Knight analyzes three middle school American History textbooks for “their treatment of racism in the 1920s and 1930s.” She finds all of the textbooks “assume (with the exception of the use of some direct quotes) a passive, neutral tone when describing
HEATHER HICKMAN & BRAD J. PORFILIO

the racial injustices of the past.” This is problematic because many middle school students are unlikely gaining the insight necessary to understand how racism impacted the historical experience of the US or how it structures social and economic relationships in the present. Furthermore, the texts do not capture how many ordinary African Americans resisted racist social and economic policies and practices in order to improve the life chances for all US citizens. The author concludes the chapter by calling on educators and textbook publishers to supply an “increasingly honest, complex view of our collective past,” so that middle school students will be able to have a contextual understanding of social problems impacting their own lived worlds.

In the next chapter in this section, “Don’t Ask and Don’t Tell the Lies My Teacher Told Me: A Content Analysis of LGBTQ Portrayals in Textbooks,” Jeffrey M. Hawkins argues classroom curricula “deprives everyone of the opportunity to fully understand and appreciate the diverse spectrum of people and experiences that configure the world,” especially the experiences of LGBTQ citizens. Therefore, the author engaged in an empirical study to determine whether US history textbooks are beginning to provide “comprehensive LGBTQ content.” After he generated a review of the literature of how LGBTQ citizens have been typically (mis) represented in textbooks, he documents his findings of a content analysis of “the most widely used and current U.S. history textbooks for LGBTQ content.” Hawkins shows there is limited LGBTQ content in US history texts; consequently, the textbook publishers are complicit engaging in a “completely stupefied LGBTQ identity theft.” Furthermore, the author makes clear the LGBTQ content presented in the texts is the shallowest approach (e.g., the contribution approach) to ethnic integration promoted in schools. The author concludes the chapter by arguing, correctly, that the LGBTQ person will be “implicitly excluded from” North American society, unless a “taxonomy, rich and detailed with comprehensive LGBTQ content” becomes the “concern of all educators interacting with today’s P–20 diverse student body demographics.”

In the seventh chapter in this section, “Invisible Indians: How Political Systems Support the Misrepresentation of Indigenous People’s History and Its Effect on Indigenous Children,” Kate Cummings reviewed the history and social studies texts currently in use in first through twelfth grades in a rural school district in New Jersey for the purpose of gauging whether there is a lack of inclusion of Indigenous history. After providing a brief analysis as to why the history of Indigenous peoples has been traditionally excluded or marginalized in history textbooks, she illustrates that the textbooks employed in this school district have not been radically altered in terms of how they treat the Indigenous experience in the US. She notes the texts’ “historical treatment ranged from virtually non-existent to a very interesting discussion of the Indigenous people’s participation in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.” Moreover, none of the texts explicitly details the atrocities Indigenous people faced in the past. They fail to detail:

… the multitude of broken treaties, fraudulent land grabs, and constant relocations that the People had to endure just to stay alive. Nowhere is it revealed that for virtually every tribal group, contact with Europeans resulted in a reduction of the
Indigenous people by 90-96% through warfare, disease, and starvation. In fact, several authors (Churchill, 1997; Deloria, 1988; Loewen, 2007) detail the actual forces behind the harm inflicted on the People. There was a concerted effort on the part of the federal and state governments to eradicate the Indigenous population in order to control the entire North American continent in support of the European notion of Manifest Destiny.

The author concludes the chapter by suggesting how the pernicious school curricula impact Indigenous youths’ social and intellectual development and by calling on educators to end the “displacement of tribal people” in textbooks.

In the next chapter in this section, “Gender Representation in AP Art History Textbooks,” Denise Michelle Cornish, Sherrie Carinci, & Jana Noel utilize “a feminist approach in the examination of Advanced Placement (AP) high school art history textbooks within several Northern California school districts to identify the quantity and quality of text devoted to the genders.” After the authors articulate the feminist theoretical framework that guided their study, they point to evidence from their study that indicates teachers failed to mediate “the colonizing influences of any cultural artifact let alone the textbook to help students move from passive consumers to active producers of culture.” Because the teachers were expected to deliver a large quantity of curricula during the year, none of them had time to “evaluate the textbook for source criticism.” The authors also demonstrate “students not only see more male images in the texts, but will also read more per male image.” Overall, the texts present conservative notions of gender to students:

the textbook writing was viewed as very traditional with stereotypical images consisting of active male gods, heroes, and athletes (Gardner, 2005) along with mourning women, headless (female) monsters, and passive goddesses (Cornish, 2010). Concerns arose with the sexualizing of the female and racial exclusion, for the textbooks did not address power relations and how such past roles recorded in the images still have resonance today.

The authors conclude the chapter by providing several recommendations to “de-colonize students’ art worlds.”

In the final chapter of volume one, “Neo-Confederate Ideology & History Textbooks – 1860 to 2010,” Faith Agostinone-Wilson’s critical historical analysis of the two major phases of the post-Reconstruction neo-confederacy (1890s-1930s and 1950s-today) is designed to articulate the impact neo-confederate ideology has had on perpetuating racist structures, policies, and practices in the US. The author also captures how American History textbooks are currently being hijacked by neo-confederate supporters for the purposes of erasing “both national and social evidence of historical complicity with slavery and subsequent denial of institutionalized racism alongside corporate support for a shrinking social sector.” She concludes the chapter by calling on textbook publishers and schoolteachers to honestly link racism to keeping in place unjust social and economic institutions in the US, rather than merely characterizing racism as a social phenomenon emanating from personal prejudice or being contained to “geographically isolated” areas of the South before the end of slavery.
CONCLUSION

These sections on their own and combined with those in the partner to this book highlight the continued power of textbooks and related products to shape social views, perpetuate power in dominant groups, demonize or trivialize social groups who are oppressed on the structural axes of race, class, gender, sexuality and (dis)ability, and regulate student thought and behavior. Acknowledging that knowing is not enough, contributors make sense of the political, social, moral, and economic dimensions of textbooks and share ways in which they have (and others can) disrupt this power.

As Apple (2006) notes in *Educating the “Right” Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality*, “in the absence of an overt national curriculum, the commercially produced textbook … remains the dominant definition of the curriculum in the United States” (2006, p. 46). For this reason, textbooks must be reconsidered for the role they play in the creation of students’ political, social, and moral development and in perpetuating asymmetrical social and economic relationships, where social actors are bestowed unearned privileges and entitlements based upon their race, gender, sexuality, class, and religious and linguistic background. Contributors to this and the partner volume move this knowledge to praxis by suggesting how teacher education can reduce the alienating power of the textbooks and how content-area teachers can transform their textbook driven curricula to be critical and transformative despite the textbook’s content.

This volume and its partner have implications for a wide audience. First, it will be appealing to students and educators in colleges of education. Specifically, pre-service teachers and their educators can use this book to facilitate discussion of course content selection and analysis. Further, students and professors in the areas of educational leadership and curriculum and instruction can use this text to consider policy regarding texts and the political implications of choices. School administrators are another audience for this text. Administrators can refer to the volume as a guide when considering textbook adoptions. Likewise, state and local policy makers may find this volume useful when creating policy for textbook adoption and use at the state or district levels.

REFERENCES


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INTRODUCTION


Prohibited courses; discipline; schools, 49th Arizona State H.R. HB 2281 (2010).


PART I

PROBLEMATICIZING THE PORTRAYAL OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN TEXTBOOKS
A QUALITATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS’ CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF TEXTBOOK CURRICULUM UNITS AS POLITICAL TEXT

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are part of the curriculum found in today’s classrooms because they allegedly provide a framework for thinking about what will be tested and taught, to whom, when, and how. Despite its role in classrooms, little attention has been given to the role of curriculum from textbooks and its impact in teacher preparation and teacher development, particularly in teacher education courses. Apple (1992) argues that texts provide opportunities for teachers to engage in a critical analysis of the economic, political, and social realities outside and within the classroom. By participating in this analysis, teachers are provided the opportunity to construct and reconstruct curriculum materials, which places them in a position of professional autonomy. This is vital considering that in today’s world, where the population of school-aged children continues to increase in diversity, there is no room for teachers to hold on to the long held belief that curriculum should be prescribed, scripted, fixed, rigid, and non negotiable. This is especially important in teacher preparation programs. It is critical that teacher preparation programs challenge preservice teachers to be critical of the textbooks they will be using in their future classrooms because schools continue to be spaces where official knowledge is controlled by those in power and measured via standardized tests.

CURRICULUM AS A POLITICAL TEXT

Since the 1970s, scholars have critically examined the significance of the school curriculum, its structuring powers, its ideological messages, and its framing of classroom interaction, school culture, and student participation (Skeleton, 1997). Apple (1975) was the first to reassert the curriculum as a political text. According to his theory, the curriculum (both overt and covert) functions to maintain social stratification especially those of class, race, and gender (Pinar & Bowers, 1990). In addition, the curriculum is understood to be a vehicle in which the dominant culture, or those who are in power, exercise political control through intellectual and moral leadership over non dominant groups and use force and ideology in the
reproduction of a class system, i.e., hegemony and social reproduction theory (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Giroux, 1983; Pinar & Bowers, 1990). Furthermore, under this perspective, it is believed that students from certain groups (i.e., working class students, middle class students, etc.) have access to different kinds of academic knowledge or curricula (Anyon, 1981; Keddie, 1971). Scholars further explored whether students resisted the social forces they experience in school. The most well-known study that demonstrates this theory is the study conducted by Willis (1998) who discovered that school-aged males from working class backgrounds resisted schooling and chose to “do” school under their own terms. Other scholars considered the possibility of resistance and take note that resistance is often linked to working class males, while other forms of resistance by females and other ethnic groups are often ignored (Giroux, 1983).

By the 1980s, more emphasis was placed on political and pedagogical practices, i.e., transformative pedagogy. During this time, Freire’s (1985) work on critical pedagogy was often used to provide a lens to understand curriculum as a political text. By the late 1980s, the focus shifted on daily educational practices specifically on how race, class, and gender interconnected and how economic, political, and cultural power revealed itself in schools (McCarthy & Apple, 1988). In addition, for critical theorists the focus expanded to identify what was included and excluded in textbooks. What they learned was that some information was excluded from the curricula either intentionally or unintentionally. It was believed that this occurred because some of the information was controversial and represented different values. The majority of educators were uniformed and relevant materials were nonexistent (Margolis, Soldatenko, Acker, & Gair, 2001).

Viewing curriculum as a political text does not come without its criticisms with some claiming that the utopian goals of critical pedagogy are unattainable (Ellsworth, 1989). Despite the tensions and criticisms related to curriculum as a political text, one cannot dispute the fact that this may indicate that “in order to understand curriculum, one must understand it, at least in part, as a political text” (Pinar & Bowers, 1990, p. 18). What this means is that one must engage in a multitude of scholarship with an open mind so to expand their thinking. For example, with the plethora of mass media and digitalization, one can say the curriculum is no longer just located in textbooks and may in fact be more political. For schools, the curriculum now extends outside of the classroom where teachers or schools have no control. Torres (2006) contends that mass media appears to be a more powerful means of social reproduction than schooling. Despite the impact of digitalization and mass media and the fact that our schools are increasingly becoming more diverse, schools continue to be spaces where official knowledge is controlled by those in power and measured via standardized tests. Furthermore, because teachers are under constant surveillance and scrutiny because of the standards and high stakes testing movement, some new teachers may be expected or may have no choice but to look to textbooks and teacher guides for support when teaching (Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002).

With mandated policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the curriculum has become more prescribed, systemized, and standardized for what is
allegedly a more efficient method to measure knowledge via standardized tests. For example, research has found that many teachers narrow the curriculum and only teach knowledge that is legitimized by textbooks and tests (Darling-Hammond & Valenzuela, 2001). In addition, the policy itself produces the opposite of its intentions. Since its inception, many children have been left behind, and too often they are students of color, poor students, and students with disabilities. As a result of such mandated policies, research has shown that some teachers have been shown to resist mandated curriculum (Jackson, 1990).

TEACHING AS A POLITICAL ACT

Teachers have one of the most powerful jobs in the world. What they say, do not say, and what they do, and do not do will impact their students’ lives. Therefore, to say education is a political act is to say teaching is also a political act. Each plays a role in the social reproduction of knowledge and power and in the constitution of hegemony (Torres, 2006). For many teachers, the task of teaching classrooms with groups of students who come from diverse backgrounds seems daunting. How do they meet the needs of all of their students? How do they provide equity and ensure that all students will achieve academically? What cannot be ignored is that teachers must understand that the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, immigration status and other dimensions of diversity do not disappear once students enter their classroom. Using various frameworks from multicultural education, educators can start to expand their understanding and thinking in order to meet the needs of their diverse learners via critical pedagogy, equity, and social justice. Teachers must begin to pay attention to the forces outside of their classroom that are working to control conditions within them (Hinchey, 2004). Classrooms and schools are not insulated environments and do not exist in a vacuum. What occurs inside the classroom is greatly influenced by the social, political, and economic forces outside of the classroom. Teachers cannot solve issues brought on by the societal, political and economic ills, but they should make an effort to understand how these issues will play out in their classrooms and schools.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Multicultural Education has been defined as a “field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women’s studies” (Banks & Banks, 2004, p. xii). For multiculturalists, critical pedagogy provides a lens to understanding curriculum as a political text and understanding education as a political act. Furthermore, “the effect on society and schools cannot be underestimated. The shifting realities, or the new global realities will need to be founded on democratic principles. These societal changes call out for social justice, which is embedded in critical pedagogy” (Wink, 2011, p. 29).
Under the critical multicultural and social justice framework, teachers are required to challenge traditional teaching practices that rely on transmission or the banking model of education. This requires examining the bias within the knowledge generation process and critically questioning what passes for knowledge by asking questions about whose knowledge is represented, whose perspectives are omitted, and who benefits from such selections (Banks, 2008; Freire, 1996). Critical multiculturalists know that the curriculum must be based on classroom context. Each year teachers will have a different set of students in their classroom. To assume the curriculum from the previous year will impact students from the current year is misleading. This is why critical multiculturalists do not believe that a “one size fits all” curriculum is adequate in our diverse classrooms. According to Apple (2004), “the curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation” (p. 222). Rather, critical multiculturalists view the curriculum as selective, partial, and biased because the knowledge selected reflects the perspectives, tastes, and worldviews from those in power, while the perspectives, tastes, and worldviews from groups who are marginalized are for the most part missing from the curriculum (Nieto, 2010).

TEACHER EDUCATION IN A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

Educating men and women of all ages and encouraging them to take leadership roles and to make a positive impact in a changing society is the pinnacle of the university’s mission. The ultimate goal is for members of the university community to be proficient learners, think logically and critically, to identify and choose personal standards of values, and to be socially responsible. In order for this to occur, the university encourages faculty and students to develop leadership skills that are necessary for the improvement and transformation of society. Faculty and students are encouraged to engage one another not only through reflection and dialogue, but also through active involvement, with issues of social justice in contemporary society. This occurs in university courses and other learning experiences designed to strengthen skills in analyzing the structural roots of suffering and the relationships of power and privilege in contemporary society, particularly as they affect the poor and marginalized.

Unfortunately, the only time students in our teacher education program have the opportunity to address issues of diversity and social justice usually takes place in the one required multicultural education course. Overall, the program does very little to integrate diversity issues throughout the program. However, during the past year, faculty have integrated diversity issues into the final capstone course where students apply their understanding of the relationship between the broad social context and potentially inequitable educational practices to describe educational practices that function to marginalize or privilege students based on group membership. The faculty understands the urgency to make changes so students are prepared to teach in diverse classrooms. The goal of teacher education is to
integrate diversity and social justice issues into every teacher education course as course revisions are completed.

Until that goal is met, students who enter the multicultural class are typically coming into contact with diverse issues and social justice for the first time, which makes them uncomfortable because it challenges their Eurocentric perspectives. In order for students to become critical multiculturalists, they must first understand themselves. To be a multicultural educator, one must become a multicultural person first. They must be willing to deconstruct their identities and examine their paradigms and any preconceived notions they may have about people who are culturally different from them. Though this process is difficult, it is necessary so preservice teachers are able to reflect, discuss, and transform society through their profession. By building their critical consciousness, preservice teachers are able to achieve an in-depth understanding of the world via critical examination of power and privilege. This helps preservice teachers develop an understanding of their responsibilities as future teachers so that all children are valued and provided an equitable education. It is even more critical because not only will their attitudes and beliefs about people who are culturally different from themselves impact the way they interact and treat their students, but it will also impact the way they teach their students.

METHODS

This study starts with preservice teachers enrolled in a graduate level multicultural teacher education course. One of the objectives of this course is for students to explore theories behind the need for curricula and pedagogy to be inclusive of all students regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and native language ability. As a result, students explore ethical issues in education and are required to critically examine an existing K–12 curriculum unit for areas of bias and incomplete presentation and explore ways to broaden, adapt, or modify the curriculum in the context of a more multicultural approach. The goal is for students to demonstrate how they would provide an inclusive approach to the curricula to help them meet the needs of a diverse student population and to teach for social justice.

In order to examine how students critically analyzed existing K–12 curriculum units, an analysis of student work was conducted. The analysis focused on how students were able to demonstrate the ways in which their unit was reflective of inclusive education, equity in education, social justice and the conceptual framework for multicultural education. In addition, student reflections were examined to identify student experiences with broadening the curriculum unit in the context of generating alternative narratives for equity and social justice in education.

Data from student responses and reflection of textbook curriculum units and recommendations from students on how to make the curriculum more inclusive were analyzed using qualitative case study research methods. Each student’s unit was examined for evidence of inclusiveness, equity, and social justice and
RESULTS: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

Participants chose to critically analyze a History and Geography book used in the Social Studies curriculum at the Elementary level, Literature, Mythology, and Biology books used in the English and Science curriculum at the High School level, and a Spelling book used in the Literacy Curriculum at the Elementary level. Critically examining existing textbook curricula and focusing on one unit from the textbooks helps preservice teachers practice the skill of questioning and recognizing the representations of dominance in the material that they will be expected to teach. The goal is for preservice teachers to learn how to make changes to the curricula and to teach it via critical pedagogy in their future classrooms.

Using the knowledge they gained about critical pedagogy, all participants found that the curriculum units were based on Eurocentric perspectives. After critical examination of the textbooks, students made several recommendations on how to integrate alternative narratives and make the unit more inclusive and multicultural.

For example, the main focus for one of the 5th grade units was on geography and its importance in strengthening students’ understanding of the lives of three conquistadors and their experiences in the 1500s. According to the participant, the unit failed to provide information related to the treatment of the native people that were already located in the areas where the conquistadors traveled. For example, the story was told from the conquistador’s perspective and there were no stories told from the native people’s perspective. In addition, the participant felt that students needed to understand what the meaning of a conquistador was instead of what was inferred from the text. For example, the participant stated that students should be asked, “Are we modern day conquistadors?” By asking this question, the participant felt that the goal should be for students to understand that conquistadors were conquerors. Finally, the participant made suggestions on how to make the learning activities more multicultural. For example, one of the activities required students to trace the route of the conquistadors on a map. To integrate critical pedagogy, the participant suggested that students should not only trace the route, but also think about the people who lived there and how it affected the population. To take it a step further, the participant suggested that the students should compare what the areas looked like during the conquistador’s time period and what these areas look like today. As a final activity, the participant recommended that students should not only create a timeline of the events of each conquistador’s expedition, but they should also include their exploits to help students understand how their actions impacted the existing cultures.

In another example, the focus of a 5th grade unit was on the history of the westward expansion. The participant identified that the westward expansion shaped more than the geographic boundaries of our nation. For example, mass emigration of White settlers into the western territories impacted both Native American and Mexican populations already living in the West. Furthermore, the idea of Manifest
Destiny was a uniquely Eurocentric belief in that it was the “destiny” of the United States to expand across the continent and “settle” the West. According to the participant, the unit plan affirmed this definition but did not address the historical implications of this movement as it related to cultures other than White Americans. The participant recommended that the unit be supplemented with additional texts that were written by people from Native American and Mexican cultures about their experiences with the westward expansion, specifically manifest destiny. Furthermore, the participant suggested that students have an opportunity to practice critical pedagogy and recommended a critical reflective activity titled, “Whose Destiny?” where students address how the exploration of unknown territory by early Americans impacted other people already living in the western territories, such as Native Americans and Mexicans, who had lived in these areas for centuries. The participant also suggested that students complete a group activity, where each group represents a cultural group during westward expansion. Each group would then present a “news broadcast” detailing the events of westward expansion as if it were currently 1850. Each student in the group would discuss a particular aspect of the time period, with the broadcast explaining westward expansion or Manifest Destiny from the point of view of the cultural group represented.

Another example related to a unit about British Romantic poets, where the focus was on the Romantic literary movement that took place in Great Britain. According to the participant, the poets in this unit represented mostly white, British, middle-class males. However, the participant also acknowledged that it would be difficult to effectively understand the movement without representing these men. Therefore, the participant identified several ways in which the unit can be transformed to include different perspectives, explore topics that relate to class, gender, and race; and make meaning of the many themes and concepts found in the poetry of that era.

In its original state, the unit focused on the themes of the supernatural and the romantic hero by only including poetry, discussions, vocabulary, and artwork examination pertaining to these themes. The participant suggested that the unit be balanced out equally with female poets of that era. The participant suggested that students research both male and female poets and compare and contrast their lives through a critical pedagogy lens. For example, students should be asked to investigate the difference in lifestyle and social treatment of these authors, as well as the themes that each author used as central to their work. Through research and examination of the lives of these female poets, students would discover that the background of each woman varies significantly in terms of class, political beliefs, and lifestyle. These viewpoints would offer more than the traditionally taught male poet perspective. For example, the wealthy and powerful were the intended audience of male poets, while the female poets spoke to those who were common or disenfranchised. The participant suggested that the unit provide opportunities for students to examine their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs on the topics covered in the poems, such as race, poverty, inequality, etc. By providing these opportunities, students are encouraged to relate these themes to their experiences or knowledge.
on the topics in modern society in order to understand how poetry can inspire social change.

The spelling unit focused on idioms, similes, syllables and the /s/ sound. The participant suggested ways to include both students and their families’ strengths to create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected and successful learning can take place. For example, the participant added a learning activity that requires students to go home and interview family members about idioms used in their family or culture. This allows the students to explore their family’s culture, tapping into home and community resources, and coming back to the classroom not only to share with their peers, but also to showcase their family and culture’s value. The participant also identified that the unit did not provide multiple perspectives. The suggestion was made to extend the family idioms learning activity. After students share the idioms from their families and culture, students can discuss how cultural background makes a difference in understanding the intended meaning behind an idiom versus the literal meaning. Students will learn what it feels like to not understand the intended meaning when they do not have the cultural background or knowledge that is associated with that idiom. The thinking behind the participant’s suggestion is that students will become more aware of other perspectives because they are getting a deeper understanding of the content and cultures beyond their own individual perspectives.

The Biology unit focused on the diet and nutrition of the dominant American Caucasian culture and excluded other cultures’ perspectives on health. The participant suggested enhancing the opening anticipatory set lab experiment to include students’ cultures. For example, the participant suggested that students bring in culturally relevant snacks to measure and then provide the students the opportunity to compare them with one another. Furthermore, providing an opportunity to discuss the various kinds of snacks would provide an opportunity for students to discuss the role they played in making the item with their family and the meaning of the snack in family functions in comparison to the contexts of dominant culture. In addition, the participant recognizes that the terminology used in the text may be difficult for English Language Learners (ELL). Therefore, the participant suggested that adding videos, guided question worksheets, available English/grammar help and exams that require verbal responses will provide ELL students a better chance at success in biology. The participant also suggested adding a cultural kitchen assignment, which utilizes the student’s family in their education, and the invitation to have students’ parents come to the class to present their food, which plays to the student’s preference in seeing elders from their culture teach the group.

According to one participant, the Mythology unit was already quite multicultural and supported educational equity. This participant identified differentiation for language learners and low-level readers, where differentiation varied and accommodated students with disabilities, ELL students, and gifted students as the largest multicultural factor present. However, the participant also felt that the unit only skimmed the surface of multicultural education and was lacking in cultural diversity and different perspectives. To make the unit more
multicultural, the participant suggested adding multiple perspectives and introducing other cultures such as Egyptian and Native American cultures in the lesson. She also suggested including activities where students have the opportunity to describe gender roles and social class in Ancient Greek society. Furthermore, the participant suggested supplementing the text with other texts that contain multiple perspectives and adding elements to the activities that include students’ cultures. Finally, the participant suggested extending the learning to outside of the classroom into the students’ communities and/or families by adding a learning activity where students interview someone they believe to be a hero. This can include a parent, community member, teacher, relative, etc. (mom, dad, youth minister, teacher, etc).

EQUITY
In order to provide equity, students recommended that the units provide opportunities for students to have a voice. For example, the changes recommended to the unit on British poets provide an opportunity to include poems with many themes that represent that era. But more importantly, as recommended by the student, adding poems written from different perspectives help make the unit more inclusive of voice. For students, this provides opportunities to see how different perspectives change the meaning of poems, concepts, or events and how it is never a good idea to take one perception of any situation as “truth.” Students should be taught to question what they are being told and be taught that their own perspectives and beliefs are valuable to the learning process. By doing this, students are provided an opportunity to see their perspective as valuable. Adding opportunities for discussions that require student input and perspective, as well as adding opportunities for them to produce products that are solely representative of their beliefs and values, is one way to provide equity in the classroom.

SOCIAL JUSTICE
Students developed awareness on their responsibility as a multicultural educator to integrate social justice into the curriculum units. For example, for the unit on British poets, the participant suggested that the unit focus on poems that included themes of slavery, religion, and politics. In her view, it is important to focus on poems that speak to the social and political upheaval at the time in order for students to make connections to current events and their own feelings about the themes in the poem as a general whole. In addition, the participant suggested that students create their own poems as part of the learning activities. For example, students can write poems that call to action for social change, drawing on themes of the Romantic Era but specifically addressing current social and political issues as they relate to race, gender, sexuality, or marginalization of a specific group of people.

With the Spelling unit, the participant extended the unit to integrate social justice. The participant recommended that students research endangered animals
from around the world and find information about the animals and reasons for their endangerment. Furthermore, students have to determine how they are going to advocate for their endangered animal as a group or as an individual. Students not only learn about these different animals throughout the world, but they also use critical thinking to evaluate their animal’s circumstances and develop a plan for action to help the animal they have chosen. By doing this, students are provided an opportunity to share their own insights without fear of a right or wrong answer, which is a key piece of critical pedagogy.

A unit plan that strives for social justice provides the framework for students to become more involved in their community and world outside of the classroom. In the Biology unit, the participant suggested enhancing the focus of kidneys and their importance in maintaining homeostasis in the body to including information on individuals on dialysis. This would not only provide an educational understanding for the students on the overall role and effect the kidneys have in the body, but also address some of the challenges people face when they are on dialysis. An invitation to a dialysis technician/nurse or individual who is going through dialysis to speak to the class about the process is a way for the students to learn more about the subject and how they can help make change for those individuals who face physical and financial challenges. After the presentations, students can take action by logging on to the Dialysis Patient Citizens (DPC) website and e-mail congress or e-mail state lawmakers about their concerns. After this initial step, the hope is that students would feel informed and empowered to take a stance against Medicare dialysis funding cuts.

In the Greek Mythology unit, the participant suggested that students have the opportunity to view situations and events from numerous viewpoints. This will not only provide an opportunity for students to analyze and question what they are learning, but critical thinking, reflection, and action are also encouraged through this process. Furthermore, the participant suggested enhancing the unit by highlighting the issue of gender roles and social class structure in the readings because these issues are frequently visited throughout the unit. By doing this, students are encouraged to make connections to Greek society and their own society and they can start to envision how they can contribute to the development of a more democratic and equal society.

A goal of teacher education programs should be to produce teachers who critically examine textbook curricula so they are able to recognize educational practices that function to maintain official knowledge that is controlled by those in power and measured via standardized tests. Critically examining the politics of textbooks is a challenge and can be difficult because students may not have been taught to question the curricula when they were students. In addition, preservice teachers run the risk of forgetting about critically examining textbook curricula and making changes to the curricula because currently this is the only time in their program they are asked to practice these skills. As a result, what it means to be a multicultural educator varied among participants. One participant felt that in order to be a multicultural educator, one needs to approach teaching in a matter that constantly reflects acceptance, respect, and the dedication to have students realize
they could make this world a better place because they are learning about topics from a variety of perspectives. Another participant stated that multicultural educators need to ensure that units and lessons are equitable and inclusive to all students. Furthermore, the participant asserted that within a multicultural curriculum it is important for students to understand that there are many sides to every story, and exploring how cultures were negatively affected by historical events broadens the scope of the units. What bothered one participant the most was that the description of Manifest Destiny presented in the textbook is a widely accepted description and taught in U.S. schools. In this participant’s view, in order for the unit to become multicultural it is important to understand that this singular point of view must be countered with other, culturally diverse viewpoints.

As schools in the U.S. become more and more diverse, teachers will need to be acutely aware of the many cultural perspectives in their classrooms. Requiring preservice teachers to critically examine units of curriculum and teaching them to question the ways in which we teach information can foster a more equitable and culturally diverse learning environment. Teacher preparation programs must take action to prepare future teachers so they are better prepared and are able to provide an inclusive education. Furthermore, it is important to note that a multicultural curriculum takes into account more than content; it also looks at how material is presented and taught. Multicultural classrooms are diverse, comprised of students from varying cultures, races, backgrounds, and ability levels.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Challenging preservice teachers to critically examine curriculum and creating strategies to provide a multicultural curriculum is one step to helping students learn how to practice multicultural education, to teach for social justice, and to create pedagogies of power so they are able to transform their classrooms. Since education is embedded in a particular sociocultural and sociopolitical context, multicultural education needs to be placed within a framework of empowering attitudes and beliefs rather than just being viewed as a pedagogy or curriculum. In order to truly transform society for social justice, in addition to changing the content of the curriculum, the content needs to be presented critically and critically questioned so preservice teachers’ thinking and learning will change. Our greatest hope for providing equitable teaching environments for our children is to focus on teachers’ practices, and a great starting place is during their preservice training. It is here where they can practice and apply what they have learned to the curriculum they will be required to teach once they complete their training. In order for this to become a reality, teacher education programs must make changes to its programs if their goal is to create teachers who question content in textbooks and its curricula. In order for preservice teachers to practice critical examination of curriculum and to make needed changes so it is inclusive, preservice teachers must be provided numerous opportunities throughout their teacher education program to make changes to the curricula. Furthermore, preservice teachers must also be able to
demonstrate this practice during their practicum or student teaching to ensure mastery of learning has taken place.

Teaching students how to include multicultural voices in the curriculum suggests that other cultures may well have valuable ideas to offer. Honoring various perspectives challenges the presumed Eurocentric ideals, something that may be uncomfortable to both students and teachers. However, multiple perspectives must be encouraged and respected and part of the educational experience for all children. Students need a curriculum that “encourages them to empathize with others” (Christensen, 2000). Teaching against the grain takes great courage and vision because it dares to challenge the official knowledge and prevailing truths about what works and what does not work (Nieto, 2010).

Furthermore, when students start to envision other ways in which they could infuse lessons with activities reflective of multicultural education, they begin to feel a sense of agency and make a commitment to impart more knowledge, not just what is required by the curriculum. In order for students to develop into effective multicultural educators, they must know how to respond to the myriad forces that shape them. Understanding how the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, immigration status and other dimensions of diversity impact their classrooms, schools, and their everyday lives is one of the many challenges they face. However, once they start to imagine the possibilities for themselves and their students, they start to proactively search for multiple perspectives and pursue multiple possibilities to improve their practice, because they recognize that they must be able to respond to the diverse needs of their students. It is important to help students learn how to critically reflect what it means to be a multicultural educator. They must learn how to sustain this practice so they do not see it as an additive program, but one that is inclusive of their everyday life as a teacher. Multicultural education has a greater possibility to impact student learning when it is approached through the lens of critical pedagogy.

While our goal as teacher educators should be to prepare the most effective teachers that will benefit all children, we cannot forget the ultimate goal is to promote equity and equality in schools so all students will be able to receive a quality education. Examining how preservice teachers critically examine K–12 curriculum units is one way to evaluate whether or not the training they receive makes a difference. The challenge lies in whether or not students will sustain these skills as they move through their training and negotiate the demands of mandated policy, such as high stakes testing. Torres (2006) raises the following question, “What difference do schools make in promoting multicultural traditions if, as many scholars have argued, there is only one dominant, hegemonic culture in capitalism, and that is the commodification of labor and knowledge and the culture of class?” (p. 59). Perhaps it will take small acts of courage, one teacher at a time. Scripted curriculum that come in neat little packages or cookie cutter approaches to teaching do not fit well with diverse learners in our diverse world. Incorporating changes is a difficult process. However, providing the tools for preservice teachers to use in their classrooms is a start. By starting at the classroom level, one can only hope
that it will transfer to outside of the classroom where students start to become agents of change in their own communities. Curriculum can become a beacon of hope and joy if it is presented in an honest, direct, and comprehensive way, and if it acknowledges the lives of the students to whom it is directed (Nieto, 2010, p. 149). If there is no relation to students’ lives outside of school, students who represent non-dominant cultures will continue to feel alienated and disconnected from the very system that claims to have their best interest at hand.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

– What should be the goal of textbook curriculum used in our schools?
– Is it possible to provide equity when teachers are required to teach curriculum using prescribed textbooks?
– How can educators provide opportunities to engage students and their families into the prescribed textbook curriculum without marginalizing them? Is this necessary? Why or why not?
– How can institutions of higher education ensure preservice teachers are trained, not as technocrats, but as critical educators who contribute to the transformation of society via the curriculum and critical pedagogy?
– How can teachers become more in touch with the social, political, and economic forces outside of their classrooms, so they can provide equity in the classroom?

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So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language. (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 81)

The number of English Language Learners (ELL) in the United States continues to increase dramatically. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), between 1979 and 2008, the number of students who speak a language other than English at home climbed from 3.8 to 10.9 million (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). By 2025, it is estimated that in the United States (U.S.), one student in four will be an English Language Learner (National Education Association, 2010, p. 1). Although English Language Learners represent a variety of ethnic populations and linguistic communities, the majority of ELL students are educated in states that have a high percentage of Latino/a students, specifically Arizona, California, Florida, New York and Texas (Fry, 2007, p. 1), and the majority of ELL students are Latino (National Clearinghouse, 2007). Moreover, contrary to popular belief, the majority of ELL students are native-born citizens of the United States. According to the National Education Association (NEA), “76% of elementary school and 56% of secondary school ELL students are native born, and more than half are second-or-third generation U.S. citizens” (NEA, 2010, p. 1). Most noticeably, these students continue to have an excessively high drop out rate, come from families who are poor, and their level of educational achievement is lower than that of non-ELL peers (Fry, 2007; NEA, 2010). Further, the textbooks used in secondary ELL classrooms perpetuate a deficit view of ELLs. The textbooks fail to acknowledge their cultural and linguistic capital and demean the first language and culture of the students.

In this chapter, the authors will critically analyze the textbook *Highpoint* written for high school students at the intermediate/advanced level of English language proficiency. The textbook is one of two used in English-as-a-Second-Language middle/high school classrooms in the second largest school district in the nation. As teacher educators, we analyze the high school ESL textbook and demonstrate how these textbooks are by-products of a linguistic imperialism. A subtractive bilingualism imposed upon our students’ through texts and instructional practices that not only devalues their culture, but also erases their primary language.

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NOT ALL ENGLISH LEARNERS ARE EQUAL

In a recent publication on the educational status of English Learners, Laurie Olsen (2010) declared, “English Learners cannot be permitted to incur irreparable academic deficits during the time in which they are mastering English” (p. iii). Olsen’s research sponsored by Californians Together, a coalition of 22 parent, community and educational organizations that protect the interests of English Learners issued a challenge to school districts. The challenge called upon them to address the educational deficits of these students and to ensure that the schooling of English Learners not become a “permanent dead end” (Olsen, 2010, p. iii). Highly critical of secondary instructional programs Californians Together argued that secondary students labeled ELL were actually “long term English Learners” (LTEL). LTELs have been in our system since elementary school, but have not acquired academic language proficiency in English and incur major “academic deficits” (p. iii). Earlier studies (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Jacobs, 2008; Menken & Kleyn, 2010) concur with the findings in Olsen’s report. Studies about LTEL find that the majority of ELL students in secondary schools tend to be students who were born in the United States, are children of immigrant parents, have been enrolled in U.S. schools for more than six to seven years, are making inadequate progress in English language development, are struggling academically and, for the most part, do not graduate from high school. Typically, LTEL have been in the United States more than seven years and a many are even born in the United States. Sometimes, they are called the 1.5-generation. The term 1.5 generation is intended to identify immigrants who came to the United States as children or are the first generation to live in the United States. These children often exhibit the cultural and linguistic traits of second-generation immigrants. As young people, they speak mostly English and behave culturally more “American” than “immigrant.” They are not quite American and not quite first generation immigrants. Characteristically, grouped with the second-generation U.S. citizen or the children of immigrants, the 1.5-generation, U.S. born children of immigrants become our LTEL. Observations of LTELs in social settings will reveal that they can communicate effectively in the English language, often code switching with ease from English into their primary language and back to English. While it is true that LTEL students maintain the basic communication skills in their primary language, generally speaking they cannot read or write in their primary language. Furthermore, if asked to read a textbook, these students can decode complex sentence structure. However, in spite of their ability to function in English, they cannot compose a simple essay or negotiate the difficult academic language necessary to pass a standardized exam. In California, most of these students languish in ELL programs at Level 3 (Early Intermediate/Intermediate). In other words, when reading a text in English, these students can accomplish the following tasks: list and categorize terms correctly, describe people, places and events, define and explain familiar vocabulary term, read and retell from a variety of texts, identify the main idea and provide details of a story, explain academic
concepts, identify the “big ideas” and summarize and draw comparisons from a selected text. LTELs often demonstrate the linguistic markers of their first language, which are evident in their written English, set their writing apart from that of native English-speaking students. Long-term English learners face a different set of issues than do immigrants with little or no grasp of the language and customs. (Jacobs, 2008, p. 88)

The problem is that, although LTEL are functional English speakers, they cannot move beyond the intermediate level of English language proficiency academically. Long-term English Learners who wish to transition from the ELL program into an all-English classroom are expected to pass the CEDLT (California English Language Development Test) Exam. In effect, they must master the following English skills:

**Listening and Speaking**: Understand and use simple vocabulary and syntax, with occasional gaps in comprehension and communication; understand and follow some complex, multi-step oral directions; tell a story based on a picture sequence, but without clearly expressing its main point, using phrases and incomplete sentences with gaps in vocabulary and errors that hinder communication.

**Reading**: Demonstrate decoding skills; demonstrate knowledge of antonyms and synonyms, identify the correct meaning of a word in a given context, make logical inferences in narrative passages.

**Writing**: Write at least one complete sentence in a response to a picture prompt with few errors in vocabulary, grammar and syntax, respond to a narrative prompt by producing a simple sequence of events or ideas that may be disorganized (CELDT, 2003, p. 10).

If students cannot demonstrate proficiency in the areas above, they are relegated to ELL programs for life, where they plateau and begin a steady decline in academic achievement. Students who remain in EL programs for life are not exposed to the rigors of college preparatory courses, do not have access to elective courses and are seldom encouraged to attend college. Moreover, seldom exposed to secondary courses such as advanced mathematics, science or social studies, the full acquisition of English as an academic language does not occur. Since LTELs cannot reclassify as English proficient, they remain in courses designed for students with intermediate English proficiency and have little exposure to the secondary content curriculum provided to native speakers of English. Since LTEL high school students have mastered the listening and speaking skills required on the CEDLT (California English Language Development Test) exam, the intermediate classes are not challenging them and their motivation to achieve is impacted. In many cases, since most of them have not received formal instruction in their primary language, they can read and write better in English than in their home language. These students, having attended school in the United States, possess a divergence of opinions about their academic progress. Some believe they are doing well in school and those who do graduate from high school are surprised when the college or university of their choice does not accept them. Those who become disenchanted with school become discouraged and abandon their studies.
Arguably, there are several contributing factors for the inadequate English language acquisition of ELL students, among them are: weak language development models, inconsistent program placement and implementation, segregation of ELL students within schools, and a narrow curriculum (Olsen, 2010).

Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix and Clewell (2000) labeled English Learners enrolled in our secondary schools as a population that is “overlooked and underserved” (p. 1). We agree. Further, Guadalupe Valdes (2001) contends that teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) has deeper implications for our students than learning English. Teaching ELL students encompasses an ideology that requires teachers to think about the place that English Learners and immigrants occupy in society. Equally important to teacher knowledge of pedagogy, teachers who teach ELL must recognize that in the United States, these students also confront xenophobia, linguicism and marginalization. Therefore critical educators must not only teach language, but also work to change the circumstances in which these students live and learn. Institutions of education must not only assist in the acquisition of language fluency, schools must also build capacity among teachers and administrators and ensure the availability of appropriate, intensive and effective English language development materials for these students to negotiate the academic language contained in the content areas and in English. Moreover, as educators we must also select textbooks that are not just engaging, meaningful, comprehensive and enjoyable, but we must also find textbooks that honor the linguistic and cultural diversity of our youth and facilitate the development of their critical voice and agency.

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF ESL TEXTBOOKS

Historically, scholars have been critical of ESL textbooks (Ansary & Babii, 2002; LaBelle, 2010; Sano, 2009; Shor, 1987; Spelleri, 2002). Ansary and Babii, as well as Sano, each analyzed the textbooks for their depictions of poor and working people, and their portrayal of ethnic peoples. The authors also used their research to identify the characteristics of quality textbooks for ELL students. In his analysis of children’s books, Sano (2009) utilized Bourdieau for a theoretical background. Referencing Bourdieau, Sano characterized the U.S. educational system as one that allows students with higher cultural capital to internalize their status and to excel, whereas students with lower cultural capital are always struggling to catch up. In this case, those students whose cultural capital is recognized by schools are fluent English speakers, while the students’ primary language is considered a deficit. This ideology, which is rampant in our schools, demeans and devalues the cultural capital of our students and reproduces the structural inequality present in U.S. society. We further maintain that teaching is political (Friere, 1970) and that in the United States, language and knowledge have been taught in historical contexts where schooling is not neutral. Consequently, the adoption of textbooks for English Language Learners does not consider the cultural and linguistic needs of our...
students, only the development of linguistic proficiency of English. As such, LTEL become bored, disaffected and simply tune out of school.

On the other hand, pedagogical models founded upon critical views of education ‘require’ teachers to develop an understanding of the relationships between ideology, culture, hegemony and power and to become transformative educators committed to radically changing the ‘traditional’ curriculum, to transforming society. Critical educators also strive to develop student voice, even if this voice challenges the perspective of the educator. (Montaño & Quintanar-Sarellena, 2011, p. 210)

As a result, books written from a critical perspective both develop the cultural capital necessary in our students to advance academically and tap the cultural and linguistic knowledge of ELL students.

As important as it is to learn the structure and function of the new language, it is equally important to embed the knowledge in a culturally relevant and critical environment that will actually promote learning and agency. Clearly, learning English will facilitate the academic success of ELL students; however, a critical educator would argue that these students should have a voice in their own destiny. According to Paulo Freire (1968), teachers most commonly teach skills, but not how to think or to question. In the process of education for liberation, Freire focuses on the dialectical role of the teacher and the need to make the learning process relevant to the student. His pedagogical method emphasizes the need for learning material to be culturally specific. This means that students learn by using their immediate environment and by learning how to question the world that surrounds them. This idea is pertinent to the analysis of the teacher in bilingual programs, since one important aim of bilingual programs is to make schooling relevant to the linguistic minority child. One method of achieving this aim is by incorporating the child's language and culture into the educational process. Freire emphasizes the need to incorporate the students' background in the educational process. It is important for students to be able to relate their academic knowledge to their immediate environment.

METHODS

Academic Language and Critical Literacy

As previously mentioned, the pedagogies and theories that guide this research are sociocultural learning theory and critical literacy (Freire, 1972; Short, 1992). Sociocultural learning theory contends that language is developed and acquired naturally in a socially mediated setting or community (Vogotsky, 1962). Sociocultural learning pedagogy includes the use of participatory activities in which students build upon previous knowledge by using new knowledge in a collaborative setting. Students immediately use new language to think, listen, read and write on a relevant, comprehensible, and meaningful topic. Further, the researchers in this study posit that language can be used to learn content and content can be used to learn language, as long as students negotiate and apply academic language in a realistic context. However, the development of academic
language also requires teachers to provide direct instruction, to scaffold language instruction, and to explicitly focus on the development of proficiency in academic English. The fact that ELL students are effectively developing basic interpersonal communication skills, but are not developing cognitive academic language proficiency (Cummins, 2000), is one reason why the focus of ESL classes are now concentrating on the development of academic language.

Academic language skills are required in all content areas. Further, academic language skills are needed to describe, explain, interpret, analyze, apply, justify, draw conclusions and evaluate language in both social and academic settings (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994). Teachers use academic language to teach new knowledge and skills in a variety of academic disciplines and each discipline has its own academic discourse. The primary difference in language is that academic language is primarily used and learned in classrooms, whereas social and communicative language is primarily acquired in a social or familial environment. While academic language is primarily negotiated in content area instruction, the skills required to develop a receptive vocabulary, use terms in a variety of content areas, and read and write using academic language can all be supported in an ESL classroom. Students need English to negotiate meaning from academic oral presentations and textbooks, and, in order to develop such competence, students must learn how to effectively use language to achieve different functions. We are, however, conscious that there are individuals who view language as a hierarchy or, as Wong-Fillmore (1986) suggests, that social status relationships and attitudes play a major role in language learning. This research does not support a hierarchy of English. In fact, we maintain that ELL teachers must include the acknowledgment and affirmation of languages in the home, even while teaching English.

We employ a critical literacy framework for this research articulated in a previous article (Montaño & Quintanar, 2011), where we maintain that teaching should be dialogical and constructed collaboratively (teacher and students, students and teacher, teacher and community, home and school, etc). Instruction should facilitate the development of a student’s personal and cultural identity, aid comprehension and the generation of new knowledge and the student’s primary language and form of discourse should be respected, tapped and affirmed. A teacher’s pedagogical practices should be grounded in the students’ sociocultural-sociolinguistic communities, reflect their sociopolitical realities, and engage students in the change process. The teacher’s role in critical literacy is to recognize that language is a tool that may be used to develop in our students the capacity to resist, not to conform. A teacher’s role is to raise consciousness, to facilitate reflection, and to create opportunities for our students to reflect on their positionality and what they can do about it. Reading strategies should not only focus on understanding the material, more importantly they should also incorporate critical thinking skills. The content by the teacher should reflect socially relevant, comprehensible, and meaningful topics. Critical classrooms should honor the equality of languages and support an environment that respects, not devalue the “serpent tongue” (Anzaldúa, 1999).
Given the current sociopolitical context of high stakes testing and monolingual, English only policies in California, we are cognizant that ESL teachers are not provided the instructional materials that support the process of critical literacy. Literacy instruction for ELL students occurs in scripted classrooms where monolingual instructional practices are supported and encouraged, therefore it is not surprising that the textbooks used in these classrooms demean and devalue the ELL student. We believe that understanding the general sociopolitical climate where our students negotiate their learning is critical to understanding the specific learning environment where we situate our study, that is in the second largest school district in the nation and the state with the largest concentration of ELL students.

THE CONTEXT

The Los Angeles Unified School District has the largest percentage of ELL students of any school district in the nation; 31% of the students in Los Angeles Unified are identified as English Learners (ed-data, 2010) and most speak Spanish as their primary language. According to the Blume (2011):

The federal government has singled out the Los Angeles Unified School District for its first major investigation under a reinvigorated Office for Civil Rights, officials said Tuesday. The focus of the probe, by an arm of the U.S. Department of Education, will be whether the nation’s second-largest district provides adequate services to students learning English. Officials turned their attention to L.A. Unified because so many English learners fare poorly and because they make up about a third of district enrollment, more than 220,000 students. (para. 1-3)

We use a critical approach in the analysis of *High Point* textbooks. These books approach literacy instruction from a technical standpoint with consideration given only to English language proficiency. As such, the textbook promotes instructional practices focused on moving students along a language continuum towards full proficiency in English. While the focus of this research is on LTEL, *High Point* books are written for students for whom English is a second language. Although the teaching of English to English Language Learners is a component of bilingual education and should promote the biliterate development of language, throughout the United States bilingual teachers are engaged in the forcible process of subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), systematically erasing the students’ home language. Since the textbooks adopted by LAUSD presume a mechanical approach to literacy instruction, they suggest a subtractive approach to the teaching of English. A more critical approach would facilitate the development of voice, identity, agency, and critique. Effectively, the textbooks utilized by LAUSD promote the debilingualization of ELL students. Further, since these textbooks focus on learning English only and not student agency, they objectively promote the social reproduction of an educational system that has historically marginalized immigrants, children of immigrants and language minority students.

The research questions are the following:
Do the ESL textbooks selected for this paper help ELL students acquire the necessary language skills necessary to negotiate the academic and sociopolitical context where they reside?

In their quest to develop proficiency in English, do these books value, tap and affirm the cultural and linguistic capital of our students?

In the United States, the subject of textbooks for ESL students has been given minimal attention in textbook analysis. A review of the previous studies on this topic reveals that few have focused on both language and content analysis. General research on the subject has centered focused on language analysis or content analysis (Ansary & Babii, 2002; LaBelle, 2010; Sano, 2009; Shor, 1987; Spelleri, 2002), but very few have analyzed textbooks for language skills, content or cultural relevance. In addition, given the general importance of Texas, Florida and California in the textbook market and the number of ELL students in each of the respective states, the focus on California ELL textbooks will help decision makers charged with the task of adopting textbooks. Finally, it is our hope that our focus on LTEL will shed light on a previously neglected, but significant sector of the EL student population.

Protocol and Procedure of Conducting the Textbook Analysis

As previously stated, the authors will critically analyze a textbook written for high school students at the intermediate/advanced level of English language proficiency. The theoretical framework provided the researchers a critical lens for the analysis of High Point. High Point is presented in three volumes Level A, Level B and Level C. We decided to concentrate on Level C, which is the level that targets Intermediate/Advanced English Learners.

In order to provide us with a tool that would help guide our evaluation of the text, we developed a Language Analysis protocol. The Language Analysis protocol used for this study comprised three components: Language Proficiency, Content Analysis, and Literacy Skills taught (reading, writing, listening or speaking). The level of English utilized in High Point was assessed for its appropriateness for use with a student at the intermediate level of English proficiency. In other words, was the level of English used suitable for an intermediate student as determined by the CELDT. We also consider our personal expertise in designing the protocol used for this study.

We developed a list of criteria that would analyze the appropriateness and accessibility of the text. The book was analyzed for the level of English language proficiency. We identified the language skills taught and also, conducted a content analysis. A component of the content analysis was devoted to assessing the consideration paid to student cultural knowledge, immigrant experiences, and for the attention given to multicultural themes. Furthermore, the language of the text was also assessed for the text structure, rigor, language functions and literacy skills. The book was also analyzed for the extent to which it addressed reading, listening, speaking and writing of English. Given that we employed a sociocultural
approach to language learning, consideration was also given to the number of interactive activities, the use of student grouping and other socially mediated methods. We also analyzed the language with respect to the English language capabilities of a student who is an LTEL (as previously discussed in this chapter). The content analysis considered the themes presented for its relevance to youth, cultural appropriateness, and grade level suitability, use of academic content language, comprehensibility and use of higher order thinking skills. Finally, in congruence with the critical outlook utilized, we considered whether or not the book was critical or informative, dialogical or direct, additive or subtractive and the extent to which it developed student voice and identity. A final analysis called for a component that would examine the perspective offered in the textbook: Was it written from a deficit or enrichment perspective? We independently analyzed the text and then combined the results.

THE LITERACY SKILLS OF LTEL

The objective of this research is to determine the extent to which High Point effectively supports the literacy development of LTELs. It is, therefore, critical to understanding the level of English language proficiency for this group of students. The English literacy skills mastered by these students are at the level of communicative competence in English demonstrated by the ability to carry on a fluent conversation entirely in English. Conversely, LTEL are not yet able to negotiate complex academic language, have failed to master English when reading or writing, and are “stuck” in progressing towards English (Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Olsen, 2010). Most noticeably, although LTEL are often assigned to classrooms with newcomer students (recent immigrants), their facility to speak, comprehend and read in English are much more developed than the abilities of their immigrant peers. While newcomers have a strong foundation in their primary language, most often LTELs cannot read or write in their primary language. In spite of the fact that LTEL have been enrolled in ESL or ELD (English Language Development) courses for more that 5-7 years, they cannot enroll in elective courses and have limited access to the high school experiences afforded English-speaking students. Having failed to pass competency exams, such as the CELDT, these students are placed in remedial courses and for the most part have reached an academic dead end. In summary, while English is a difficult language for any student, it is especially difficult for high school LTELs who believe they have mastered English and who remain in ESL courses designed for recent immigrants.

FINDINGS

Language Proficiency

The analysis of the textbook for its treatment of language proficiency is quite adequate. From a mechanical stance, High Point engages teachers in activities that scaffold the development of language and adequately facilitate the development of
language proficiency. The language is rigorous enough and allows students to negotiate the target language. The text structure is topical and narrative. Each section includes vocabulary and language functions that students need to address. The language is appropriate for an English Learner with an intermediate to advanced level of proficiency, but it fails to address the specific linguistic needs of a LTEL. For example, the writing activities in the text call upon students to construct simple sentences. Since LTELs are able to speak mostly English and cannot write in any other language than English, their ability to write in English is far more than the construction of simple questions. In fact, with teacher guidance and scaffolding, LTELs will be able to construct paragraphs and short essays. They need a greater focus on writing skills, such as expository writing.

Additionally, the textbook is also not appropriate for newcomers. Many of the short stories in the textbook assume that immigrant students have certain prior knowledge and familiarity with social situations, such as attending a Broadway play, listening to the work notable Mexican-American folk musicians, running track or accessing the Internet.

The textbook focuses the discrete language skills of our students and does not do enough to facilitate academic language proficiency; granted High Point is a language arts textbook, but the relevant content can be a tool to facilitate the development of more rigorous language skills like writing a short essay or negotiating complex academic language. The book should be moving beyond reading comprehension and the simple understanding of terms. The textbook should also facilitate the use of higher order thinking skills in negotiating language. For example, at the beginning of the book, the language function explicitly taught is “to describe.” In order to contextualize describe, students are supposed to “create” something with “nothing” shapes, such as a spiral, the symbol for more, and other “nothing” shapes (Schifini, Short & Tinajero, 2006, 13). The task is abstract and unclear, and it does not contribute to the understanding of the function to describe, which was the featured language function.

In terms of skill development in proficiency of language, the language used in the book is rigorous and allows students to negotiate language functions. For example, each section includes vocabulary and language functions that students need to address the readings. While language is not taught in a decontextualized setting, the book does use cultural stories and contemporary topics, the focus is on discrete language skills and reading comprehension. Discrete language skills are the specific phonological, grammatical and literacy knowledge that students acquire as a result of direct instruction in formal and non-formal practices. The development of discrete language skills include such things as learning the alphabet, pronouncing sounds represented by letters and combinations of letters or the ability to decode words in a text (Cummins, 2000). For students at an intermediate level, these skills can include the construction of sentences, defining terms, or responding to a question posed by the teacher in almost perfect English.

In summary, High Point does promote the use of effective strategies for English as a new language, but it fails to address the specific literacy needs of the LTEL choosing instead to focus on the rudimentary language acquisition skills, such as
grammatical structures, language function and use, and reading comprehension. While these skills are legitimate aspects for teaching English as a second language, the direct instruction of English fails to tap higher order thinking skills or develop the necessary skills for negotiating complex academic language.

Content Analysis

The overarching theme of the book is creativity and imagination and throughout the texts, these themes are developed in an array of topics such as computers, poetry, songs, components of a story, and teenagers’ experiences of various sorts. The book starts out with a theme of the “Way of an Artist.” Plunging the students into the subject of creativity as the opening theme seems rather abstract. The book cited three theme-related books, The Starry Night, Alphabet City and The Lives of Musicians, that may be inspirational to secondary students and the content is somewhat comprehensible. Secondary students do find it easier to describe something more relevant to them. The content of the second story is not especially meaningful for students struggling with a new language and learning to negotiate the labyrinthine ways to succeed in high school and prepare for college admission. Many English Learners, especially LTEL, have more pressing interests and challenges in life than the Lion King. However, some of passages presented in the book are relevant to ELLs, such as the story Between Two Worlds by Julia Alvarez, Becoming American, and the short biography of Tish Hinojosa. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the questions focus on comprehension and an understanding of the story. Students are seldom asked to discuss their own reactions to the stories and students are not provided with ample opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue. The story on Tish Hinojosa is arguably culturally relevant. The short story showcases a young adult that discusses her musical background and the processes she goes through to create her songs. Importantly, she integrates her culture in her writing. In addition, she talks about her feelings, personal experiences and her family, which any secondary student can relate to. This story and many others could have been used to tap the cultural and linguistic knowledge of students, yet the book felt short of exploring students’ passions, as Tish Hinojosa so eloquently captures in her essay. Students might learn more if asked questions about their own passions, and their learning styles, both of which are not explored. In the passage about shoplifting, students could have been prompted to contribute their experiences when they had been humiliated, wrongly accused or racially profiled. The book also presents the topic of computers, which is quite relevant to secondary students. A story in the book poses the intriguing question of whether computers have the capacity to think on their own. Finally, at the end of each topic, there is a section where students can write their own story. We only wish students were challenged with more personal and intriguing questions.
Hegemonic practices are best characterized as pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices, both subtle and overt that promote an ideology of the dominant class. Practices such as corporatization of instruction, including the promotion of textbooks by textbook companies written for ESL students in an attempt to demean their cultural and linguistic knowledge and forcibly assimilate them into the dominant society. These are the types of textbooks ELL students are exposed to, those that exemplify linguistic hegemony in the United States. ESL textbooks, therefore, promote the values and norms inherent in a belief system that values profit over human agency. These textbooks also interpret history from the dominant perspective. The use of the story of Lewis and Clark in *High Point* is an example of hegemonic storytelling. Ascribing to a revisionist perspective of U.S. history, these textbooks belittle and ignore the resistance movements of oppressed peoples. The story about western expansion and the genocide of indigenous peoples is treated as a cultural encounter. Conspicuously missing from the textbook narrative are the concepts of imperialism, conquest and oppression. A more critical pedagogical approach would connect the concept of cultural and historical imperialism to the expedition of Lewis and Clark. The selection might also be used to discuss the experiences of immigrant families coming into the United States. The students’ could have compared the obstacles faced by immigrant families to the perilous experiences of those on the expedition. Generally speaking, the students’ own reactions to the stories were present only a few times.

The students’ primary language is never supported in this text. This book could have emphasized the use of cognates for Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian speakers. For speakers of other languages, some use of contrastive analysis between their primary language and English could have been useful. Also, it has been very useful for students to construct their own dictionaries, where they also use the term in their primary language. It is also very useful to allow students to help each other in their primary language, and effective teachers use grouping to promote language interaction.

In conclusion, while the text does not have a deficit view towards English Learners, there are several missed opportunities to capitalize on students’ prior experiences. Further, while *High Point* does infuse relevant topics for English Learners throughout the book, the opportunity to engage students in a critique of the sociopolitical conditions is absent.

CONCLUSION

*High Point* is written by second language researchers prominent in the field of second language learning and teaching and without argument the book does follow theory on second language acquisition, for newcomer students. *High Point* is written for the level of language proficiency for an ELL student at the intermediate level, as it purports. However, it is written at the intermediate level for a newcomer, a first generation immigrant, who enters U.S. schools with little to no
knowledge of English. LTEL are not newcomers and the book does not adequately address the literacy skills these students need, namely writing, academic language and critical thinking. In addition, given the restrictions placed upon textbook writers, it is not surprising that the book does not take a critical stance or ask students to question the sociopolitical climate in the United States. However, given the positionality of ELL students and the hegemony of English, it is imperative that critical teacher educators and teachers assume such a stance.

Further, consideration must be given to the lack of voice that educators have in selecting their textbooks. Educators across the United States are frustrated by requirements that force them to focus on high-stakes tests, scripted curriculum and the standardization of the curriculum, a curriculum that is more stratified and regulated than ever before (Kumashiro, 2010). At this time, it is impossible for California’s teachers to select their own textbooks, but it is not impossible for them to supplement the textbook by utilizing critical strategies. Critical Literacy is grounded in the experiences of the students. When used as an instructional practice, the possibilities for the development of personal and cultural identity are endless. Critical literacy can also help to develop the academic language fluency in our students, by utilizing topics discerned from their lived realities, readings selected by them, and the writing of creative poems and stories that reflect their culture and language. Teachers can develop voice and identity by using literacy strategies like problem posing, politicizing the everyday, reflection and dialogue or engaging students in action research projects. As critical teachers, we must connect language learning with identity development, so that our students will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. Let us create the learning environment where students can fully develop their voices, find their serpent’s tongue, and overcome the “tradition of silence” (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 81).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

– What is an LTEL? What are the characteristics of LTELs? Compare the educational experiences of an LTEL with a newcomer student (a student who has recently entered the United States).
– How does the sociopolitical climate of the United States today influence the textbook development or adoption of books for EL students?
– How does the sociopolitical climate in your state or district impact the lives of EL students?
– What would that classroom’s literacy instruction look like if you were to observe a teacher practicing a critical approach while instructing EL students?

REFERENCES


