


CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Planting Seeds to Harvest Fruits

Geneva Gay

 **W**e know for certain that teaching in U.S. schools is increasingly a cross-cultural phenomenon, in that teachers are frequently not of the same race, ethnicity, class, and linguistic dominance as their students. This demographic and cultural divide is becoming even more apparent as the numbers of individuals of color in teacher preparation and active classroom teaching dwindle. In our work in K–12 and college classrooms, we repeatedly encounter prospective and in-service teachers who are doubtful, even intimidated and fearful, about the prospect of teaching students from different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds.

These situations caused us to ponder how to help teachers deal with these dilemmas. We begin in this book by envisioning how to talk to teachers about multicultural education, especially those who are beginners. One way to accomplish this goal is to minimize its perceived threat and to counter some of the misconceptions surrounding teaching to and about cultural diversity. We think telling our own stories about our emergence as multicultural educators is a viable means to stimulate these conversations. In doing so, we have chosen

to be simultaneously personal, professional, and autobiographical about our own multicultural development.

Within our profession, much is said about the necessity and value of variety in teaching styles or using multiple means to achieve common learning outcomes. This is especially true in multicultural education, given the diversity of learning styles, histories, cultures, and experiences that ethnically different students bring to the classroom. Traditional styles of academic writing and classroom teaching are not amenable to capturing some of the subtle nuances of becoming and being multicultural educators. A poem conveys a level of poignancy and feeling that is impossible in the best crafted descriptive text. Writing in the form of letters allows a kind of intimacy that is beyond the capability of dispassionate analysis. Interactive dialogues invite readers to think along, become more deeply involved with what the author is saying, and unveil their own positions. Furthermore, we try to convey through example to our readers that diverse techniques are needed to capture and convey the essence of multicultural education. We also want the process dimensions of our project to exemplify its substantive messages, one of which is the value of collaboration and cooperation in multicultural teaching and learning.

TEACHER EFFICACY AND EMPOWERMENT

A number of ideas have shaped our thinking about ways to respond to the needs we address and thus determined the structural contours and substantive text of this book. All of them speak to the need for teacher efficacy and empowerment in multicultural education—that is, to be competent in and confident about one's ability to do multicultural teaching. Teacher educators and staff developers must find ways to bridge the developmental divides between the recommendations of multicultural education scholars and the needs of novice practitioners. Making these bridges involves accepting the reality and respectability of multiple levels and approaches to implementing multicultural education.

The need to bridge multicultural theory and practice, age and youth, experienced and initial involvement helped to shape our project on becoming multicultural. It led us to emphasize processes over products, which means we concentrate on our own emerging knowl-

edge, thoughts, beliefs, and skills about multicultural education rather than on specific techniques for how to do multicultural teaching with students. Nevertheless, many instructional strategies are implied in our particular developmental processes that have utility for teachers in general.

Peer Modeling and Teaching

Who can best teach what to whom, and how? As we thought about this question, we grappled with the developmental divide between novices and experts. Logically, the most knowledgeable should be the best teachers. But we know that this is not necessarily true in real life. We explored and then accepted the possibility that individuals who are in the early stages of their career as multicultural educators might be able to talk about what it means and how to do it in ways that resonate better with their peers than do expert leaders. If so, they can be effective teachers for other beginners in the field. Their progression in acquiring multicultural knowledge and teaching skills also may serve as directions and inspiration for others to follow. Early-career multicultural educators have the added advantage of being close to their own K-12 classroom teaching experiences and can infuse theoretical principles with current and authentic practical applications. Preservice and young in-service teachers may identify and work better with them than with individuals who are much further along in their career development.

We have noticed that many multicultural education novices are captivated when the leading scholars in the field write and speak, but rarely do they genuinely engage in dialogue with them. They will not analyze, critique, challenge, or reinterpret what they read and hear from the “experts.” Conversely, many of the scholars who spend much of their time engaged in conceptualizing and theorizing about multicultural education have difficulty responding to requests from practitioners for help in translating these general principles into specific classroom practices. We think individuals who are the peers of multicultural novices can broker some of these developmental gaps between theory and practice and different levels of maturation in the field. Consequently, the contributing authors in this book are in the earlier phases of their careers as multicultural educators. We think of ourselves more as peer coaches rather than experts and authorities.

But our stories are not offered as exemplars or as panaceas for how everyone can or should become multicultural. Nor are they methodological in the sense that the emphasis is on how to do multicultural teaching in the classroom. Our focus is on personal preparation for being multicultural educators. It reflects our belief that teachers must be multicultural themselves before they can effectively and authentically teach students to be multicultural. At the heart of this personal becoming is self-knowledge.

Our stories are real examples of how individuals are engaging with the challenge of personal growth as a requisite of multicultural teaching. They illustrate the dynamic, diverse, complex, and developmental nature of the process. None of us would ever think of suggesting that our multicultural development is complete. But we are not disturbed by the fact that we have a lot more learning and growing to do. Rather, these prospects are exhilarating for us. We look forward to the enrichment that our further multicultural pursuits offer.

We hope that our processes of becoming multicultural will entice preservice and novice in-service teachers to join the journey and become more reflective of and critically conscious about their own multicultural beliefs, experiences, and behaviors and to develop personal and professional competence and confidence in multicultural education. For those readers who are responsible for teacher education, we hope our stories will provide them with some ideas, information, and actions for inclusion in the design and implementation of their instructional programs.

Personal and Professional Journeying

Multicultural teaching is both a personal and professional process. We strongly believe that who we are as people determines the personality of our teaching. Who the person is who inhabits the role of teacher shapes how that role is performed.

Some of the best ways to find out about the interactions of person and performance in teaching is from the self-studies and personalized reporting of teachers. These ways of knowing are referred to by various terms, including *reflection*, *narratives*, *storied research*, and *autobiography*. As research methodology, content, and pedagogy, they are becoming increasingly popular among educational researchers, theorists, and practitioners. They also fit well with our desire to share how

our personal and professional multicultural development is at once discrete and intertwined, individual and collective.

We are persuaded by Sonia Nieto's (2000, p. 353) argument that "*becoming a multicultural teacher . . . means first becoming a multicultural person* [emphasis in original]. Without this transformation of ourselves, any attempts at developing a multicultural perspective [for teaching and learning] will be shallow and superficial." This transformation involves a deep "personal awakening and call to action" (Nieto, 1999, p. xviii), but it is more than that. It is a transformative journey of acquiring more knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity; confronting our own racism and ethnic biases; learning to see reality from a variety of ethnic and cultural perspectives; challenging inequities in conventional school policies, programs, and practices; working collaboratively with others with similar concerns; and being change agents in and outside of classrooms and schools (Nieto, 1999, 2000). Teachers need to be well into their own multicultural journey before they can prepare the way for and guide students to follow. They also need to realize that there are no absolute guarantees and no one, regardless of how gifted and insightful a guide or teacher they may be, can ever determine the exact course of action for anyone else to take to be effective multicultural educators.

Teacher educators and staff developers can offer guidance, resources, encouragement, support, and models, but how or whether to act on these is always an individual decision. Each of us must take our own journey toward becoming multicultural educators. This journey does not have to be a lonely, isolated one. By engaging in dialogue with ourselves and sharing our stories with other travelers, we can find confirmation, companionship, and community (Newman, 1990). In addition, as Mayher (1990) suggests about becoming teachers in general, "By transacting with these stories of unfolding journeys, we can enrich and enlighten our own parallel, but necessarily individual, roads" (p. xv).

Throughout this book, we offer unfolding multicultural education journeys and invite our readers to learn from what we are doing and then to join the journey and add to the conversation by writing parallel stories about their own multicultural development. For us, these processes translate into growth in knowing, thinking, feeling, and doing about multicultural education, both personally and professionally. A word of caution is due here: Do not expect to find what

Mayher (1990, p. xvi) calls the “surety of adoptable answers” or a catalogue of universally applicable “how-tos” for classroom instruction in this book. That is not the most important function or value of teaching through stories. Rather, it is to model and motivate self-consciousness, self-reflection, and self-critique of our own knowledge, feelings, beliefs, and practices and to offer opportunities for camaraderie in a common cause. The greatest benefits you can expect to receive from stories of our multicultural development are “the excitement and rewards of becoming part of a wider professional community that takes our journey seriously and recognizes the need for mutual respect along the way” (Mayher, 1990, p. xvi).

The Power of Story and Telling Your Own

Another idea that converges around our project is the power of story or narrative as a mechanism for improving teaching preparation and practice. Narratives are valid and viable ways of knowing for teachers and students. According to McEwan and Egan (1995), narrative is “essential to the purpose of communicating who we are, what we do, how we feel, and why we ought to follow some course of action rather than another” (p. xiii). Because the “function of narrative is to make our actions intelligible to ourselves as well as others, narrative discourse is essential to our efforts to understand teaching and learning” (p. xiii). In speaking specifically about the use of stories of culturally diverse students in classroom teaching, Dyson and Genishi (1994) tell us that they have “the potential for empowering unheard voices” (p. 4).

These observations are especially meaningful for us because of the nature of most existing scholarship on multicultural teacher education. Much of quality is written on what should be included in these programs, why, and how. But nothing exists about multicultural teacher education from the insider perspective of people going through the process—that is, individuals telling their own stories as they are lived. Our stories in this book deal with people who are in the process of becoming multicultural educators, told in their own voices.

Multicultural education, like other kinds of teaching, is a moral enterprise that requires deep personal engagement, commitment, advocacy, and agency from those who participate fully and genuinely in the enterprise. Trying to convey the sense and significance of these dimensions of multicultural preparation and classroom practice to teachers through technical knowledge and objectified analyses is

extremely difficult, if not impossible. Narratives allow us to visualize these ideas in storied behaviors, as well as reveal and examine the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and intentions of the agents of the actions (Coles, 1989; McEwan and Egan, 1995). We use metaphors in constructing our narratives to help convey feelings, beliefs, and values and to demonstrate that becoming multicultural is greater than developing pedagogical knowledge and skills; it is a style of living outside as well as inside the classroom.

Too many educational leaders are mystified about finding instructional strategies that will improve the academic achievement of under-achieving students of color. In their search for the “best programs and practices” throughout the country, we believe they are overlooking the obvious: the personal experiences of successful individuals. Some researchers are demonstrating that the answer lies within the lives of teachers, and within teachers telling their own stories (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993; Nieto, 1999). Our work is within these traditions. We strongly believe in the viability of autobiography as a research methodology and a rich source of substantive data for multicultural teacher preparation and classroom practice.

bell hooks (1998) explains that autobiographical narratives enable us to look at aspects of our past experiences from different perspectives and to use the knowledge we glean from them as means of self-growth and change in practical ways. These personal stories act as mirrors, opportunities, and invitations to participate in “I-to-I encounters” with others similarly engaged and for them to unveil and tell their stories in their own voices, in their own ways, about becoming multicultural, as we have done (Jackson, 1995). In so doing, they will join the community of other sojourners en route to becoming multicultural educators, and the process of sharing will improve the quality of their efforts. We believe that the essence of being good multicultural educators is more than powerful content or skillful pedagogy; it is how we live our lives as people and as teachers. Our personal narratives serve the dual function of helping us to look inward and outward in becoming multicultural educators.

Importance of Reflection

The final conceptual orientation that helps to contour our project is the importance of reflection in becoming and being good teachers. Developing reflective practitioners is the clarion call of many teacher

education programs throughout the United States (Schön, 1983; Valli, 1992; Zeichner and Liston, 1996). Reflection and narrative go hand-in-hand; narratives are the form that give external embodiment to the internal thinking processes that comprise reflection. Being critically conscious and analytically reflective about one's own personal knowledge, beliefs, values, and actions are necessary skills in becoming effective multicultural persons and professionals.

In reflecting on our becoming multicultural educators, we are more concerned about making personal and professional sense of some benchmark events in our development than merely describing them. We explore, wonder, question, and speculate about how these events cause us to know, think, feel, and do differently about issues related to teaching for and about ethnic and cultural diversity. Talking about the insights and perceptions gleaned from these analyses is essential to the reflective process (Richert, 1992). Sometimes this discourse is necessarily internal and individualistic, but it is more imperative for it to be external and communal. That is, teachers need to talk about their reflections with others who are engaged in similar processes. Individuals must have the skills to convey these internal thoughts and feelings in ways that capture their integrity, intensity, and essence and are understandable to others.

Thus, conversation and community are essential to reflective teaching. In this book, we have tried to build both among ourselves and with our readers. Our need to find expressive techniques that were amenable to conveying the nuances and the content of our inner thoughts was as instrumental in our decision to use a variety of writing styles as was our desire to model the multicultural education principle of multiple perspectives and modalities in teaching and learning.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The chapters that comprise this book are unique, yet they share several commonalities. They are unique in that the various authors' journeys toward becoming multicultural persons and educators are different. Some of them focus on classroom events as students and teachers, some concentrate more on learning experiences that occur in social settings outside the boundaries of any formal educational institutions, and others include both. Some of the authors take readers down memory lanes that go all the way back to the beginning of formal schooling in kindergarten, through elementary and secondary

schools, college and even graduate school, and into the early years of their professional lives. Others center their narratives in adulthood as classroom teachers, young parents, and adult children. Some talk about how moving across different geographical regions within national boundaries and the experiences they encountered in doing so affected their knowledge, consciousness, and commitment to multicultural education. Others extend these journeys across international boundaries as they travel back and forth between their home countries and the United States. Yet there is a common thread embedded in these differences: becoming multicultural is a dynamic process of growing, a journeying, a transformation, and a transcendence in both a literal and metaphorical sense.

The writing motifs used to give order and structure to our ideas and convey our messages include interviews, letters, narrative essays, interactive dialogues, and poetry. These choices are deliberate, since we wanted to give legitimacy to the idea that alternative and multiple means of teaching and learning are essential to multicultural education. We agreed to include the same types of information in our chapters so that the conversations across them would have some cohesive and centralizing focus. Therefore, all of the chapters include three types of information: descriptive, reflective analytical, and interpretative. The descriptive provides factual information about the details of transforming experiences that contribute to our multicultural education development. In the reflective and analytical information, we try to make sense of our experiences and reveal their deeper meanings. It is woven throughout the descriptive text. The interpretative information extrapolates broader multicultural education messages that are embedded in our personal stories. They are identified separately as “Principles for Practices” and suggestions for how others can “join the journey” in becoming multicultural educators.

All of the chapters also address several of the major concepts, components, and principles of multicultural education: multiple perspectives, culturally responsive teaching, congruity between school culture and the cultures of different ethnic groups, combating racism, and achieving social justice and educational equity for ethnically diverse groups. By arranging these conversations in this way, our collective efforts converge on multicultural education from somewhat different vantage points and are complementary. Together, they present a more comprehensive profile of teacher preparation for multicultural education than any one chapter could do alone. We try to

simultaneously attend to the particular and the general within multicultural information.

In Chapter Two, “We Make the Road by Walking,” John Ambrosio traces his journey in becoming a multicultural person and educator through a series of intellectual, political, and sociocultural experiences, reflections, and autobiographical snapshots. He explains how these helped to breach his cultural isolation, challenge his internalized biases and stereotypes, and facilitate his transformation from encapsulation within European and Italian American cultures to an increasing awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity. John’s story is anchored in the multicultural education components of personal commitment to and engagement in activism to achieve social justice, dignity, and equality for ethnically diverse issues, perspectives, experiences, individuals, and groups; having the moral fortitude and will to act on one’s own multicultural values and beliefs; and the reallocation of political and academic knowledge, power, and privilege among ethnically diverse groups.

Carolyn Jackson next shares paths that she has taken that have led to increases in her multicultural personal strength and professional wisdom. She likens the journey to the process of crystallizing and classifying diamonds that involves clarity, carat weight, cut, and color. She chose these images to signify the strength of will, depth of knowledge and purpose, and the continuous personal and professional development that are needed to be a good multicultural educator. These emphases are embedded in the title of Chapter Three, “Crystallizing My Multicultural Education Core.” Carolyn’s story is centered in the multicultural education components of self-understanding, cultural clarification and ethnic identity development, efficacy and empowerment for ethnically diverse students, and diversity within ethnic groups and cultures.

Chapter Four deals with a series of symbolic conversations that Audra Gray engages in as she encounters experiences that cause her to rethink some of her assumed truths about cultural differences, race relations, and the schooling experiences of diverse ethnic groups. She titles the chapter “Conversations with Transformative Encounters” and explores four events, or encounters, that have been instrumental in initiating or accelerating her multicultural consciousness and competence: reflections on early schooling experiences; situating particular issues of one ethnic group within the general parameters of multicultural education; resolving the tensions between a given discipline or subject area and multicultural education; and the effects of

reading a fiction novel about intergenerational relationships among women in a Japanese American family. Her multicultural becoming converges around the components of deconstructing existing realities and multicultural claims of “truth,” building community within and among diverse ethnic groups, and using insider ethnic group perspectives and various media of expression in developing multicultural education programs.

Jeannine Dingus begins Chapter Five with an excerpt from Paul Laurence Dunbar’s poem, “We Wear the Masks,” setting the tone for how she characterizes her multicultural journey and explaining why she titled the chapter “Making and Breaking Ethnic Masks.” “Mask” is a metaphor for the negative academic expectations and ethnic stereotypes imposed on students of color by teachers, peers, and sometimes even themselves. Using vignettes that she witnessed personally or participated in, she examines how teachers’ assumptions about race and ethnicity affected her own and other students’ personal identities and academic experiences and how she created her own masks to insulate herself from these teacher expectations. She also shows how she began to crack these masks and eventually remove them entirely. Jeannine’s story exemplifies multicultural education components having to do with historical legacies and past experiences of ethnic group; improving the self-esteem and ethnic identity of students of color; and the interactions among culture, ethnicity, expectations, and achievement in teaching and learning for ethnically diverse students.

Chapter Six, “Steppin’ Up and Representin’” by Kipchoge Kirkland, focuses on connections that he makes with himself, his family, cultural community, multicultural education colleagues, and future teachers. By “connections,” he means “experiences, learnings, insights, relationships, discourses, reflections, and actions.” He uses personal, poetic, and academic narratives to express his concerns, thoughts, convictions, and aspirations for becoming an effective multicultural educator. The most prominent components embedded in Kipchoge’s multicultural journey are authentic role models and mentors for ethnically diverse students; school, family, and community partnerships in multicultural education; developing advocacy and agency in multicultural teaching; and using culturally responsive techniques to teach ethnically diverse students to better demonstrate their intellectual, personal, social, and cultural competencies.

In Chapter Seven, “Clearing Pathways for Children to go Forth,” S. Purcell Woodard writes an open letter to his son. Although this is

addressed specifically to Alex, the messages are applicable to the numerous sons and daughters of today's parents who will be tomorrow's students in multicultural classrooms across the country. He shares a wide range and variety of resistances to ethnic and cultural diversity he has experienced in his journey toward becoming a multicultural educator; how his growing multicultural competencies help him to deal with them; and how he is strengthening his resolve to make life and learning better for ethnically, culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse students. The central multicultural education components addressed in the chapter are developing deep self and social consciousness; building multicultural networks, coalitions and communities; and personal activism for social change and cultural equity.

Chia-lin Huang, the author of Chapter Eight, "Professional Actions Echo Personal Experiences," uses echo as the metaphor for major landmarks in her multicultural education journey. The echoes discussed are reevaluating her relationship with her grandmother; interactions with students from two indigenous minority groups in her native Taiwan; being a student in a foreign country, with its attendant foreign culture and language; and returning to her ancestral cultural roots. These experiences become echoes because what she encounters or learns in one setting or situation is reexperienced in others, either by herself or students she teaches. For Chia-lin, "echoes" are parallelisms in the experiences of different ethnic groups and memories or residues of earlier social, personal, cultural, and academic learnings embedded in subsequent professional understandings and actions. Her story exemplifies the multicultural education components of cross-cultural understanding, teaching the histories and heritages of diverse ethnic groups, and modifying instructional styles to better fit the cultures, background experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students.

Patricia Espiritu Halagao, the author of Chapter Nine, "Unifying Mind and Soul Through Cultural Knowledge and Self-Education," uses a technique called *balagtasan* from Filipino literary traditions to frame and focus her process of multicultural becoming. It is a form of poetic debate where facts and feelings, thinking and doing, and mind and soul battle with each other. In sharing her journey, she highlights important experiences and pivotal individuals who have contributed to her growth as a multicultural person and educator. Some of these are positive, and others are negative. Many of these dilemmas were provoked by prejudices of European American teachers and peers

toward Filipino Americans. Patricia's story illustrates four prominent components of multicultural education: positive ethnic identity development; holistic teaching and learning about ethnic and cultural diversity; designing ethnically specific curriculum and instruction; and bringing the cultures, experiences, voices, and contributions of marginalized groups onto the center stage of the educational process.

In Chapter Ten, Mei-ying Chen situates her journey toward becoming a multicultural person and educator in the learning obtained from social interactions with ethnically diverse groups. In "Hanging Out with Ethnic Others," she reflects on multiculturalism in her daily life and the importance of social, experiential learning in the preparation of multicultural educators. She explains how and why her interactions with ethnic others cause some cultural shocks, require some border crossings, and create some confrontations with prejudices and stereotypes. She considers all of these essential to good multicultural teaching and learning. Her early "miseducation" in schools about ethnic and cultural diversity led her to be skeptical about "book knowledge" in this area. To counter these lingering doubts, Mei-ying develops the habit of seeking out opportunities to mingle socially with members of different ethnic groups in their own cultural contexts. She believes these "firsthand, up-close, authentic experiences" are the best multicultural education teachers. The key multicultural education components embedded in her journey are debunking ethnic and cultural myths, prejudices, and stereotypes; locating and listening to authentic voices and experiences of ethnic groups; and combining academic and school knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity with social and experiential learning.

Mary Stone Hanley employs her prior training and experiences as a playwright to present the process of her becoming a multicultural educator in Chapter Eleven. The play she presents in the chapter, "Footsteps in the Dancing Zone," is a series of life-altering experiences dealing with education about ethnic and cultural diversity, civil rights protests, social and political activism, and confrontations with racism. The cast of players involved in the construction of Mary's multicultural knowledge, commitment, and skills include individuals and events that were major actors in the social and political civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s and promoters of educational equity for ethnic diversity in the 1980s and 1990s. Her writing technique provokes multiple layers of simultaneous engagement with her characters, ideas, and experiences. Mary's substantive text exemplifies

the multicultural education components of analyzing critical socio-political issues and events of different ethnic groups to combat racism and other forms of oppression.

In Chapter Twelve, Laura Kay Neuwirth explains the transformation of her personal ideology and pedagogical practices as she moves “From Color Blindness to Cultural Vision.” She examines the futility of trying to be “color-blind” in teaching students of color—that is, pretending that race and ethnicity are not important variables in education and therefore trying to ignore them and treat all students the same. In so doing, she demonstrates that having strong intentions to “do good” for ethnically diverse students without having corresponding knowledge and skills is insufficient. Laura explains how she abandoned the color-blind philosophy and how this change affected her subsequent choices of curriculum materials, instructional strategies, and personal understandings. The multicultural education components emphasized in her story are acquiring accurate knowledge about the cultures, experiences, and contributions of different ethnic groups; deconstructing prevailing assumptions about teaching ethnically diverse groups; and developing multicultural curriculum and implementing culturally responsive teaching.

In Chapter Thirteen, “Navigating Marginality: Searching for My Own Truth,” Yukari Takimoto Amos explains her personal experiences with marginalization and how they contribute to her multicultural education knowledge, convictions, commitment, and skills. Some of this marginality is geographical, since she is an international student who travels back and forth between the United States and Japan. Other margins are symbolized by gender stereotyping, ethnic profiling, linguistic differences, and one’s own self-definitions and those imposed by others. Yukari describes how she became conscious of these margins, how they operate, and what she does to cope with and transcend them. She presents a compelling portrait of the tensions and uncertainties associated with being caught between different cultural borders. The multicultural education components exemplified in Yukari’s story are cultural style-shifting skills; understanding the variable of immigration within the experience of different ethnic groups; and developing knowledge and skills needed to function in different ethnic, cultural, social, and national settings.

Learning to be a multicultural educator takes place for Terri Hackett, the author of Chapter Fourteen, “Teaching Them Through

Who They Are,” in the process of teaching ethnically and racially diverse middle school students. She describes how her general philosophy of teaching and openness to ethnic and cultural diversity made her receptive to teaching students in culturally responsive ways. As she tries to ensure that her teaching behaviors reflect her personal and professional values and beliefs, she learns that she has to be diligent about connecting the knowledge and skills she teaches to the students’ experiential frames of reference. Terri also explains some of the challenges she encounters in the process of trying to accomplish these goals and how her understanding of who her students are helped to overcome them. Terri’s process of becoming a multicultural educator highlights the components of using novel teaching strategies to make learning interesting and relevant to ethnically diverse students; using the prior social knowledge and lived experiences of diverse students in formal classroom instruction; and being an advocate for diverse students, programs, and practices.

JOINING THE JOURNEY

We believe that success in multicultural teaching is more a journey than a destination. With this in mind, we invite you to join our journey in becoming multicultural people and professionals. Journey with us in two ways: by extrapolating general messages and methods for becoming and being multicultural educators from our particular stories and by adding your personal stories to ours. As the discourse prompted by our collective stories expands, our individual competencies for multicultural teaching will be enriched and enabled even more, and more children will be better served in our schools.

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