

Professional Learning in a Changing World: *Promises & Challenges for Teacher Education*

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Our Challenge

... is to prepare the future generation of special education teachers to work in contexts in which *professional practice* is mediated by demographic changes, systemic restructuring efforts, and multiple (often contradictory) policy mandates.

Special educators are working at a time when the field's identity is changing rapidly and drastically. How can teacher educators mold the identity of future practitioners when the field's identity is being changed at the same time?

Purpose

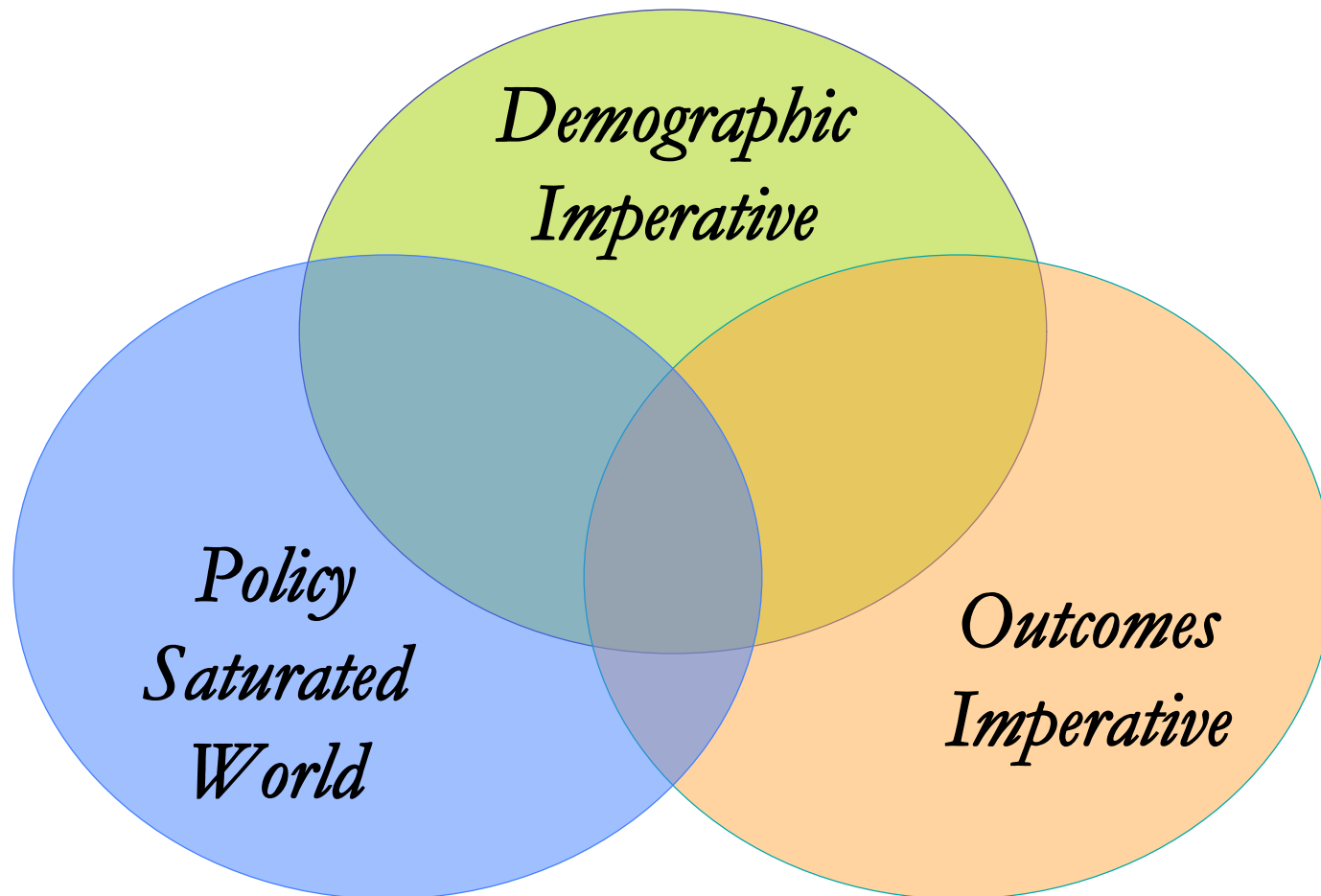
- Highlight the urgency to focus on the creation and renewal of professional learning opportunities as the guiding principle for future work in teacher education.
 - Discuss challenges associated with the idea of professional learning in a changing world.
 - Outline implications.
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Three Topics

1. Setting the context: Why a focus on professional learning?
 2. Unpacking professional learning: 3 Challenges
 3. Implications
-

The Urgency to Focus on Professional Learning

Teacher labor is mediated by...



Why Focus on Professional Learning?

The Demographic & Outcome Imperatives

- Demographic imperative (Banks et al., 2005)
 - Ethnic minorities growth rate.
 - Teaching force is homogeneous.
 - Educational outcomes imperative
 - Achievement discrepancies between groups.
-

Achievement Gap Trends

(Lee, 2002)

Substantial success in “narrowing the Black-White achievement gap has been realized since the 1960s. However, a closer examination of the data reveals that this earlier progress has been reversed since the late 1980s” (p. 3).

Because achievement and socioeconomic conditions co-vary without any time lag, it appears that they are related to each other. However, this does not fully explain why some of the Black-White achievement gaps rose in the 1990s despite the fact that Blacks socioeconomic and family conditions did not get worse relative to their White counterparts (p. 7).

Achievement Gap Trends

(Lee, 2002)

“...indicators of youth culture and student behavior [motivation, post-secondary aspirations, alcohol/illicit drug usage, school safety] do not seem at all related to racial and ethnic achievement gap trends (p. 8).

While the narrowing of the racial and ethnic gaps in classroom opportunity-to-learn may have contributed to the narrowing of the achievement gap in the 1980s, it does not help to explain why the racial and ethnic achievement gap widened in the 1990s (p. 10).

Why Focus on Professional Learning?

Demographic & Outcomes Imperatives

- How teachers learn to understand and teach students who are different from themselves?
 - How can teachers learn to break this historical cycle of educational failure that affects a sizable proportion of the student population?
-

The Urgency to Focus on Professional Learning

Learning to Teach in a Policy Saturated World

- Tensions and dilemmas at the interface of IDEA & NCLB (*Pugach, 2005; Valli & Buese, 2007*)
 - Increase, intensification, and expansion of instructional, institutional, collaborative, and learning role expectations.
 - The promise of inclusion: Do LRE data support it?
-

Why Focus on Professional Learning?

Learning to Teach in a Policy Saturated World

- Preparing for the “knowledge global society.”
 - Accountability and its consequences (*Valli & Buese, 2007*)
 - Equity is achieved by obtaining positive outcomes across *all* groups.
 - *Who* is included in *all* and *how* are they included?
 - Unanticipated, often negative, consequences for teachers’ relations with students, pedagogy, and sense of professional well-being.
-

Why Focus on Professional Learning?

Learning to Teach in a Policy Saturated World

■ Disproportionality

- Deeper understanding of the role of culture in learning
 - Consultation, pre-referral, Tiers 1 and 2 in RTI.
 - What do the data suggest about disproportionality: Beyond dichotomies
 - Student deficits due to poverty *v.* structural bias
-

What is the risk for students of a given race to be identified for special education services?

2006 with "High-Incidence" disabilities

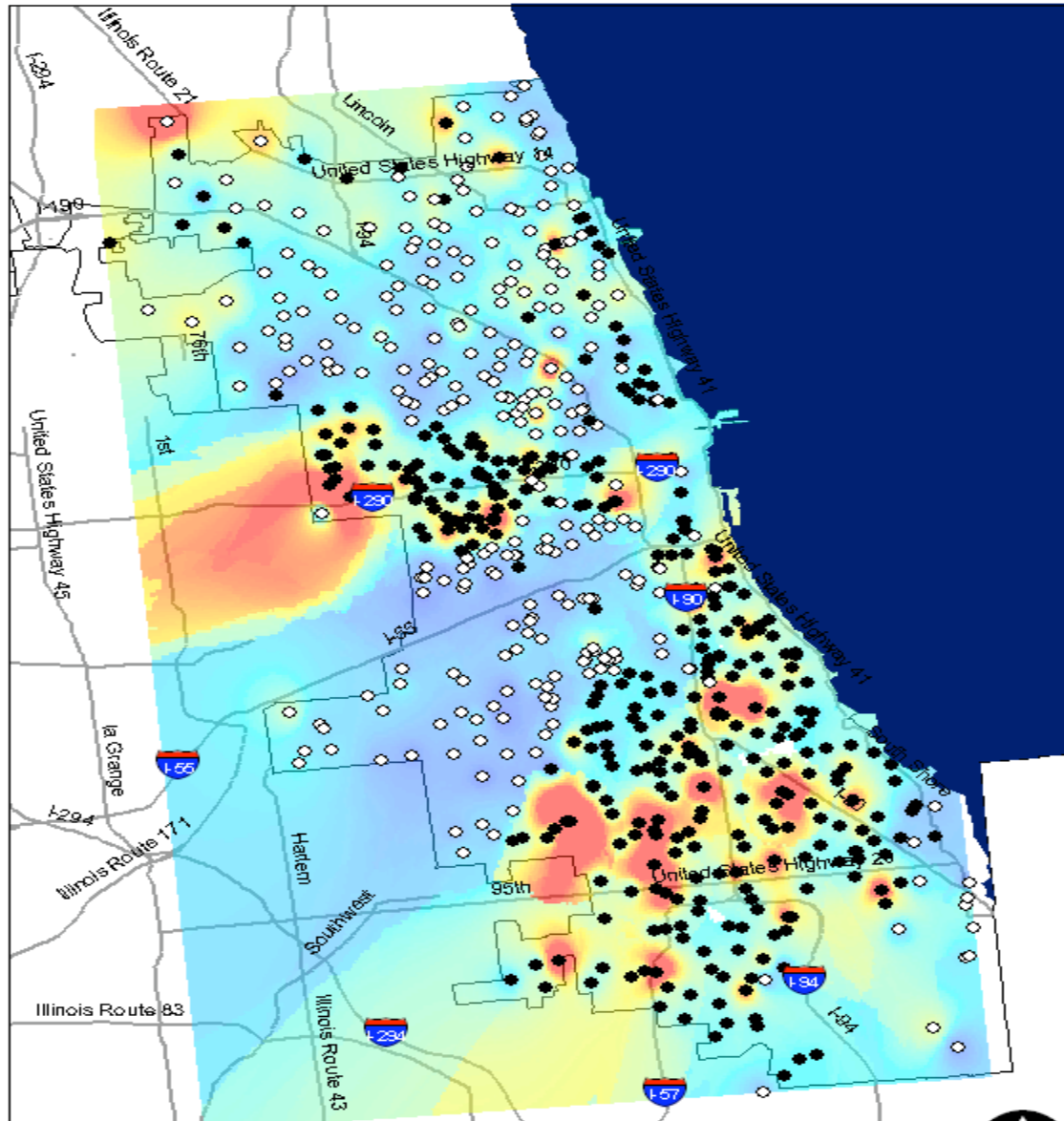
African-American

Hispanic

White

Asian/Pacific Islander

American Indian/Alaskan Native



Professional Learning in a Changing World

Unsettling Questions

- How do we prepare teachers to learn that policies pose problems to people, problems that must be solved in relational settings in which the tensions between history and creativity will play a key role (Ball, 2002).
 - What kinds of learning opportunities are needed to prepare teachers to work in the midst of circulating “ensembles of uncoordinated or contradictory policies?” (Ball, 2002)
-

Professional Learning in a Changing World

Unsettling Questions

- How do teachers learn to teach diverse students when the enactment of one policy may inhibit or contradict or influence the enactment of others? (IDEA *v.* NCLB)
 - What kinds of learning opportunities can be created in TEPs to graduate teachers with a moral and historical consciousness?
-

Professional Learning in a Changing World

Unsettling Questions

- How do teachers learn to engage meaningfully with students and families instead of relating to abstract sociocultural categories? (particularly when they are different from teachers)

What learning opportunities and experiences do teachers need to become *adaptive learners and leaders*?
(Bransford et al., 2000)

Summing Up

Why Focus on Professional Learning?



Not enough teachers can organize instruction to highlight the cognitive skills that our new knowledge society expects. Not enough teachers can work successfully with students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Not enough teachers can relinquish the role of classroom “sage” and knowledge transmitter to assume a new role focused on facilitating problem-solving and developing knowledge among students. The challenges posed for American education require substantial teacher learning resources (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006, p. 1)

Three Topics

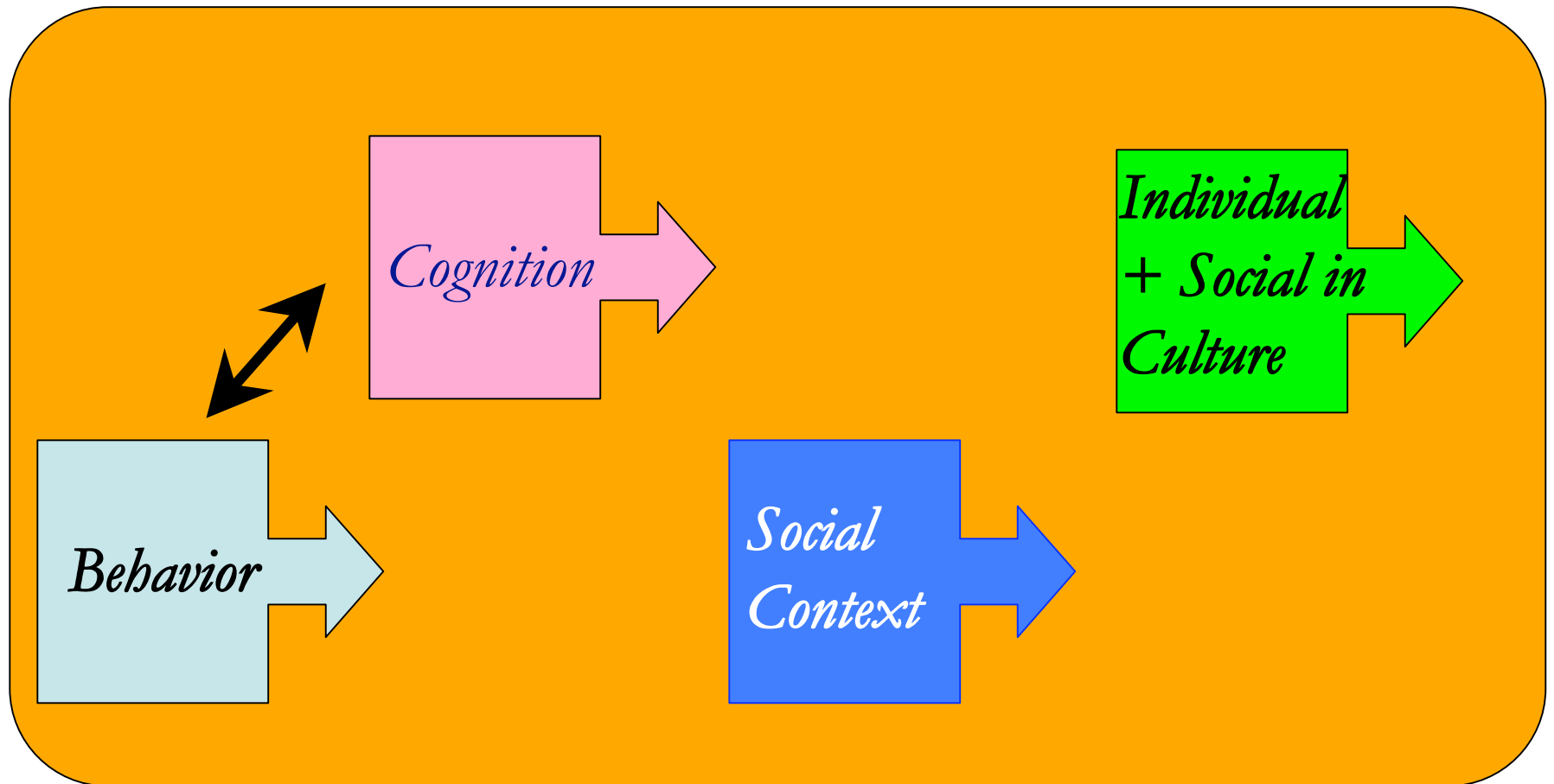
- ✓ Setting the context: Why a focus on professional learning?
 - 2. Unpacking professional learning: 3 Challenges
 - 3. Implications
-

Unpacking Professional Learning

Challenges

1. Critical renewal of learning models.
 - Sped, GenEd, Multicultural Ed.
 2. Culture matters: Beyond innocent views of culture.
 3. Walking the talk: Lack of roadmaps.
-

Critical Renewal of Learning Models



Conceptual Issues

- Definition of learning
 - Changes in behavior, knowledge, participation, or identity?
 - Unit of analysis
 - Individual performance, joint activity; multiple planes (individual, interpersonal, institutional).
 - Technical, contextual, or personal influences?
-

Culture Matters

The End of Innocence

- an invitation to (borrowing from Stuart Hall) end the [sped] field's innocence; I am referring to the innocence that has pervaded [sped] scholarship regarding monolithic views of culture, essentialized perceptions of culturally different groups of students, and the power of representation (Artiles, 2004, p. 550).
-

Culture: A Few Traditional Assumptions

- Independent variable (trait), **cohesive**, & stable.
 - “Typical minority” *v.* individualization/ uniqueness.
 - “Single group studies,” “tourist approach.”
 - Not linked to subject matter teaching and learning
 - *Culture is not destiny* (Nieto, 2004, p. 148).
-

The Cohesion of Culture

THE VALUE OF WITHIN-GROUP DIVERSITY

Narratives of Immigrant Assimilation

(Suárez-Orozco, 2001)

- Clean break assumption.
 - *“Not supposed to look back.”*
 - Homogeneity assumption.
 - Progress assumption.
-

Unpacking Professional Learning

Challenges

- ✓ 1. Critical renewal of learning models.
 - ✓ 2. Culture matters: Beyond innocent views of culture.
 - 3. Walking the talk: Lack of roadmaps.
-

Walking the Talk

The Promise of Professional Learning Communities

Serve 3 key functions

(McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006)

- Build and manage knowledge.
- Create a shared vision, language, and standards for practice and student outcomes.
- Sustain aspects of schools' cultures that are vital to sustainability.

PLC influence teacher and student learning (Lee, & Smith, 1995, 1996; Lee et al., 1997; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Newman & Associates, 1996; Rowan et al., 1997).

Walking the Talk: Elusive Justice (El Haj, 2006)

- Ethnographic work in 2 schools in the East Coast entailing 4 years of fieldwork stretched over an 8-year period.
 - Two different schools committed to meaningful change.
 - *What is fair?, How can we make this a more inclusive community? How can we make this a place where all students are successful?*
-

Walking the Talk: Elusive Justice (El Haj, 2006)

- Examine justice claims that implicitly organized various approaches to redressing educational inequality.
 - Integration, *equal standards*, recognition of difference.
-

Walking the Talk: Elusive Justice (El Haj, 2006)

- Equal standards interrupt inequalities by ensuring all students have access to a challenging curriculum and attain at high performance levels.
 - Make for historical differential access to OTL.
 - But... many students could not show mastery of the new standards.
 - Widely variable academic performance levels.
-

Walking the Talk: Elusive Justice (El Haj, 2006)

- Same or differential treatment?

Should all students be expected to meet the same standards? Should they be expected to do so within a specific timetable? If so, should students who did not demonstrate mastery of the standards fail? Or, should teachers take into account students' differences (in knowledge, skills, learning strengths, development over time) and, consequently assess them differently?

Walking the Talk: Elusive Justice (El Haj, 2006)

- If students needed differential treatment...

did that mean teachers would “lower” standards for some students? Did differential treatment indicate inequitable education? Alternatively, did equity demand acknowledging students’ differences and thus engaging in differential treatment (pedagogy, timetables, assessment) to get them to those standards?

Three Topics

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Implications

1. Articulate a vision for TEPs that places *equity* as the telos of teacher learning.

Learn to teach with a clear idea of the role of education in a diverse society, particularly for historically oppressed groups of students.

Visualize how we come in contact with a past cultural history, project it into the future, and then crystallize such an imagined future “back” into the present in the form of beliefs, assumptions, and expectations that in turn, mediate the present context and interactions.

Implications

2. Reconfigure the organizational structures of TEPs

- Technical culture
 - Professional norms
 - Organizational policies
 - Design TEPs as systems of experiences that “embody the critical processes demanded by” equitable schools and the teaching profession (*Artiles et al., 2000; Blanton et al., 1998; Cole & Griffin, 1983; Moll, 1997*).
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Implications

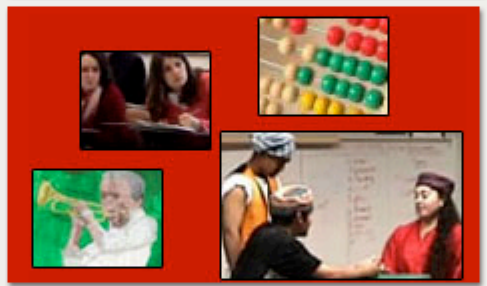
3. Transform traditional curriculum and pedagogy by revisiting their underlying assumptions.
 - Re-think: Foundations, methods, and field experiences (fragmentation).
 - Thematic: Learner, content, assessment, and community centered (HPL framework).
 - Embedded in the collaborative and systematic analyses of practice.
 - Create a multimedia database (*living archive*) of teaching practices--e.g., Inside Teaching (Mace & Lieberman, 2007).
-



Welcome to **Inside Teaching**. This website is designed to support a community of learning, which includes teachers, professional developers, and other educators interested in learning and in teaching.

Visit **collections** of multimedia records of teaching practice. Learn from others' **perspectives** on using records of practice for teacher learning. **Contribute** your own teaching and learning experiences and **browse** materials and resources that reflect the larger context of the work featured here. This site itself is an environment of learning, a "living archive" that relies upon the contributions of visitors in order to grow and to thrive.

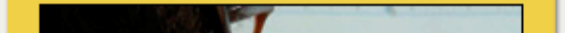
Collections



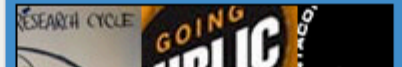
Perspectives



Workspace



Reading Room



Implications

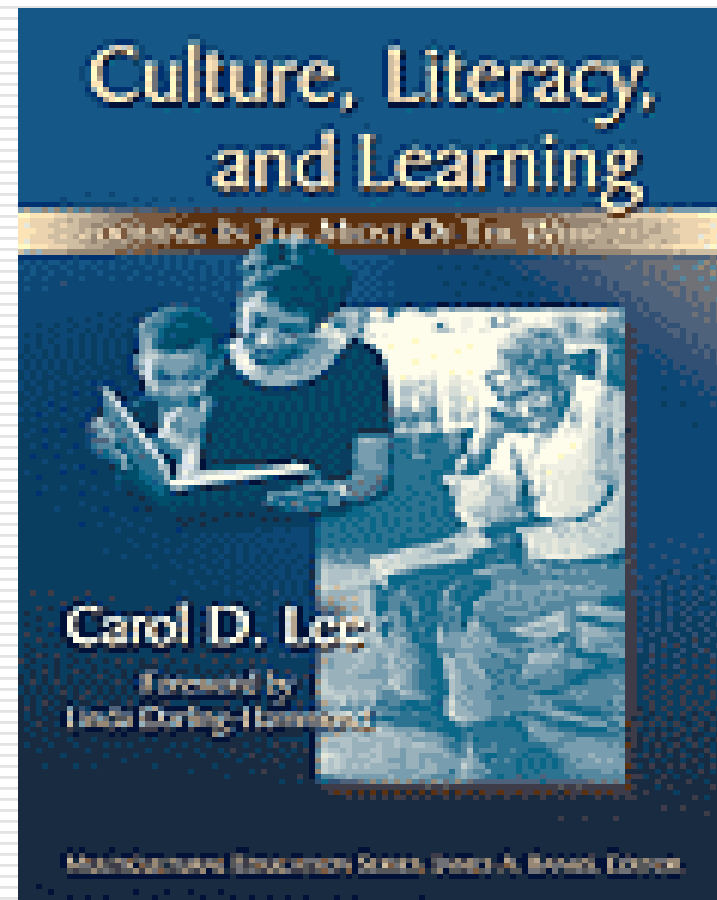
- Prepare teachers that understand and use culture's complexity and fluidity to promote pupil learning--e.g., using pop culture and everyday knowledge.
 - Pop culture, particularly pop music and visual literacies (film, TV) constitute the contexts in which dominant and subordinate groups struggle over ideologies, values, and literacy practices.
 - Teachers can learn to use pop culture in *theoretically informed* and *critical* ways to assist their urban students make connections “between lived experiences and the school culture” (Morrell, 2002).
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Implications

Honor Culture's Complexity and Fluidity

Lee, C. D. (2007).

Culture, literacy, and learning: Taking bloom in the midst of the whirlwind. New York: Teachers College Press.

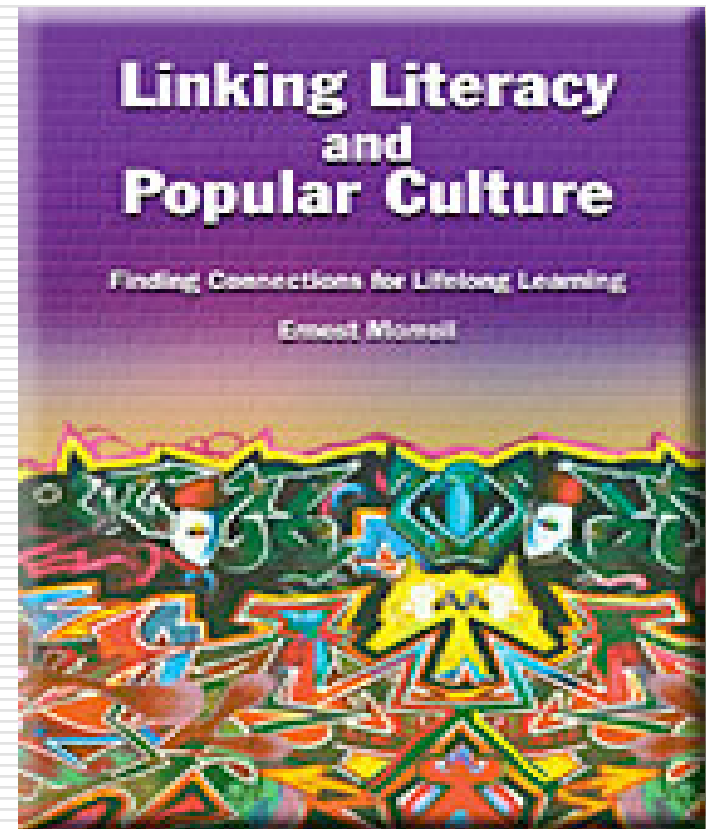


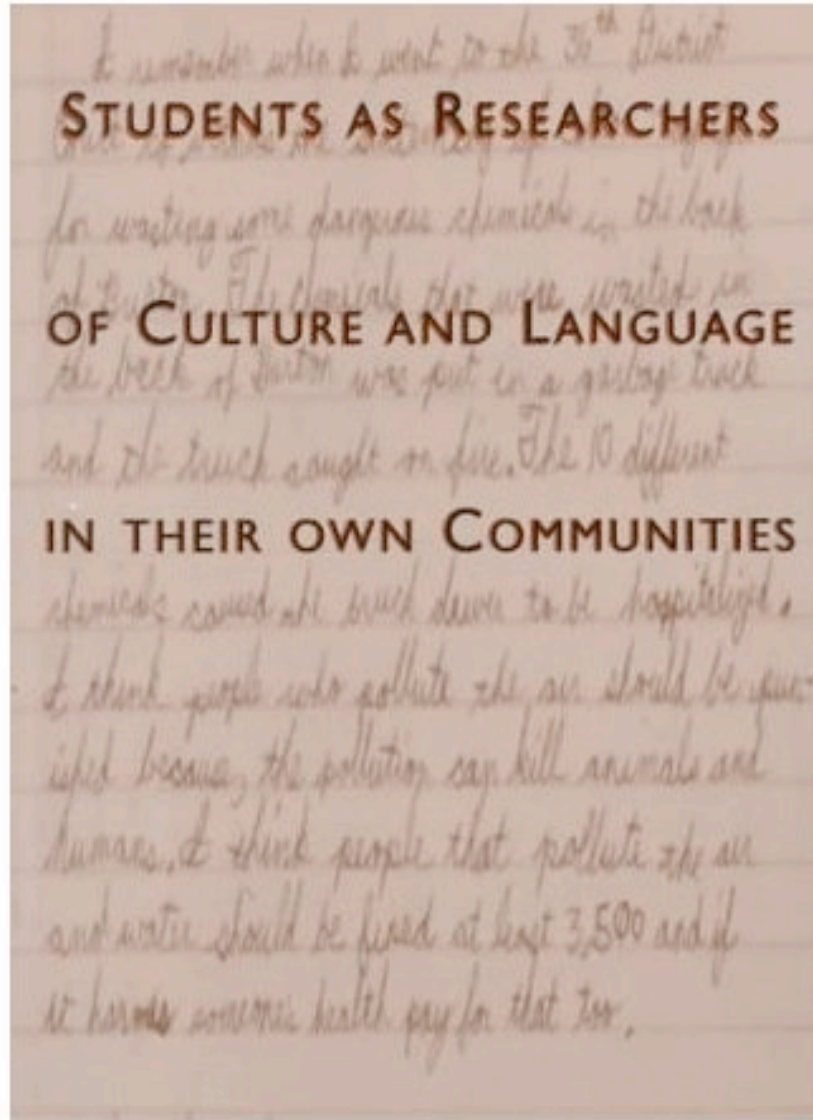
Implications

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Morrell, E. (2004).

Linking literacy and popular culture: Finding connections for lifelong learning. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

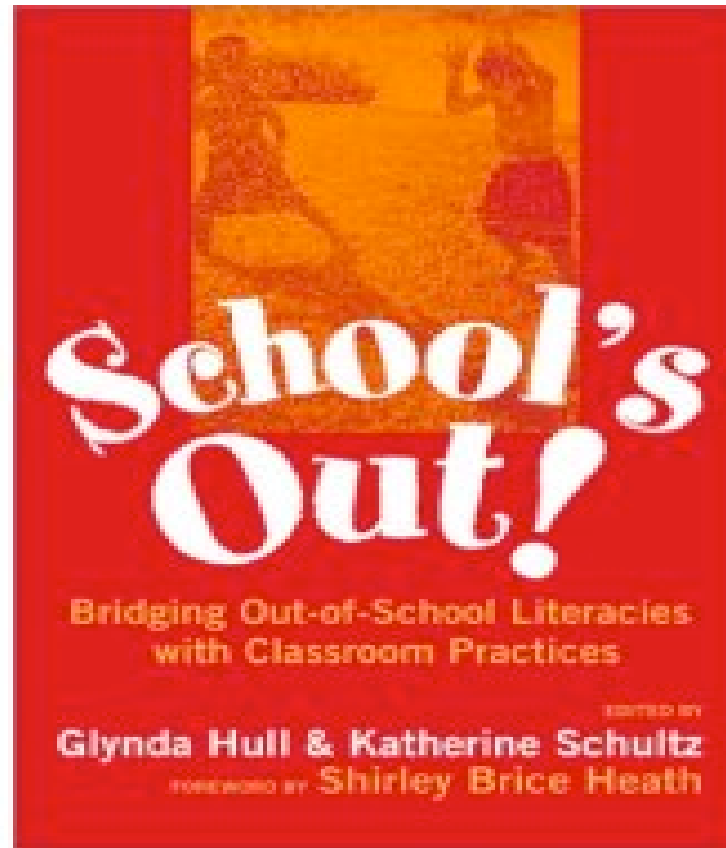




EDITED BY ANN EGAN-ROBERTSON & DAVID BLOOME

**Egan-
Robertson, A.,
& Bloome, D.
(Eds.). (1998).
*Students as
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and language in their
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Cresskill, NJ:
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Hull, G. (Ed.). (2001). *School's out: Bridging out-of-school literacies with classroom practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.



HOME ABOUT CLASSES GALLERY NEWS PEOPLE



D.U.S.T.Y. DIGITAL UNDERGROUND STORY TELLING FOR YOUTH

WELCOME TO D.U.S.T.Y.

STUDENT LOGIN

username

password

Sign In

DUSTY Students
Students, sign in here to update your personal page.

To view student pages, check out www.DustyKids.org

PARTNERSHIPS

Want to support D.U.S.T.Y.?
To find out more about establishing a relationship...



D.U.S.T.Y. is an afterschool program for middle and high school students in Oakland. There are three sites currently: Cole Middle School, Castlemont Community of Small Schools, and Hoover Elementary School. DUSTY students work on computers to create their own Digital Stories, as well as to generate rap and hip hop "beats and rhymes." Throughout the creative process, students learn to master programs such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premiere, iMovie, and Fruity Loops with the help of skilled instructors. At the end of each semester, the students' creative

masterpieces, including digital stories, raps, beats, and performances are showcased in some sort of final event at The Parkway Theatre, The Metro, and other local venues.

D.U.S.T.Y. is part of the West Oakland Center for Digital and Multimedia Literacy. The Center combines Internet access and multimedia activities with literacy instruction for West Oakland residents of all ages. It is a joint project developed by the Prescott-Joseph Center for Community Enhancement and the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley.

The Digital Underground Storytelling for Youth (DUSTY) Program is a university and community collaborative between the University of California's UC Links Program, UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, and the Joseph-Prescott Center for Community Enhancement.



Implications

4. Design TEPs with spaces and practices to examine and document *Teacher Educators' learning*.

- “What really good teacher educators’ practice looks like in various contexts?
 - What questions are they asking?
 - How are they preparing novices for the challenges of day-to-day teaching as well as the arc of professional career?” (Mace & Lieberman, 2007)
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Purpose

- Highlight the urgency to focus on the creation and renewal of professional learning opportunities as the guiding principle for future work in teacher education.
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