

Introduction

The globalization of education has resulted in an unprecedented number of students attending schools outside their own countries of origin. While this phenomenon is reflected in Taiwan by the growing number of international schools and the proliferation of international students attending higher education in Taiwan, questions on how to address classroom diversity issues are shared by teacher education programs worldwide. By examining the past and present problems of multicultural education facing the field of teacher education, the purpose of this theoretical paper is to illustrate a number of theoretical foundations of multicultural education, discuss problems that have emerged within the field, and provide specific suggestions on how to address these problems. The paper begins with a brief historical background of multicultural education by outlining how one particular country, the United States, began to deal with diversity in public schools and traces how multicultural education grew to become an established field of study. Second, the paper explores the rationale for the need of multicultural education in teacher preparation, including discussions about the hidden curriculum, social reproduction theory, and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. Third, it proposes a number of essential requirements for preparing teachers to teach culturally diverse students. In this third section, we provide the following proposals: 1. raising teachers' consciousness of the diversity issues; 2. hands-on field experiences; 3. building a community of educators. This is followed by implications for teacher education curriculum in Taiwan and suggestions for further research.



Historical Context and Present

Until the second half of the 20th century, most of the discussions concerning how to deal with a culturally diverse student population centered on white children emigrating from Europe (Ladson-Billings, 1999). These discussions were primarily based on how to effectively assimilate these newcomers into mainstream American society. African-American and Native-American students were not included in the drive to assimilate immigrant students. Consistent with the segregated school system at the time, they were placed in separate schools that prepared them for menial jobs and a peripheral role in American society.

During the early 1900s, the majority of teachers did not possess any preparation for dealing with newcomers to the United States, their ideas of how to teach children from other countries largely reflected their own personal values and the cultural norms of the surrounding community. This consisted of transmitting white middle-class values that included ways of dressing, diet, health, and religious beliefs (Tyack, 1974). The cold war and the space race with the former Soviet Union during the 1950s ushered in calls for more professionalism in teacher preparation. It was during this time that five-year teaching programs and master of teaching programs were beginning to become more established. The emphasis of these programs overwhelmingly centered on content mastery, and multicultural education was of little or no concern.

As desegregation began to become more established in the 1960s, public school policy makers began to pay more attention to cultural diversity. However, the prevailing view at this time was that African-