

Revista Interamericana de Educación para la Democracia

RIED  **IJED**

Interamerican Journal of Education for Democracy



**Teacher Insights from an
Intercultural Peace Curricula
Development Project**

Vol 2, No. 2
September, 2009

Document available in:
www.ried-ijed.org

ISSN: 1941-1799



Teacher Insights from an Intercultural Peace Curricula Development Project

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Abstract:

Data garnered from an eight month critical ethnographic action research project tells a story of prejudice and discrimination in a white, Euro-American dominant context at Junction High School in the U.S. Midwest. However, counter-normative efforts aimed at transforming the situation for newcomer students were conducted by both the researcher and a group of teachers who developed and implemented intercultural peace curricula. White, Euro-American constructions of “others” and teacher reflections on their engagement in the process are presented in this article. The article aims to provide a case study and to encourage deeper dialogue on intercultural peace education in schools for achieving an authentic democracy.

Introduction

“Somos iguales, pero no somos iguales.”

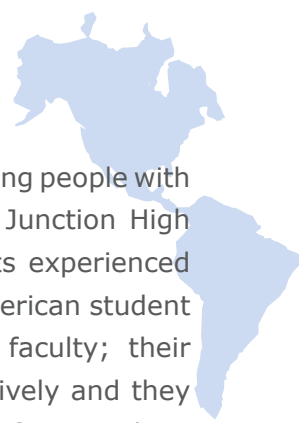
Mariela, Latina

student at Junction High School

During a November 2004 focus group meeting with six Latino/a students at a predominately Euro-American high school in the Midwest of the United States, which I call Junction High School,¹ I asked, “What is your experience like in the high school?” Mariela suggested that no one spoke Spanish. Rafael said, “They say, ‘Speak English.’”² I asked if other members of the group have heard a non-Latino person say “Speak English,” and they unanimously replied yes. Some Latino/a students reported that they had heard “Speak English” from some teachers; others said only other students had demanded this of them. These students also heard derogatory comments. Elmo said, “They call me ‘beaner’....They think that we always eat beans.” Elmo also reported that some non-Latino students said, “Go back to Mexico....” Students

made a joke about this comment in Spanish and laughter erupted. Elmo continued, “They think that we crossed a river, *El Rio Grande*. They’re racist.”³ Two other group members agreed that some non-Latino students were racist.

When students started talking about other Euro-American and newcomer students with backgrounds from Germany, Russia, and Japan, Elmo blurted out, “We’re all the same, all the **same** except like the skin color, language.” Mariela added, “*No hay diferencia.*” I said, “I wonder what it would take to get some students here at Junction to start thinking like what you said, ‘We are all equal,’ *somos iguales, no?*” Elmo corrected my pronunciation, “*Somos iguales.*” Rafael interjected, “*Somos iguales--americanos, los chinos, japonesas, mexicanos.*” Mariela interrupted Rafael, “*Somos iguales, pero no somos iguales.*” Mariela briefly explained her comment in Spanish--and I did not comprehend her explanation. She then added, “*Todos tenemos los mismos derechos.*” Mariela said this slowly and clearly so that I would understand. Elmo repeated in English, “We have equal rights.”



Equal.” The final bell rang and students left for the day.

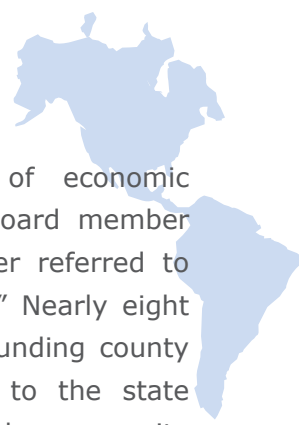
I sat there alone in a big room, baffled about what Mariela meant by her paradoxical statement, “*Somos iguales, pero **no** somos iguales.*” Did she mean there was a tension between the ideal of equal rights and the reality of the everyday treatment of Latino students at Junction High School (JHS)?⁴ Did she mean the guise of equality existed, and that the reality of inequality was an everyday experience for students who were not white and did not speak English as their first language? Or did she simply mean that people are not all the same in certain regards. If only my Spanish speaking and listening skills were better and we had more time, I could have asked her to clarify what she meant.

After the focus group with six Latino/a students, I reflected on my experience of linguistic dissonance—being a white, Euro-American U.S. male whose first language is English. I had conducted the meeting in broken Spanish and English; I had trouble understanding students and had trouble expressing myself in Spanish. Newcomer students whose first language was not English experienced this linguistic dissonance on a daily basis at Junction High School. Many of them had trouble speaking and understanding English, and they frequently heard the demand from white students and some faculty, “Speak English.” I thought about the challenge of learning another language for practical, everyday communication; Latino/a students were very forgiving of my Spanish language struggles. Suddenly, the challenge of developing intercultural peace among various student groups at JHS also seemed overwhelmingly complex. Might intercultural understanding and friendships based on mutual

respect for differences be built among people with diverse linguistic backgrounds at Junction High School? Obviously, Latino students experienced much racism from both a Euro-American student body and, in several instances, faculty; their multilingualism was viewed negatively and they experienced negative sanctions for speaking their mother tongue (Brantmeier, 2007b).

Surely, this racially charged, assimilationist environment did not embrace the diversity ideal of “E Pluribus Unum,” a foundational democratic principle that is inscribed on the U.S. dollar bill. Latino students seemed acutely aware that inherently they were equal; however, the white dominant context in which they lived, worked, and attended school did not foster this equality. In this article I discuss how a few teachers, with the help of the researcher, decided to try to change this injustice in their classrooms by developing and implementing intercultural peace curricula.

The study of schooling for minority and majority students in pluralistic, democratic societies is critically important for understanding the processes of social and cultural change that are occurring in a culturally, economically, politically, and environmentally interdependent world. Through a small and unique window, the overarching study conducted here provides a view of how a particular intercultural peace curricula effort at a U.S. Midwestern high school facilitated modest social change in that local context. This critical, qualitative study engaged seven teacher inquirers in a curriculum change effort. Specifically, this ethnographic action research project clarified the attitudinal and structural factors that impeded and/or facilitated an intercultural peace curricula development project—a project that responded to the current multicultural needs of a traditionally mono-



cultural U.S. Midwestern high school. This study ascertained the constraints and possibilities of intercultural peacebuilding opportunities within layers of educational policy contexts, organizational culture/s, and cultural meanings ascribed by both individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds at Junction High School.

Organizationally, this article first provides an overview of the research site and then a brief methodological overview of the research project. Secondly, a conceptual overview of peace and intercultural education establishes a foundation for exploring findings related to the racism experienced by newcomers at Junction High School. Next, the primary data, teacher inquirer reflections on the counter-normative intercultural peace curricula project as a whole, are presented and analyzed. Finally, the discussion section analyzes how the practical insights of educators and the researcher might contribute to a broader understanding of the possibilities for and constraints on transforming racism via intercultural education. The researcher asks the reader to engage in dialogue about how to actualize a more authentic democracy built on affirmation of diversity and peace.

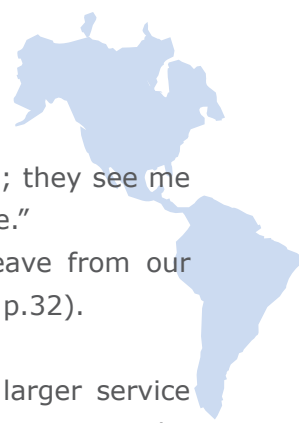
Overview & Research Context

The focus group meeting highlighted in the introduction was conducted as part of a larger intercultural peacebuilding effort that aimed to lessen the degree of prejudice and discrimination experienced by newcomer students in a historically Euro-American dominated high school and community. Historically, the community I call Unityville has had a fairly homogenous Euro-American population with a small contingent of African American and Native American residents. With a population nearing 20,000, Unityville is located near an urban center in the Midwest of the United States. Manufacturing and agricultural

industries comprise the bulk of economic activity in Unityville. A school board member and Junction High School teacher referred to Unityville as a “blue collar town.” Nearly eight percent of residents in the surrounding county live in poverty, which is close to the state average. From conversations with community members, high school faculty, and students’ parents, it is safe to say that the poverty rate is probably fairly high for many newcomer Latino families, while Japanese families maintain middle to upper class socio-economic status. Adult male members of local Japanese families are mostly employed in administrative positions at manufacturing companies.

Over the last several decades, the population of the surrounding county has remained consistent. In recent years, increased migration and immigration by both Latino (mostly Mexican-American or Mexican) and Asian (mostly Japanese) people have changed the demographics, though the Euro-American population is clearly still an overwhelming majority. State statistics indicate that since the 1990 census the Latino/a population of the surrounding county has increased over 300%. In an interview, local Latino community organizer Ernesto Billings suggested that about 600 Latino families live in Unityville, a number much higher and probably much more reliable than the state or national statistics⁵.

Demographics at Junction High School reflect the surrounding community. Based on district information for 2003-2004, the Unityville School District as a whole had a five percent total minority population consisting of African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic residents. In other words, Junction High School had about 95% white/Caucasian students, and about five percent of students who were non-white. Of minority populations, Latinos/as and



African-American students comprised the largest numbers, with some Asian students, a handful of Native American students, and an even smaller number of students who were identified as multi-racial. During the course of the 2004-2005 school year, several more newly-arrived Latino students enrolled at Junction High School.

Intercultural Peace Curricula Project History and Methodology

The Indiana University-Unityville collaborative outreach project began when a Euro-American female member of Junction High School contacted teacher educators at Indiana University. She asked for help because the Unityville School District was having “problems” with the “influx” of immigrant newcomers in K-12 schools. In response, Dr. Barbara Korth, with the help of Chris Frey, assembled an international, multi-lingual group of graduate students who conducted initial visits and a qualitative study. During interviews with newcomer students that were conducted in Fall 2003 by members of the Indiana University-Unityville Outreach Project research team, newcomer students whose first languages included Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin, and Arabic expressed emotional distress, feelings of isolation, and general struggles with adapting to the Euro-American dominated schooling environment at Unityville Schools (Korth et al., 2004). Gathered in interviews conducted in students’ first languages, some typical middle school and high school student statements included the following:

“We don’t have any friends.”

“They (native students) don’t like us.”

“Not even teachers want us to be here.”

“Some teachers make fun of us in class.”

“We are not welcome here.”

“They don’t want us to be here; they scream at us in the halls.”

“I don’t like to go to lunch; they see me and start making fun of me.”

“They tell us, ‘migrant’ leave from our town.” (Korth et al., 2004, p.32).

As a continuation of that larger service research project and as a response to the negative experience of newcomers at Junction High School, my critical ethnographic action research study was conducted at Junction High School in the 2004-2005 academic school year for approximately eight months.

Critical social research aims to understand inequalities and power dynamics on individual, cultural, institutional, and structural levels. It also aims to transform social inequalities through positive social change. Carspecken (1996) writes about the concerns of critical social researchers, “We are all concerned about social inequalities, and we direct our work toward positive social change....We also share a concern with social theory and some of the basic issues...the nature of social structure, power, culture, and human agency” (p.3). Aligning with descriptions of participatory action research, this project sought to facilitate an emancipatory change⁶ process through engaging teacher inquirers in peace curricula development (Punch, 1998). Thus, the research design aimed to describe and then change the existing social realities at Junction High School. The intention of the researcher was to create a more peaceful environment, particularly for newcomer students who were the recipients of prejudicial attitudes and racial bullying.

The study involved seven internally selected teacher inquirers who were “dedicated to the cause” of helping newcomer students better acclimate to Junction High School (Brantmeier, 2005). Teacher inquirers were chosen internally by both the librarian and media



specialist (who at Junction High School is called the “distance education coordinator”), and the assistant principal; these insiders invited the six other teacher inquirers to the first meeting. All participants who were approached to participate in the study willingly agreed. According to human subjects research guidelines established by Indiana University, teacher inquirers as well as principals of Junction High School provided verbal and in some cases written consent prior to participation in the study. All internally selected participants were compensated with small stipends for their participation in the study. Of the seven, five teacher inquirers were Euro-American and female. Having Mexican and Euro-American heritage, one female guidance counselor identified herself as half-Mexican. One male teacher was recruited for the group. Five of the seven teacher inquirers taught in academic content areas including science, math, social studies, English, English as a new language, and Japanese language. The distance education coordinator was also included as a member of the teacher inquiry group.

The purpose of the study was to map everyday understandings of peace and non-peace in the context of developing responsive, peace-building curricula that would address non-peaceful attitudes and behaviors which contributed to the negative experiences of newcomer students. At the first meeting, I explained the tentative schedule for meetings: identifying peaceful and non-peaceful attitudes and behaviors, focusing on the type of intercultural peace curricula that participants wanted to develop, and then focusing on the nuts and bolts of curricula development. The first teacher inquiry group meeting took place at 6:30 a.m. before school. The majority of meetings were 45 minutes to an hour long and were held either before or immediately after school. Given teacher inquirers’ many

commitments, scheduling meetings was difficult. Frequently, one or two participants could not make a scheduled meeting.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the larger study include the following inquiry domains and associated empirical questions:

Inquiry Domain One: Reconstructing Everyday Understandings of Peace and Non-Peace

Empirical Question/s: What were the situated understandings of peace and non-peace at Junction High School?

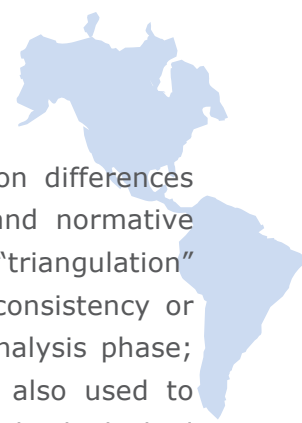
Inquiry Domain Two: Doing Intercultural Peace

Empirical Question: How might an intercultural peace curricula affect teacher attitudes and peace & non-peace behaviors toward “others”?

Inquiry Domain Three: School Culture & Education Policy Context

Empirical Question: What constraints and possibilities were encountered when curricula was developed for intercultural peace education at Junction High School?

There were three overlapping phases to this eight month research process: initial contact and observation, peace curricula development, and peace curricula implementation and examination. Two personal interviews were conducted with each teacher inquirer, one before peace curricula development and one after. Nine full inquiry group meetings were conducted either before or after school. Two small group meetings were conducted over lunch.⁷ Inquiry group meetings were audio recorded, transcribed



by the author, checked for accuracy, and then low-inference coded (Carspecken, 1996). Specifically, the majority of data presented in this article stems from the final group meeting in which teacher inquirers reflected on their experiences during the process as well as on the counter-normative process as a whole.

Validity and Limitations of the Study

Several validity techniques were employed throughout the data collection and analysis phases. Member checks with research participants occurred whenever possible; this was necessary to ensure fair treatment of participants and to ensure validity of interpretation in the process of hermeneutic reconstructive analysis (Carspecken, 1996). Social pressure to conform and “group think” might have influenced teacher inquirer responses in meetings. Member checks were sometimes conducted in teacher inquiry group meetings by asking for clarification about what participants meant. They were also conducted in de-briefing sessions with certain participants after meetings closed. During the analysis phase, I also e-mailed some participants questions of clarification about my interpretations.

During data collection about attitudes, behaviors, organizational culture, and the education policy context, ethnographic data triangulation methodologies were used that included multiple sources of information: individual and focus group interviews, participant observations, and relevant document review. “Triangulating” data in this manner ensured internal validity: it added consistency of interpretation for generalized truth claims that emerged in data analysis and allowed for the location of negative cases which often provide subtlety to the analysis. “Triangulating” data

in this manner can shed light on differences between or among subjective and normative worlds. In other words, data “triangulation” was not solely used to ensure consistency or validity of claims made in the analysis phase; the “triangulation” method was also used to shed light on the differences individuals had from the group and differences that existed between attitudes and written public documents. Attempts to employ negative case analysis were also made.

Studying the very process that I facilitated created several challenges in regard to methodology. Challenges of validity of interpretation were met through multiple means. Yoko Nakamichi, a Ph.D. student and a co-investigator for the Indiana University-Unityville Outreach Project, was present at most large group teacher inquiry group meetings. Her role was to take notes on body language to ensure accurate reconstruction of meanings of various conversations that took place during teacher inquiry group meetings. This, along with peer de-briefing shortly after each meeting, member-checking (Robson, 2002), and ongoing examination of researcher bias, helped to ensure validity of interpretation. Democratic practices, namely participatory engagement and inclusive representation, were sought throughout the research process.

Contextualizing Peace and Intercultural Education in the U.S.

A brief conceptual overview is necessary prior to examination of this data. The term “peace” is an ambiguous word with situated meanings and long complex histories. Peace has many different connotations in the English language alone, not to mention various meanings in other languages.⁸ For example, English synonyms of peace in a search with



thesaurus.com include: accord, agreement, brotherhood, love, neutrality, pacification, rest, serenity, sympathy, and tranquility (<http://thesaurus.reference.com/search?q=peace>). The various connotations of the word peace relay its context-dependent uses and nested understandings.

One of the purposes of this research project was to ascertain participant understandings of both peace and non-peace at Junction High School in the context of their everyday lives. In other words, what are the socially constructed and negotiated understandings of peace and non-peace at JHS? In the United States in general, the word “peace” has a long and embattled history, and peace education has been politically suspect. In the book *Peace Education in America, 1828-1990*, Stomfay-Stitz (1993) maintains:

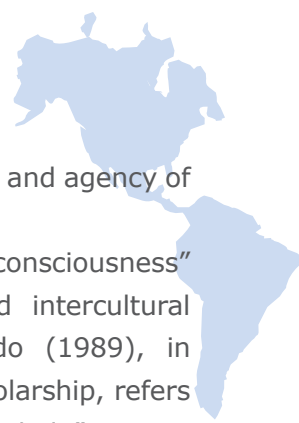
Peace educators have believed that love of country involved a critical appraisal and examination of motives behind government actions, based on ethics and morality. Peace educators have suffered vilification, persecution, and imprisonment for motives that were in the best interests of developing an enlightened, intelligent form of citizenship. (p. 338)

Early efforts in the 1920s toward education for peace in the United States were politically suspect and considered unpatriotic; “peace educators acquired a pacifist-socialist label” (Stomfay-Stitz, 1993, p. 63). Along with the negative connotations of pacifism as weak, socialism of course was in tension with capitalistic ideals of individual free-enterprise and competitive markets. Peace had a doubly suspicious character in the capitalistic democracy of the United States.

Adapting to changing political climates, peace education in the United States strategically morphed from education for world citizenship in the early 1900s, to education for international friendship and goodwill in the 1930s and 1940s, to atomic age education in the 1940s through 1950s, and then to include feminist, global, and planetary educational agendas in the 1960s through the 1990s (Stomfay-Stitz, 1993). Current peace education thinking runs the gamut from education for the absence of international conflict to the generation of inner peace (Groff, 2002).

Peace education has various meanings and concepts embedded within it. Most notably, Galtung’s (1969) distinction between negative peace and positive peace moved conceptualization of peace beyond issues of the elimination of direct violence (negative peace) to the elimination of structural and/or indirect violence (positive peace). Structural violence can be understood here as social, political, economic, and environmental arrangements that privilege some groups or individuals to the exclusion of others. Social justice pursuits, aligned with alleviating structural violence, need to be integral to a deeper peace education project. Social justice is understood here as fair and just institutional/structural arrangements and personal/social/professional relationships that provide access, opportunity, and inclusion of historically marginalized or otherwise oppressed individuals and/or groups of people. However, in general academic usage, peace education can be understood as education for the elimination of direct and indirect violence (Harris & Morrison, 2003).

The goals of peace education in the context of multicultural schooling environments can be considered nearly synonymous with the goals of intercultural education. A primary aim of intercultural education is to generate



mutual understanding and an acceptance of fundamental differences among people from divergent backgrounds (Bennett, 1998). In the context of schooling for democracy, intercultural peacebuilding initiatives should promote mutual understanding, trust, and the diversity affirmation necessary to sustain positive relationships among people with diverse backgrounds. For deeper change, they should also critique and reform systemic inequities that propagate dominant-subordinate power dynamics and structural/institutional racism. Ideally, intercultural understanding emerges as the result of shared symbolic and interactive meanings between two people, or among groups of people with distinctive primary cultures;⁹ the intercultural emerges in the shared space near the borderlands of cultural differences in pluralistic, democratic societies. The building of “new centers of interaction on the borders and frontiers,” (Alfred, Byram, & Fleming, 2003, p. 4) was an overarching goal for this intercultural peace curricula development project. When writing about “being intercultural,” Alfred, Byram, and Fleming (2003) maintain:

The locus of interaction is not in the centripetal reinforcement of the identity of one group and its members by contrast with others, but rather in the centrifugal action of each which creates a new centre of interaction on the borders and frontiers which join rather than divide them. (p.4)

Intercultural peace can emerge when new identities are formed via the convergence of groups of people with distinctive primary cultures. However, it is important to apply a critical perspective to the power dynamics involved in cultural conflict and change processes, given that dominant groups, via attitudes, behaviors, and policies, can impose their ways and vested interests on subordinate groups—this is not true intercultural peace but rather a form of cultural

violence that squelches the volition and agency of subordinate cultural actors.

The cultivation of “*mestiza* consciousness” might be a helpful tool to build intercultural understanding for peace. Hurtado (1989), in referring to Anzaldua’s (1987) scholarship, refers to a multicultural awareness labeled “*mestiza* consciousness”—an ability to “perceive multiple realities at once” (p.855). Cultural mediation from a *mestiza* standpoint, understood as effective navigation on the borders and frontiers of different symbolic knowledge reservoirs, serves an important function in the building of intercultural understanding for peace. It embodies the reality that an individual’s identity can consist of different, blended cultural reservoirs that are prioritized and applied according to contextual needs. A more complex theory of intercultural interaction posits that individuals and groups of people can have multiple, blended symbolic reservoirs—alongside primary cultures—and that situated responsiveness to social circumstances requires the prioritization and application of particular symbolic reservoirs. Thus, culture and an individual’s culture are not singular and static. Adaptive intelligence guides valuations, behaviors, and dispositions in response to changing socio-environmental circumstances. The cultivation of adaptive intelligence and *mestiza* consciousness emerge as potentially helpful tools for building interculturality in forging authentic democratic citizens.

Related to identity formation and change in multicultural environments, several research studies catalogue and describe varying experiences of newcomer students to U.S. schools. For example, Dentler and Hafner’s sociological study (1997) compares 11 elementary schools in the states of Nevada, Arizona, and California which experienced high enrollment of newcomers; this descriptive study focused on stratifying variables according to race, ethnicity,



language, group, family composition, and income. Olsen (1997) conducted a long term ethnographic study in an urban California school, and she describes the cultural assimilationist practices, identity navigation, and the sorting and selecting processes according to language, skin color, and national origin that were enacted in this school. Grey (1992) provides a descriptive and analytical account of the concepts of marginality in high school ESL programs in the U.S. Midwest. Other research examines the multiple constructions of ethnicity and identity of immigrant youth living in the U.S. (Stepick and Dutton Stepick, 2003; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002).

The research presented in this article provides a case study to examine the possibilities and constraints for engaging teachers in both inquiry and action aimed at changing a climate of prejudice and discrimination experienced by newcomer students. It diverges from the previously mentioned studies in that it was purposefully action-oriented with the goal of description and of change. Observing and facilitating a change process from the inside out requires one to toggle between -emic and -etic perspectives, and between action and inquiry. A methodological tension arises because this project aimed to research the very process it facilitated; it was simultaneously both research--in the sense that it aimed to describe and theorize social phenomena situated in a local context, and action--in that it attempted to change teachers and students at Junction High School through a peace curricula development project.

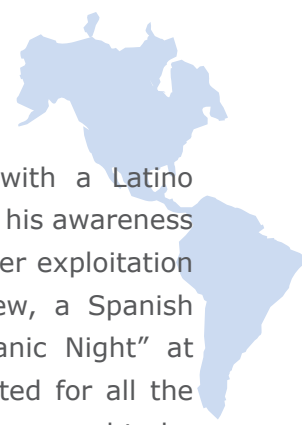
Broader questions are raised by this study: How should new, egalitarian modes of interaction be constructed in an increasingly diverse U.S. society and world? Can cultural heterogeneity and unity be valued, sustained, and enabled at Junction High School? Is there a harmony of unity and diversity to be found in an authentic

democratic citizenship governed by the principles of "E Pluribus Unum?"

Findings

Euro-American Racial Hierarchies, Community Perceptions, and Racism

Euro-American racial hierarchies of 'others' such as Mexicans and African-Americans were glaringly apparent at Junction High School. Unequal power relationships existed among racial/ethnic groups in the school district. No non-white people held positions of power in the School District. Those with power (school board, members of the Superintendent's office, high school administrators) were predominately white and male. There was one white female administrator at the high school, one white female school board member, and the ENL¹⁰ (English-as-a-New Language) District Coordinator was a white female. In my observations, I saw one African-American teacher who taught at a local elementary school. The social construction of minority groups helped to shape belief systems that affected newcomer students. White people in positions of power in the school district openly constructed Mexicans as criminals, explained student behaviors in school as self-isolating, but also positively stereotyped Mexicans as "hard workers." In an initial September 2004 meeting with administrators of Junction High School and the School District, the principal conveyed a community belief that some Mexicans are considered "outlaws because they're Mexican." He reported two drive-by shootings related to Mexicans in the community and another administrator reported a related rape. The ENL coordinator for the district implied that the Mexicans were committing a lot of the crimes in the community, "Just look at the criminal reports." There seemed to be a tinge of fear undergirding her comment. When the principal of JHS, Mr.



Beck, spoke about the isolation of Mexican kids at Junction High School, he said, “They do it themselves.” He was non-specific about what exactly he meant.

Attempts were made to counteract negative comment made about Mexicans. As part of the September 24th conversation with the assistant superintendent and others, project leader Barbara Korth mentioned that struggles between and among minority groups were linked to white privilege and a system of dominance. This point was not further discussed at the September 24th meeting. However, it would later be visited in a teacher inquiry group meeting.

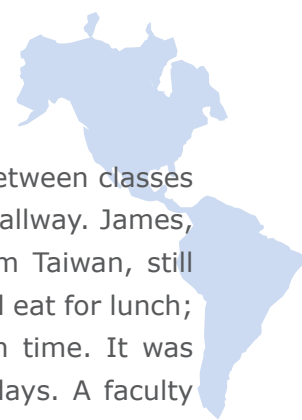
African-Americans, in the eyes of the principal of Junction High School, were so assimilated that they could be ‘considered white.’ Quite to my shock, when talking about how Hispanics had a bad reputation in Unityville in an interview months after the September 24th meeting, ENL teacher Lisa Bennett reported a community perception of Hispanics, “Hispanics are the new niggers of Unityville. I **never** use **that** word”.¹¹ She looked me directly in the eyes. She then explained how Hispanics were considered lower than other groups in typical Unityville community perceptions. I flinched at the fluid use of the n-word, but understood the point that she was making about negative communal perceptions of Hispanics. I thought of an elementary teacher who was reported to have said that “Hispanics are the new blacks of Unityville.” Negative perceptions of Hispanics were obvious, and it made me begin to wonder about local white constructions of racial/ethnic hierarchies. It also deepened my own sense of empathy with the plight of Hispanic students in Unityville Schools and families in the wider Unityville community.

In a personal interview with a Latino community organizer, he reported his awareness of considerable housing and worker exploitation of Hispanics. In another interview, a Spanish teacher at JHS described “Hispanic Night” at the courthouse—when he translated for all the Hispanic law violators who were convened to be sentenced. The principal mentioned that there was much job competition between African-Americans and Mexicans in the community. Julianne shared a story about her husband hiring Mexicans at his local company because “they are better workers.”

In an interview in March with the ENL Resource/In-School Suspension Room aide,¹² she wrote down a conversation she had with a community member. The message conveyed this white community member’s perception of newcomer Mexican people:

Unityville should be re-named “Uvillco” [like Mexico]. There are so many Mexicans here now. It gripes me that we have to pay for them being here. We are losing our social security benefits because they don’t pay taxes. They receive benefits and health insurance, but they don’t contribute to the costs. We have to pay for them to have classes in English and special class formats and special helpers at school. Why should we have to pay for that? If they are going to be here, then they need to speak English. No more handouts (Personal Interview, March 8, 2005).

This Euro-American community member complained about giving Mexican students “handouts” in the form of special services to help them learn English at school; Hispanics were considered a burden to the economy. She reiterated “Speak English,” a norm-defining



comment heard much by Mexican students at the high school. Not contributing to social security was another complaint. She failed to mention that some Hispanic workers in community businesses were paid as little as \$2.50 per hour for their work--labor exploitation by some white business owners indeed.

White constructions of what it means to be a good, acceptable person were obviously the standard by which other groups were measured. Speaking English above all tended to be the most important normative rule that needed to be followed. If you lived or went to school in Unityville, typically Euro-American people felt you 'should speak English.' There was a tendency to place Hispanics toward the bottom of the racial/ethnic hierarchy. Little discussion of socio-economic relations or power arrangements or white dominance took place. When residency status of Hispanics was discussed by faculty and school personnel, it was discussed quietly. For example, a librarian one day whispered to me that, "You can tell the undocumented ones," because they "act nervous around you."

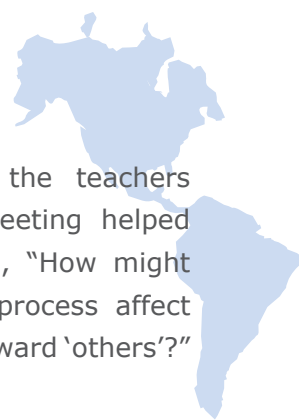
Newcomer students experienced many explicit and implicit racist comments, particularly in the winter month of February, when racially/ethnically motivated fights peaked. Ben, a Mexican-American boy who was originally from Los Angeles, was suspended for getting in a fight with a white-American student who called him a "puta." Garo, an Arabic-speaking student, got in a fist-fight with a white-American student who told him to "Ride his camel back to his country." Jerry, a Euro-American student, reported worrying for the safety of his Arabic-speaking friend, Sarah, who was called a terrorist and who was threatened. Wider school incidents of racial bullying continued. Rafael, a Latino student, was approached by a white-American kid who wanted to fight him outside the library where

the Latino kids habitually stood between classes to avoid the heavy traffic of the hallway. James, a Mandarin-speaking student from Taiwan, still had not settled on where he would eat for lunch; he felt pretty vulnerable at lunch time. It was a tough winter with many grey days. A faculty member provided her conspiracy theory that administrative support for the peace curricula project was just a mask for not dealing with newcomer students and the English as a New Language program in a deeper way.

Counter-Normative Intercultural Peace Curricula Development

Facilitated by the author, teacher inquirers began meetings in November with the end goal of building intercultural peace curricula that they would implement in their school and classrooms in the spring. In the initial stages, teacher inquirers identified both peace and non-peace related attitudes and behaviors exhibited by members of the dominant Euro-American population in relation to newcomer students. Non-peace related attitudes and behaviors that they observed in their classrooms and school included name-calling, prejudice, exclusion, anger, derision, lack of empathy about newcomer situations and non-English language use, whispering/gossip, stereotypic slurs, rude comments, and ignoring (Brantmeier, 2007a).

In subsequent meetings, teacher inquirers then discussed goals for intercultural peace curricula and in the spring proceeded to develop these curricula in their content areas: science, English, math, social studies, and a Japanese language course. The science teacher developed a "cultural cell" unit that asked Euro-American and Latino students to identify and share elements of their cultural background with one another; her intent was to build intercultural bridges and surmount the language



barrier via meaningful forms of dialogue. The English and English as a New Language teacher developed a “Stick your head up above the crowd” five paragraph essay unit that examined the conditions necessary for historical figures to go against the grain of social norms; her intentions were to bolster courage in Euro-American “ally” students to stand up against the racism and discrimination experienced by newcomer students. The Japanese language teacher combined her efforts with the social studies teacher to develop and implement a unit on Japanese internment during World War II. Their intentions were to both empathize with the historically marginalized and shed light on a U.S. history of state-sponsored, forced racial segregation. The math teacher developed a list of strategies for working with ENL students in the mainstream math classroom. He wanted to go beyond language barriers to help students achieve in his class.

Good intentions met the realities of the wider cultural norms of schools and communities and the pressures of a U.S. educational policy context focused on accountability via standardized tests (Brantmeier, 2007b). Short-term, additive curricula units were developed and the following long term ideas were suggested but not initiated by teacher inquirers: cultural awareness education that permeates the school curriculum, a diversity course, diversity graduation requirements, and/or a school wide reading project (Brantmeier, 2005). Generally, most curricula units developed by content teachers were aimed at promoting empathy in the Euro-American student body for the plight of newcomers.

Education for the Educators: Practical Insights

The purpose of the last teacher inquiry group meeting was to examine how the peace

curricula process had affected the teachers involved in the process. The meeting helped to answer the research question, “How might an intercultural peace curricula process affect teacher attitudes and behaviors toward ‘others’?”

Conducted in late April when two teacher inquirers had already developed and implemented their units and two other teacher inquirers had plans to implement their units in mid-May, the meeting itself was different than previous teacher inquiry groups for a couple of reasons. The pace was slow and pauses were many; it appeared that all teacher inquirers were taking time to reflect in a deliberate and sincere way. Two group members, the guidance counselor and the English and English as a New Language teacher, were missing from this meeting.

Reports of Increased Awareness

When teacher inquirers were asked, “How has the peace curricula process affected you?” the first reactions by the Japanese / ENL teacher and science teacher were surprise about how quickly the time had passed. The most commonly agreed upon response was that the peace curricula process raised awareness. For some members, it raised awareness about changing demographics and the “problems” that the larger, predominately white community would encounter. The distance educator stated:

I think I’m more aware of the community, in main part because of the business that my husband is in, because you know when you think of influx of the immigrant population that we are dealing with. It’s predominately the Hispanic population and that’s a work force that you know he’s dealing with.



The participant commented on labor market changes and the need for workers. The science teacher reacted:

And that will have an impact on lots of, um people and their attitudes too. They're [white Americans] probably feeling more threatened about job security and__

Distance education coordinator (interrupting):

But he still says that they are not taking jobs from anyone that wants one. They are **doing** what the American workers will not do.¹³

The "people" that the science teacher referred to in holistic terms were the predominately white workers of Unityville. She predicted growing tension between "Americans" and immigrants because of feelings of job insecurity by "American" workers. She also predicted increased tension between Hispanics and "people": "They're ["American", "people"] going to take their own personal anger **out** on the Hispanic population because they are working."¹⁴

Participants used a dichotomy of American¹⁵ and "other" to emphasize that "American" (American = white, U.S origin here) workers are "lazy" and a response suggested that Americans do not want to do repetitive manual labor because they think it is "beneath them." Participants discussed linkages among labor work force changes, community changes, and school changes, and predicted growing cross-cultural tensions. Julianne stated that "people," referring to American people, are not prepared for the "mass entrance" that she predicted will take place.

Other group members reported experiencing awareness about the intercultural

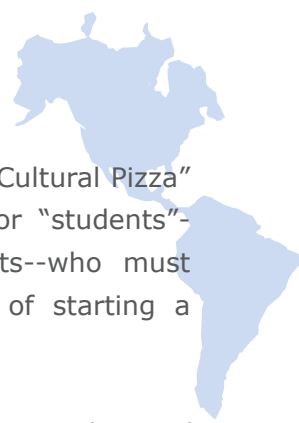
groundwork that needed to be done for the "influx to take place" in such a way that the community does not "implode". She described the process as an "eye opener" in that she now understands "what kinds of issues will become even greater" in relation to the "influx" of immigrants to Unityville. She also described the peace curricula process as "invigorating" because she felt more "a part of things," more aware of specific things she can do to help or hinder, and "this overall feeling that more and more I felt more engaged and more aware (pauses)."

Reports of Changes in Feelings and Behaviors

Several teacher inquirers reported changes in feelings and behavior. The Distance education coordinator reported, "I feel more empowered, more supported." The social studies teacher relayed that brainstorming, goal setting, and collaboration were a "good thing." She nonspecifically reported of changes within the context of her ten year perspective of teaching at Junction High School, "And again it kind of leaves, leaves your head spinning as far as all we need to progress towards and continue to improve on, but I think it's there" (TIG Nine, April 26, 2005).

With general terms such as "internal growth" and "great strides," the social studies teacher reported of change at JHS. She talked about her own awareness in relation to her own teaching in the third person:

And also from an individual teacher's standpoint. There's an awareness, a lot more individual issues with specific students that, you know, before might have been glossed over for whatever reason. You're just more in tune, to where each student's coming from. And how to address that in a better way (TIG Nine, April 26, 2005).



Some ENL students reported difficulty in World Civilization class during the months of November and December. This social studies teacher did not provide handouts of linguistically dense Powerpoint lectures to ENL students; these handouts were provided to special education students only. When asked about this, the social studies teacher changed her behaviors and provided lecture handouts to the ENL students as well. In a February conversation in the ESL (English-as-a-Second Language) Resource Room, Mariela was smiling and talking about getting an "A" in Jennifer's course, where previously she was having difficulty. Mariela reported that the handouts helped her understand the lectures.

Other teachers reported changes in relation to newcomer, Hispanic students. After a quiet moment of group reflection, the science teacher said, "I don't feel so afraid to approach Hispanics and try to strike up a conversation. I'm not allowing the language barrier to be the barrier" (TIG Nine, April 26, 2005). She reported of intercultural learning in the form of common understanding:

...It's interesting how you find, start feeling like you've got something in common or **something** you both understand and it's like 'Oh" (falsetto voice) and it's really interesting that that comes about and I think **that** helps to ease tension that might be between groups. (TIG Nine, April 26, 2005)

The intercultural learning referred to here was the common understanding shared between two cultural groups with distinctive primary cultures. Pam, the science teacher, whose major goal for the peace curricula project was overcoming the language barrier, also reported getting over "initial fears of communicating" with Hispanic students and that she learned about

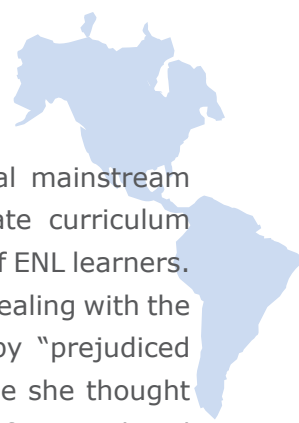
student backgrounds during her "Cultural Pizza" lesson. She reported empathy for "students"--referring to "American" students--who must have "their own internal fears" of starting a conversation with ENL students.

Reports of Changes in Student Attitudes and Behaviors

During reflection about the process, teacher inquirers reported their perceptions of changes in student attitudes and behaviors. The distance education coordinator added to the science teacher's comments by relaying that she feels like "there's a lot of appreciation on both sides too, you know the effort, the trying, there's some reciprocal appreciation going on." The male math teacher agreed that students with Hispanic origins appreciated the visual aid strategies that he used and he reported more students volunteering in his class:

I think it's ultimately like, just experimenting with strategies to use in the classroom. I mean going along with that, they do appreciate it. I mean just as far as once you start making that connection, that ok you'll be able to communicate somehow to them. And you'll be able to communicate to them. And they'll be able to communicate to **us**, even if they don't necessarily know the language. It's just been a help to experiment to see what works, see what doesn't...I mean, there have been more and more of the Hispanic students that are volunteering in class to answer some stuff.

Thomas reflected on how visual examples helped him reach ENL students. He relayed a change in student behavior based on the use of visual examples in his pedagogy; more and more Hispanics were volunteering in his class. Both



changes in teachers and perceptions of changes in students were reported.

The Pain of Being More Aware

The pain of being more aware was the phrase I used to try to capture the contradictory sentiments that teacher inquirers expressed in relation to participating in the peace curricula process:

Japanese / ENL teacher: I have to say though at the same time that some things have been a little disheartening. In the sense that um, **more** has been revealed to the group and to me about some of the hurdles that lay ahead and um, the perspectives and stereotypes and biases that everyone has. And how with problems with faculty, and (sighs) administration sometimes. Sometimes it seems a little like 'Oh, my gosh.' It's just kind of a lot. I questioned how much some people changed if they don't want to change, or you know, that kind of thing. And that's, that's too bad sometimes I think that I still feel a little bit that way, but...

Science teacher: Sometimes you feel like we've gone two steps forward, three steps back.

Two people: Yah.

Researcher: Yah.

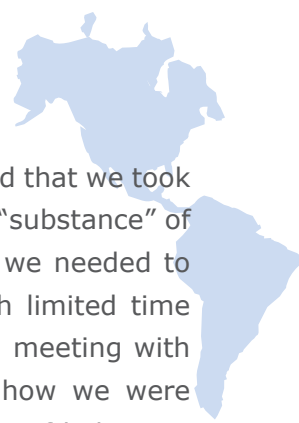
Occasionally on the lengthy drives home after a long day of fieldwork, I reflected on the pain of being more aware. Denise's comment triggered a series of personal reflections that I shared with the group. I shared that I was hurt by white kids joking about the dangerous climate created by the presence of Hispanics and

that I felt disheartened at several mainstream teachers' refusals to accommodate curriculum and pedagogy to meet the needs of ENL learners. Julianne reported hardship when dealing with the unexpected; she was surprised by "prejudiced ideas" expressed by certain people she thought were "on board" with the goal of intercultural peace.

In an attempt at reciprocal exchange, I took the opportunity to de-brief when I talked at length with teacher inquirers about how I was affected by the peace curricula process during teacher inquiry group nine. I suggested that I had more empathy for the situation of newcomer students based on my journey from an outsider to an insider during my time at Junction High School. I reported that I felt more empathy for teachers based on understanding the daily lives of teachers who often have to prepare for as many as five different classes per day, to try to meet the needs of about 150 students per day, and to prepare them for standardized tests (TIG Nine, April 26, 2005). The last thing I mentioned in relation to how the process affected me was that I placed my faith and hope in individuals and groups working toward positive change amid systems constraints:

Researcher: I feel [reading from my list of how I was affected] energized by possibilities. There's a lot of teacher agency amid a hierarchical system. It seems to me **clearly**, that there is a hierarchical system, there is a chain of command in this school. And there's a chain of command in this school district. So sometimes the teachers in that whole stratified power hierarchy have wonderful ideas, but then they run up against the system constraints.

Science teacher: Uh-hmm.



Researcher: So the procedures and different things you need to do. And also the power constraints. You know if somebody above you says 'No, you're not going to do it.' Well, what do you do in that situation? And, I'm energized by knowing that there are a group of teachers here (looking around the circle) that want to promote positive change for newcomer students and who have decided that they were going to actively do something about that this year in the form of this group. And have done things, have done things in their classrooms. And big successes, small successes, failures, whatever. My point is just that, you know, there are possibilities. There are possibilities. And I place my faith in the (pauses) groups and individuals who are working toward positive change (pauses). It seems like a speech? (someone laughs). I guess I did prepare.

Co-investigator: That last line especially (everyone laughs).

Researcher: A little bit cheesy? (more hearty laughter from everyone) (pauses, silence).

I sincerely meant my "cheesy" comments about faith in individuals and groups that provide hope for larger social change amid asymmetrical power dynamics and top-down decision-making processes in stratified, hierarchical, bureaucratic systems.

Changes That Could Have Been Made

The meeting changed focus from reflections to critiques when I asked the question, "What changes could we have made to make this process more effective?" (TIG Nine,

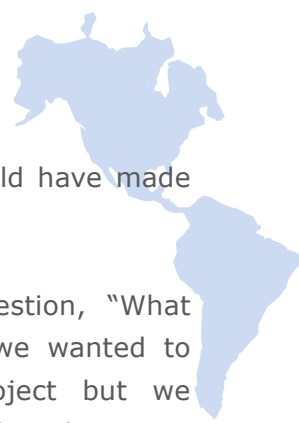
April 26, 2005). Participants agreed that we took too long to get to the "heart" and "substance" of developing lesson plans and that we needed to get to business more quickly with limited time in our meetings. We opened each meeting with "checking in," where we shared how we were doing. I talked about the challenge of balancing the agenda with everyday issues and questioned whether or not a "check-in" at the beginning of meetings was an appropriate technique. Denise suggested that morning meetings were not the best and Julianne agreed and said that she was preoccupied with the day to come (TIG Nine, April 26, 2005). Both scheduling meetings and keeping meetings on schedule were considerable challenges in the peace curricula process; how to *spend time* was a major challenge.

Administrative inclusion in the peace curricula process was spotty, and non-systematic. During a couple of critical junctures, I held meetings and conversations with the assistant principal in charge of working with the peace curricula development project. Teacher inquirers highlighted administrative inclusion and participant presence at all group meetings as changes that could have made the process more effective:

Japanese / ENL teacher: I don't know if we could have gotten an administrator involved?

Distance education coordinator: That's exactly what I was going to say. I don't know if we could have...

Japanese / ENL teacher: (talking over) Because it seemed like that was a link that was missing, and is **still** missing. Distance education coordinator: Right. Science teacher: Because then we would have all these ideas, and then you go



forward with them and we'd get slapped down. It's like, 'Why do we even spend our time **planning** this out?' Then it got slapped down.

Distance education coordinator: (voice emerges from chatter) Make them part of the process and involve them from the beginning.

In a school culture where top down decision-making is the norm, inclusion of those in positions of power is critical to creating deeper change. Including key administrators in the peace curricula process was identified as the missing link for garnering support for a wider school effort. I personally attempted to get support from administration by keeping the assistant principal informed about teacher inquiry group ideas. I also attempted to garner administrative support by asking for group release time at a critical juncture in peace curricula development; this support was denied because of lack of school district resources.

The presence of key teacher inquirers who work primarily with the ENL population was also highlighted as a change that could have made the process more effective. The science teacher stated that both the ENL teacher and guidance counselor, key players because of their frequent interaction with ENL students, were missing from many of the meetings. Lack of prioritization was discussed as a reason why these two group members had missed meetings. The group "missed out" on the "valuable information" they could have contributed. In summary, group members suggested that getting to the "heart" of issues more quickly because of time constraints, administrative inclusion, more frequent attendance of teacher inquiry group meetings by key members, and introducing readings on peace and multicultural

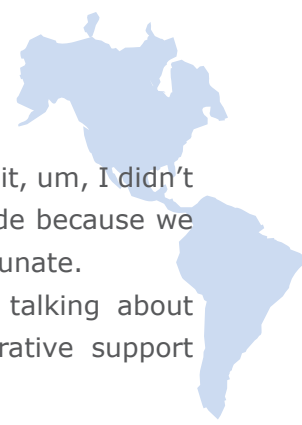
education earlier in the year could have made the process more effective.

When answering the question, "What were some of the issues that we wanted to address in the curriculum project but we didn't?", a participant reported that the group process did not address the language barrier and that some Euro-American students still reacted negatively to Spanish language use in the school. She stated, "So the Hispanic kids will talk to each other in their native language, and I overhear a student say, 'You speak English when you're in here (said firmly).' I still hear them say that." A participant mentioned that a wider implementation of the peace curricula would have been better but time was a key factor. She also indicated that more structure and direct guidance on how to develop intercultural peace curricula were needed.

If more time was available, teacher inquirers could "perfect" the curriculum, administrative support could be garnered, and administrators could enforce peace curricula implementation, top-down. Though enforcing peace curricula seems a bit like an oxymoron, a participant claimed that if teachers were told what to do, they would do it. If the curriculum was 'laid out' for mainstream teachers, they would implement it.

A top-down power hierarchy and a "Tell us what to do" norm existed at Junction High School, and this was reiterated several times. The science teacher was first to answer the question, "What were some of the issues we wanted to address, but couldn't?"

Science teacher: We knew **what** the problems are. I think our main thing is **how** do we address the problems, and (pauses) not so much of the resources



available to us, because there's lots of resources available, I think we addressed what we identified what we felt were the major problems; we struggled with how to fix them.

Distance education coordinator: And how much support we can get from administration. Not just **ours** but Central Office administration. You know how far can you go?

Japanese / ENL Teacher: Yes. (quietly)
Distance education coordinator: When you talk about the hierarchy here?

Researcher: Uh-huh.

Distance education coordinator: You're absolutely right. There is a strong hierarchy system. And you can't go around it.

Science teacher: (jumps in) So when you think about possible solutions, we also then, you can't be real creative because, you know, you're confined within certain restraints (frustration in voice). Then it's like, well how do we make **this** square fit into this **triangle**. How are you going to do that? And...

Distance education coordinator: (jumps in) How do you maneuver inside the box? When you're not allowed outside the box? That's a lot of it.

Japanese / ENL teacher: Mm. I think we definitely came up against that when we, um, that was the whole situation with 'All Arabs are terrorists and should die' [This is a reference to a letter written by a Euro-American student] that whole

thing, you know. And how it, um, I didn't feel like progress was made because we hit a wall. That was unfortunate.

Researcher: What you're talking about was kind of an administrative support wall.

Japanese / ENL teacher: Yah.

How to make a square fit in a triangle? How to maneuver inside the box? Participants used geometric metaphors to express frustration with the realities of power hierarchies and the constraints on creativity they experienced from lack of administrative support at Junction High School. More administrative support was identified as important for wider efforts toward changing the school climate at JHS. The lack of support by key administrators was identified as an obstacle to deeper intercultural education for peace at Junction High School.

Research that is Dialogic

Teacher inquiry group nine concluded with participants asking me questions about whether or not my expectations for the peace curricula process were met:

Social studies teacher: You came in with sort of an idea

Science teacher: (background) A plan of action

Japanese / ENL teacher: ...in mind, I'm sure. We didn't know what that was, but after this is all said and done, is it **better** than you thought? Or we didn't achieve as much as you wish we could have? Or, your idea of what is here at Unityville in comparison to other research you've done?



Researcher: ...I had no idea, what (pauses), you know, I thought. I had this narrow view of curriculum. I thought curricula units that you could implement at some point in time that would help to **create** better relationships among students in the school. And you know, I'm looking at intercultural peace, and intercultural to me in my mind, that shared place of understanding, but simultaneously respecting diversity and difference, and honoring that and actually celebrating, the cliché, celebrating diversity. So the notions of creating better relations for newcomer students. My role I think was really advocacy. I was inherently, let's say **biased**, because I was working to create better conditions for newcomer students. And, did that take place? I sure **hope** so. I think to engage teachers in a reflective process about their school, their curriculum, the way that they teach, um, maybe there's a lot of, I'm **hoping** there's a lot of unintended consequences of that engagement in that process.

Discussion

Counter-normative efforts to combat racism and other related forms of discrimination against newcomers at Junction High School were conducted by teacher inquirers and the researcher, though the results of these efforts were surely modest, "additive" at best, and difficult to measure empirically. Racism was expressed in derogatory comments and language monitoring practices that resulted in the out-grouping of newcomers at Junction High School. This racism was implicitly expressed in the racial hierarchies perpetuated via narratives told by some white administrators, teachers, and community members; and it was expressed

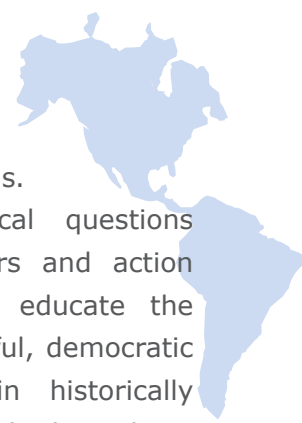
in negative attitudes toward the presence of Hispanic workers by some white community members.

Amid all this, a story of hope emerged in the form of a small group of teachers engaged in the development of curricula that attempted to build intercultural empathy for peace. In ideal form, intercultural empathy is a condition of mutual understanding based on a process of de-centered position-taking with another's unique human experience on emotional, intellectual, physical, and potentially spiritual levels. Shared understanding of the experience of the "other" emerges from a dialogic exchange between two people or groups of people with distinctive primary cultures (Brantmeier, 2008). In reality, baby steps were taken at JHS to actualize intercultural empathy for peace. Though our efforts in intercultural education were not as deep as needed, they did not go unnoticed by Latino students, and **some** positive impact was reported by teacher inquirers who participated in the process. Structural racism was not alleviated at JHS, but awareness of related issues and changes in curricula, perception, and behavior were reported.

Personally, I experienced much sorrow and hope by engaging in the process. I now believe that even small, modestly helpful efforts can plant seeds for broader change. This research, though uncovering strife, turmoil, exploitation, and de-humanization in both the oppressed and the oppressors, leads me to be more committed and inspired toward deeper engagement in a critical, optimistic pedagogy of hope (Freire & Araujo-Freire, 2004).

Toward Closure

The paradoxical words, "*Somos iguales, pero no somos iguales*" relay the heartfelt words of a Latina student who reflected on the relative



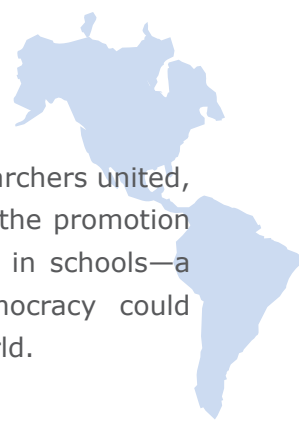
positionality of Hispanic students in a 95% Euro-American dominant school. In ideal spirit, and by law, all students were equal at Junction High School and in a broader democratic society; however, not all students were/are treated equally and with fairness. Newcomer students experienced lower status and were given fewer resources than their predominately white “American” fellow students. Newcomers struggled for cultural adaptation in a new community and in some cases, a new country; they faced a white dominant cultural assimilationist orientation in school—an orientation that insisted on linguistic and cultural assimilation. The burden of change was placed on newcomers and was reinforced by attitudes, policies, and practices in the wider community, and by an administrative chain of command that helped to reinforce cultural and linguistic assimilation—in some cases intentionally, and in other cases, unintentionally (Brantmeier 2007b).

In the United States, the growing gap between a predominately white teaching force and increasingly multicultural school populations warrants the attention and focus of both researchers and institutions of teacher education (Howard, 2006; Banks et al., 2005). Researching the possibilities and constraints for strengthening a multicultural agenda are imperative to a broader project of education for democracy in an increasingly pluralistic U.S. society (Gutmann, 1995). More deliberate and informed action research is surely needed. In particular, research on intercultural education for peace must be critical of power dynamics in operation among majority and minority groups in order to foster education that aims to establish more genuine, participatory forms of democratic engagement via culturally inclusive curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogy, fair testing, deliberate modes for non-majority participation in school decision-making practices, and policy-making that steers the

equitable distribution of social goods.

This article raises critical questions for multicultural peace educators and action researchers. How do we best educate the educators to provide safe, peaceful, democratic school environments for all in historically homogenous school settings, whether those settings are rural or urban? Some of the insights expressed by research participants as well as some practical insights the researcher believes to be critical for ensuring success in other peace curricula development projects hopefully can serve others who are embarking on similar projects elsewhere. For example, student, faculty, and administrative allies from the dominant group were essential for getting things done. Newcomer student input in the process was also critical. Dedicated and sustained administrative involvement in the process would ensure the feasibility of implementation. However, teacher ownership of the curricula that they developed was also crucial. In short, a collective effort involving all members in the power hierarchy would strengthen reform. The constraints on teacher time, energy, and innovation presented by the present outcome-based, test-oriented policy climate were serious hindrances to developing curricula which were even considered a “deviation” by one of the teacher inquirers, who discussed the difficulties of fitting her unit into the standard, required curriculum. Long term commitment in a collaborative partnership is essential to create deep change.

In the call for papers of this special issue, the editors wrote, “An authentic democracy—an inspiration for all societies—cannot coexist with racism, since democracy itself implies respect for those who are different, as well as the promotion of intercultural coexistence” (<http://www.ried-ijed.org/english/call01.php>). Ideally, our schools are the vehicles for this authentic democracy, one that would promote racial and linguistic



diversity affirmation and the common ground of local and global citizenship. Many obstacles exist to actualize this ideal, and the work of the collaborative partnership still continues in Unityville and must continue elsewhere.

Ultimately, as educators and researchers united, we are the sentinels who ensure the promotion of a culture of peace and justice in schools—a culture in which a robust democracy could flourish for the children of the world.

Notes

- 1 Junction High School is a pseudonym for the research site. Unityville is a pseudonym for the surrounding city. All participants have been given pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the research site.
- 2 Double quotes are used for exact speech acts. Single quotes are used when a speaker communicates what somebody else said during a speech act (see above example). Single quotes are also used in the main text for paraphrased speech acts.
- 3 Data taken from socialization connection field notes on October 23, 2004.
- 4 Junction High School is the pseudonym for the research site. Pseudonyms are used for all place, institution, and people names.
- 5 Personal Interview Community Organizer conducted on February 8, 2005.
- 6 Emancipatory change here refers to change that increases individual and/or group agency under conditions in which intentions and actions are limited in significant ways.
- 7 On several occasions, one or two members of the group missed an inquiry group meeting. Other data for the larger ethnographic project was gathered from observations in teacher inquirer classrooms, semi-structured personal interviews, shadows of ENL students in mainstream classrooms, student interviews, and document analysis.
- 8 For example, Japanese connotations of the word *hei-wa* could relay conditions of social harmony (Galtung, 1985). Arabic connotations of the word *salaam* could convey justice. Hindus recite, “*Om, shanti, shanti, shanti*,” a mantra after *puja* or prayer; the connotations of inner and outer peace could be understood. In a Buddhist conception of *ahimsa*, the concept of nonviolence could be understood. The challenges of translation of “peace” are rampant here.
- 9 A primary culture is the in-group that one identifies with most, usually the ascribed culture at birth.
- 10 ENL (English-as-a-New Language) and ESL (English-as-a-Second Language) are used interchangeably throughout to refer to newcomer students. This reflects how teacher inquirers use both terms to describe newcomers. Though referring to these students as a collective category as such does not recognize the diversity of students with origins from Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Taiwan,



Japan, and Israel. This general categorizing as ENL or ESL itself says something about how these diverse groups are constructed.

11 Personal interview one conducted on November 1, 2004.

12 For part of the day, in-school suspension kids were sent to the ENL Resource Room for the ENL aide to watch.

13 Teacher inquiry group nine conducted on April 25, 2005.

14 Teacher inquiry group nine, April 26, 2005.

15 It was discussed in a teacher inquiry group meeting that the term “American” when applied to whites from the United States was a misnomer given that America extends from the tip of North American to the tip of South America.

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