

Writing Democracy Objectives

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Introduction

This article reviews work on practicing democracy in the public school classroom. The authors share the process of teaching and learning democracy in the Masters of Education, Leadership, Renewal and Change Program at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, during the 2009-2010 school year. The authors of the article are the instructors in the Fort Collins cohort of the program. Together with their students, they began a process to realize the moral obligation of bringing the focus of learning democratic responsibility and participation to the center of planning and teaching, every day in every classroom. This obligation and this effort became reality through the daily writing of democracy objectives. There are several sections to the article. The sections explain not only the graduate program and its underlying philosophical connection and working partnership with the National Network for Educational Renewal, but also focus on promising practices toward democratic schooling and the effort to bring democracy into the reality of classrooms on a daily basis.

The promising practice which is at the heart of this work is the daily writing of what were eventually named “democracy objectives.” Democracy objectives were defined by the authors as the purposeful effort and written direction for teaching the skills and knowledge required to participate and to contribute in a social and political democracy. Instead of having this goal hidden somewhere in the curriculum or merely implied within a statement of rationale, it is the intent of this work and this article to bring the teaching of democracy to the top of the page, in a position as prominent as any content knowledge or language skill being taught in our public schools. We acknowledge that content and literacy skills are important for every student. And, equally important are the skills of critical literacy that are essential for citizens of a democracy. It is, therefore, our obligation to teach these skills, each day, as well.

The article reviews the process experienced by the authors in collaboration with their graduate students as they developed the writing of objectives which would bring democratic practices to every classroom. The authors and their students experienced the learning process together; it was a process of inquiry, discovery, and creation of knowledge. The pedagogy used by the instructors was one of dialogue, a Friirian (1970) epistemology, not teaching by “banking,” that is simply pouring content into learners, but rather creating new understanding collaboratively. Together through the discussion of literature and theory, and its connection to practice, they were able to create ways to realize the democratic ideal in the education of young people. As John Goodlad and colleagues from the NNER have advised, it is urgent for us now to reiterate the significance and establish the strategies to focus daily on the work of protecting the well-being of our democracy and preparing the young for participation in it and contribution to it. The article reviews the journey of the instructors and their students as they read together and studied the meaning of schooling in a democracy, of teaching for social justice, and the need for change and renewal. The article includes the explanation of the theory and program of study. That explanation is followed by the sharing of the collaborative work from which

surfaced the practice of writing objectives for democracy. This was not an experience of top-down instruction which is common in all schools, kindergarten through graduate level. Most remarkable for both students and teachers engaged in this work, was that the practice developed during the coursework and student teaching terms was co-created by members of the Masters cohort. Understanding that dialogue is fundamental to democracy, we experienced teaching and learning as a democratic process. Our intention in reporting this work is to share our story, and to offer to others the possibility of experiencing this kind of mutual learning with the hope of transforming reality.

As the authors looked forward to the work ahead, they and their students accepted the challenge that with the writing of objectives there must also be the development of strategies for instruction and assessment of those objectives. The development of this concept will be ongoing and will continue to involve students and teachers. The work in this direction continues in the Masters Program at Colorado State University.

2010 NNER National Conference

This work was first presented at the 2010 NNER National Conference in Normal, Illinois. The work and presentation aligned with Strand 1 of the conference which offered the following as context for the work:

The challenge of practicing democracy in the classroom has never been greater. With the increasing diversity of learners and the changing social contexts where schools are housed, providing a nurturing and equitable education to everyone is more difficult than ever. In spite of the challenges, however, we know that public schools are the one place where all citizens can learn about and experience democratic interactions and processes. Public schools are also the one place where society can ensure that all students are provided with the knowledge and skills to enable them to become contributing

members of our social and political democracy. The role of the teacher has never been more important than today. (NNER Conference Brochure, 2010)

Acknowledging the serious nature and the urgency of this challenge, we are pleased to share our work which brings to teachers and to pre-service teachers a practical way to ensure the well-being and growth of our democracy. This must be a central focus of the work in the classroom every day, as it is identified as the primary purpose of our nation's schools. Democracy objectives included in every lesson plan will guarantee that this work is at the forefront and essential for every teacher and every student, every day.

Connection to State and National Efforts

It is pertinent, at this point, to add a note connecting the work being done at the Colorado Department of Education and by the National Governors Association. It is the current movement, at the state and national levels, to review and revise state standards and assessments in order to guarantee essential skills and knowledge to every child across the nation. The work being done across the nation reflects a shift in focus for educational goals, and aligns completely with the practice of creating democracy objectives as well as recognizing the urgent need for teaching much more than content alone. The current movement recognizes that it is essential, for our nation's progress, to consider carefully other necessary skills and knowledge for every child to achieve success in the 21st Century. Those skills and knowledge include critical thinking, engaging in dialogue, posing questions, discerning bias, working effectively and communicating respectfully with others, recognizing the value of civic engagement and its role in a healthy democracy and civil society, respecting the diversity of individuals and groups, balancing personal freedom with the interests of the community, taking initiative and responsibility, acting with maturity and politeness, balancing self-advocacy with the consideration of others, behaving honestly and ethically, constructing clear coherent arguments which represent one's beliefs, interacting effectively with people who have

different primary languages, acknowledging authority and taking direction, using teamwork and leadership skills, and cooperating for a common purpose.

The shift in thinking requires incorporating the teaching of these skills and this knowledge that have now been determined essential for all students. Lessons must be purposefully designed to include the instruction, practice, and assessment of those skills. It is the purpose of this article to share the work being done in the Masters program at Colorado State University in meeting the following challenge:

Students will not acquire these skills by simply existing in a democratic nation. The skills must be taught and practiced just as students practice language skills and mathematic skills. These skills, to live well as a contributing citizen of democracy, must be part of each lesson each day. (State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education, 2009)

Colorado State University and Fossil Ridge High School-A Partnership School

The Masters program is taught on-site at Fossil Ridge High School, a partner school with CSU. The foundation of the partnership and the core beliefs of the Masters program align with the philosophy and functions of a Professional Development School.

1. Pre-service Training of Teacher Candidates
2. Professional Development for All Educators
3. Inquiry – Ongoing Action Research
4. Exemplary Practice in Every Classroom for Every Child (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004)

As a partnership school, we recognize and honor the purpose of such schools as identified and developed in the work of the National Network for Educational Renewal. The overall purpose and rationale for the partnership are to improve the performance of universi-

ties responsible for educating teachers, to improve the performance of schools that provide support to the mission of public schooling, and to improve the collaborative relationships for the mutual benefit of everyone involved. With this purpose in mind, we also acknowledge that our work in the masters program and at the partner high school must align with the moral dimensions of schooling and the effort to continue to achieve the Agenda for Education in Democracy, the guiding work and shared vision for all members of NNER. It is the four-part mission of the Agenda that guides our instruction, conversation, and direction for the students in our program as well as for the high school staff and students.

- Fostering in the nation's young the skills, dispositions, and knowledge necessary for effective participation in a social and political democracy;
 - Ensuring that the young have access to those understandings and skills required for satisfying and responsible lives;
 - Developing educators who nurture the learning and well-being of every student;
 - Ensuring educators' competence in and commitment to serving as stewards of schools.
- (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004)

Overview of the Masters Program: School of Teacher Education and Principal Preparation – Colorado State University

The Masters Degree in Educational Leadership, Renewal and Change is a 14-month, cohort-based program. Its goal is to develop mature, highly qualified teachers whose practice is grounded in research and theory. The coursework follows the strands of equity, democracy, and social justice, which run throughout the entire curriculum. The focus of the graduate work goes beyond the study of curriculum and instruction, which have been the basis of traditional masters programs in education. It incorporates an in-depth study of renewal and change in public schooling. Therefore, the graduates leave the program with deep understanding of the larger role of

educators, of the moral dimensions of teaching, and their commitment to the stewardship of the profession. The mission of this work – including the focus on the public purpose of schooling – attracts adults who are hopeful and optimistic concerning our nation’s progress. Their expectations include learning the skills to create positive change and renewal of schools for all children.

Upon completion of the following requirements, students receive a teaching credential along with their Masters degree.

Degree Requirements and Curriculum

Summer – Phase I

Courses:

Context of Schooling

Models of Teaching

Fall – Phase II

Interdisciplinary Methods

Expert Teaching in Reading, Literacy & Numeracy

Internship I Teacher Licensure – Practicum in Partner Schools

Seminar: Instruction

Action Research

Spring – Phase III

Internship II: Student Licensure - Student Teaching in Partner Schools

Seminar: Instruction

Action Research

Summer – Phase IV

Differentiating Instruction – Diverse Learners

Curriculum Development

Seminar: Teacher Licensure Capstone

What does a student's day look like?

Fall Semester - Fossil Ridge High School – Tuesdays

7:30 a.m. – 9:00	Internship/Fossil Ridge High School
9:08 a.m. – 11:40	Seminar/Instruction
11:40 a.m. – 12:15	Lunch
12:15 p.m. – 1:15	Interdisciplinary Methods
1:40 p.m. – 3:00	Internship/Kinard Middle School- Practicum
3:30 p.m. – 5:00	Reading, Literacy & Numeracy

Fall Semester – Fossil Ridge High School – Thursdays

7:30 a.m. – 9:00	Internship/Fossil Ridge High School
9:08 a.m. – 11:40	Seminar/Instruction
11:40 a.m. – 12:15	Lunch
12:15 p.m. --2:20	Interdisciplinary Methods
3:30 p.m. – 5:00	Action Research (four times each semester)

The material above explains the focus and intensity of the fall coursework in the Masters program. All courses in the fall are taught on site in the partner schools. The two summer sessions, which complete the course requirements in the program, are taught on the CSU campus in the School of Teacher Education and Principal Preparation (STEPP). Spring semester requires 16 weeks of student teaching, including five evening seminars, again taking place in a number of partner schools in Northern Colorado.

It is imperative that all students applying to the program are cognizant of the rigor and intensity of the 14 months of coursework and internship. Therefore, during the application process students not only present evidence of completion of required undergraduate work and their bachelor's degree in an applicable content area, but they also complete a screening process including a personal interview to discuss goals and expectations. Because of the intensity and the dedication required, students must feel a "fit" with the mission and vision of the program. The synergy that develops among cohort members as a result of the power of the shared vision adds dimensions that result in a whole that is much greater than the sum of its parts.

The program attracts students who range in age from 25 to 50 years of age. The diversity of the population and richness of life experience enhance the learning for all students and instructors as well.

Readings That Guide Coursework, Study, and Conversation

Education and democracy are complex issues (Soder, Goodlad & McMannon, 2001). As the masters students began the study of both, the issues became more connected, and the connection stronger and more complex. Recognizing this complexity and the challenge it presents, it becomes ever more evident that we, as educators, cannot separate one from the other in our society.

A democratic society is different from other kinds of societies in that while it looks to its schools to perform all of these essential functions, it also looks to its school to create a very specific kind of citizen: a democratic citizen. A democracy can be successful only to the extent that its citizens are willing and able to assume the responsibilities of self-governance. Simply being literate is not enough. (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004, p.8)

The focus of the first six months of study in the program was strongly grounded in the moral purpose of schooling and the chal-

lenges of social justice. Readings were required and discussed in both small groups and the large group. These readings offered opportunities to explore and clarify the ethical responsibilities of teachers. Purposeful and intentional effort was made, throughout the reading and writing assignments, to have each student examine her or his knowledge of self and core beliefs. The understanding of one's self and the examination of one's beliefs are the first steps of inquiry in becoming an authentic person and authentic teacher (Palmer, 1998). As the teacher candidates deepened their awareness of self, their understanding of the teacher's responsibility to all students, in a democratic society, deepened as well.

The program did integrate the study of educational philosophy, methodology, and classroom management. First and foremost, however, at the heart of every discussion was the basic question: What is the just, equitable, fair way to teach in order to guarantee, for every student, equal access to knowledge and to the skills for successful participation in our social and political democracy? Throughout the program, inquiry into this question provided a unifying vision. The first step in becoming a teacher was the first step in the journey inward to know one's self and one's beliefs about teaching, learning, and students. The best teaching methods and strategies may well do until the real teacher, the authentic teacher, shows up (Palmer, 1998).

The following readings were among those chosen to inform our discussion and guide the journey for our students to greater understanding of self and of purpose, and to address the even tougher question of how to achieve that purpose.

Readings That Guided Conversations on Democracy in Schooling

- *A White Teacher Talks About Race*, by J. Landsman
- *Courage to Teach*, by P. Palmer
- *Deculturalization: A Struggle for Equity*, by J. Spring

- *Education for Everyone*, by J. Goodlad, C. Mantle-Bromley, S. Goodlad
- *Critical Issues Papers*, by AED Scholars
- *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by P. Freire
- *Schooling in the U.S.*, by F. Parkay

(Students also studied and discussed a number of articles on democratic schooling, equity, and social justice in education.)

We posed questions and shared ideas from texts and from one another, questions and ideas inspired by the writers we studied. We entered into the dialectic process described by Paulo Freire. We, with our students, created new understandings from which a new reality might develop, from the dialogue to praxis with hope of transforming the world (Freire, 1970). Freire offered a “pedagogy that includes elements for a model of an alternative society, very much a society not as it is now but as it should and can be” (Mayo, 1995, p. 39).

Our students then entered student teaching with methodology, strategy, and intention of doing things differently, more equitably, more inclusively, while at the same time challenging the status quo. Their goal was to teach literacy to all students and, because our nation is a democracy that is always growing and changing, their goal was to teach “critical literacy” as well (Mayo, 1995).

We believe it is fair to say now, looking back on the experience of dialogue and praxis with our students, that we all experienced deep learning. It was a learning that would change each one of us individually and all of us together as community; and, it most assuredly would change the way we would be and would work in schools. It was powerful. It was renewing. It was simultaneous, and mutually beneficial. The reality of change surfaced during the next few months. We observed the students in their practice teaching. The evidence of change was visible and tenable in their lessons.

What emerged from the study and dialogue?

What emerged from the months of study and dialogue was deeply rewarding, and in some sense, exceeded our expectations. It addressed the challenge shared in *Education for Everyone* (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004):

The study and practice of democracy in our schools have weakened; we must return to the primary purpose of education while ensuring that it is indeed for everyone. (p. ix)

It is difficult to report all that emerged from the ongoing conversations. The process of learning continues. What we did see in the months that followed, during the spring semester of student teaching, was a return to the primary purpose of education, the protection and growth of our democracy. We share those observations in this section.

From January to May, 2010, we went into the field to observe the teacher candidates during their student teaching. From the very beginning, these student teachers were doing things differently. Almost every lesson we observed had evidence of the purpose and focus we studied and developed together. Our students were incorporating, in their daily planning, the teaching and assessing of skills and content necessary for participation in a democratic society. They were bringing to reality, within the classroom itself, the ideology of justice and equity along with the epistemology of dialogue and collaboration. Students were teaching students to work together, to listen to one another, to include each voice, to care for one another and to care for their planet. They were teaching these beliefs everyday because they were focusing on them and writing objectives with the intention of keeping this work central. There was evidence in the daily lesson plans of creating what we eventually named democracy objectives.

Rationale for Democracy Objectives

As instructors and observers, we gathered the data, that is the

objectives. Then, we shared with all the students exactly what they had written. We studied them, analyzed them, and named them. Together, we gleaned the essence of what they had created. In the process of naming what they had created, we established clarity and strength to the new reality, clarity to further describe it, and strength to replicate it. In addition, we deepened our comprehension of why this work is essential in schooling for democracy. We asked ourselves how educating students in democratic skills would, in fact, be a democratic process. Could we educate students to be participating individuals, to be critical thinkers, to respect their uniqueness and that of others, and to create an environment where all differences would be celebrated and nurtured? Not only could we, but if we reflect on the message of the mission of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy, we are morally obligated to do this work.

This is the work of equipping all children to enter into the human conversation. This is work of nurturing all children so they know in the deepest sense that they belong, that they are capable, and that they will contribute. More than training students, it is creating a place where children will be nurtured to find their voices and celebrate their talents. Students cannot enter the conversation without the skills and the words, without their own voices and ways to express them. The success of the challenge lies in the partnership. The work for the children is to identify the self, the core beliefs and unique talents to contribute to life; the work for the educators to teach the skills and guide the students to accomplish that lifelong task, the task of seeking authenticity of personhood and validation of citizenship. Writing democracy objectives places this work at the forefront of teaching. It is first and foremost in the minds of the teachers and students every day.

Democracy objectives, written and placed at the top of the page of lesson planning, will ensure: that all students are skilled in ways to think, speak, participate, contribute, and find their own voice; that all students are educated in the ways to work cooperatively toward common goals and to lead others toward their own success; that all students learn how to treat others well and to work well together in a

civil setting; that all students can know what an equitable, safe, nurturing environment feels like; and most important, all students will have the skills to create that environment for themselves and others.

Democracy objectives will ensure that all teachers will be committed everyday to the work of teaching democratic skills and knowledge. If we do not ensure this for every teacher, then it will happen in only a few places for only a portion of the population. If we do not provide these important learning experiences for all students, we will, in fact, be preparing some students to be leaders and others to be slaves (Dewey, 1916).

From the ensuing discussions, we outlined three categories of democracy objectives, each addressing distinct responsibilities of citizenship. The following section explains each category with examples of objectives written by the Masters students.

Democracy Objectives

This section explains each category of democracy objectives with examples of objectives written by the student teachers in their lesson plans.

Group I Objectives concerning the student's responsibility to self—the role of the individual in a democratic community.

Students Will Be Able To (SWBAT):

- Prepare to participate in a class debate by reading documents from Scopes Trial and identify the arguments.
- Clarify his or her own political beliefs and use those beliefs to evaluate historic policies for the Great Depression.
- Participate in Jeopardy exercise and display good sportsmanship.
- Know and complete their POGIL roles and will motivate others to do their best also.
- Explain and defend, in his or her own words, opinions on the Big Bang Theory.

Group II — Objectives concerning the student’s responsibility to the whole—her/his role with regard to the community.

SWBAT:

- Work together in groups to decide which art works will be in the show. Everyone will get a voice and then share why a work is in or out.
- Work together in groups with a German text so they can assist one another with comprehension of the text.
- Recognize opposing arguments, respond to them respectfully and thoughtfully, ensuring that all feel included and safe in the discussion.
- Listen to the entire discussion with the intention of hearing each person’s voice.
- Evaluate her/his peers’ work in the cooperative group to ensure that all learn and improve during the project.

Group III — Objectives concerning the student’s responsibility to the environment—the democratic responsibility as stewards of the planet and living things.

SWBAT:

- Participate in a discussion of animal rights and food production.
- Participate in a field trip to a sustainable farm and prepare a “trashless” lunch for the day.
- Examine a case study about farming methods that work with nature.
- Discuss ways to lessen our dependency on fossil fuels and decrease the rising amounts of greenhouse gasses.
- Describe the human impact on greenhouse gasses.

This evidence was just the beginning of the change process. As we reviewed the lesson plans in which students were writing this type of objective, the tone and the intention of something very different surfaced. The objectives still included the traditional expectations of content and language essential to good planning. Above and beyond those expectations, we observed something more, something greater. We observed objectives that called for students to treat each other well, to expect the best of themselves and others, to care for our planet, and to protect and grow our democracy. We were seeing the reality that had emerged from our dialogue, from our conversation. This may serve as an example of the purpose and power of the human conversation, which John Goodlad has shown is the essence of the purpose of schooling. According to Goodlad and the *Agenda for Education in a Democracy*, we must teach children how to live and work together, as well as how to treat all people with dignity and respect, in order to create a better world. We cannot assume that students will learn these skills through association or osmosis.

Schools are not often thought of or spoken of as institutions having moral imperatives. But the skills, dispositions, and habits of intellect necessary for democratic citizenship have to be developed somewhere. People are not born with them. This places a considerable burden on the shoulders of the teachers, who are responsible to the children they teach as well as to their parents and to society as a whole. The moral dimensions of teaching are inescapable. When a teacher begins to teach, a whole array of moral choices and decisions inescapably comes into play. What is omitted from a curriculum can be just as consequential as what is included. How information is presented can have tremendous effect on how it is received. Teaching cannot help but be informed by values and guided by normative principles. (Goodlad, Mantel-Bromley, Goodlad, 2004, p. 28)

We believe the authors are saying that moral imperatives will direct how schools function whether the content and mission are consistent or not. Currently much of what students learn in terms of participating in a democracy happens by chance, if at all. What is good for students and for our democracy may happen in some classrooms and not in others. It is our obligation to ensure that democracy – the skills and knowledge of democratic living – are being taught in all classrooms, in every school, every day. Children in our nation, as stated above, are not born with skills for democracy, just as they are not born with skills in English or sports or music or any other subject of the curriculum or co-curriculum. They must be taught. In the past, planning for teaching democracy has been neglected. Having teachers consider democracy skills in daily objectives to achieve this purpose has not been part of teacher preparation. These skills and this knowledge are as essential as the language and content for all students. This work must not be considered an add-on to the curriculum or a “hidden agenda.” This work must be at the center of what is happening in classrooms on a regular basis.

Therefore, we accepted the challenge of bringing this curriculum to every classroom. To do that, we revised the lesson plan template that we had been using to include the writing of democracy objectives as a first step in daily planning with the standards, and language and content objectives.

SIOP Lesson Plan Revised

In creating the Masters of Education, Renewal and Change program for Colorado State University in the spring of 2008, the program and curriculum were developed using the Colorado State Standards and the professional development school model, while keeping in mind the demographics of Fossil Ridge High School and the City of Fort Collins, Colorado. The student body and teaching staff at FRHS are predominately white and upper middle class. Therefore, one challenge was to develop teachers who can teach white, upper middle class students as well as those children from poverty, ELL students, students who learn differently, minority stu-

dents, and those with special needs. It was imperative to address the issues of equity, social justice, and developing democratic citizens, and reflect those issues in the components of lesson planning and delivery for all students. For that reason, the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) model of lesson planning was selected as the model to be used by our students throughout their program of study.

The SIOP model was originally developed to meet the needs of English Language Learners through the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) sponsored research study, "The Effects of Sheltered Instruction on the Achievement of Limited English Proficient Students," which began in 1996. Its goals were to: 1) design an explicit model of sheltered instruction that teachers could use to improve the academic success of English language learners, and 2) train teachers in that model. This model would be applicable for all subject areas because it would offer a framework for instruction that incorporated best instructional practice for teaching both language and content. It was grounded in the understanding that English learners can acquire content knowledge while they develop and improve academic English language skills (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2006).

Working with collaborative teacher-researcher teams in several districts on the East and West Coasts, the project developed an effective model of sheltered instruction, namely the SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2006, p. 31). During the first months following the development of the model, a study was conducted to establish the validity and reliability of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Instrument, which was designed to rate teacher implementation of the SIOP model of sheltered instruction. A statistical analysis revealed an inter-rater agreement of .99. Additional analyses indicated that the SIOP instrument is a highly reliable and valid measure of sheltered instruction (p. 31).

A model that has achieved teaching and learning success is the SIOP Model. Developed from scientifically-based re-

search (with treatment and comparison groups), this model is consistent with the literature on best practices that enhance both teaching and student learning. It has been shown to be beneficial for all students. (p. 41)

The major components of the SIOP Lesson Planning Guide are lesson preparation, building background, comprehensive input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery and review and assessment (p. 21).

The SIOP Lesson Plan Template contains the following sections:

Section 1 - Planning : content and language objectives, key vocabulary, materials including supplementary, adapted, and higher order questions.

Section 2 - The Anticipatory Set/Objectives and Purpose: building background.

Section 3 – Instructional Input: scaffolding the lesson/learning activities, which include teaching/ modeling, guided practice (I do, We do, and You do), and independent practice.

Section 4 – Closure: review and assessment.

Based on the strong research as well as the success of the SIOP model, our students were required to create both content and language objectives as part of every SIOP lesson plan. We defined content objectives as the direction and focus for teaching the content of a subject, and language objectives for developing language to discuss that content. Each has a clear and critical purpose in the plan.

As our program evolved, we added democracy objectives to the template. Democracy objectives are defined as the written focus and direction for teaching the skills and knowledge to participate and contribute in a social and political democracy. These will be stated at the beginning of each lesson. This underscores the commitment to fostering our nation's democratic ideals as well as the need

to teach those ideals to all students. Therefore, we now use a modified SIOP lesson plan template that includes the important work of teachers in educating our students for a democracy.

Democracy Objectives and the Four-Part Mission of the AED

So what does all this mean? How do we incorporate it in the work we have been doing?

The final inquiry for the students in the Masters cohort during the 2009-2010 school year challenged them to connect their work with democracy objectives to the four-part mission of the Agenda, which is the foundation of our program. We, as the instructors, saw a connection, and we wondered: What about the students' understanding of it all? And we wondered not only about their understanding of the work that they had been doing at Colorado State University, but also about how it connected to the greater story and work being done around the country in other NNER settings (www.nner.partnerships.org).

We shared with the students the Critical Issues Papers written by the Agenda for Education in a Democracy Scholars Group. During our final capstone course in the summer, following their student teaching, we had the opportunity to read the Critical Issues Papers and discuss further the challenges of teaching diverse learners and what that challenge means in terms of social justice and equity. We reviewed with the students the mission of the Agenda along with the objectives they had written and the work they had done. The following is the analysis of those objectives as they reflect the Agenda. The students demonstrated an understanding of the four parts of the mission as they were addressed specifically in their objectives. They realized the mission in their lessons and in their classrooms. They synthesized the objectives in class, in small groups, and then as a large group. Through that examination, the students were able to organize and make sense of their work as they placed their objectives in the four sections of the Mission. Several examples follow:

Enculturation SWBAT:

- Participate in collaborative groups to list all the ways that we are in this together.
- Evaluate the effects that substance abuse has on the whole society.
- Utilize research skills in order to gather information they can evaluate critically.

Equal Access to Knowledge SWBAT:

- Explain to a partner a summary of the book and if you agree or disagree with the statement on the board. Every student will share thoughts.
- Form groups to create a class presentation and create an assessment to ensure that all are learning.
- Participate in a mock “town hall meeting.” The topic is whether a new factory should be allowed. Each person will defend his or her opinion.

Nurturing Pedagogy SWBAT:

- Hear and validate each person’s questions before asking Mr. Wise a question.
- Share the texture template with peers at the table allowing everyone to use it equally.
- Explain your method and reasoning used in solving the problem so that everyone understands and shares your success.
- Analyze the ramifications of judging others by participating in a role-play activity and discussion to help substance abuse addicts.

Stewardship SWBAT:

- Explain the UN’s mission to aid those in need (United Nations Emergency Packages).

- Critique group activity: Did everyone feel included and did each person contribute?
- Brainstorm ways that human activity affects the world.

What did we do with all that we learned? How did the work continue in the next year?

During the 2010-2011 school year, with a new cohort of Masters candidates, we continued the study of democracy objectives. We believe we have taken the work to the next level. It is exciting as we continue to learn with our students, as they and we, together, teach each other and the high school students about this complex and multi-faceted phenomenon, democracy.

From the very beginning of the new school year, using the modified SIOP template, we were clear in our expectations that the pre-service teachers would create plans that included democracy objectives each day. The objectives were to be clear, purposeful, and measurable. The students of the current cohort have only experienced lesson planning with democracy objectives. Democracy is as central to their teaching as are content and language.

The following examples are objectives that the pre-service teachers wrote during their first month of the fall semester, 2010:

Democracy Objectives – September and October, 2010

SWBAT...

- Listen respectfully while someone else is talking, whether it is your classmate, group member or teacher, in order to learn from others' perspectives.
- Contribute as a group to the larger project of which the entire class will have ownership.

- Communicate and delegate within a group to find best solutions.
- Listen carefully to each person during a Socratic Seminar with the goal of learning, clarifying and revising her own thinking.
- Participate in today's game and be fair, so that all students feel safe.
- Reflect on working with peers during a three-week project and put in their own words their feelings around "team learning."

Deepening the Connection to Purpose of Schooling in a Democracy

As the semester progressed, so did the understanding of the potential of these objectives. During class discussions, we discovered that all the objectives, which still clearly aligned with the moral dimensions, merited the written connection to the purpose of schooling in a democracy. We asked our students to be clear in their thinking and writing about the rationale for teaching and learning democracy in a direct and purposeful manner. We were teaching children how to behave as well as educating students in the skills to participate in a democracy. We needed to be consistent in our writing and clear in our reasoning. We established the protocol that each objective should clearly explain to students why it is necessary to nurture the understanding of democracy and the skills to protect it. The following examples, also written by the student teachers, illustrate an addition to the statement connecting the why of this effort for high school students, as well as the power it brings to the students and the joy it offers to those who participate. If the students in our nation's schools can experience the empowering partnership in their education and the joy of contributing in an authentic and meaningful way, that experience may become part of who they are and who they will be in our society. Simultaneously, they will become the change and the renewal they desire for our world.

Examples of democracy objectives written during fall semester, 2010. October and November.

SWBAT...

- Work together in groups to complete the puzzle in order to practice collaboration and learning from others, a dialogical pedagogy which includes all students.
- Work in small groups making sure that each person shares her interpretation of the poem with the hope of deepening everyone's understanding and opening thinking to multiple possibilities of interpretations.
- Work cooperatively in pairs, each with a specific role—learning the benefits of collaboration. Then, the whole class data set will be used in discussion—the work of many compiled for the good of the whole.
- Demonstrate evidence of preparation for participation in a class jigsaw activity, acknowledging that preparation is required for contribution and participation in the activity.
- Participate in a simulated “Town Hall” meeting where each student will support his stance on the issue so that he will find his voice and be empowered.
- Explain their successful completion of math problems so as to include all students in that learning process.
- Explain the relationship between what one eats and the impact on the treatment of animals so that students will connect this to roles as stewards of the planet and all living things.
- Through small and whole group activities, SWBAT practice using/ finding their voices, expressing their opinions and listening to others do the same. This will cultivate a community of plurality in the classroom.

Peer Coaching and Teaching Democracy

An additional component of their training was to prepare and teach lessons to their peers, sharing and teaching the key educational

theories studied. In the preparation of those lessons as well, democracy objectives were required. This work was presented toward the end of the fall semester. Their deepened understanding of democracy is evident, and their skills in writing objectives for democracy are strong. Following are several examples of democracy objectives created for these lessons, lessons addressing many methodologies as well as interdisciplinary units.

SWBAT:

- Teachers will be able to cultivate equality, respect and plurality within the classroom by celebrating individuality through differentiated instruction.
- Teachers will work in interdisciplinary groups to role play learning theories, to elect a spokesperson and to share with the class the group's feelings in order to model how important and worthwhile it is to come to group consensus.
- Teachers will model the delivery of personal opinions to a group in a non-threatening manner, and receive feedback without negative feelings acknowledging that learning from each other is positive and powerful.
- Teachers will model the respect for equality and the value of every voice by listening attentively to all, showing that we gain great insight from each other.
- Teachers will work in cooperative groups, respecting others' views and contributing to a finished product, a democratic product.
- Teachers will develop communication, leadership and decision-making skills while practicing the strategies of cooperative learning, validating that self-mastery is everyone's responsibility.
- Teachers will interact as they question and clarify content together, and they will share how the interaction helped to extend their understanding and learning.

- Teachers will edit each other's work demonstrating that learning for everyone is everyone's responsibility, showing our role as stewards.
- Teachers will work together as the larger class group to generate solutions for classroom management issues as this is something all will deal with individually in the future.
- Teachers will create a project or an activity to celebrate joint success, sharing their experience that learning and participating in a community are joyful events.

Where are we and where do we go from here?

The journey continues. We participate with our students in the study of democracy focusing on essential skills and knowledge to be taught to our youth. All students want and need to experience the real work and joy of caring for one another and the world. These are the desired results of this kind of objective. The authenticity of the work and the joy of partnership in the process must be added to lesson planning and become a part of teacher preparation in our nation.

Through dialogue and practice, we have made progress. Along with our students, we all have changed in important ways on the journey to becoming teachers for democracy. As the fall semester concludes and our students complete their preparation for student teaching, we prepare again to observe and work with them in their classes throughout Northern Colorado. Our goal is to support them in the field as they improve their practice. And, always central in our focus will be certain key questions: Is the teacher using strategies that include all students and support equal access? Is the teacher creating an environment that offers nurturing pedagogy? Is the teacher creating a place "not only for democracy, but as democracy" (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p45)? We continue this mutual endeavor to deepen the understanding of teaching's moral dimensions.

We foresee two areas to expand and improve the notion of lesson planning for democratic schooling. It will be necessary now to involve the thinking and writing of specific strategies to achieve and to assess the achievement of democracy objectives. It will ac-

comply little toward our purpose if we only state what to teach. We must be clear on how to teach these ideals and how to assess them. More than testing solely content on standardized tests, we are asked to assess growth in the areas of human development, for civic participation and contribution to this world. This work will ensure that the ideas of democracy take on a daily and dynamic form in the work of the teachers and students. This kind of teaching and assessing is clearly more challenging than a quantitative analysis of student achievement. It is not a simple task to assess beliefs and actions for the good of the whole. It is, however, the responsibility of teachers in a democracy. As we celebrate the progress we see and the change we hope for, we accept the continuing challenge for our students, for us, and for the profession.

We leave you with a quote from one of our students after leading a group of middle school students on a field trip where all were asked to study the earth, the animals and their responsibility to living things. A simple, and yet, profound statement that echoes the work of democratic schooling:

The field trip to the farm was a success. We are such a diverse group, but we all get along so well. What a beautiful moment.

Epilogue: Paradox, Contradiction, Dilemma

With the passage of time, we understood that what we were adding to daily lesson planning were, in some sense, merely behavioral objectives. We observed that the student teachers were incorporating the training of students to participate in a democratic community. Therein lies a paradox. How do we “train” students to act democratically? There is much literature, both past and present, to support the notion that education and schools truly are paradoxical. Organizations and communities of learning cannot be absolutely defined or limited by clear description. Something of the mystery and magic remain. Paradox, story, and metaphor open our minds to that which goes beyond classification and limitation. There is

an element of learning and being human which gets us to question, wonder, and imagine. These writers from past and present suggest the part of learning and living which is the paradox, which is the question, which is the undefined.

Good teaching is paradoxical (Palmer, 1998). We are asked to create places that are safe in order that students can take risks, something of a contradiction. And we must teach students to think critically, to develop their own thinking, and then to question it. Socrates, through his method of questioning, forced people to confront their own dogmatism. In his thinking, he was forcing his students to be free (Phillips, 2001). Jean Paul Sartre professed that “man was condemned to be free” and he must accept that only through his aloneness could he create meaning in this life with others (Sartre, 1946). John Dewey believed through experience students learn and all students must share the same good experiences. Even as the students are the center of the process, the experiences prepared for all students must be good and must be shared (Dewey, 1916). Theodore and Nancy Sizer based their work on the belief that “the way a school functions, insistently, teaches.” Children learn what they live; therefore, they must be taught to participate skillfully and must be called forth to do so (Sizer, 1999).

And John Goodlad (1984) presented data showing that there is good training in democratic practice in pockets around our country. Good teaching and good experiences are happening for a portion of the population. The injustice is that it is not happening in every school, every day, for every child.

As we continue to observe in schools in Colorado, we see some students being taught to participate in cooperative groups, to be responsible for the learning of others, to participate in creating knowledge together, and to experience the joy of being empowered in the process. Children are being called to participate in the process, to find their own voices in the process, and to assess their learning in the process. We see some students being trained to be leaders in a community as they have the opportunity to share their thoughts with confidence and clarity, and to experience learning in a profound way

by listening to others. Our reason for writing objectives, which train students in these behaviors, is that the training must be present in all schools nationwide if democratic participation and freedom for all are to be realized in the education of our citizenry. Training our students to be free, a paradox? Perhaps.

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