**Editor:**
Nancy P. Gallavan, Ph.D.; University of Central Arkansas

**Articles and Authors:**

**Racing to the Top with All Students: Nurturing Teacher Dispositions in a Diverse Society through Social Foundations Courses**
Thomas J. Fiala, Ph.D., and Deborah Owens, Ph.D.; Arkansas State University

**Racing to the Top with All Students: Nurturing Teacher Dispositions in a
Diverse Society through Social Foundations Courses**

**Thomas J. Fiala**
Arkansas State University
and
**Deborah Owens**
Arkansas State University

**Abstract**

Key to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (2010) is the requirement that all students "must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school" (Appendix A, p. 2). The challenges associated with implementing the CCSS are intensified when preparing teachers to engage student populations that are increasingly culturally, socially, and politically diverse. This paper explains how a social foundations of education course is particularly situated to prepare teacher candidates in developing the appropriate dispositions to implement the CCSS and meet the needs of *all* students. The paper also argues that incorporating a peace education paradigm and critical literacy approach helps teacher candidates begin to understand the complexities of teaching a diverse population of students.

**Racing to the Top with All Students: Nurturing Teacher Dispositions in a
Diverse Society through Social Foundations Courses**

The federal government's most recent education reform initiative, *Race to the Top,* provides the opportunity for states to compete for discretionary federal funds. A core tenet of *Race to the Top* is the requirement that states adopt "standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010) have been developed as a means of providing a common set of educational standards among states, establishing a set of rigorous expectations for all students, and developing a standardized assessment of student achievement that is consistent among states. As one of the states competing for these funds, Arkansas has begun the process of adopting the CCSS. Key to the CCSS is the requirement that all students "must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school" (CCSS, 2010, Appendix A, p. 2).

Literacy teaching, the traditional domain of reading, English, and Language Arts teachers, is predicated, according to the CCSS, on the teachers' abilities to use their "content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields" (CCSS, 2010, p. 3). The challenges associated with implementing the CCSS are intensified when preparing teachers to engage student populations that are increasingly culturally, socially, and politically diverse.

**The Common Core State Standards**

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) require schools, through the use of rigorous content and application of knowledge, to develop higher-order skills in all students and to prepare students for college courses in English, mathematics, the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. These requirements mean asking students to demonstrate their deep conceptual understanding through the application of content knowledge and skills to new situations. The CCSS also require curricular activities to convey a unified vision of the big ideas and supporting concepts in a discipline and reflect a progression of learning that is meaningful

and appropriate.  Importantly, the CCSS recognize the inclusion of all types of learners as a *priority* in order to meet the needs of special populations.

According to the CCSS, these requirements are designed so that all students are prepared to succeed in a global economy and society.  And, while the CCSS are first addressing the academic areas of language arts and mathematics, those candidates who endorse these standards are explicit in stating that many of the 21st century skills being reviewed discussed will be required across disciplines.  The purpose of this paper is to discuss the essential role of social foundations of education classes within teacher education programs in preparing them to meet the challenges of teaching in 21st century schools within a democratic and pluralistic state (CCSS, 2010).

## The Council for Social Foundations of Education Standards

The role of a social foundations course within teacher education programs is guided by standards established by the Council for Social Foundations of Education (CSFE) (1996). According to Standard I - Defining Foundations of Education: the purpose of foundations study is to, through a reliance on the disciplines and methodologies of the humanities (primarily history, philosophy, and the social sciences), develop "interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education, both inside and outside of schools" (p. 3).  Social foundations instructors assume the responsibility of guiding teacher candidates through a process of developing a new way of encountering and engaging in concepts, texts, and social issues on a level that is often vastly different than previously experienced in other college courses.  The interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives that serve as the core of social foundations education are described by the CSFE as follows.

The *interpretive perspectives* assist candidates in "examining, understanding, and explaining education within different contexts," promote the analysis of "the intent, meaning, and effects of educational institutions, including schools," and attend to "the diverse contexts within which educational phenomena occur, and how interpretation can vary with different historical, philosophical, and cultural perspectives" (p. 3-4).

The *normative perspectives* assist candidates in examining, understanding, and explaining education "in light of value orientations," promote an "understanding of normative and ethical behavior in educational development," and probe "the nature of assumptions about education and schooling."  The social foundations of education "examine the relation of policy analysis to values and the extent to which educational policymaking reflects values."  Students are encouraged to examine their own value positions regarding education through critical study and reflection (p. 4).

The *critical perspectives* employ normative interpretations to develop within candidates the inquiry skills necessary to question educational assumptions and arrangements.  Students develop the ability to "identify contradictions and inconsistencies among social and educational values, policies, and practices." In particular, critical perspectives engage students in employing democratic values to assess educational beliefs, policies, and practices in light of their origins, influences, and consequences." (p. 4)

The role of social foundations studies within teacher education programs is supported by the National Academy of Education (NAE).  In its report, *A Good Teacher in Every Classroom: Preparing the Highly Qualified Teachers Our Children Deserve* (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005), the NAE acknowledges the curricular vision of social foundations courses. Social foundations of education courses require "that teachers be mindful of what it means to

educate students within a democracy so that, as citizens, they can participate fully in political, civic, and economic life" (p. 5). The report further states that the social foundations framework: "… takes into account [that] the social purposes of education in a democracy are necessary to guide decisions about what to teach and why. These purposes enable teachers to select, adapt, and design materials and lessons so that teachers can accomplish their goals." (p. 14)

The National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), an organization founded by John Goodlad in 1985, recognizes the role of teacher education programs in the process of preparing citizens to participate fully in a democratic society (Neumann, 2009). Furthermore, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) (2007) called for changes in undergraduate programs, in particular for teacher education programs, stating: "Teacher candidates must be prepared to teach the content of civic preparation; knowledge of the history of the country and principles of democracy; development of civic skills; civic experiences both on and off campus; and reflection, placing all of this work in a framework for citizenship preparation." (p. 1)

## The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) and Teacher Dispositions

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) (2008) requires teacher education programs to prepare and assess the dispositions of teachers. According to Duplass and Cruz (2010), there is a great amount of ambiguity about what defines an appropriate disposition to be a teacher. However, NCATE requires attention to a set of minimum standards. According to NCATE, teacher candidates should:

- Demonstrate fairness in educational settings by meeting the educational needs of all students in a caring, nondiscriminatory, and equitable manner;
- Understand the impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability/exceptionality, sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning; and
- Apply their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a manner that facilitates student learning. (NCATE, 2008, p. 7)

## The Intersections between NCATE and CSFE Standards

Social foundations studies play important roles in promoting and developing appropriate teacher dispositions that are aligned with NCATE standards. By examining the intersections between NCATE standards for teacher dispositions and the standards for social foundations studies delineated by the CSFE, teacher educators can develop an instructional framework for teacher candidates that prepares candidates to enter the teaching profession and implement the Common Core State Standards, which establishes more rigorous expectations for teachers and their students. Furthermore, by developing their abilities to examine their professional practice through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives, the goal is that teacher candidates will be better able to engage their future students in educational experiences that will prepare them to participate in a democratic and pluralistic society.

According to NCATE, candidates must be able to "demonstrate fairness in educational settings by meeting the educational needs of all students in a caring, nondiscriminatory, and equitable manner" (NCATE, 2008, p. 7). Within the context of the social foundations of education, candidates examine the concepts of fairness and equity and explore the difference between equality and equity. The role of the social foundations professor is to enable candidates to explore through an interpretive lens the need for schools to treat all students in an equitable and fair manner, which at times requires special or different treatment of particular students or

groups of students. Furthermore, candidates are asked to examine educational policies and practices through a normative lens and begin to analyze the value orientations that influence policies and practices. Social foundations studies also facilitate the development of their abilities to employ a critical lens that questions educational assumptions and arrangements that sometimes produce discriminatory and inequitable educational situations and outcomes.

NCATE standards also require candidates to "understand the impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability/exceptionality, sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning" (NCATE, 2008, p. 7). Through the development of interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives, candidates engage in a process of reflection about their own value positions, processes that are at times transformative as they begin to understand their own ethnocentric beliefs and behaviors.

The candidates' abilities to "apply their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a manner that facilitates student learning" (NCATE, 2008, p. 7) are dependent on their abilities to be transformed through their studies of the social foundations of education and effectively developing their abilities to examine social constructs and educational policies and practices through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives. In applying their knowledge of the social foundations of education, candidates are, in essence, applying concepts of equity and social justice to their classroom practices. The notion of engaging in concepts of equity and social justice as an educator is easier for some candidates and their students than it is for other candidates and their students.

According to Neumann (2009), "Social foundations courses often provide prospective teachers with their first exposure to these ideas of social justice and preparing citizens for a democracy" (p. 82). In describing her experiences as a professor teaching issues of multiculturalism in a teacher education program, Bruna (2007) found that many of her White students felt that "the whole purpose of the class was to make them feel guilty" (p. 115). However, for candidates to be able to demonstrate appropriate dispositions as teachers as defined by NCATE standards, the study of the social foundations of education has to become a transformative experience for many candidates.

## Suggestions for a Framework for Teaching Social Foundations

The authors suggest two interactive approaches for teaching social foundations courses that have the potential to be transformative for candidates in developing the dispositions reflected by NCATE standards. The first approach employs a peace education paradigm for examining the social foundations of education. The second approach employs a critical literacy process. By employing these approaches, a social foundations course can become dynamic offering transformative experiences for teacher candidates and provide a forum for the development of the type of teacher dispositions outlined by NCATE standards while helping meet the needs of diverse populations.

### The Peace Education Paradigm and the Social Foundations of Education

The role of social foundations, according to the CSFE, is to develop within candidates an "interpretive, normative, and critical perspective on education both inside and outside of schools" (p. 3). A peace education paradigm can serve as a normative perspective that, as Galtung (1996) explains, "links assumptions together in a coherent, compelling story" (p. 15). To better understand a peace education paradigm, we can borrow from sociology and the importance of understanding social norms. Candidates first need to understand the term "social norms" in order to comprehend the goals of social foundations studies. As James Orcutt, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Florida (2004), explains,

The term refers to rules or expectations for behavior that are shared by members of a group or society and views consensus as a basic fact of organized social life. Consensus or shared agreement exists in all organized groups and societies about what behaviors are appropriate and expected of members. This consensus is expressed through social norms – shared rules that channel behavior in various areas of social life into orderly and predictable patterns. Sometimes, of course, behavior deviates from these normative patterns. Such behavior, according to the normative definition, is deviant behavior; and deviants are those people who violate the normative consensus of organized society. (p. 2)

For candidates, the peace education paradigm is based on Galtung's notion of value-consensus, although, as emphasized, not in the sense of becoming dogmatic and intolerant. Rather, the peace education paradigm is a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares the same set. In this way the paradigm goes beyond a simplistic notion of *negative peace* as the absence of direct violence and adds the more complex but utilitarian notion of *positive peace* as the presence of symbiosis and equity in human relations (Galtung, 1996).

According to Harris and Morrison (2003), "Peace education is currently considered to be both a philosophy and a process involving skills, including listening, reflection, problem-solving, cooperation and conflict resolution. This process involves empowering people with skills, attitudes, and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment" (p. 9). Within this paradigm individuals are empowered, as Reardon (1988) states, to change social structures and patterns of thought that have denigrated the human condition resulting in inequality, inhumane treatment of individuals and groups, and domination, abuse, prejudice and hate that often leads to violence and war.

A peace education paradigm becomes, as Brantmeier and Lin (2008) explain, "a framework of values, principles, concepts, behaviors, and fundamental assumptions from which a community of cultural actors view empirical and social realities" and should "embody the generative, integrative, transformative potential education for peace" (p. xv.).
Some of the values, principles, and assumptions that the peace education paradigm offer in guiding the social foundations of education course are as follows:

- Peace is an ongoing process, attainable, and renewable.
- There are transcendent, universal values common in peace education efforts. Universal ethics of love, compassion, forgiveness, and processes of reconciliation and renewal should guide peace education.
- Education for peace should both affirm diversity and build common understanding.
- Peace education efforts need to be linked to equity and social justice and should be critical in nature. This means examining power, oppression, privilege, and social stratification in relation to gender, class, race, both disability and ability, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, and language as structural factors that have impeded human progress.
- Language creates reality and, therefore, we should strive to use peaceful analogies, metaphors, and diction that promote peace.
- Teacher dispositions need to be informed through a peace education paradigm. (p. xv)

Within this paradigm, the activity of peace education links knowledge, value systems, and dispositions as norms of behavior to life activities and social interactions, all of which are guided by the agreed upon aforementioned principles and assumptions.

**Critical Literacy and the Social Foundations of Education**

From a practical standpoint, a critical literacy approach has the power to guide candidates toward deeper, more profound levels of understanding related to the texts, images, and concepts presented in a social foundations of education course and, therefore, enhance the candidates' abilities to enter the teaching profession with 21st century skills as necessitated by the Common Core State Standards. However, from a pedagogical standpoint, a critical literacy approach has the power to create citizens who are able to fully engage in a participatory, multicultural, and pluralistic democracy.

Critical literacy, according to Freire (2007), is based on the concepts through which candidates are encouraged to assume a critical perspective and to engage in literacy events that examine power structures and social constructs that oppress certain groups of people and privilege reflective of individuals in positions of power. Larson and Marsh (2005) define critical literacy as follows:

- Learners are positioned as active agents in relation to texts and social practices.
- Teachers facilitate the development of learners' understandings of the ways in which they are positioned in relation to texts and social practices.
- Texts are ideological constructions, informed by authorial intent and issues relating to power.
- Literacy events involve deconstruction of the ideological content of texts and production of texts that inform critical understanding. (131)

According to Freire and Marcedo (1987), learning and literacy become liberatory when students are engaged in both reading the world and the word emphasizing that "reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world" (p. 35). They further assert that "language and reality are dynamically interconnected. The understanding attained by critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context" (p. 29).

A foundational concept in critical literacy is the challenging of "power relationships inherent in language use" both by the teacher and the student (Behrman, 2006, p. 490). In 21st century classrooms this requires a multi-modal concept of literacy in which all forms of communication are examined with a critical lens. For example, communication includes textbooks, children's books, the spoken word, media messages, and visual representations. In addition, critical literacy requires a reading of the world. For candidates enrolled in a social foundations of education course, this expectation requires a critical examination of "educational beliefs, policies, and practices in light of their origins, influences, and consequences" within a democratic, muliticultural, and pluralistic society (CSFE, 1996, p. 3).

**Conclusion**

According to the Council for Social Foundations of Education (CSFE) (1996), Foundations of Education study employ different disciplinary perspectives to discern how schools equip young people to assume adult positions in U.S. society. The aim of such study is not simply to describe accurately the connection between the internal organization of schools and their socializing mission. Foundations also refers to a tradition of academic inquiry that seeks to expose and make explicit the relationship between educational methods and values. Foundational inquiry compares and contrasts words to deeds and intentions to consequences, thus equipping the candidate to judge whether an action is warranted, that is, whether it is supported by reason and evidence. A foundational approach to the study of education assesses the logical connections between the educational goals an individual selects and the means an

individual employs to achieve the goals.  Foundational study, therefore, contains a prescriptive as well as a descriptive dimension: to consider in tandem what schools **are** doing and what they **ought to be** doing.  Such study focuses on the ways schools carry out their missions of preparing individuals to occupy productive roles in our society.  A common theme is discernment of educational aims that are implied in current school practices as well as in recommendations for modifying such practices.  Foundational study serves to gradually deepen the abilities of teacher candidates and classroom teachers to answer the overarching question: Why do U.S. schools operate the ways they do?

Clearly, the appropriate disposition for a teacher in 21st century schools is intrinsically linked to the Common Core State Standards, particularly when considering the special populations that are cited as a priority by the authors of the standards.  The study of the social foundations of education is particularly situated to prepare teacher candidates to be transformed through the development of interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives in order to meet the needs of all students.  Through a peace education paradigm and a critical literacy approach, teacher candidates can begin to appreciate the complexities of teaching a diverse population of students.  This goal requires the abilities to be reflective, thoughtful practitioners with abilities to apply the skills required by the CCSS to their own practices.  In order to help their future students "demonstrate a deep conceptual understanding," candidates must first develop their own deep conceptual understandings of school and society.  This outcome can only happen if candidates are given the tools to critically analyze the social arrangements of society that have produced the schools where they will work.  The peace education paradigm provides a forum for reflecting upon and understanding the concept of positive peace and the meaning within a community of learners.  A critical literacy approach enables candidates to begin questioning the historical and social contexts where they live and work and to understand the worlds their students are attempting to read as a prerequisite to reading the word.  Candidates can then begin to understand the challenges many of their students encounter when trying to live and learn within inequitable and challenging circumstances.  For the students they teach, inequity, inequality, and oppression are manifested in diverse ways.  Therefore, understanding the needs of special populations, cited by CCSS as a priority, is dependent on understanding the challenges associated with poverty, racism, gender bias, disability, and exceptionality.  Through this understanding, candidates can become transformative agents and advocates for their students in order to help all students learn the knowledge and higher order skills they need in order to prepare and succeed in a 21st century global economy and society.

**References**
American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). (2007). Democracy & civic engagement: Implications for teacher preparation and a national agenda for inquiry. Washington, DC: author. Retrieved from: http://www.aascu.org/pdf/07_demo_teached.pdf

Behrman, E. H. (2006). Teaching about language, power, and text: A review of classroom practices that support critical literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 49*(6), 490-498.

Brantmeier, E. J., & Lin, J. (2008). Introduction: Toward forging a positive, transformative paradigm for peace education. In J. Lin, E. Brantmeier, & C. Bruhn, (Eds.). *Transforming Education for Peace.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Bruna, K. R. (2007). Finding new words: How I use critical literacy in my multicultural teacher education classroom. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *33*(1), 115-118.

Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS). (2010). *Common core state standards initiative: Preparing America's students for college and career*. Retrieved from: http://www.corestandards.org

Council for Social Foundations (CSF). (1996). *Standards for academic and professional instruction in foundations of education, educational studies, and educational policy studies* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from: http://www.uic.edu/educ/csfe/standard.htm

Darling-Hammond, L., & Baratz-Snowden, Eds. (2005). *A good teacher in every classroom: Preparing the highly qualified teachers our children deserve.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Duplass, J. A., & Cruz, B.C. (2010). Professional dispositions: What's a social studies education professor to do? *The Social Studies*, *101*(4), 140-151.

Freire, P. (2007). *Friere: Education for critical consciousness* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world.* London, UK: Bergin & Garvey.

Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization.* London, UK: Sage Publications.

Harris, I. M., & Morrison, M. L. (2003). *Peace education* (2nd ed.). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.

Larson, J., & Marsh, J. (2005). *Making literacy real: Theories and practices for learning and teaching.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Orcutt, J. D. (2004). Sociological viewpoints on deviance and social control, part 2: The normative perspective on deviance. Retrieved from: http://deviance.socprobs.net/Unit_1/Page_2.htm

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE). (2008). Professional standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions. Washington DC: NCATE.

Neumann, R. (2009). Highly qualified teachers and the social foundations of education. *Kappan, 91*(3), 81-85.

Reardon, B. (1988). *Comprehensive peace education: Educating for global responsibility.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

U.S. Department of Education (2009). *Race to the Top* Fund. Retrieved from: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html

**Racing to the Top with All Students: Nurturing Teacher Dispositions in a Diverse Society through Social Foundations Courses**

**Thomas J. Fiala, Ph.D., and Deborah Owens, Ph.D.; Arkansas State University**

**Abstract**

Key to the Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards, 2010) is the requirement that all students "must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school" (Appendix A, p. 2). The challenges associated with implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are intensified when preparing teachers to engage student populations that are increasingly culturally, socially, and politically diverse. This paper explains how a social foundations of education course is situated particularly to prepare preservice teachers to develop the appropriate disposition to implement the CCSS and meet the needs of <u>all</u> students. The paper also argues that incorporating a peace education paradigm and critical literacy approach helps preservice teachers begin to understand the complexities of teaching a diverse population of students.

**Introduction**

The federal government's most recent education reform initiative, *Race to the Top,* provides the opportunity for states to compete for discretionary federal funds. A core tenet of the *Race to the Top* initiative is the requirement that states adopt "standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010) have been developed as a means of providing a common set of educational standards among states, establishing a set of rigorous expectations for all students, and developing a standardized assessment of student achievement that is consistent among states. As one of the states competing for these funds, Arkansas has begun the process of adopting the CCSS. Key to the CCSS is the requirement that all students "must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school" (Common Core State Standards, Appendix A, p. 2).

Literacy instruction, the traditional domain of reading, English, and Language Arts teachers, is predicated, according to the CCSS, on the teachers' ability to use their "content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields" (CCSS, 2010, p. 3). The challenges associated with implementing the CCSS are intensified when preparing teachers to engage student populations that are increasingly culturally, socially, and politically diverse.

**The Common Core State Standards**

The CCSS requires schools and educators, through the use of rigorous content and application of knowledge, to develop higher-order skills in all students, and prepare students for college courses in English, mathematics, the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. This requirement means asking students to demonstrate deep conceptual understandings through the applications of content knowledge and skills to new situations. The CCSS also requires curricular activities to convey a unified vision of the big ideas and supporting concepts in a discipline and reflect a progression of learning that is meaningful and appropriate. Importantly, the CCSS recognizes the inclusion of all types of learners as a <u>priority</u> in order to meet the needs of special populations.

According to the CCSS, these requirements are designed so that all students are prepared to succeed in a global economy and society. And while the CCSS is first addressing language arts and mathematics, educators who endorse these standards are explicit in stating that many

of the 21st century skills that are being talked about are those that will be required across disciplines.  The purpose of this paper is to discuss the essential role of social foundations of education classes within teacher education programs in preparing them to meet the challenges of teaching in 21<sup>st</sup> schools within a democratic and pluralistic state (CCSS, 2010).  START HERE

### The Council for Social Foundations of Education Standards

The role of a social foundations course within teacher education programs is guided by standards established by the Council for Social Foundations of Education (CSFE, 1996). According to Standard I - Defining Foundations of Education: the purpose of foundations study is to, through a reliance on the disciplines and methodologies of the humanities (primarily history, philosophy, and the social sciences), develop "interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education, both inside and outside of schools" (p. 3)  Social foundations instructors assume the responsibility of guiding preservice teachers through a process of developing a new way of encountering and engaging in concepts, texts, and social issues on a level which is often vastly different than previously experienced in other college courses.  The interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives which serve as the core of social foundations education are described by the CSFE as follows.

The *interpretive perspectives* assist students in "examining, understanding, and explaining education within different contexts," promotes the analysis of "the intent, meaning, and effects of educational institutions, including schools," and attends to "the diverse contexts within which educational phenomena occur, and how interpretation can vary with different historical, philosophical, and cultural perspectives" (p. 3-4).

The *normative perspectives* assist students in examining, understanding, and explaining education "in light of value orientations," promotes an "understanding of normative and ethical behavior in educational development," and probes "the nature of assumptions about education and schooling."  The social foundations of education "examine the relation of policy analysis to values and the extent to which educational policymaking reflects values."  Students are encouraged to examine their own value positions regarding education through critical study and reflection (p. 4).

The *critical perspectives* employ normative interpretations to develop within students the inquiry skills necessary to question educational assumptions and arrangements.  Students develop the ability to "identify contradictions and inconsistencies among social and educational values, policies, and practices." In particular, critical perspectives engage students in employing democratic values to assess educational beliefs, policies, and practices in light of their origins, influences, and consequences" (p. 4).

The role of social foundations studies within teacher education programs is supported by the National Academy of Education (NAE).  In its report, *A Good Teacher in Every Classroom: Preparing the Highly Qualified Teachers Our Children Deserve* (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005), the NAE acknowledges the curricular vision of social foundations courses.  Social foundations of education courses require "that teachers be mindful of what it means to educate students within a democracy so that, as citizens, they can participate fully in political, civic, and economic life" (p. 5).  The report further states that the social foundations framework:

> … takes into account [that] the social purposes of education in a democracy is necessary to guide decisions about what to teach and why.  This enables teachers to select, adapt, and design materials and lessons so that they can accomplish their goals. (p. 14)

The National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), an organization founded by John Goodlad in 1985, recognizes the role of teacher education programs in the process of preparing citizens to participate fully in a democratic society (Neumann, 2009). Furthermore, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU, 2007) called for changes in undergraduate programs, in particular for teacher education programs, stating:

Teacher candidates must be prepared to teach the content of civic preparation; knowledge of the history of the country and principles of democracy; development of civic skills; civic experiences both on and off campus; and reflection, placing all of this work in a framework for citizenship preparation. (p. 1)

## The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) and Teacher Dispositions

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) requires teacher education programs to prepare and assess the dispositions of teachers. According to Duplass and Cruz (2010), there is a great deal of ambiguity about what defines an appropriate disposition to be a teacher. However, NCATE requires attention to a set of minimum standards. According to NCATE, preservice teachers should:

- Demonstrate fairness in educational settings by meeting the educational needs of all students in a caring, nondiscriminatory, and equitable manner;
- Understand the impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability/exceptionality, sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning; and
- Apply their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a manner that facilitates student learning. (NCATE, 2008, p. 7)

## The Intersections Between NCATE and CSFE Standards

Social foundations studies play an important role in promoting and developing appropriate teacher dispositions that are aligned with NCATE standards. By examining the intersections between NCATE standards for teacher dispositions and the standards for social foundations studies as delineated by the CSFE, teacher educators can develop an instructional framework for preservice teachers that prepares them to enter the teaching profession and implement the Common Core State Standards, which establishes more rigorous expectations for teachers and learners. Furthermore, by developing the ability to examine their professional practice through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives, preservice teachers will be better able to engage their future students in educational experiences that will prepare them to participate in a democratic and pluralistic society.

According to NCATE, preservice teachers must be able to "demonstrate fairness in educational settings by meeting the educational needs of all students in a caring, nondiscriminatory, and equitable manner" (NCATE, 2008, p. 7). Within the context of the social foundations of education, preservice teachers examine the concepts of fairness and equity and explore the difference between equality and equity. The role of the social foundations professor is to enable them to explore through an interpretive lens the need for schools to treat all students in an equitable and fair manner, which at times requires special or different treatment of particular students or groups of students. Furthermore, preservice teachers are asked to examine educational policies and practices through a normative lens and begin to analyze the value orientations that influence policies and practices. Social foundations studies also facilitate the development of the ability to employ a critical lens that questions

educational assumptions and arrangements that sometimes produce discriminatory and inequitable educational situations and outcomes for students.

NCATE standards also require preservice teachers to "understand the impact of discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability/exceptionality, sexual orientation, and language on students and their learning" (NCATE, 2008, p. 7). Through the development of interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives, preservice teachers engage in a process of reflection about their own value positions, a process that is at times transformative as they begin to understand their own ethnocentric beliefs and behaviors.

The students' ability to "apply their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a manner that facilitates student learning" (NCATE, 2008, p. 7) is dependent on their ability to be transformed through their study of the social foundations of education and effectively developing an ability to examine social constructs and educational policy and practice through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives. In applying their knowledge of the social foundations of education, teachers are, in essence, applying concepts of equity and social justice to their classroom practice. The notion of engaging in concepts of equity and social justice as an educator is easier for some students than it is for others. According to Neumann (2009), "Social foundations courses often provide prospective teachers with their first exposure to these ideas of social justice and preparing citizens for a democracy" (p. 82). In describing her experiences as a professor teaching issues of multiculturalism in a teacher education program, Bruna (2007) found that many of her white students felt that "the whole purpose of the class was to make them feel guilty" (p. 115). However, for preservice teachers to be able to demonstrate the appropriate disposition to be a teacher as defined by NCATE standards, the study of the social foundations of education has to become a transformative experience for many students.

### Suggestions for a Framework for Teaching Social Foundations

The authors suggest two interactive approaches for teaching social foundations courses that have the potential to be transformative for students in developing the dispositions reflected by NCATE standards. The first approach employs a peace education paradigm for examining the social foundations of education. The second approach employs critical literacy as a process. By employing these approaches, a social foundations course can become dynamic and transformative experiences for preservice teachers and provide a forum for the development of the type of teacher disposition outlined by NCATE standards while helping meet the needs of diverse populations.

**The Peace Education Paradigm and the Social Foundations of Education**

As previously discussed, the role of social foundations, according to the CSFE is to develop within students an "interpretive, normative, and critical perspective on education both inside and outside of schools" (p. 3). A peace education paradigm can serve as a normative perspective that, as Galtung (1996) explains, "links assumptions together in a coherent, compelling story" (p. 15). To better understand a peace education paradigm we can borrow from sociology and the importance of understanding social norms. Pre-service teachers first need to understand this term in order to comprehend the goals of social foundations studies. As James Orcutt, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Florida, explains,

> The term refers to rules or expectations for behavior that are shared by members of a group or society and views consensus as a basic fact of organized social life. Consensus or shared agreement exists in all organized groups and societies about what behaviors are appropriate and expected of members. This consensus is expressed through social norms

– shared rules that channel behavior in various areas of social life into orderly and predictable patterns.  Sometimes, of course, behavior deviates from these normative patterns.  Such behavior, according to the normative definition, is deviant behavior; and deviants are those people who violate the normative consensus of organized society. (p. 2)

For pre-service teachers, the peace education paradigm is based on Galtung's notion of value-consensus, although, as he points out, not in the sense of becoming dogmatic and intolerant.  Rather, the peace education paradigm is a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them.  In this way the paradigm goes beyond a simplistic notion of *negative peace* as the absence of direct violence, and adds the more complex but utilitarian notion of *positive peace* as the presence of symbiosis and equity in human relations (Galtung, 1996).

According to Harris and Morrison (2003), "Peace Education is currently considered to be both a philosophy and a process involving skills, including listening, reflection, problem-solving, cooperation and conflict resolution.  This process involves empowering people with skills, attitudes, and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment" (p. 9).  Within this paradigm individuals are empowered, as Reardon (1988) states, to change social structures and patterns of thought that have denigrated the human condition resulting in inequality, inhumane treatment of individuals and groups, and domination, abuse, prejudice and hate that often leads to violence and war.

A peace education paradigm becomes, as Lin, Brantmeier, and Bruhn (2008) explain, "a framework of values, principles, concepts, behaviors, and fundamental assumptions from which a community of cultural actors view empirical and social realities" and should "embody the generative, integrative, transformative potential education for peace" (p. xv).

Some of the values, principles, and assumptions that the Peace Education paradigm guiding the social foundations of education course are as follows:

1.  Peace is an ongoing process, attainable, and renewable.
2.  There are transcendent, universal values common in peace education efforts.  Universal ethics of love, compassion, forgiveness, and processes of reconciliation and renewal should guide peace education.
3.  Education for peace should both affirm diversity and build common understanding.
4.  Peace education efforts need to be linked to equity and social justice and should be critical in nature.  This means examining power, oppression, privilege, and social stratification in relation to gender, class, race, both disability and ability, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, and language as structural factors that have impeded human progress.
5.  Language creates reality and, therefore, we should strive to use peaceful analogies, metaphors, and diction that promote peace.
6.  Teacher dispositions need to be informed through a peace education paradigm. (p. xv)

Within this paradigm, the activity of peace education links knowledge, value systems, and dispositions as norms of behavior, to life activities and social interactions, all of which are guided by the agreed upon aforementioned principles and assumptions.

**Critical Literacy and the Social Foundations of Education**

From a practical standpoint, a critical literacy approach has the power to guide students toward a deeper, more profound understanding of the texts, images, and concepts presented in a social foundations of education course and, therefore, enhance their ability to enter the teaching

profession with twenty-first century skills as necessitated by the Common Core State Standards. However, from a pedagogical standpoint, a critical literacy approach has the power to create citizens who are able to fully engage in a participatory, multicultural, and pluralistic democracy.

Critical literacy, according to Freire (2007), is based on the concepts through which students are encouraged to assume a critical perspective and engage in literacy events that examine power structures and social constructs that oppress certain groups of people and privilege those in positions of power. Larson and Marsh (2005) define critical literacy as follows:

- Learners are positioned as active agents in relation to texts and social practices.
- Teachers facilitate the development of learners' understandings of the ways in which they are positioned in relation to texts and social practices.
- Texts are ideological constructions, informed by authorial intent and issues relating to power.
- Literacy events involve deconstruction of the ideological content of texts and production of texts that inform critical understanding. (131)

According to Freire and Marcedo (1987), learning and literacy become liberatory when students are engaged in both reading world and the word and that "reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world" (p. 35). They further assert that "language and reality are dynamically interconnected. The understanding attained by critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context" (p. 29).

A foundational concept in critical literacy is the challenging of "power relationships inherent in language use" both by the teacher and the student (Behrman, 2006, p. 490). In twenty-first century classrooms this requires a multi-modal concept of literacy in which all forms of communication are examined with a critical lens. For example, this includes textbooks, children's books, the spoken word, media messages, and visual representations. In addition, critical literacy requires a reading of the world. For preservice teachers enrolled in a social foundations classroom this requires a critical examination of "educational beliefs, policies, and practices in light of their origins, influences, and consequences" within a democratic, muliticultural, and pluralistic society (CSFE, p. 3).

## Conclusion

According to the Council for Social Foundations of Education,

Foundations of Education study employs a number of different disciplinary perspectives to discern how schools equip young people to assume adult positions in American society. The aim of such study is not simply to describe accurately the connection between the internal organization of schools and their socializing mission. Foundations also refers to a tradition of academic inquiry that seeks to expose and make explicit the relationship between educational methods and values. Foundational inquiry compares words to deeds and intentions to consequences. In so doing it helps judge whether an action is warranted, that it, whether it is supported by reason and evidence. A foundational approach to the study of education assesses the logical connections between the educational goals we select and the means we employ to achieve them. Foundational study, therefore, contains a prescriptive as well as a descriptive dimension: to consider in tandem what schools **are** doing and what they **ought to be** doing. Such study focuses on the ways schools carry out their mission of preparing individuals to occupy productive

roles in our society.  A common theme is discernment of educational aims that are implied in current school practices as well as in recommendations for modifying such practices.  Foundational study serves to gradually deepen the ability of prospective and veteran teachers to answer the overarching question: Why do American schools operate the way they do?  (p. 3)

Clearly, the appropriate disposition for a teacher in twenty-first century schools is intrinsically linked to the Common Core State Standards, particularly when considering the special populations that are cited as a priority by those who developed the standards.  The study of the social foundations of education is particularly situated to prepare preservice teachers to be transformed through the development of interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives to meet the needs of all students.  Through a peace education paradigm and a critical literacy approach, preservice teachers can begin to appreciate the complexities of teaching a diverse population of students.  This requires the ability to be reflective, thoughtful practitioners with the ability to apply the skills required by the CCSS to their own practice.  In order to help their future students "demonstrate a deep conceptual understanding," they must first develop their own deep conceptual understandings of school and society.  This can only happen if they are given the tools to critically analyze the social arrangements of society that have produced the schools within which they will work.  The peace education paradigm provides a forum for reflecting upon and understanding the concept of positive peace and what that means within a community of learners.  A critical literacy approach enables them to begin to question the historical and social contexts within which they live and work, and understand the worlds their students are attempting to read as a prerequisite to reading the word.  Teachers can then begin to understand the challenges many of their students encounter when trying to live and learn within inequitable and challenging circumstances.  For the children they teach, inequity, inequality, and oppression are manifested in diverse ways.  Therefore, understanding the needs of special populations, cited by CCSS as a priority, is dependent on understanding the challenges associated with poverty, racism, gender bias, disability, and exceptionality.  Through this understanding teachers can become transformative agents and advocates for their students in order to give all students the knowledge and higher order skills they need in order to prepare and succeed in a twenty-first century global economy and society.

# References

American Association of State Colleges and Universities. (2007). Democracy & civic engagement: Implications for teacher preparation and a national agenda for inquiry. Washington, D.C.: AASCU. Retrieved from: http://www.aascu.org/pdf/07_demo_teached.pdf

Behrman, E. (2006). Teaching about language, power, and text: A review of classroom practices that support critical literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 49*(6), 490-498.

Bruna, K. R. (2007). Finding new words: How I use critical literacy in my multicultural teacher education classroom. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *33*(1), 115-118.

xCommon Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). Common core state standards initiative: Preparing America's students for college and career. Retrieved from: http://www.corestandards.org

Council for Social Foundations. (1996). *Standards for academic and professional instruction in foundations of education, educational studies, and educational policy studies* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from: http://www.uic.edu/educ/csfe/standard.htm

Darling-Hammond, L., & Barantz-Snowden, (Eds.). (2005). *A good teacher in every classroom: Preparing the highly qualified teachers our children deserve.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Duplass, J. A., & Cruz, B. C. (2010). Professional dispositions: What's a social studies education professor to do? *The Social Studies*, 101, 140-151.

Freire, P. (2007). *Friere: Education for critical consciousness* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Friere, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world.* London, UK: Bergin & Garvey.

Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization.* London, UK: Sage Publications.

Harris, I. M., & Morrison, M. L. (2003). *Peace education*, (2nd ed.). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

Larson, J., & Marsh, J. (2005). *Making literacy real: Theories and practices for learning and teaching.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lin, J., Brantmeier, E. J., & Bruhn, C. (2008). *Transforming education for peace*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Orcutt, J. D. (2004). Sociological viewpoints on deviance and social control, part 2: The normative perspective on deviance. Retrieved from: http://deviance.socprobs.net/Unit_1/Page_2.htm

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators. (2008). *Professional standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions*. Washington D.C.: NCATE.

Neumann, R. (2009). Highly qualified teachers and the social foundations of education. *Kappan*, *91*(3), 81-85.

Reardon, B. (1988). *Comprehensive peace education: Educating for global responsibility.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

xU.S. Department of Education. (2009). *Race to the top fund*. Retrieved from: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html