Lanas (2014). Failing intercultural education?


Failing intercultural education? - “Thoughtfulness” in Intercultural Education for Student Teachers

Abstract

This paper proposes a rethinking of intercultural education in teacher education, arguing that discussion of the intercultural education of student teachers tends to have the following two gaps: one, student teacher education as a context for teaching intercultural education tends to be overlooked, and two, such discussion tends to ignore the self of the teacher educator. This paper aims to address both gaps. In doing so, the first task of the paper is to critically analyse student teacher education as a structural, ideological context for intercultural education; the second task of the paper is to rethink the pedagogical relationship between a student teacher and a teacher educator, considering the self of the teacher educator in particular. I conclude by suggesting ‘thoughtfulness’ as a fruitful idea for the intercultural education of student teachers.

Keywords: intercultural education, emotions, teacher education, post-structuralism, education
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Introduction

Intercultural education\(^1\) for teachers in the globalizing world is usually perceived as important by educators, students, teachers as well as policymakers. Accordingly, a much research is conducted in the field of intercultural education in order to meet the needs of globalizing world and intercultural societies. At the same time, the public discussion about intercultural education is at times frozen in polarized positionings of ‘advocates for interculturalism’ and ‘sceptics towards interculturalism’, and suffers from lack of common ground for discussion. Many advocates for intercultural education feel frustrated for the lack of identifiable outcomes in the societies, schools, individual teachers or in individual students’ lives. In this paper, I will try and expand the common ground for discussions by taking a critical look at the perceived problem of ‘unsuccessful intercultural education’.

There is a vast quantity of research literature concerning the intercultural education of teachers. Such literature examines mainly pre-service and in-service teacher perceptions of intercultural education (see for example Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011; Kaplan, Abu-Sa’ad, & Yonah, 2001), the goals of intercultural education on an individual and a school level (see for example Banks, 2002; Leonard & Leonard, 2006; Milner 2010), models of learning intercultural education (see Garmon, 2004), and successful models of teaching intercultural education (see for example Baskerville, 2011; Laughter, 2011; Martin, 2010; Phillion & Ming, 2004; Scoffham & Barnes, 2009). Despite such efforts, and despite short term positive impacts, teacher education programmes have been noted to demonstrate lack of translation to school practices (e.g. Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005, 21-22; Mills & Ballantyne 2010).

Researchers have found various explanations for this lack of demonstrated success. Mainly, the lack of demonstrated success has been explained in terms of the programmes themselves, which often highlight and address celebratory rather than critical approaches to diversity, employing ‘add-on’ or piecemeal approaches (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Schoorman &

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\(^1\) The concepts of intercultural education and multicultural education (and also social justice education and global education) are often used interchangeably in practice and literature. Without discussing conceptual issues further, in this paper, the choice was made to use the concept of intercultural education because it emphasizes the ‘in-betweenness’ of subjects and cultures instead of the multitude of them.
Bogotch, 2010a; Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010b), in terms of student teachers’ beliefs about their own colour-blindness and neutral racial positions (Bell, 2002; Leach, 2011), in terms of a mismatch between theory and public opinion (Martin 2010), or in terms of the predispositions student teachers bring with them, which have a powerful socialising influence (Gay, 2010; Lortie, 1975; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; see also Taguchi, 2007). However, very few studies look critically at 1) the teacher education context (as if intercultural education occurred in a vacuum); and 2) the relationship in which the self of a teacher educator and the student teacher ‘come into being’.

Firstly, the perceived problem of unsuccessful intercultural education is commonly attributed to society, students, and intercultural education programmes, and do not present as relevant the immediate context in which education occurs; namely, teacher education. In teacher education, issues of diversity have generally been separated from the rest of the curricula and programs, and despite general recognition for the importance of issues of diversity, the rest of the teacher education curriculum has tended to remain unchanged (Hollins & Guzman 2005). This pattern of attribution relates to lack of funds (Holling & Guzman 2005) and the instrumentalist focus of teacher education: research on teacher education tends to stress questions of ‘proper’ preparation, immediate use, and apparent relevance (Phelan, 2006, 2011). Such efforts often direct researchers to seek to ‘solve the problem’ of unsuccessful intercultural education by inventing new formulas or models instead of critically examining the context in which the perceived problem appears and analysing the problem itself in a critical manner. This paper aims, firstly, to critically examine teacher education so as to identify the possible structural and ideological challenges teacher education presents for intercultural education. To achieve this, I compare the structures and ethos of teacher education to the needs of intercultural education.

Secondly, in research as well as in the everyday practice of teacher education, the self and emotions of an educator are often approached as a side note, as if a teacher is a spectator in a process that occurs within students (with a few exceptions: see Keith, 2010; Wang, 2005; Wang, 2008). Exclusion of the teacher educator’s self from accounts of intercultural education is a multilayered ethical, pedagogical issue. As teacher-educators in intercultural education, we ask that our students rethink their identities—because biases cannot be overcome by external imposition; transformation must happen within the self—and engage in a process of ‘self-shattering’ (Pinar, 2004). When we ask students to think and engage in this manner, teacher educator’s own sense of self cannot be privileged (Wang, 2005): that is not
Lanas (2014). Failing intercultural education?

pedagogically sensible or ethically sustainable, for reasons this paper will explain. The second aim of this paper is to rethink the pedagogical relationship of intercultural education for student teachers, opening up the categorical separation between teachers and learners, placing educators into the ‘zone of discomfort’ (Zembylas, 2010) with students, seeing the zone of discomfort as a challenging but positive state.

This paper draws mainly from philosophy of education. The paper conjoins accounts that see intercultural education as impossible to teach as such (Wang 2005, 59) and accounts that view intercultural education, not as a body of knowledge to be transmitted, but as a ‘poetic experiencing of contradictions in order to invent new modes of subjectivity for both teacher and student’ (Wang 2005, 59). One might openly define the goal of intercultural education as ‘facilitat[ing] conscientisation among teachers that would inspire efforts towards changing (rather than preserving) the status quo’ (Schoorman and Bogotch 2010, 1042). Intercultural education is, in those terms, a continuous process that entails acts of response to ‘difficult knowledge’ (Britzman, 1998) and acts of endurance of difficult emotions for both educator and student. In that continuous process, through acts of endurance, new possibilities for democracy and social justice can be imagined and invented.

The literature from which this paper draws originates mainly in Western Europe and Northern America, and the discussions apply in these contexts. At the same time, there is no one static teacher education in any context. Indeed, teacher education comes into being in the pull of multiple mutually contradicting factors, such as teachers’ expectations, national policies, student intake and public discussion. Thus none of the arguments made in the literature can be automatically seen as applying to all teacher educations, not to mention teacher educators. Rather, the purpose of this paper is to identify and discuss some of the potential cumulative effects of some implicit discourses with which teacher education instotutes must negotiate.

Limits exist to what can be achieved in intercultural education with an instrumentalist focus on performative outcomes. Intercultural education in teacher education is not simply a forum for teaching the skills needed to reimagine new possibilities for social justice, but a forum where that reimagination can occur, in which both teacher educators and student teachers encounter multiple others, engage in difficult knowledge, and explore the zone of discomfort so as to reimagine the world in which we live. When one perceives intercultural education simply as ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ on the basis of empirically testable outcomes in
teachers, students or schools, and when one sees intercultural knowledge as knowledge some have and others lack, intercultural education turns away from its greatest strengths; namely, the beauty, painfulness, and potential of reimagining the world and ourselves in it.

Through this paper, I redefine the ‘problem of unsuccessful intercultural education in teacher education,’ proposing that instead of focusing on a failure to produce measurable outcomes in students or in schools, one might focus on different forms that ‘thoughtfulness’ can take during the process. I propose an emphasis on ‘thoughtfulness’ (Joldersma, 2011) rather than on specific competences, and define thoughtfulness as to approach each situation simultaneously with the ethicality of a teacher and the humbleness of a learner. In the conclusion to this paper, I discuss the possible meaning of thoughtfulness in a non-performative intercultural education.

**Performative Teacher Education**

Teaching as learnt through teacher education tends to be performative in nature. ‘Performativity’ in this instance refers firstly to Judith Butler’s (2006) idea of performativity, which defines performativity as something that functions to produce that which it declares. For example, teachers become teachers when assigned the role of ‘teachers’; similarly, students become students when named ‘students’. A roomful of sitting bodies absorbed in their own thoughts is considered education simply if that situation is named ‘education.’ Secondly, one might view education as a performance in which students acquire the role of students, teachers acquire the roles of teachers, and students and teachers pursue their roles as well as they can. Students may perform learning and teachers teaching without the actual pursuit of learning or teaching. This development has not decreased in the wake of so-called “new professionalism” of teachers globally (Zeichner 2010). This is a problematic context for intercultural education, for at least four reasons.

Firstly, in performative teacher education, student teachers learn not who they are or could become, but who they must be in order to teach (Green and Reid 2008, 27). A teacher is inaugurated into subject-hood through a ‘teacherhood’ discourse and must continuously cite that discourse so as to remain intelligible as a subject. A teacher must be ‘recognizably teacherly and master a convincing practice of teaching’ (Green and Reid 2008, 27). The collective experience of teacher identity is given precedence over an individual consciousness
of what it means to be a teacher (Sumara, Davis & Iftody 2008, 160). In such a context, student teachers learn to perform reflexivity rather than to reflect (Atkinson, 2012). In other words, educators and students are stuck in fixed roles in which their possible selves are limited: the teacher does the teaching, the student the learning, and deviations from those roles bring the entire performance into question.

At the same time, one might argue that a breaking of the roles of teacher and learner is a crucial requirement for the emotional process of engaging with difficult knowledge together. If selves are perceived as static, only the self of a learner tends to be at play when building difficult knowledge; a teacher’s self can be hidden behind the protective walls of professionalism. Wang (2005) notes—and I concur—that such a position is untenable. Willingness on a teacher’s part to be influenced by communal inquiry is required for a democratic process in which the voices of students are heard without being judged, even when those voices bring the teacher anger, frustration, and anxiety (Wang 2008, 15). Wang (2005) asks: How can unsettling students’ identities not be accompanied by a questioning of teacher educators’ own socially, politically, and culturally situated selves?

Secondly, performative teacher education lacks the space to produce knowledge that is open by nature. Teacher education remains a modernist project in which the stress is on ‘producing and sustaining predictable, stable and normative identities and curricula’ (Phelan 2011, 214). In practice, student teachers, accustomed to the modernist and instrumentalist discourse, imagine they will learn what truths to teach and how to teach those truths truthfully (Phelan 2011; Taguchi 2007, 278-279). Student teachers often feel that they haven’t learned anything if they are unable to apply their ‘learning’ directly. Intercultural topics, on the other hand, tend to be without clear cut answers and easy applications. Reflecting on intercultural topics requires retaining complexities, accepting multi-vocality, openness, and the questioning of fixed truths.

Thirdly, normative expectations exist of professionalism as ‘ready’ instead of ‘becoming,’ which creates an impasse; namely, that the assumption of professionalism as finished and ‘ready’ prevents a teacher from engaging in the process of ‘becoming.’ At the same time, an instrumentalist belief in pre-existing solutions that simply need to be ‘found’ prevents a teacher from seeing the search process itself as a ‘solution.’ Inherently, a teacher’s multicultural ‘competence’ can never be ‘ready’ and fixed (see Jokikokko, 2010) but requires
reflexivity, relearning, and dialogical re-seeking with each new other. Such authentic dialogical seeking can only occur as long as one does not consider oneself already ‘finished.’

Fourthly, in performative teacher education, emotions often remain seen as separate from rationality and our intentional selves, as forces that influence us from the outside (Zembylas & Fendler, 2007) and something to be ‘managed.’ Knowledge remains commonly perceived as emotion-free and essentially painless. No structures are in place to recognise, accept, and work with difficult emotions and accept the painfulness of learning. In general, experiencing pain in connection with learning is experienced as unjustified (Wang 2008, 12), causes a sense of alarm, and may be interpreted as a signal that something is wrong. Consequently, expressing negative emotions tends to be seen as inappropriate in education (Lanas 2011; Lanas & Corbett, 2011). Intercultural education—on the other hand—constitutes an emotional and intellectual process (Wang 2005, 58). Any conceptualisation of intercultural education in teacher education must regard emotions as essential to the learning process.

While we experience our emotions as personal, private, and partly what makes us ‘us,’ those very emotions are socially constructed and shared with others (Ahmed, 2004a, 2004b; Game, 1997; Gray, 2008). Michalinos Zembylas (2007c) argues that one can view emotions as embodied practices performed in a class, practices that link our personal selves to broader societal issues. According to Zembylas, emotions are, to some extent, products of previous experiences, influenced by social, historical, and cultural contexts. They can be seen as habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), as embodied history internalised as a ‘second nature’ and thereby forgotten as history (Zembylas, 2007b). Therefore, emotions reflect societal power relations and are also significant in the actual formation and maintenance of social identities and collective behaviour (Zembylas, 2007b). In other words, difficult emotions occurring in intercultural education do not reside within students, but occur and are performed within intra-action in a broader societal context. Rather than painting a simple negative or positive image of responses to intercultural issues, categorising people in simplistic ways, one might more productively examine how emotions link to ambivalent discourses and inform actions when negotiating the presence of the other and one’s sense of belonging (Zembylas, 2012). Deconstruction of emotional rules—specifically, who is allowed to perform what emotions—is central when teaching difficult topics.
In summation, within the performative framework of teacher education, student teachers or teacher-educators may not be provided with the conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, emotional or personal space to ask difficult questions of historical, political, cultural, or social contexts. The possibilities for such negotiations may also be limited, on a very practical level, by the teacher educator's relations with the teacher education institution and its openness to students and staff from minority cultures. While students in teacher education acquire tools to construct knowledge, in general those students may lack the tools to analyse the knowledge construction in which they engage. On the other hand, a pedagogical relationship for intercultural issues requires analysis of knowledge production processes, retaining various and changing perceptions of the self and other, and navigating challenges and changing emotions. What might a non-performative pedagogical relationship in which this is possible look like?

**Education as Responding**

When a student teacher engages with difficult knowledge during the course of intercultural education also the teacher-educator enters a zone of discomfort. The teacher educator’s self is also at play because selves are relational, not possessions (Jackson, 2004); we all constantly come into being in different relations. The very capacity for consciousness is based on otherness, which is not merely a dialectical alienation on a path to a sublation that will endow it with a unifying identity in a higher consciousness. On the contrary, consciousness is otherness, the differential relation between a centre and everything not that centre (Holquist, 1990, 18). Self is a relation, therefore the self is always at play.

In order to rethink intercultural education in teacher education so as to recognise the relationality of the self, I will draw from the theories of Gert Biesta (2003) and Clarence Joldersma (2011), theories that see education as ‘coming into presence’ and a ‘primordial way of being human.’ My purpose is not to provide a directly applicable model of education—in fact, such an attempt would go against the very basis of this paper — nor to offer ‘complete’ pictures of the insights of Biesta or Joldersma. Instead, my purpose is to explore less trodden pathways of thought on teacher education and intercultural education within teacher education, with the aid of Biesta’s and Joldersma’s thinking.

According to the Levinaisian perspective on education propounded by Biesta (2003), a subject is constituted by a *relationship* of infinite responsibility to the otherness of the other. Biesta
challenges the humanist idea according to which human individuals are human through consciousness, and education is a process wherein a child is brought to common, pre-established, pre-existent reason. For Biesta, learning is not about the acquisition of knowledge or truth, but about responding. Biesta views education as taking up the responsibility that is ours and coming into presence by responding to the other. Joldersma (2011) has a similar perspective: he also regards education as fundamentally situated in a relationship with another human being, the other. For Joldersma, this is education’s “primordial character”.

“Education involves an asymmetric relation to someone who is outside of one’s understanding. [...] the other who calls one’s understanding to account, is located outside of one’s expectations and anticipations, i.e., outside of one’s world. [...] Education can thus be construed as something for which one is structurally never quite ready. [...] being disturbed by something, being called into question. [...]” (Joldersma 2011, 445)

Therefore, education is situated in the possibility of being disturbed, involving an incoming element that disquiets before one can judge its propriety (Joldersma 2011, 444-445). Each other human being can be ‘the other,’ a person located outside of one’s understanding, who might call one’s interpretations up short. The ‘other’ in question is one’s teacher at that moment. There are always multiple other others who also stand outside of one’s anticipations. Therefore, multiple teachers always exist for us, some of whom may currently be performing the role of a student. Intercultural education offers particularly many opportunities to learn from ‘the other who is located outside of one’s expectations,’ who ‘is outside of one’s world’ and ‘disturbs one by calling one into question.’

When engaging with difficult knowledge, students and educators respond to each other and in doing so, both learn and come into being as learners and teachers. For example, for mainstream students, ‘difficult self-shattering knowledge’ may constitute —for instance— knowledge of the power and privilege that brings a seemingly integrated self into question as a consequence of cultural hegemony. The self of a teacher-educator may, in turn, become unrecognisable to him or her for instance when a student reflects him or her in a new way. Novella Keith (2010) describes the painful experience of being grouped with ‘the white oppressor’ by a student.
A mismatch between student backgrounds and a teacher’s vision can be dramatised as mutual resistance (Wang 2005, 56). Within performative teacher education, the power relationship inscribed in the roles of ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ allows teachers to withdraw to power-positions at a painful moment. Teachers may do so because the safety of the emotional rules concerning teacher educators may represent a comfortable escape route from difficult emotions, or because teachers may feel obligated to appear in control in their role, and that they do not have the right to experience difficult emotions (Keith 2010). The issue, then, becomes how to transform mutual resistance into mutual challenge so that both teacher and student step out of their comfort zones into an uncertain, intersubjective space vibrant with new possibilities (Wang 2005, 56). At best, such situations are turned into instances in which teachers and students call upon each other to move beyond the familiar toward new landscapes of subjectivity (Wang 2005, 54).

While not denying the discomfort and painfulness of difficult knowledge, acting to promote connections such as intimacy, kindness, and compassion helps students and teachers to create movements of difference and hope that can act to propel mutual understanding (Zembylas, 2007a). As Wang states (2005, 54), pedagogy-through-discomfort should be coupled with loving guidance of students in their inner struggles, without assuming that those students must resolve the conflicts in question. Difficult emotions must be addressed in a tactful way (Wang 2005, 58). For an educator, experiencing uncertainty can also be a resource in such situations. Our commitment to reducing violence can be perpetually renewed by never being sure if we are doing the ‘right’ thing (Wang 2005, 56). Uncertainty, when it does not become paralysing fear, can contribute to a teacher’s pedagogical tact, on which a pedagogical relationship is dependent. Uncertainty and insecurity can help us approach each situation simultaneously with the ethicality of a teacher and the humbleness of a learner.

Intercultural education may therefore benefit philosophically from the thought that anyone and everyone can be a teacher, regardless of one’s identity, which leads in turn to a ‘fundamental plurality of surrounding teachers’ (Joldersma 2011, 446). This fundamental plurality of teachers rightfully divides one’s attention and responsibility, showing a need for thoughtfulness (Joldersma 2011, 446). Although thoughtfulness is important in all education, it is called for particularly in intercultural education.
Engaging with Thoughtfulness

This paper proposes that rethinking the problem of unsuccessful intercultural education in teacher education means moving beyond an instrumentalist, performative discourse in teacher education. So far, I have suggested a focus on the pedagogical relationship between the teacher educator and the student teacher instead of focusing on outcomes in students. In this pedagogical relationship, we are all learners and teachers, exploring the zone of discomfort together, re-imagining and recreating the world in which we live, admitting ultimately that this is a zone of discomfort that we do not enter and leave at will, but which is rather a part of existence itself. The final part of this paper suggests that thoughtfulness when faced by multiple others is a fruitful way of approaching intercultural education in teacher education.

I suggest moving intercultural education from a performative realm of acquiring competences to a realm of thoughtfulness, and thus bringing discussion from the relatively ready-made, performative realm of ‘interculturalism’ that links to polarized public discussions, to a general realm of ‘goodness.’ A realm of goodness entails, specifically, ‘an inversion of one’s striving for oneself, a reorienting of oneself towards the flourishing of others’ (Joldersma 2011, 446). That is a goal to which most future teachers can relate. While there is no need to ‘sell out’ the values of intercultural education, they could be “liquid” (Dervin, 2011) and framed in a language that does not immediately alienate the students who need them the most (the sceptics).

The concrete and practical ways in which thoughtfulness can manifest depend on the particular relationships and the subjects within that relationship, as well local and broader historical, cultural and social contexts (see also Author and Other, in press). In other words, there are no fixed external criteria for thoughtfulness. Whereas within performative discourse, intercultural knowledge is perceived as something a teacher has and students lack (and that should be transmitted to the students as a consequence of teaching) in a realm of goodness, teacher educators and student teachers no longer have fixed roles carrying different ethical obligations, and an educator is no longer automatically inscribed as ‘more interculturally aware.’ In goodness, our thoughtfulness is not determined according to external criteria, but it ‘comes into being’ in the relationship in question. As a teacher-educator, I am only as thoughtful as I am in my relationship with my various students, who are also my teachers.
Similarly, in their future occupation, my students are only as thoughtful as they are in their relationships with their various pupils, who are also their teachers.

While thoughtfulness cannot, and should not, be pinned down to specific characteristics or actions, Max Van Manen (1991) writes about tact of teaching and pedagogical thoughtfulness in a way that can help us in thinking about thoughtfulness in our own contexts. Van Manen writes about a child-adult relationship, but his insights can be useful in any relationship characterized by caring and love. Tact (or thoughtfulness), according to Van Manen, means the practice of being oriented to others, of ‘touching’ someone. For Van Manen, they are unplannable, embodied and delicate in a way that a genuine touch is. Tact or thoughtfulness may manifest itself as holding back, as openness to the other’s experience, as subtle influence, as being attuned to the self of the other, as situational confidence, as giving space, as acknowledging vulnerability, as making hurt forgettable, as healing, as strengthening what is good, as attentiveness to the unique, and as supporting personal growth. Thoughtfulness can also manifest itself as “not leaving” (Author and other 2011). Van Manen identifies some ways in which thoughtfulness is mediated: through speech, through silence, through eyes, through gesture, through atmosphere and through setting an example.

On one hand, it is important to clearly define what we mean by concepts such as thoughtfulness or love in order to distinguish them from what they are not. bell hooks (2000, 11) states that many are “comfortable with the notion that love can mean anything to anybody precisely because when we define it with precision and clarity it brings us face to face with our lacks”. The same can be applied to thoughtfulness. At the same time, lists are always partial and, at worst, become normative and exclusionary instead of thought-provoking. There is always ‘more beyond’ what we already know about thoughtfulness, and seeking for this ‘more’ is at the core of thoughtfulness itself. Seeking for thoughtfulness is not a problem to be solved but a part of existence with others. For example, perceiving unsuccessful intercultural education as a problem to be ‘solved’ presumes that it can indeed be ‘solved.’ Instead, we might ask less instrumental important questions about thoughtfulness such as, ‘How can one engage with painful knowledge without inducing further pain?’ and, ‘How may one recognise in education historical, societal, or global violence without the experience reflecting this violence?’ While intercultural education may be essentially painful, it need not be experienced as violent. Acknowledging pain as a part of life differs from thoughtlessly inflicting pain on the other ‘for their own good.’
Finally, the idea of ‘thoughtfulness’ offers a new meaning to the concept of ‘tolerance,’ which theorists commonly use and criticise in the context of intercultural education for renewing othering discourses. Within a context of thoughtfulness, tolerance may gain a new meaning, referring to difficult emotions and not to otherness. In other words, when encountering difficult issues, one must tolerate one’s own discomfort and the discomfort of others. When students feel normative pressure to perform learning by saying the ‘right things’ instead of expressing a whole spectrum of emotions, they may feel that sincere, honest reflection is forbidden. This can deprive students of a voice precisely when they need that voice to respond. Not only do students experience such deprivation as violent, but if one views learning as responding, depriving students of a voice—through pressure to say the ‘right thing’—actually prevents learning.

We can best teach thoughtfulness by learning to be thoughtful faced with multiple others. With each new learner and new difficult emotion, we must re-learn what thoughtfulness means. The challenge for the educator is to accept the pain momentarily, to hold it for long enough to provide an opening for an ‘ethic of discomfort’ (Zembylas, 2010). The task of the teacher when teaching discomforting topics might then be characterised as situationally ascertaining how to assist the process of becoming at the face of discomfort, so as to relieve the violence of the experience.

**Implications for intercultural education**

In conclusion, intercultural education of teachers might benefit from shifting attention from outcomes ‘out there’ in field schools to the processes that take place ‘in here’ in teacher education, and seeing these processes as outcomes in themselves. To explain, if we locate the goals of teacher education ‘out there’ in the field schools, and if, in the field schools, they accordingly locate their goals ‘out there’ in the ‘real lives’ and futures of the students, we find ourselves in an ever spiraling cycle of education in which the goals are always somewhere else, inherently unreachable.

This paper suggests that, as a critical response to the modernist performative and instrumentalist pressures experienced by teacher education, intercultural education could be seen as a part of education’s primordial character and as responding *in the moment*. I suggest that the goals of intercultural education are not ‘out there’, but in the everyday of teacher education, in the
Lanas (2014). Failing intercultural education?

relentless and constant efforts to open up safe spaces for students’ responses and to respond to the various circumstances and to the various frightened, frightening, angry, provoking, passive and excited students in thoughtful ways that open up new subjectivities and new, previously unimaginable pathways for thinking and acting.

Much of this work is taken on by the teacher educators who engage with intercultural issues and who do their work in the pull of various intersecting discourses. The concepts discussed in this paper, thoughtfulness at the face of other-as-teacher, education as responding, zone of discomfort as part of existence, are meant to provide teacher educators and researchers of teacher education with thinking alternatives for the instrumentalist and performative pressures. There is little we can do to diminish these pressures and, indeed, this paper does not suggest that diminishing them should be the goal. On the contrary, this paper suggests that as a part of intercultural education we should acknowledge the occasional mismatch between intercultural education and the performative, instrumentalist pressures influencing teacher education and that we should respond to them in our everyday in thoughtful ways.

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Lanas (2014). Failing intercultural education?


Lanas (2014). Failing intercultural education?


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