The Making of a Multicultural Society

Brian Johnstone on a trip to Egypt with students from King Drew Magnet High School in South Los Angeles. The trip was organized as a student travel excursion through Traveling Spirits, a nonprofit organization founded by Brian. Brian is a Ph.D. Candidate of the SSCE Division.

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SOCIAL SCIENCE AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION DIVISION
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From the Editor

Whilst studying in Shanghai one summer, a professor told me about a Chinese proverb that says, “May you live in interesting times.” It is meant as a curse in much the same way as Americans use the phrase, “Go to hell.” But interesting times can be the most rewarding—they challenge our accepted norms and test our ability to adapt.

Our interesting time is globalization. I am certainly a product of globalization’s powerful impetus: an American citizen with Korean heritage who has lived on three different continents and traveled to over twenty countries. Growing up, the term ‘multicultural’ was never something that I gave much thought to because, even within my family, multiculturalism was just a given. Alongside our Korean heritage, my family members come from backgrounds of Russian-Jewish, Italian-Lebanese, and an American Beatnik persuasion (although my family members describe themselves as, simply, New Yorkers). I do not share a family name with any of my cousins that would indicate that we share a common ethnic heritage, and yet, that was never something that we thought twice about.

And perhaps my story is not so uncommon. As a byproduct of globalization, migration trends in the last few decades have challenged the conception of the nation-state as a singular ethnic, linguistic, and cultural entity. In response to these trends, both the state and civil society have employed the language of multiculturalism to incorporate migrants. What ideologies underlie the politics of including migrants in the established social fabric? Which actors are responsible for politicizing and categorizing migrants? What are the consequences in the making of a multicultural society?

First, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Val Rust for receiving the Honorary Fellow Award to the Comparative and International Education Society. This issue begins with an article written by his former student discussing Dr. Rust’s lifetime work and achievements.

SSCE students have contributed to the discussion of multiculturalism. This particular issue showcases two articles from our M.A. students. The articles are complementary in that they provide perspectives on migrating from Asia to the United States, and incorporating migration into an Asian country that has not faced migration issues before.

Before I close, I would also like to thank Dr. Carlos Torres for providing me with the opportunity to serve as the Divisional Newsletter Editor. It has been a pleasure working with him this past academic year, and an even greater pleasure in editing and publishing the work of my colleagues in the Division.

Without further ado, I present the current issue of the SSCE Newsletter.

Stephanie Kim
Ph.D. Candidate of the SSCE Division
SSCE Newsletter Editor
Is multiculturalism a sliding signifier?

With this title, I do not attempt to focus on Lacan’s famous essay entitled “The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud,” nor do I want to endorse Lacan’s semiotic analysis. Yet this issue of the SSCE Newsletter tackles one of the most relevant and controversial topics in the quest for a social justice education: multiculturalism, a term that for many has become a sliding signifier.

Multiculturalism emerged as a response to twentieth century intergroup relations, addressing the challenge of racialization, or integration, and fully ingrained in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s as well as the New Civil Rights Movement of the twenty-first century. In Europe, the term that is fashionable—interculturalism—is employed to address mostly the question of integration of immigrants. Interculturalism is an attempt to create intercultural mediation, based on an idiosyncratic idea of culture that seeks a new idea of citizenship.

Both models, however, tend to converge toward a similar situation. In the United States, exemplified in the debate about a new immigration law, protection of the border, and the recent conflicts about Arizona’s and Alabama’s draconian anti-immigration measures, the question of multiculturalism and ethnic studies has been conflated with the question of undocumented immigrants, approximating to the European situation. Very conservative sectors in the United States call for a differential integration, following the example of the majority of European countries, which do not automatically grant citizenship to the children of immigrants who are born in their territories. Fortunately, the Latin American situation, with the formidable impulse of indigenous people struggling for the recognition of their ancestral rights, is changing drastically the conversation about culture, citizenship, and the redressing of inequalities.

Theoretically, multiculturalism is grounded in different political theories such as: communitarianism, critical pedagogy, critical theory, critical race theory, post-structural theory, Lat-Crit, anti-racist theory, theories of subjugated knowledge, and post-development theory. There are also less radical perspectives in the wake of liberalism, such as human capital theory, John Dewey’s liberalism, or even liberalism’s reworking in a post-contractual viewpoint provided by John Rawls.

There are also different approaches in inter/multicultural education. Any systematic analysis of multiculturalism literature will show that the major goals of multicultural education vary from developing ethnic and cultural literacy (i.e., expanding the degree of information about the history and contributions of ethnic groups that traditionally have been excluded from the curriculum) to personal development (i.e., developing pride in one’s ethnic identity); from changing attitudes and clarification of
values (i.e., challenging prejudice, stereotypes, ethnocentrism, and racism) to promoting multicultural competence (i.e., learning how to interact with people who are different than ourselves, or how to understand cultural differences); from developing basic skill proficiency (i.e., improving reading, writing, and mathematical skills of people whose ethnic, racial, or class background is different than the mainstream cultural capital that predominates in formal schools) to striving to simultaneously achieve educational equity and excellence (i.e., developing learning choices that work across different cultures and learning styles); and to individual empowerment and social reform (i.e., cultivating students’ attitudes, values, skills, habits, and discipline to become social agents committed to reforming schools and society with the goal of eradicating social disparities, racism, and gender and class oppression, and therefore improving equality of educational and occupational opportunities for all).

Some time ago, Sleeter and Grant (1999) identified five stages of multicultural education:

(1) *Teaching the exceptional and the culturally different.* In the 1960s, this approach was aimed at helping students considered at-risk to fit into the American mainstream by implementing strategies that remediated their deficiencies.

(2) *Intercultural education movement.* This was further developed into the human relations approach. It focused on the interpersonal relationship, aimed at reducing prejudices and conflicts among people.

(3) *Single group studies.* Characterized by attention to a single cultural group (e.g., women, Asian-Americans, Native-Americans, Latino/as and Chicano/as, African-Americans), it stimulated social action by providing information about a group and created new academic fields and subjects (e.g. ethnic studies, women’s studies).

(4) *Multicultural education.* Emerging in the early 1970s, multicultural education is both a specific approach and a general term describing “the education policies and practices that recognize, accept, and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, disability, class, and (increasingly) sexual orientation” (Sleeter & Grant, 1999, p. 150). The term links a wide range of issues, including race, culture, language, social class, gender, and disability.

(5) *Multicultural education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist education.* This approach emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s as a further development of the previous ones. It extended multicultural education from a simple classroom activity to the realm of social action. In their fifth incarnation, Sleeter and Grant (2008) adopted the term ‘multicultural social justice education’ as an approach focused on equity and power relations.

As this newsletter and the curriculum of SSCE testify, the teaching and learning in the Division incorporates a keen concern and interest for a nuanced theoretical understanding informing research and practice of multiculturalism at home and abroad. Yet, it is my opinion that we need a social justice oriented multicultural education in order to overcome the contradictory implementation of current multicultural policies and practices. Otherwise, multiculturalism will remain a sliding signifier.

**Carlos Alberto Torres**  
Professor and SSCE Division Head  
Director, Paulo Freire Institute
“It is a severe understatement to say that Val has been instrumental in the building of multiple generations of comparative education leaders, as many of Val’s students from the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and today maintain his legacy in their own service to the field.”

Val Rust: A Lifetime of Achievement

By Rosalind Raby

Val Rust is Professor Emeritus in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and a core part of the SSCE Division. Val has an outstanding record in scholarly research and publication, world-based prestige in policy, planning, evaluation, technical assistance, and administrative activities, and has made a lifetime of contributions to the development of his field that stems primarily from his stellar teaching and mentoring.

Val has made his imprint onto the comparative education program at UCLA. For over four decades, through his teaching, Val has reached out to an ever-expanding circle of students and young professionals who see him as a beacon in the field. For many, Val was instrumental in their decision to begin their graduate work at UCLA. Students from all decades are inspired by Val’s unique teaching style in which he does not simply present material in a didactic fashion, but rather encourages students to interact with the course material as involved and active participants in the learning process.

Val has also been instrumental in the development of study abroad here at UCLA. From 1998-2009, Val directed the UCLA International Education Office and helped transform the office into a world-recognized advocate for education abroad. He expanded the scope and range of existing study abroad program while ensuring mechanisms to enhance them as a meaningful and pedagogical experiences. These changes helped
UCLA become one of the most highly valued student mobility programs in the country. Val’s passion and tireless effort in the sending of UCLA students abroad epitomizes his belief in the positive effects that international education can have towards intellectual and personal development.

Scholarly research is certainly a fruitful part of Val’s career, ranging from numerous books, journal articles, and book chapters since the 1960s. One of his most cited articles, his 1991 Comparative and International Education Society Presidential Address, introduced an important paradigm shift and remains a preeminent work in our field. Another important contribution is his chapter entitled “From Modern to Postmodern Ways of Seeing Social and Educational Change” in Rolland Paulston’s (ed.) Social Cartography: Mapping Ways of Seeing Social and Educational Change (Garland Publishing, 1996), which continues to be a staple in most comparative education theory courses. Val provided a critical examination of the Society at an important juncture in the field that helped usher in the wave of postmodern scholarship that followed.

A collection of Val’s recent publications appear in a twelve-volume book series on globalization and education policy reforms (Springer, 2009-2010), which continue to demonstrate the value of his interpretations of how education influences contemporary societies. Val’s academic contributions are also found in several different country and theme specific areas. He helped to define and enhance existing literature on Scandinavian education, pioneered comparisons of East and West German education, and continues to make notable contributions to the field of Azerbaijani education, Georgian education, and the field of education abroad. As a scholar of distinction, Val has contributed to the very fundamentals of how we conceptualize education comparatively and internationally.

Val’s innovation in international development work is as legendary as his research. He worked in Indonesia on a fifteen-year World Bank project helping to develop teacher education institutions. His work in Norway with an OECD project initiated the International Management Training for Educational Change Center and has since been duplicated in other parts of Europe. From 1993-1999, he served on the Board of Directors of Relief International. More recently, he has worked extensively in Azerbaijan and Georgia where he advised in the creation of the new Khazar University under the auspices of UNESCO. Since 2002, Val has cofounded and run the UCLA Center for International and Development Education, which continues to define standards in international development with ongoing and new grants.

Val has devoted a lifetime of professional work and leadership to the Comparative and International Education Society and the World Council of Comparative Education Societies. He has held numerous positions with the Society: Secretary of CIES (1972-1975); Editor of the CIES Newsletter (1972-1975); Member, Board of Directors of CIES (1979-1983); Member, Nominating Committee of CIES (1984-1987); Chair, Nominating Committee (1996-1997); Vice-Chair of CIES (1988-1989); President of CIES (1989-1990); Chair of the Constitutional Revision Committee (1996-1997); Associate Editor of the Comparative Education Review (1998-2003); Book Review Editor of the Comparative Education Review (1998-2003); and Co-Chair of the CIES Higher Education SIG (2007-current). Val was honored by the Society with the Eggertsen Lecture at the CIES Annual Conference in 2004, given a Lifetime Achievement Award by the CIES Higher Education SIG in 2012, and, this past March 2013, given an enthusiastic standing ovation when awarded the title of CIES Honorary Fellow, the Society’s highest award.

Val is also a founding member of the CIES Western Region and has helped to keep this region alive during a

“Postmodernism was one of the most debated issues in the academic world during the 1980s... I argue that postmodernism should be a central concept in our comparative education discourse.”

Val D. Rust
1991 CIES Presidential Address
time in which comparative education programs are rapidly disappearing at universities in the region. His continued engagement in the Western Regional Conference not only nurtures a local community of scholars, but is one of Val’s legacies. Indicative of his dedication to the field he so loves, Val has participated in every CIES annual and regional meeting since he joined—with his active presentations and service as chair and discussant. If he is not taking an official role in a session, he is always in the audience to support his students and fellow colleagues.

Indeed, it is Val’s mentoring that has the most lasting contribution. It is a severe understatement to say that Val has been instrumental in the building of multiple generations of comparative education leaders, as many of Val’s students from the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and today maintain his legacy in their own service to the field as professors, international advocates, and community leaders. Val’s engagement with his students often begins in class, but quickly continues into the professional arena. His former students can attest to Val’s abilities as a role model and personal source of inspiration. To his testimony, most have remained in the field and have themselves used the skills taught to them by Val to mentor the next generation of scholars.

Val demonstrates all of the characteristics cherished by UCLA: that of integrity, high principles, compassion, strength in leadership, and academic excellence. There are only a small handful of people who have enhanced the professionalism and inclusiveness of CIES as much as Val has. And yet, there is another characteristic that needs to be highlighted. This speaks to Val’s unsurpassed character. All of the Val’s students that I have met tell me how Val is someone who truly cares about his students as individuals and demonstrates this by his continued involvement in their professional lives well beyond graduation. Dr. Cathryn Dhanatya, Assistant Dean for Research at the USC Rossier School of Education, writes, “His gift of intellect is only overshadowed by his heart and his ability to bring so much compassion, passion, and inspiration to his work and everything he does.” Dr. Laura Portnoi, Associate Professor of Education at CSU Long Beach, says, “Dr. Rust stands out amongst his peers as one of the most engaged academics in the Society, and he has contributed immensely to its progress and robust development.” Dr. W. James Jacob, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Pittsburgh, echoes that Val is “a man of sound principles, one who never compromises ethical standards in research and scholarship.” I want to personally add that there are few scholars who I have studied with or worked with over the decades who have the ethical integrity that Val demonstrates on a daily basis. Trust remains a critical issue in all his relationships and is the defining note for an incredible person. All who know and love Val will concur that he always has a twinkle in his eye and a smile that makes anyone from anywhere in the world feel at home and at ease.

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Val has proven himself to be a preeminent scholar who has significantly advanced the field of comparative education. His scholarship continually exhibits tremendous depth and insight to many complex educational issues.

Dr. Rosalind Raby is a Senior Lecturer at the CSU Northridge Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and Director of the California Colleges for International Education. She was a student of Val Rust from 1981 to 1989.
Recently, I paid a visit to one of my high school classmates at a university in the western region of America. I was sitting in his expensive racecar while he drove me to a Chinese restaurant far away from the campus. On the way, I asked him why he came to the United States at the expense of giving up three years of study at one of the top universities back in China. He had very high GPA in high school and had represented our school to participate in a nationwide mathematics contest. However, the sudden removal of heavy pressure after he had completed his College Entrance Examination (or Chinese SAT) had also released all his aspirations to remain an excellent student. Rumors in his university said he was famous, or infamous, for failing the collegial exams. He then flew to America, secretly, and started his freshman year all over again.

He recalled with slight carelessness that it was his parents’ decision to send him to the United States as they expressed their disappointment in his recent academic failure. In his opinion, being abroad does him little good except for getting away from his parents. He wants to start his own business, but he is studying computer science alone in a strange country where he is totally isolated from his friends. He dreams of a hectic life in a new environment, but neither his life tempo nor his major fit his flavor. He wants to practice English with his roommates, but he is living with three other Chinese students. He finds conversations initiated by his American peers neither attractive nor informative. He kept repeating to me, “I must go home for refreshment this winter. Otherwise, I will be too languid to do anything in the future.”

I was sympathetic to him. And he is not alone in undergoing this sense of loss in his ‘adventures in wonderland’.

For Chinese students and their parents, America is as a land of total freedom, democracy, and advancement. This is what attracts millions of Chinese students to study in this country. Unfortunately, many of them are disappointed and disillusioned by the reality they face as they compare it to their previous understanding of the American Dream they once imagined. By focusing on Chinese students who were sent to the United States by their parents, I examine why Chinese students find it difficult to fulfill their and their parents’ expectations of the American Dream.

In the late 1970s, two important policies tremendously affected the life trajectory of today’s Chinese youth. First, the Reform and Open Door Policy launched in 1978 brought in the fresh air of a Protestant spirit: a respect for nature and humanity, the advancement of science and technology, and the free and sincere pursuit of a wealthy life. Young
people in the early 1980s were amazed by the development of Western civilization through which they attributed to education. Second, in order to gain control of China’s exploding population, the One Child Policy launched in 1979 restricted each urban family from giving birth to more than one child. In effect, by directing each adult family member’s attention to the only child, almost every child growing up in China today comes of age as the family’s little emperor or princess. Parents, today more than ever, strongly feel that it is their responsibility to give their only children the best education they can afford.

Both policies brought prosperity to common families by reducing the burden of childrearing. In turn, families shifted their attention and hopes for themselves onto their newborns. The latter, who were born in the 1990s with big promises and heavy investments in their education, has now grown up to become China’s major intellectual force while carrying the heavy hopes and high aspirations of their parents. However, they lack self-awareness in discovering what avenues and in which directions their individual talents might fit best. Chinese youths between the ages of 15 and 25 are apt to accept their parents’ perspective that the West has an education superior to China’s, and that any cultural inconsistency can be overcome as long as one holds fast to the ultimate goal of prosperity. In other words, social identity and school achievement are not considered in tandem to one another when today’s Chinese parents try to persuade themselves and their children in pursuing a higher academic degree in America. Therefore, the sole concentration of studying abroad should be placed on academics that have little to do with socialization and interaction within the host country.

But the matter of social identity, in spite of its unpleasantness, becomes a very obvious issue when a Chinese student enters a predominantly White society. The sense of self, according to Moje and Martinez (2007), “always produces power and [is] always produced in relation to power.” In China, a remarkable number of young children have been perfectly protected by their parents and grandparents and excessively socialized within the familiar hearth of their family and a relatively homogenous culture. It seems like a paradox that many Chinese children experience both excessive socialization and an enclosed environment. But it is not so much a paradox when the former indicates a connotative idiosyncrasy of being more sophisticated than the child’s biological age would allow, and when parents regard educational achievement and economic success as the primary yet unspoken goal of childrearing. The only child is positioned at the center of power relations within a family to secure that family’s social status and prestige.

Henri Tajfel (1981) highlights that it is social categorization, comparison, and desire for distinctiveness that attribute to the establishment of social identity. Being positioned as the center of a family provides youths with both a sense of belonging and distinction. The former is the result of a procedure that starts with categorizing and comparing one’s role with others and ends in finding intimacy and deeply rooted trust. The latter seems to make little emperors and princesses believe that their needs and voices are influential to the entire family, but it might also put them under their parents’ close supervision. As Chinese parents are typically the biggest and sole sponsors to a child’s educational pilgrimage, this very action of investment endows the custodians direction and authority in demanding obedience in every step the child is to take.

However, if not armed with the mindset and knowledge that prepares them for inevitable hardship, Chinese students studying in America will undergo a psychological change that they failed to
anticipate. But neither the students themselves nor their parents should be blamed for the cause of this psychological trouble. This unpreparedness has its historical reasons. The mass urbanization and industrialization of big cities in China, where most Chinese students are from, create a mirage that on the one hand resembles the lifestyles of the West, and on the other hand camouflages the differences in identity. Elizabethe Birr Mohe and Magdalena Martinez (2007) write: “According to Henri Tajfel (1981), individuals’ self-concepts—and, ultimately, their identity enactments—derive from knowing (or believing) that they are members of particular social groups.” As China’s economy soars in recent years, what results is a rapidly growing middle class while many parents, especially those who are highly educated, are inclined to use their savings to have their children obtain a degree that will lead to their global advancement. The goal is to help the child advance even further upward socioeconomically.

But this “desire for distinctiveness” is injured to a great extent when Chinese students are exposed to a new setting where their old distinctiveness is not often appreciated. They are often confronted with two choices: first, endure solitude as their parents expected; second, become more involved in activities with Whites and other non-Chinese students that are alien to Chinese culture. The misfortune of my classmate is that he tried both options and faced disappointment both times. His lack of cross-cultural awareness and English proficiency has become an obstacle in building new interests and friendships in his school. Even though the United States consists of a variety of cultures and is exalted for its multiculturalism, it still entails an emotional and personal struggle before one is able to live comfortably as an integrated newcomer. Here I recall the one-way assimilation of the melting pot: It is much easier for the dominant society to expect that a Chinese student will adapt to its ways, than for that society to adapt to the Chinese student. Neither his family’s socioeconomic advantage nor his education can disperse his sense of identity loss, which in turn has a negative impact on his academic engagement today.

I am also a Chinese student in an American university. Since it seems unrealistic to change the child-centered family model in China, the best possible solution falls on preparing Chinese students with a mindset where Chinese students can also contribute their own perspectives. Rather than worrying over the loss of Chinese identity, it may be more helpful for Chinese students to keep a clear vision of where they come from, who they are, and what they will be while also actively contributing to America’s cultural diversity that helps them better appreciate their academic efforts and personal values.

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I remember vividly the first time I attended an American class. It was 2010, in Knoxville, Tennessee. I was an exchange student who had just stepped out of McGhee Tyson Airport the week prior. Interestingly enough, the first thing that struck me at the time was the different hair colors of the students around me. Knoxville is certainly not the most diverse city in America. But while the majority of the students in the classroom were Caucasian, as a South Korean accustomed to a society where almost everyone’s hair color is black, just witnessing the different hair colors—blonde, brown, black, even red—was an astonishing experience. Looking back, it was my first experience with racial diversity that is, or at least is perceived to be, absent where I come from.

Multiculturalism might be a hackneyed topic in America. This country has experienced many types of diversity and large waves of immigration for a long time. Although diversity is not synonymous with multiculturalism, the notion of diversity and multiculturalism is as familiar to an American as are discussions on race and ethnicity as fervently argued in the American public sphere. However, it becomes an entirely different story when it comes to South Korea.

Koreans commonly believe that their nation is one of the most homogeneous in the world. The legend of Dangun, who is believed to be the common ancestor to every Korean, reinforces the idea of Korea as a single racial and ethnic nation tied by blood and culture. Although Koreans know that the legend of Dangun is a myth, many Koreans still believe that the similar facial features and a unique Korean culture and language undeniably distinguish Koreans from other racial and ethnic groups. However, this belief has begun to be challenged as South Korea faces changing demographics and an emerging multicultural discourse. In particular, the Kosian children who are the offspring of Korean men and Southeast Asian women pose a particular challenge to a nation that has for a long time taken pride in its homogeneity.

South Korea is witnessing a growing number of foreigners. Yeonhap News (2012 August 9) reports that there are 1.4 million foreigners living in South Korea constituting 2.8 percent of the total population. Statistics Korea (2012) reports that international marriages compose of 9 percent of all marriages in South Korea. As the influx of foreigners has increased and the children born into these international couples have entered the Korean school system, a full-scale multicultural discourse has emerged in South Korea.

However, multiculturalism in South Korea has a much narrower connotation than it does in America. It is largely limited to the women from Southeast Asia who marry Korean men, the children of these couples, and, sometimes, North Korean refugees. Until the 2000s, South Korea did not think much about race at all. Racial discrimination in South Korea is primarily a ‘pure Korean’ versus a non-white or non-Korean racial and ethnic minority.

Children from international marriages between a Korean man and a Southeast Asian woman is a relatively new phenomenon. Korean men living in rural areas, the majority of them who are farmers, have difficulty in finding Korean women to marry as the agricultural industry declines and the Korean economy focuses more on the tertiary sector. Korean women are reluctant to
marry a man in a non-lucrative industry and move to a rural area, leaving behind a fancy city. Thus, finding a spouse in foreign countries via international matchmaking companies has become a popular option for men in rural areas. While unfortunate, many Southeast Asian women who marry Korean men do so out of difficult economic circumstances in their home countries. It is not uncommon for Korean men to pay some amount of money to his wife’s family when he brings her to South Korea. The children from these couples are called ‘Kosian’ because they are of Korean-Asian descent.

According to the Korean Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the number of children born from international couples now counts for 1 out of every 20 newborn babies. The number of students from a multicultural background is also skyrocketing, reaching 47,000 in 2012 that is approximately 0.7 percent of the entire K-12 student population. This is not a significantly large number yet, but this number has already tripled since 2008, and further demographic changes in Korean schools are unavoidable. Kosian children often endure social discrimination for their darker skin tone and somewhat different appearance. According to a study conducted by the National Human Rights Commissions of Korea in 2010, 91 percent of Kosian children answered that they experienced unfair treatment because of their ethnicity, skin color, and parent’s home country. Children often experience bullying and isolation from their peers at schools. At the same time, Kosian children feel neither a sense of belonging to South Korea nor to their mother’s home country, and this leads to confusion in identity formation. There is still strong pressure from their school and extended family to adopt the ‘Korean way’, and sometimes children are even forbidden to speak in other languages. In a sense, Kosian children face ambiguous attitudes: on one hand, they are not considered as Korean because of their appearance; on the other, they are forced to follow a commonly perceived standard of Korean culture and language.

These children are also likely to be disadvantaged in terms of education. In particular, many Kosian children reveal difficulties in learning the Korean language. Mothers of these children confess that their own lack of fluency in Korean may negatively affect their children’s ability in Korean. Although both mothers and their children are fluent enough in daily conversation, when it comes to an academic level comprehension, many children show difficulty in skillfully utilizing high-level Korean (Oh, 2007).

And lastly, Kosian children are often marginalized because of their parents’ low socioeconomic status. The discrimination that occurs is not only due to their race and ethnicity but also largely due to their disadvantaged economic circumstances. In general, Kosian children have fewer resources compared to most Korean children.

The Korean government is putting considerable energy and effort in successfully integrating this new group of children and their families. For example, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology actively promotes multicultural education. Through multicultural education centers, the Ministry develops educational policies, creates multicultural education materials and textbooks, and provides teacher education programs. The Ministry of Gender Equality launched over one hundred multicultural family support centers all over the nation, which provide multicultural education for multicultural families. The Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries offers migrant brides programs that help them better settle into their new towns. These measures include Korean language classes and a home-visiting helper system. Additionally, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism holds a variety of cultural events and festivals under the theme of multiculturalism. Other ministries such as the Ministry of Justice, Health, Welfare and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Labor also offer programs geared towards Kosian children and their families. Schools, especially those located in rural areas to which many Kosian children attend, also make substantial efforts to offer multicultural education. For example, schools teach the concept of multiculturalism
in their social studies classes and provide family-oriented multicultural events.

However, these efforts are oftentimes problematic despite good intentions. While a host of ministries provide programs and services geared towards multiculturalism, their overarching policies seldom have a unified strategy that coordinates the efforts of different state-level actors. Also, it is quite clear that the school system is not ready to fully incorporate multicultural education. Multicultural lessons are usually limited to moral and social studies education, and although textbooks have been revised to no longer emphasize Korea as a single racial and ethnic nation, their content can still be misleading and parochial. For example, textbooks often emphasize, unintentionally, the inherent differences between ‘multicultural people’ and Koreans. Furthermore, many teachers who have to implement multicultural education feel lost because this is uncharted territory for them. Teachers express difficulty when having to teach multiculturalism without adequate guidelines. According to a study that interviewed 294 primary and secondary teachers, only 6 teachers had taken coursework in multiculturalism in their undergraduate studies, and only 4 teachers had had any multicultural education teacher training (Choi & Mo, 2007).

Furthermore, many of the programs and services are short-term in nature and fail to provide continuous support with a long-term vision. In addition, the programs and services narrowly focus on providing support to only Kosian children and their mothers. This narrow focus leaves out the general public, who also need to recognize and accept the reality of a more diverse population that exists in South Korea. Multiculturalism also only encompasses minority groups, excluding the general public from thinking that multiculturalism is not their but others’ problem. In order to become a truly multicultural society, every single family should be defined as multicultural because a true multicultural society needs a larger recognition of diversity and equality. Also, even though the terms ‘Kosian’ and ‘multicultural family’ effectively represent the changing demographics in South Korea, there is substantial danger that even this distinctive naming conveys negative connotations and fosters a stigmatizing effect. Given that multicultural efforts are government-led, top-down methods, the disparity between government policy and actual classroom practices needs to be narrowed (Kim, 2011). While this is being done, policies and classroom practices need to be scrutinized for whether they are only geared towards assimilation without consideration of sincere and mutual understanding. Finally, multicultural discourse should not be limited to only Korean language education. Although language education is crucial for new immigrants and their children to adapt to Korean society, this cannot be the stopping point. Multicultural education needs to expand to a larger political and social discourse to include racism and class disparity.

From a Korean perspective, there is a lot to learn from countries with a long history and high level of diversity, including the United States. However, the spectrum of multiculturalism—including the immigration trends of ‘multicultural’ groups, the history of homogeneity, and how race and ethnicity is perceived—is different for each nation. While learning from an American context or from other models of diversity, South Korea still needs to find its own tactics and solutions. Because Koreans have held such a strong belief in a single racial and ethnic nation for a long time, the transformation into a truly multicultural society will take considerable time and effort. Nevertheless, for the sake of not only minority groups but for everyone living in a more diverse society, this process must be done with patience and effort and, more importantly, with joy.

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**Alumni Profile**

Dr. Lauren Ila Misiaszek

“Many of the most important lessons from SSCE weren’t entirely new to me. Instead, they were just ‘reinvented’ in the new setting of graduate school.”

Dr. Lauren Ila Misiaszek (née Jones) is an M.A. and Ph.D. Alumnus of the SSCE Division.

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**When did you graduate from UCLA?**


**Who was your advisor?**

Carlos Torres—to whom I owe so much.

**What was your research focus in SSCE?**

My dissertation was entitled “Women’s Theologies, Women’s Pedagogies: Liberatory Praxes of Latin American Women Educators in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Argentina.” In it, I examine how women in popular education use theology in educational activities as a tool of action and reflection against, for example, race, ethnic, class, and gender inequality within the context of neoliberal globalization.

**How has your research evolved?**

My work now can be expressed as being situated within the following three themes (each undertaken within comparative and international frameworks and settings): (1) gender (and its intersections) and pedagogy in higher education; (2) gender (and its intersections), pedagogy, and what I refer to as ‘personal theologies’ in nonformal education settings; and (3) intersections of identity, critical literacy, and pedagogy in both formal and nonformal education settings.

**What is your current position? Where?**

I am currently a 2012-13 Fulbright Scholar in the United Kingdom. I am based in the Centre for Education Research in Equalities, Policy and Pedagogy in the Department of Education at the University of Roehampton. I am conducting a research project entitled “Gender and Higher Education Pedagogies in a Comparative Perspective.” I also lecture in Roehampton’s Department of Education.

**What other projects are you involved with?**

I co-convened (along with my husband and SSCE Ph.D. Alumnus, Greg Misiaszek) the 8th International Meeting of the Paulo Freire Forum that was held at UCLA in September 2012. Greg and I also serve as the Assistant Directors of the Paulo Freire Institute-UCLA.

I am an Associate of the Paulo Freire Institute-United Kingdom based at the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research at the University of Sussex.
I have also worked since 2007 as an instructor at the College of William and Mary Summer Institute in Nicaragua, a critical service learning program. I have been working in Nicaragua on various projects since 2004.

**What lessons did you learn while at UCLA? What advice do you have for current students?**

Certainly the current students could be the ones giving me advice since everyone’s life experiences teach us different things. But since I’ve been asked, it’s been interesting to reflect upon this question of lessons and advice. For me, the two are really interconnected. So I’ll combine my responses.

Many of the most important lessons from SSCE weren’t entirely new to me. Instead, they were just ‘reinvented’ in the new setting of graduate school. In thinking of lessons, broadly, to adopt the words of bell hooks, I will always be working on trying to live out a “philosophical standpoint emphasizing the union of mind, body, and spirit” (hooks, 1994, p. 18) that involves a “connection between life practices, habits of being, and roles of [myself as a] professor” (ibid, p. 16). Understanding how and why this union is undervalued in academia and struggling to maintain it is essential for me.

In addition, here are few other more specific pieces of advice that I have found useful:

- Gaining (paid or unpaid) experience in program administration, research, and teaching. This opens up many opportunities and helps to establish professional affiliations. Also, asking people about their own career trajectories—they are never as linear, clear-cut, or polished as they may seem.
- Knowing that I’ll never feel completely ready for those first conference presentations, and trying to move past that feeling with other people’s support. It’s also always a good idea to present as early as possible.
- Leaving behind Moore Hall each day after class. Finding safe spaces with positive people. It was important to find people who helped me cultivate a practice of letting go.
- Incorporating critiques and moving forward. I have people who know my work and who question it along with me as it continues to evolve. While their feedback is important and healthy, at the same time, it’s important not to let it paralyze me. I try to check myself through these critiques and move ahead appropriately.

Giving others the benefit of the doubt. While this phrase sounds like a cliché, I find it to be quite important. Recognizing all the sides of my identity as an academic. Also, recognizing that I am more than my academic identity.

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**Newsworthy**

CIES Annual Conference in New Orleans

By Jiaying Song

The Comparative and International Education Society Annual Conference took place in New Orleans, Louisiana from March 10-15. Professors Carlos Torres, Val Rust, Edith Omwami, and Katie Anderson-Levitt, as well as SSCE students, presented their work at the conference. Dr. Val Rust, Stephanie Kim, and Aki Yamada hosted their panel on the internationalization of higher education in the US and Asia. Dr. Edith Omwami, Ryan Donaghy, Melissa Goodnight, and Rolf Straubhaar hosted their panel on gender issues in comparative education. SSCE students Athanasia Chtena, Michelle Gaston, Sarah Lillo, Jaana Nogueira, Jiaying Song, Veronika Rozhenkova, and Meredith Wegener presented on their individual research during the conference.

Dr. Val Rust was named Honorary Fellow to CIES. The award comes in recognition of Dr. Val Rust’s tremendous contribution to the field. In addition, Dr. Katie Anderson-Levitt was appointed as Editor of the *Comparative Education Review* journal. SSCE students and faculty members celebrated Dr. Rust’s and Dr. Anderson-Levitt’s achievements in downtown New Orleans following the conference.

Jiaying Song is a Ph.D. Student of the SSCE Division. Her specialization is Comparative and International Education.
The Californian Association of Freirean Educators (CAFE), a UCLA graduate student group, in association with the Paulo Freire Institute-UCLA and in partnership with Proyecto de Jornaleros student group, organized the 2013 CAFE Conference and Educator Workshop. The 2013 CAFE Conference and Educator Workshop entitled “Education as Critical Consciousness” was held on the UCLA campus from April 12-13. The two days of free events brought together students, teachers, professors, researchers, activists, and community members to critically dialogue about local and international issues related to education and society.

On the first day of the Conference, over sixty participants and presenters attended a full day of panel sessions. From high school students, graduate students, and faculty from UCLA and other universities, including Indiana University, Scripps College, and UC Riverside, to community activists, day laborers, and researchers from China and South Korea, the panels included a variety of presentations on a breadth of educational issues. The day culminated with keynote presentations by Dr. Douglas Kellner (UCLA), entitled “Media Spectacle and Insurrection, 2011: From the Arab Uprisings to Occupy Everywhere,” and by Dr. Teresa McCarty (UCLA), entitled “A ‘Rightful Place’: Contesting Discourse of Disability in Indigenous Language Education and Reclamation.”

The second day encompassed the Educators Workshop entitled “What Would Freire Do? Intercultural Storytelling, Democracy, and Social Change.” The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Gregory K. Tanaka (Mills College) and was attended by 27 teachers and educators.

The participants spent the day sharing personal narratives about life and teaching, as well as creatively co-constructing alternatives to contemporary crises of democracy and education. A keynote presentation by Dr. Sandra Harding (UCLA), entitled “Standpoint as Critical Methodology and Pedagogy,” capped the day’s events and closed the conference.

The success of the conference was not simply demonstrated by the space that was provided for participants to network with new colleagues. More significantly, the participants shared that they gained a re-energizing strength from knowing that the work of others at the conference—who similar to themselves—are engaged in the struggle to facilitate social justice education.

Jason Dorio is a Ph.D. Candidate of the SSCE Division and Program Officer of the Paulo Freire Institute. Melissa Goodnight is a Ph.D. Student of the SSCE Division and an organizer of the 2013 CAFE Conference and Educator Workshop.
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