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***Advancing equity through excellence in education***

**Statement on Diversity**

Central to the mission of the **Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education (TPTE)** at the University of Tennessee is conducting and disseminating educational research designed to improve opportunities for educational equity and excellence for all. Consistent with that mission, this statement is one in a series designed to inform the public on what research says about critical issues in education.

In full compliance with the stated missions of our department, college, and university, the department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education seeks to advance, facilitate, and defend diversity of all kinds in the pursuit of relational pluralism, wherein all forms of diversity are engaged democratically through dialogue.

The engagement of relational pluralism in the classroom takes the form of critical thought and action designed to uncover and unmake hegemony. As such, education becomes an arena for developing critical knowledge about our society (diversity), progressive action in our society (democracy), and a reflective stance committed to the evolution of our society (dialogue). While we hold to the ideal of relational pluralism, we recognize that the broader world, both historically and currently, uses demographic markers (e.g. race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sex, gender, orientation, ability, religion, or some other marker) to define haves and have-nots. However, these definitions always fall short because diversity is ever evolving both within each individual and within larger communities. Through the development of teachers and interpreters, we work to unmask and unmake any such binaries that serve as the root of oppression.

To such ends, we specifically prepare teachers and interpreters to engage every individual student equitably through the development of a posture of culturally relevant, sustaining, and revitalizing pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Through such a posture, teacher/interpreter attitudes, dispositions, and competencies are grounded in the pursuit of three primary tenets:

1. Academic Success: The intellectual growth that every student in a classroom experiences as a result of instruction and learning experiences
2. Cultural Competence: The ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in other cultures
3. Sociopolitical Consciousness: The ability to take learning beyond the classroom using knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems. (p. 75)

More specifically, we practice a form of *engaged* diversity in both content and method. We advance diversity in content through course assignments, readings, and dialogues designed to prepare teachers and interpreters for the diversity they will see within themselves, within their students, and within their classrooms. We advance diversity in method via a pedagogical posture that believes every student can succeed, every student brings important funds of knowledge to the classroom, and every student can make the classroom and the world a better place.

USA public schools in general, and the public schools in Tennessee in particular, are committed to offering an excellent and equitable education to all children.  Educational research seeks to help us continually improve our schools so that the quality of education for our children will be equally good, and our differences will be perceived as assets, not deficits.  The TPTE Department supports this effort of quality, equitable education for all children in our state and country.  Like our professional organizations in our various fields of study, we are committed to promoting diversity and inclusiveness in our department (faculty, staff, and students), in our research, in our teaching, and in our service to our department, college, university, professional organizations, and our community at large.[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. Web Sites of Professional Educational Organizations in the USA that support the mission of educating our diverse population:

Index of Professional Organizations for Multicultural Educators

<http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~cmmr/proforg.html>

National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)

<http://www.nameorg.org/>

National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)

<http://www.nabe.org/>

AERA: http://www.aera.net//Newsroom/News-Releases-and-Statements/

AESA: http://www.educationalstudies.org/PDF/STATEMENT\_AESA%20\_2017.pdf

NEA: http://www.nea.org/home/64654.htm

PES: https://www.philosophyofeducation.org/mayo-et-al

General Multicultural Education Internet Resources: (from Multicultural Education Internet Resource Guide), <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/Multi.html> )

Awesome Library

<http://www.awesomelibrary.org/Classroom/Social_Studies/Multicultural/Multicultural.html>

Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research at the University of Southern California

<http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~cmmr/>

Center for World Indigenous Studies

<http://www.cwis.org/wwwvl/indig-vl.html>

Multicultural Education & Ethnic Groups

<http://wwwlibrary.csustan.edu/boyer/multicultural/main.htm>

Multicultural Pavilion

<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/>

Race & Ethnicity

<http://www.tulane.edu/~so-inst/Other2.html>

Links to educational sites related to race & ethnicity.

Teaching Tolerance Organization

<http://www.tolerance.org/index.jsp>

World Wise Schools

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/lessons.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)