

Ideological Dissonance: A Comparison of the Views of Eight Conservative Students with the Recruitment Document from a Southeastern College of Education

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The experiences of conservative students in universities have garnered increased attention in recent years. This paper presents the results of recent research on the campus of a large Southeastern university. Situated in a small Southeastern college town, the university in question is home to a College of Education that attempts to maintain the spirit and tradition of progressive education. However, the College also serves a population that includes many conservative communities and individuals. This research is the result of a focus group interview with eight self-defined conservative students at the College of Education and an analysis of official recruitment and orientation documents. The investigation's findings support the need to clarify the recruitment procedures and curriculum of the institution in order to assist conservative students entering a progressive institution, while at the same time, challenging all students, including those with conservative views, to take part in a rigorous intellectual environment.

Introduction

As public schools and colleges of education step slowly and carefully through the first decade of the 21st century, social studies educators are confronting accusations and criticisms that have not been heard as loudly since the debates between social efficiency advocates and child-centered pedagogues in the final decade of the 19th century. Zimmerman (2002) argued that this contemporary culture war is, in reality, a multi-faceted conflict, on the one hand, involving issues related to the teaching of history and patriotism and on the other concerning religion and morality. Zimmerman commented: "Inasmuch as these conflicts do divide America, moreover, they do not allow for easy truces" (p. 8). The conflict over the teaching of Intelligent Design in public school science classes, for example, throws up the interesting pedagogical issue of whether progressive educators should simply ignore

this alternative view and anger its advocates among religious, conservative quarters or instead teach the controversy and infuriate those in the scientific community who argue that there is no controversy to teach (Annas, 2006; Graff, 2005). There are few issues in public schools that have not been subject to this kind of ideological conflict in the current period.

Another aspect of the culture wars in social studies education identified by Evans (2004) involves the issue of whether the field should be defined narrowly as history education (Ravitch, 2000) or as a more expansive endeavor focusing on social problems and critical thinking (Ross, 2000). Evans described this conflict:

My thesis is that what began as a struggle among interest groups gradually evolved into a war against progressive social studies that has strongly influ-

enced the current and future direction of the field. (p. 1)

Furthermore, educators have yet to settle on national history frameworks, as the grand attempt initiated by Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn (1997) and others associated with the University of California-Los Angeles collapsed in acrimony in 1994 amidst accusations of liberal and conservative bias (Symcox, 2002). Conservatives within the field (Cheney, 1994; Leming & Ellington, 2003) entered debates about curriculum frameworks in order to argue for a patriotic and perennialist conception of history education that portrays American history in more glowing terms against a more critical view of the social studies that focuses on promoting social change and the investigation of issues of race, gender, and class.

Colleges of education have not been immune from the debates that have consumed public schools; the social justice movement, the emphasis of critical pedagogy, the tendency of encouraging activism, and the prominence of progressivism have all faced varying degrees of criticism from conservative and neo-liberal critics such as Chester Finn (1991), E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1988), and Diane Ravitch (2003) among others. At the beginning of a new millennium, Ravitch (2000) summed up what she portrayed as the sorry legacy of a century of progressive educational reform:

Throughout the twentieth century, progressives claimed that the schools had the power and responsibility to reconstruct society. They took their cue from John Dewey, who in 1897 had proclaimed that the school was the primary means of social reform and the teacher was “the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God.” This messianic belief in the school and the teacher actually worked to the disadvantage of both, because it raised unrealistic expectations. It also put the schools squarely in the political arena, thereby

encouraging ideologues of every stripe to try to impose their social, religious, cultural and political agendas on the schools. (p. 459)

From this statement, one can see the major patterns of the history of the competing notions of the social studies and its discontents.

In this research project, therefore, we investigated the ideas and experiences of conservative students at a large state university in the southeast. A significant population of self-defined conservative students at the university's College of Education has experienced considerable ideological dissonance with regard to the college's progressive mission and curriculum.

The Red/Blue Divide in Education

The mainstream media portrayed the political map of the 2004 election in a stark Red and Blue pattern with the completely Blue Northeast and West Coast bordering a completely Red Midwest and South (Gastner, Shalizi, & Newman, 2004). The culture wars in education described by Zimmerman (2002) and Evans (2004) therefore represented more than merely slight differences in methodology but rather the clash of two distinct perspectives concerning the American identity itself. Farwell and Weiner (2000) discussed how conservatives view themselves as patriotic defenders of traditional America and its values (Red conservatives), while liberals see themselves as carrying on the values embodied within founding Constitutional documents and proclaimed ideals to improve the lives of all Americans (Blue liberals). While this division was surely not as clear-cut as popular imagination perceived it, the distinction between perception and reality often means little when it comes to politics, culture, and schools. If one were to believe some critics of higher education, for example, the Ivory Tower is plagued by liberal bias and the suppression of conservative view-points (Bloom, 1987; D'Souza,

1991; Kimball, 1990; Kors & Silverglate, 1999; Rauch, 1995; Sykes, 1989). This has opened the academy to attacks by an increasing number of critics, perhaps the most outspoken of whom is the former leftist radical turned right wing commentator, David Horowitz (1997).

Horowitz has become one of the most prominent conservative critics of education in the past ten years. He has maintained a presence in the media and academia through his efforts to combat perceived liberal bias in the universities, particularly evident in his online publication *Front Page Magazine*. In many respects, Horowitz's work is a continuation of the campaigns against politically-correct speech codes that energized debates in higher education in the 1990s (Berube, 2006). Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights (ABOR) has made some inroads, though it has not become a permanent part of the legislative landscape (Horowitz, 2004). The ABOR is, in the words of Horowitz (2007), intended to "... remove partisan politics from the classroom" (p. 110).

This effort is aimed particularly at the social sciences and humanities, with colleges of education an obvious and explicit target. After all, a great number of education schools boast of their efforts to encourage and train teachers to be agents of social change and to emphasize a social justice curriculum (Ayers, 2005). In broad terms, the focus of this curriculum is on multicultural education and is critical of current trends in schooling, such as testing, school choice, and standards-based education (Steiner & Rozen, 2004). Miller-Lane, Howard, and Halagao (2007) described the goals of this movement as "guided by a commitment to create schools and, ultimately, a society that generates equitable opportunities for citizens regardless of their differences" (p. 551). While this approach of teaching for diversity appeals to a great number of students and future teachers who may abide by an approximately liberal ideology, it is less likely to have an appeal to traditionally conservative students.

How best to prepare teachers for the classroom, and the best pedagogy for the classroom, has been an issue for educators since Plato's *Republic*, and it has been discussed by educational philosophers and practitioners from across the political spectrum. For example, Tyack and Cuban (1999) argued that reforms concerning teacher preparation and public schools have been overly rigid, traditional in methods, and ignorant of the reality of public schooling. Others such as Banks (2004) and Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) suggested that education schools need to prepare teachers for the diversity they will face in most public school settings, including lessons in developing curricula that can accommodate diverse cultures and learning needs.

Yet, despite the ongoing debate over issues of teacher education, there is evidence pointing to colleges of education who are ignoring conservative critiques of schools and teacher preparation that do not fit into their particular worldview. Steiner and Rozen (2004), for example, argued that colleges of education are marked by a particular ideological slant and a disturbing lack of rigor. Their review of syllabi from a number of leading teacher education institutions demonstrated a consistent left-liberal slant and an unfortunate lack of alternative approaches to teaching and learning. In many cases, the idea that there were alternative methodologies was never broached within these courses, if the syllabi are to be believed. This perceived ideological bias in colleges of education, even if not as extreme as some might complain, may influence how effectively a program reaches its teacher candidates, especially those conservative pre-service teachers who actively resist progressive methods. When a group views itself as under assault, which may be the case with conservative students in colleges of education, it could be argued that it tends to either seek ways to make itself heard or it closes itself off to ideas that may be contradictory to its own view as points of attack rather than of discussion. It can be difficult for these students to absorb the arguments of prog-

ressive instructors when they view these ideas as an assault on their beliefs about education and values in life.

The questions we, as teacher educators, must consider are centered on the teacher education programs as a whole and the experiences of self-identified conservative students in particular. In what ways do colleges of education view their missions, and what impact might this be having in their classrooms? Put another way, how do self-identified conservative students perceive their pre-service experiences as a whole and in the classroom in particular? How have they responded to what they may view as bias, and how has this perceived bias shaped their views about education? These questions are ones that we must be able to answer if we are to respond to conservative critics of teacher education.

Methods

Those engaged in qualitative research focused on teaching and learning practices in the social studies are confronted today with a profound paradox: At the same time the field is flourishing in higher education, the relevance of research in public schools is waning (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2003; Yeager, 2005). The unfortunate result of a century-long attack on progressive modes of teaching and learning is a significant gap between research and practice. This is especially true in the social studies which, as Barton and Levstik (2004) suggested, is a field that has suffered dramatic cuts in attention paid to the field at the elementary level and is still dominated at the secondary level by content-driven history courses and traditional teacher-centered pedagogical methods. They commented on this dispiriting educational arena:

Lawmakers argue that schools should teach to the test, and schools argue they should teach the way they think best. Researchers criticize teachers for not using primary sources, teachers criticize

students for not wanting to learn, and students criticize textbooks for being deadly boring. What a mess. (p. 1)

In order to challenge the dominance of standards' reform practices that have resulted in the scenario vividly described by Barton and Levstik, teacher educators must strive to create a training process which provides both a practical and theoretical foundation for pre-service teachers. The framework of social constructivism, which as Crotty (1998) described, springs from the desire to understand how groups of people construct meaning from their experiences, provides the theoretical grounding for our investigation. As two white, male doctoral candidates with more than 20 years of combined experienced teaching social studies in high schools located in Massachusetts and Florida, we sought to capture the voices of our students and future teachers. The spirit of this vital project guides the study described in this article.

Research Setting

Ladson-Billings (2001) argued that researchers in teacher training conduct culturally relevant research in the field. She commented that this type of research is founded on "three propositions: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness" as a means of "preparing teachers for the challenging work of working with diverse groups of students" (p. 31). Following this trenchant guidance, we focused on a significant population within a large public university's College of Education. Located in a liberal-progressive bubble of a small college town in the Southeast, the college draws students from an area of primarily conservative, rural surrounding counties. Given this, we have taught many self-defined conservative students who have encountered some elements of what Festinger (1957) called cognitive dissonance within a progressive-oriented department. In the typical pre-service cohort, we have found an average of approximately 25% of students who defined

themselves as conservative or conservative-libertarian.

The College of Education under study offers undergraduate education minors for those interested in teaching in elementary and early childhood education. This is a four-semester program beginning their junior year with the option to continue to a fifth year in order to earn a Master's of Education degree. In addition, students who successfully complete the fifth-year program are recommended for Professional Certification in the state and have the option of completing a special needs certification (College of Education Unified Elementary ProTeach Program, 2007a). A related program aimed at potential secondary school educators, Secondary ProTeach, offers a Master's of Education degree to content area majors interested in pursuing a teaching career at the middle or high school levels (College of Education, 2007a).

The mission of the program of preparing students for an increasingly diverse and complex world of teaching is clear from the statements of purpose included in the college's recruitment materials for elementary and early childhood education students. In the Student Handbook (College of Education Unified Elementary ProTeach Program, 2007b), for example, the rationale for the emphasis on inclusion procedures in the program's coursework was described:

The changing demographics and the movement to include students with disabilities in general education classrooms create a context where general education teachers often feel ill prepared to meet the diverse needs of students, particularly those with disabilities. (p. 2)

While there is no explicit description of the progressive philosophy that permeates the instruction within the program of study, a careful reading of the program's themes reveals principles at work consistent with the ideals of progressives and social reconstructionists. In a

section titled "Democratic Values," for example, prospective teachers are encouraged to think in the following terms:

Teachers within a democratic society must be committed to the value of equity in education and society. They must be able to work collaboratively with others to develop alternative ways of educating our diverse population and they must accept responsibility for the learning of all children. (College of Education Unified Elementary ProTeach Program, 2007b, p. 4)

The research agenda of the program's faculty was further defined as a commitment to "a broad definition of diversity that includes ethnic and national heritage, special educational needs, gender, sexual orientation, social class, and religion" (College of Education Unified Elementary ProTeach Program, 2007b). This language is sufficient to alert prospective students with conservative self-identities to a program philosophy and mission that might conflict with their worldviews.

At the secondary level, the College of Education offers the aforementioned Secondary ProTeach program and course of study for those who have completed a Bachelor's degree and required coursework in an area of content specialization such as social studies. The program consists of a fifth year of study including fall, spring, and summer terms during which students undergo two practicum experiences as well as a nine-week student internship in a school setting under the guidance of a classroom practitioner (College of Education, 2007b).

The recruitment material (School of Teaching and Learning, 2007) available online for prospective students merely described the function of the program as providing students with "(A)n M.Ed. degree in Social Studies Education [that] prepares students for Broad Fields Social Science Certification, grades 6-12, upon successful completion of the state

Teacher Certification Examinations in this area,” without any of the accompanying mission statement or philosophical themes available for elementary/early childhood students (p. 1). The program’s description continued with a list of admission criteria, course of study, and requirements for secondary certification. While this information is undoubtedly of value to students, those with conservative viewpoints would not be expected to understand the program’s philosophical underpinnings from its website alone. This absence may reflect what Grant (2003) called the “dulling stereotype” of secondary social studies teaching and learning as solely concentrated on subject matter:

They lecture, they assign textbook readings, they pass out and collect worksheets with end-of-chapters questions, and they use a lot of multiple choice, short answer, and true-false questions on their exams. (p. 29)

While this has certainly not been our goal in the College of Education, those entering the Secondary Social Studies ProTeach program might be forgiven for expecting professional experiences devoid of a progressive worldview from the materials presented to them before matriculation. In interviewing participants, one of our principal tasks, thus, becomes ascertaining whether this disjunction between stated purpose and reality existed in the experiences of students.

Participant Selection and Sampling Procedures

The two researchers involved in the investigation, both male graduate students in the area of Social Studies Education, were interested in exploring the experiences of these students at the college and thus pursued a research agenda following a critical, social constructivist perspective as defined by Kincheloe (2005), which views the world as socially constructed.

Grant (2003) explained constructivist teaching and learning priorities in the following terms:

Taking constructivism to school means that knowledge is viewed as complex and multifaceted, that something may be lost when ideas are reduced to elementary pieces, that teaching is about creating opportunities for students to think about work through big ideas, and that learning is more about understanding than simply memorizing those ideas. (p. 84)

Teaching and learning practices that encourage students to construct their own meanings from lessons in the social studies rather than to merely receive passively information from an instructor in turn require a research agenda that fits the goals of constructivist inquiry.

We began by recruiting students within the college who defined themselves as conservatives. We used a purposeful sampling approach described by Patton (1990) as “focus(ing) on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (p. 230). This method of selecting participants, also referred to as purposive or judgment sampling, has the advantage of revealing patterns of meaning-making associated with the epistemological subjectivity of the constructivist paradigm. Bernard (2000) described this procedure: “In judgment sampling, you decide the purpose you want informants (or communities) to serve, and you go out to find some” (p. 176). We followed Bernard’s criteria for using purposeful sampling following the determinations made concerning the purpose of the study’s participants within the project and sought them out according to the following criteria:

1. Participants will be enrolled as full time students in the College of Education.
2. Participants will define their political philosophies as conservative or conservative-libertarian.

We recruited participants by making announcements in classes which explained the purpose and procedures of the project. Five of the participants (Anne, Bertha, Danielle, Gina, and Haley) were enrolled in the undergraduate elementary education track; this entirely female presence reflected the 98% female population in the college's elementary program. The three remaining participants (Chris, Eddie, and Fiona) were enrolled in the graduate social studies ProTeach track.¹ Seven participants described themselves as "white," while one participant described herself as "Hispanic."

We did not specify what we meant by the term conservative when recruiting participants for the study in an effort to avoid potentially limiting the participant pool. This led to a mixture of self-identified conservative students; when asked to elaborate on what they meant by conservative, these students ranged in perspective along the right-wing spectrum from libertarian to conservative Christian. When asked to define the meanings they derived from the term conservatism, for example, Eddie described himself as politically conservative and elaborated by saying, "I believe in limited government, personal responsibility, and as little government interference with schools and education as possible." Danielle expanded the definition by commenting:

I consider it two different things, like I consider it the political aspect, like I'm politically conservative, like Republican, but I also think for me it's more than that like, I'm a Christian, and I consider that as part of being a conservative though there are some political conservatives out there that don't agree with.

This project proceeded to study how these students' philosophies compared with the stated mission of the College of Education as a means of understanding the general experiences of these students in their pre-service training process.

Data Collection

These eight students participated in a focus group session at the College of Education in May 2007. This session lasted approximately 75 minutes and included responses on a wide range of topics from pedagogy to education policy to academic freedom. Participants responded to the following questions:

1. How do you describe your view of conservatism?
2. How would you describe your view of liberalism?
3. How does your sense of conservatism apply to educational issues?
4. How would you define the political perspective of the College of Education?
5. How would you define the political perspective of specific instructors?
6. How did this perspective affect the way in which educational issues were framed in individual courses?
7. What was your experience like expressing conservative views in your classes?
8. What is your perception of the experience of self-defined conservative students at the College of Education?

We audio and video recorded this focus group session and later transcribed the session by hand using the conventions detailed by Silverman (2002).

The respondents were especially candid when it came to evaluating the practical worth of their experiences as they began their teaching careers. In addition, we reviewed the re-

cruitment and orientation materials provided by the College of Education to its prospective students. We were particularly interested in comparing the mission statements cited above with the expectations of the students in our study.

Data Analysis

Hatch (2002) encouraged researchers to view data analysis as an on-going process which should begin as soon as the data is collected. Following Hatch's advice, "Analysis is happening from the first moments of data collection" (p. 149), we looked early for patterns emerging from the data we collected from both archival and focus group sources. We subsequently coded this data by hand. As beginning researchers, we found a style referred to by Miles and Huberman (1994) as descriptive coding to be the most accessible. After the transcription process, we re-read the transcripts several times, correcting for mistakes and identifying message units. We then divided the transcript broadly into large sections based on major topics and then into more specific subtopics.

Findings

Three main themes emerged from the data that we collected from the focus group and archival documents. First, five of the respondents questioned the value of the theoretical material contained in their classes in terms of their future careers and expressed a desire for more practical instruction. For example, Eddie criticized the policy orientation of many of the courses in the college stating, "I was kind of frustrated by the program focusing on major national issues like 'No Child Left Behind'.... I could be better served by focusing on practical aspects of teaching." While many pre-service teachers in teacher training programs might also echo this comment, the participants in our study felt the focus on theoretical material arose from the desire on the part of instruc-

tors in the program to indoctrinate their students. Ann agreed with this sentiment in her comments:

When I'm in the classroom, I need to know how to do the behavior management, I need to know how to do these actual things in the classroom, and I don't feel as prepared because I haven't been able to take more classes that actually have to do with just lesson planning...just the simple parts.

Participants such as Eddie and Fiona thus called for a more effective balance of practical and foundational curriculum items.

Second, this focus on the lack of practical instruction concealed a more basic uneasiness among participants with the theoretical perspectives undergirding much of the college's curriculum, particularly its commitment to instruction for diverse populations. Chris, for example, describing what he referred as an agenda of "social engineering," stated, "There is too much ... within education itself that perpetuates this idea of promoting differences and glorifying differences in, rather than finding similarities in people, and it's been my biggest ... argument against the way that the program here is designed." Danielle recalled having difficulties expressing this criticism of multiculturalism among the other students in the program:

I'm like, "This is America; you know, we've been speaking English since the beginning, and I mean, I want people from different countries to come, I'm not against that, but they should have to speak English, you know, this is America." And, you know, if I would say that, the class would just turn their heads and look at me and I would say, "Well, I'm sorry but that's what I believe."

In these responses, the participants argued for precisely the type of colorblind perspective toward diverse student populations critiqued by experts in multicultural teaching practices in the social studies such as Banks (2004).

Interestingly, three of the participants commented that they had anticipated this cognitive dissonance during their time within the College of Education. Expressing he was “actually expecting it to be a lot worse than it really is,” Eddie explained, “I knew I was entering a liberal profession and that my conservative beliefs might be, I expected to be put on the defensive, but I never really ... was.” Chris who defined himself as a “libertarian more than a Republican” concurred with his expectation that he would have to face viewpoints from faculty and fellow students with which he might disagree. These statements corroborated the research (Jacobson, 2006) which was conducted in the aftermath of the Academic Bill of Rights campaigns in various states which had found little support for Horowitz’s (2004) claims of bias against institutions of higher education.

Finally, the response of six of the participants to a curriculum with which they had fundamental disagreements was one of actively avoiding what they considered liberal indoctrination. Asked her opinion of the course materials, Gina openly admitted she “did not read the books.” Pressed to explain this, she remarked, “I just don’t, I just feel like, it’s just boring, it’s just stupid, I just don’t read them.” Fiona extended this to comment on her lack of participation in class discussions:

I tend to be one of the ones that just kind of takes it all in and goes with the flow type of thing, so a lot of times I don’t really find it worth the fight if you will, so I just kind of do my own thing.

In these statements, the participants displayed a phenomenon that we call “wearing raincoats,” that is, pre-service students completing the coursework of their programs while active-

ly trying to avoid any true absorption of content for fear that it will challenge their conservative perspectives.

Conclusions and Proposals

This analysis of the data from the focus group and archival collection procedures detailed above leads us to conclude that the College of Education, and teacher training programs like it, must adjust programs of study in order to better serve their self-defined conservative students. We propose a variety of paths to maintain the College of Education on a course to achieve its goal of “preparing tomorrow’s leaders in all education professions” (College of Education, 2007a). These suggestions center on practicality, dialogue, and accountability and are intended to build upon the proud tradition of our college.

One of the most common critiques we encountered in our brief glimpse into the conservative community at the college was a perceived lack of practicality in many of the courses. Students were getting a large dose of theory and just a little bit of methods preparation, though the College itself takes pride in its emphasis on hands on experiences (College of Education, 2007b). The reality of their practical experiences, then, quite often does not match the reality of what they are taught in the classroom, as comments from our focus group indicated. While other researchers (Oakes & Lipton, 2007) have noted similar feedback among students of all political persuasions, the conservative students in our study believed that the focus on theory in the program amounted to an effort to indoctrinate the program’s students. We believe that this feeds into the idea of a progressive bias within the College and weakens our ability to create true leadership among the educators of tomorrow. Many of those students who would normally be considered leaders are thus rejecting the policy theories they are learning in their classes as impractical because they struggle to see how these ideas apply in the real world.

We suggest, therefore, that a clear delineation and balance should exist between the foundational courses intended to impart theoretical material necessary to ground prospective teachers in the field and the practicum courses intended to provide practical suggestions for teaching methods. For example, a course on methods could emphasize and give students practice in classroom management procedures of all stripes as well as ensure that these future teachers understand what contextual issues might motivate students to misbehave and when certain theories about classroom management might have to be discarded. A common complaint among our participants was that many instructors implied there was only one right way to do things; when this technique failed, they felt helpless.

It is incumbent on any university program, especially one modeled on the progressive values of critical inquiry, to encourage free and open dialogue. It is clear from our data that university instructors have occasionally acted in unprofessional ways — one participant recalled flippant and disparaging remarks about the Bush administration, for example — and have also used their classrooms as a means of putting forward tangential political agendas — one participant described a guest lecture by a representative from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals in a methods course. This is inappropriate in our view and must not be allowed to continue. In a related vein, providing students with perspectives on educational theory outside the traditionally progressive views might go a long way to improving the climate for these dissenters and removing the College of Education from the crosshairs of conservative activists. For example, students should not only be encouraged to read Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (1992) or *Shame of a Nation* (2005), but they should also be exposed to Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom's (2003) *No Excuses*, which addresses similar issues from a different perspective. In the same way, our future teachers should be encouraged to explore a multicultural approach to education,

yet also recognize the legitimate critiques of that approach from both the left and the right (Barry, 2002; Schlesinger, Jr., 1992).

Finally, though, any university program must expect a spirit of honest and rigorous intellectual work from its students. Avoiding personal reflection, whatever the reason, is a failure to approach the course material honestly, and to use a loaded word, both faculty and students must be held accountable for this. Students such as those examined in this study should not be able to complete their courses successfully, as Gina has without engaging the material and maintaining an open and honest discussion within the classroom and within themselves.

Ultimately, if teacher educators are to counter successfully the critiques of conservative commentators and critics, colleges of education, and their students must approach their respective work with a sense of mutual respect, open dialogue, and realistic expectations. Only then may we say that we are truly preparing the educational leaders of tomorrow.

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ⁱ All names used to describe the participants of the study profiled in this article are pseudonyms.

The aim of the paper is to investigate the reasons, types, and effects of cognitive dissonance with regard to intercultural communication. Cognitive dissonance can be caused by the discrepancy between the ways of categorizing and conceptualizing reality through the prism of different languages and cultures. The harmonization of mindsets and the way out of cognitive dissonance are based on the mechanisms of understanding and interaction with representatives of an alien culture in order to overcome communication breakdowns. A high level of intercultural competence requires the ability to identify Here are eight questions to think about when considering whether or not to include education in your resume: 1. Do you have a degree? If you only have a high school diploma, you can likely get by without having an education section. If you attended college but didn't graduate, you can still list your education on your resume. List the name of your institution, along with a line clarifying "X years completed" or "X credit hours completed." By adding an education section, you can fill up some of the gaps and flesh out your resume so it stands a better chance of being taken seriously. Perhaps you have a lot of recent and relevant coursework, or demonstrated leadership by serving as president of a club. Adding pertinent details can bolster your candidacy. International students' enrollment in higher education in the US has expanded considerably in the last decades. In this study, international students' experiences were examined in academic and sociocultural settings. Through qualitative interviews, the findings revealed that international students deal with academic challenges, social isolation, and cultural adjustment. Specifically, academic challenges included communication with professors, classmates, and staff. Most international student funding comes from personal and family sources or other sources outside of the United States. These students help universities generate higher revenue in terms of tuition and other fees.