Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

PTSP Project Description [1]

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During my tenure at SUNY, Fredonia, I created a cross-listed course designed to introduce students majoring in English Education to U.S. multi-ethnic literature and theory specifically because I am certified to teach English at the middle school and high school levels, and have first-hand experience working with K-12 students. During the spring of 2007, I taught a similar cross-listed course for the English Department and the School of Education at UCCS. I am now in the preliminary stages of working with colleagues in the School of Education toward making this course a requirement, rather than an elective, for students matriculating in the English Education track. Such a requirement would address the current need for potential teachers to have an increased awareness of U.S. minority histories and cultures. Currently, less than 10% of teachers nationally are minorities, yet the K-12 population is becoming increasingly populated by racial and ethnic minorities, including second language learners. (The minority student population in Colorado Springs is 25%; whereas less than 10% of our teachers are minorities.) These statistics suggest the obvious need for teachers with proficiency in these related subject areas.

My English-Education course simultaneously introduces students to contemporary race theory and U.S. minority history and literature; gives them hands-on experience designing a semester-long reading list and correspondent lessons plans (aimed at the age group/grade level they were preparing to teach); and requires that they prepare a class presentation in which they research and teach some aspect of one of the texts treated in class and receive direct feedback. At the end of the semester, students present their findings; discuss the difficulties they faced in preparing their reading lists and lessons plans; and share best practice strategies and information regarding bibliographic sources.

My Teaching Scholars' Project would aim to develop and thereby improve this course. Such a project will also assist me in developing a new variant of the Knapsack Institute (see section VIII) specifically targeting local elementary and high school teachers. In addition to updating my own research regarding current trends in multi-cultural education, I will develop and implement an Attitude Survey at the outset and conclusion of each semester, which will broadly assess cultural competency and multicultural values. I will formalize a relationship with a select group of students by mentoring and tracking them during their student teaching as well as their first two professional years. This would include focus groups and individual interviews, which would yield invaluable information regarding the effectiveness of my own course as well as the Knapsack Institute workshop, and direct and ongoing input regarding approaches or strategies I might implement in this course. I would also arrange site visits at regular intervals to assess the manner in which the Colorado Teacher Performance Standards or the NCTE Standards (both of which focus upon diversity) are being addressed.

Groups audience:

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