

# Multicultural Education in a Globalized World Implications for Educational Equity

Tamkang Clement and Carrie Chang Chair Lecture  
Commemorating Tamkang University's 75th Anniversary  
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Sonia Nieto  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

# A Brief Definition

*Multicultural education, multilingual education, ethnic studies, culturally responsive education, culturally sustaining education, social justice education:*

*The major purpose of the field has been twofold:*

- 1. To provide all students regardless of background with an excellent and high quality education, and*
- 2. To honor students' unique cultures and experiences, and use them in the service of their learning*

# Questions to Explore

## part 1



- How has multicultural education evolved to address educational inequality and inequity in the United States and other nations?
- What can teachers, administrators, researchers, and policymakers do to advance equitable and quality education for all students?
- In these perilous times for democratic institutions around the world, what role can multicultural education play in addressing educational and other inequities?

## Questions to Explore, part 2



- What can other democratic nations learn from the history of multicultural in the United States?
- What can we in the United States learn from Taiwan and other nations about the pursuit of educational equity in a globalized world?

## First, a bit of U.S. history

### A complicated beginning:

- A fervent belief in democracy and equality
- The genocide of Indigenous people
- Slavery of millions of Africans
- Slave-holding Founding Fathers

# Results

- Broken treaties
- Slave uprisings
- Civil War (1861-1865)
- Jim Crow laws making “separate but equal” legal, an American Apartheid
- Civil Rights Movement
- Racism, bigotry, diminished opportunities

***“All men are created equal”??***

# Equality and Equity

Equality: Affording all people the same rights

“Separate but equal”?

Equity: Affording all people rights that they can benefit from or take advantage of

- The Civil Rights Movement
- Calls for multicultural education, bilingual and multilingual education, gender-fair education, special education, not “Brown Heroes and Holidays” or “feel-good curriculum”

# **Genesis of Multicultural Education**



# The Role of Multicultural Education in a Democratic Society



Democracy at a Crossroads



Authoritarianism



Backlash to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives



Students' identities and life circumstances put them at a disadvantage in unequal societies



How culture is viewed as stereotypical, static, and exotic



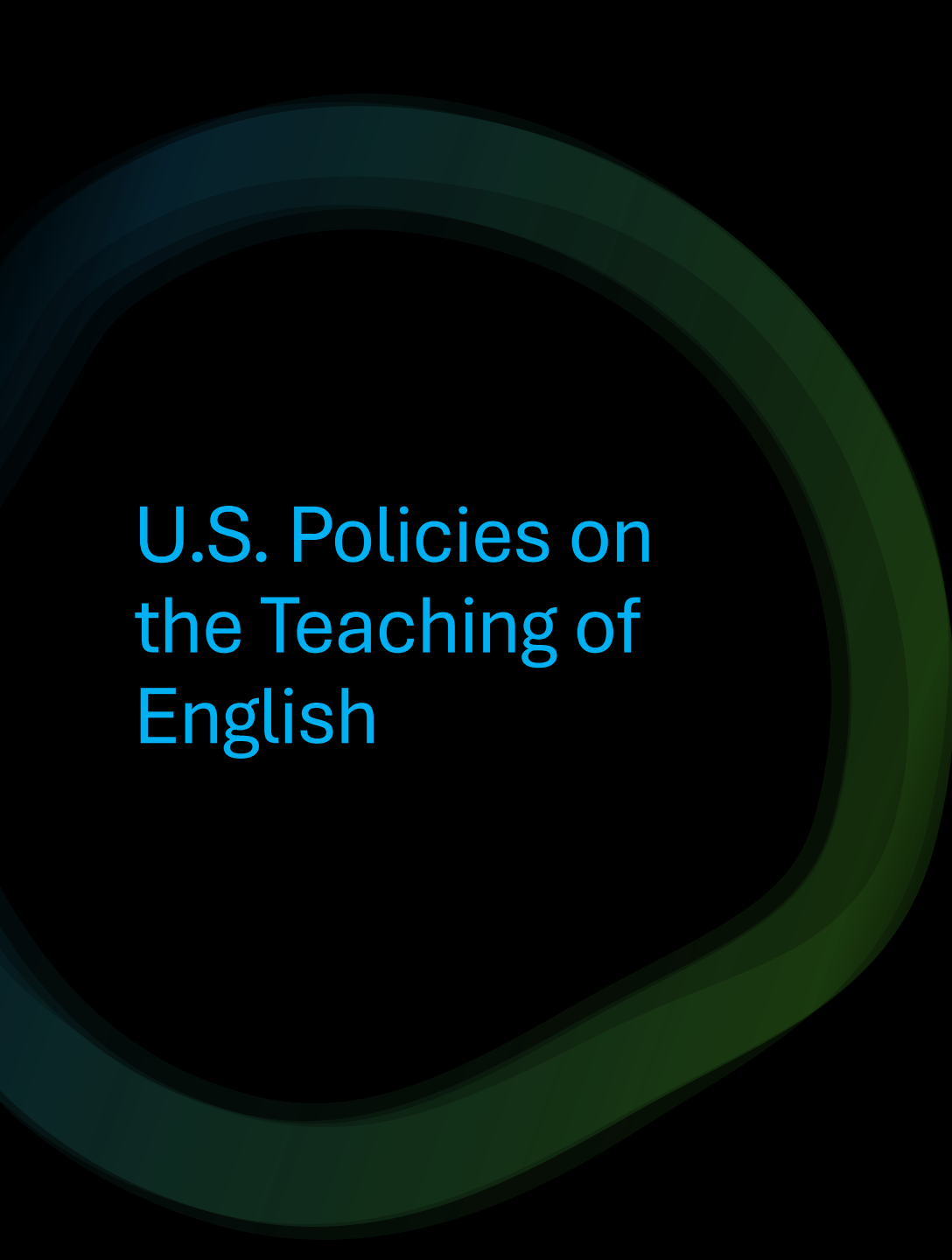
Paulo Freire: "Education is always political"



## The Goals of Taiwan's Policies on the Teaching of English

- Promote innovation
- Increase employment
- Strengthen regional and global ties
- Diversify international markets
- Create closer relationships with nations besides the PRC
- Improve the status of Taiwan among other nations

[Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs]



## U.S. Policies on the Teaching of English

- An existential survival strategy for immigrants
  - Employment
  - Housing
  - Higher education
  - Communicating with neighbors
  - Shopping for groceries
- But with the current “America First” priority, globalization is no longer a priority

# Concerns About Implementation of 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy



- Incorporating English language standards in the curriculum
- Preparing the number of teachers needed to implement the policy
- The need for additional resources
- Potential damage to national identity
- Competition among various official languages

# Keith Graham and Yi-fen Yeh Study [2022]



Findings from interviews with classroom teachers on early implementation of 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy:

- Policy ambiguity
- Diverse educational and pedagogical backgrounds of fellow teachers
- Potential damage to students' academic achievement

“Given the strength of the academic culture in Taiwan, it is unlikely that the intended bilingual policy can be realized...”

# Culturally Responsive Pedagogy [CRP] in the Teaching of English in Other Nations

**Indonesia  
(Ulviani,  
2025)**

“culturally responsive Indonesian language instruction not only enriches academic learning but also contributes to social justice, national unity, and the realization of inclusive education”

**Phillipines  
(Pulido  
Petrola,  
2025)**

English functions not only as a medium of instruction but also as a bridge to cultural and global competence

# Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the Teaching of English in Other Nations

Papua New  
Guinea  
(Suhartawan,  
Suryati,  
Sujiatmoco,  
2025)

Teachers supported CRP and incorporated innovative pedagogical strategies but were frustrated by the scarcity of materials and the time it took to create materials

Muhammad &  
Lui (2021)

Teachers valued cultural and linguistic diversity of their students but felt hampered in implementing the program because of curriculum rigidity and other problems

# Muhammad and Lui (2021)

## Recommendations:

- Reform teacher education to include CRP and *constructivism* (where teachers and students work together to build knowledge and comprehension)
- Emphasize strategies such as collaboration and dialogue
- Change the role of teachers from all-knowing instructors to that of facilitators and guides

The implications of this research extend beyond the local context by “offering valuable lessons for multicultural education in similarly diverse settings worldwide... to collaboratively foster educational systems that celebrate diversity, promote social justice, and ensure equitable opportunities for all learners”

# **The Troubled State of Diversity in the U.S.**

**The case of  
Sarah Inama**

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# Policies and Practices for Creating Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive Schools



## Three Examples from the United States

- **The Individual:** Kerrita Mayfield on Humanizing Pedagogy
- **The Collective:** Mary Cowhey on Families with Power
- **The Institutional:** Gwen Agna on creating an inclusive community school

# The Individual: Kerrita Mayfield

**Humanizing Pedagogy:** “a radical retelling of what and who school may be for...” [Nieto & López Nieto, 2023]

- Rituals and structures
- Expectations and responsibilities
- Tasks and conversations
  - “quiet time”
  - “bring yourselves to the table”
  - Research pods
  - Collective conversations
  - Whole class dialogue





## The Collective: Mary Cowhey and Families with Power (FWP)

- Home visits with students' families
- Creating Families with Power (Cowhey, 2022)
- Collaboration with families, mostly immigrants and refugees
- Educating, energizing and empowering caregivers
  - Café con leche get-togethers and dance parties
  - Culture Circles (Paulo Freire)
  - Visits to local farmers' markets
  - Family Reading Parties and Morning Math
  - Arabic Community Club
  - Workshops on *How Schools Work*
  - Scholarships

# 2025 Scholarship Recipients



# The Institutional: Gwen Agna



## Creating an inclusive community-centered school (Agna, 2025)

- A community photo display of inclusion and solidarity
- Community service projects
- Visits to the elderly
- Food collections for local food pantries
- Voter registration
- Community dinners with teachers and families
- School garden tended by students



# Promoting Multicultural/Multilingual Education for Democracy and Global Understanding: 3 Takeaways

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THE ROAD FROM  
VISION TO PRACTICE



FINDING THE  
BALANCE



PUTTING OUR VALUES  
TO THE TEST

# Final Thoughts: *Are We Ready?*

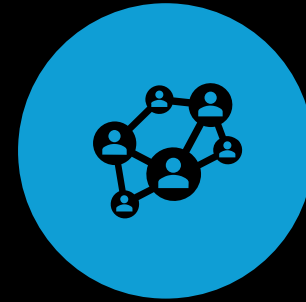
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“EDUCATION IN  
WHOSE INTEREST?”  
PAULO FREIRE



THE ROLE OF CARE AND  
LOVE IN EDUCATION



EXPANDING STUDENTS’  
ROOTS AND EXPANDING  
THEIR HORIZONS