The Agenda for Education in a Democracy

The Guiding Philosophy for a Professional Development School At the Masters Level at Colorado State University

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Abstract: The Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED)
The Guiding Philosophy for a Professional Development School at the Masters Level
This article presents the work accomplished by students and their instructors. The direction of the work has been toward greater understanding and implementation of the mission of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED). The authors, instructors in the program, share the process of teaching and learning democracy as the purpose of schooling and the essence of teacher training. The effort was to realize the moral obligation of bringing the well-being of democracy and the acquisition of skills for democratic participation to the forefront of planning and teaching.

The article includes four sections:
The Introduction describes the program, philosophy and setting of the partnership.

Section I reviews the work from 2009 to 2011 when democracy objectives emerged and were refined.

Section II offers an update of the work including the alignment of 21st century skills and teaching standards with objectives and assessment.

Section III explicates the new meanings, resulting in essential questions around the moral dimensions of schooling, and a discussion of future work.

Key Phrases
Democracy in the Classroom
21st Century Skills—Implementation and Assessment
Mission of the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED)
Simultaneous Renewal
The Agenda for Education in a Democracy
The Guiding Philosophy for a Professional Development
School At the Masters Level at Colorado State University
at the Masters Level at Colorado State University

Sustaining A Practice of Living Democracy in Every Classroom and
Learning 21st Century Skills as the Framework and Context for Schooling

Introduction

This spring marks year three of the ongoing work done by master level
students with their instructors in the Educational Leadership, Renewal, and Change
Program at Colorado State University. The Mission of the Agenda for Education
in a Democracy (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004) is the foundation
and cohesive thread of the program. The work has been a collaborative effort
among students and instructors in a cohort-based professional development school
in partnership with Fossil Ridge High School in Fort Collins, Colorado. The high
school is located in an affluent section of Fort Collins, in northern Colorado. The
practice of creating democracy in the classroom on a daily and consistent basis has
led to a deeper understanding of the purpose and foundation of schooling in the
United States. The practice of planning lessons and writing objectives to achieve
the mission makes possible the realization of the mission in the classroom. The
practice, itself, is one of change and renewal in the writing of daily lessons guiding
instruction and assessment. This renewal of lesson planning requires teachers to
consider the larger purposes of schooling, specifically those addressed in the Four-
Part Mission of the Agenda:
1. Enculturation
2. Equal Access
3. Nurturing Pedagogy
4. Stewardship

The renewed practice, currently, addresses 21st century skills and educational
standards for democracy, and brings these to the forefront of lesson design. The
Mission of the Agenda (AED) is the guiding philosophy of our work.

The program began with the study of the public purpose of schooling
(Goodlad & McMannon, 1997). The study required the examination of
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overarching ideas and challenges of schooling in a democratic society. The curriculum included courses in history, philosophy, pedagogy and methodology. The courses during the summer and fall semesters asked students to study the history of educational reform, a long history replete with some success and many failed efforts, particularly those in the direction of social justice (Critical Issues Papers, AED Scholars, 2008).

Between twenty to thirty students are enrolled in the program each year. The majority of the students have never considered the above issues to be educators’ concerns. As a result of reading, dialogue, investigation and reflection, the students entered their practice with greater understanding of the moral dimensions of the profession. As a result of their understanding of the power of the classroom setting, a questioning of the status-quo emerged along with new energy for change. The design of lessons took a new direction, formulating within the planning stages a more deliberate attention to the meaning of democratic schooling and the needs of all children. The evidence of change was visible and tenable in their classrooms. While still highly valuing content, they looked more deeply into the role of the teacher, beyond teaching their content alone, to include teaching democracy. They increased their ability to engage all children, and to create nurturing and safe places for all children. They were determined to provide experiences that would enhance intrinsic motivation in their students to become contributing members of a positive environment and civil community. During the spring semester, the student teachers devoted greater attention to lesson planning, lesson planning that would create a democratic setting and bring the public purpose of schooling to their classrooms every day. Objectives emerged as a result of their new thinking. They began writing objectives that included this purpose and reflected the Agenda (AED).

The study of the purpose of schooling has deepened over the period of three years. The result over time has caused us to examine the connections among the purpose of schooling, the Mission of the AED and the essence of the teacher training program. A further result has been the statement of purpose in the form of essential learnings. In the past year, the third year, essential questions for the Master’s of Educational Leadership, Renewal and Change Program were written. They will serve as the heart of the Capstone course. The Capstone course and oral defenses are the culminating experiences of the year-long program. The essential questions are:

The essential questions are:
Living democracy and protecting our democratic society are challenges to schooling in the U.S. The challenges have never been greater because our population has never been more diverse (Goodlad and the NNER Conference Brochure, 2010). As a teacher, how do you meet these challenges? And why is that necessary?

In light of CSU being the Colorado Setting for NNER, what are the connections between Colorado’s 21st Century Skills and Standards (CDE Website), and the Four-Part Mission of the Agenda (AED)? Evaluate your practice with regard to the connections. How do the Mission and Standards inform your teaching?

What are the essence and content of the democratic character that we are to develop in our nation’s youth? What is the knowledge, and what are the dispositions necessary to be contributing members of society? How will you create the environment and experiences needed? What is the connection between this challenge and the moral dimensions of schooling?

In what ways are partnerships, collaboration and dialogue fundamental to the Master’s in Educational Leadership Program, the Agenda (AED) and democracy? Synthesize your understandings of all three phenomena. Where do the principle concepts intersect? How does your comprehension of these three and their connections inform your practice?

A central focus of this work has always been creating democratic settings and promoting the well-being of our democracy. As a result of that focus, the writing of democracy objectives for daily lessons presented itself as a promising practice. This practice brings the 21st Century skills and knowledge needed by all citizens to every child through daily instruction. It represents change and renewal of the writing of daily lesson plans so that each teacher’s plan will enhance each child’s learning of those skills and that knowledge. In our third year, purposeful effort has been made to sustain the change. The change in designing lessons has the potential of transforming the public school classroom into the democratic setting we envision. The learning of skills and attitudes occurs when children experience empowerment of participation, joy of cooperation, and satisfaction of accomplishing good work together (Brendtro, Mitchell & McCall, 2009). It is necessary for all children to
know, in the deepest sense, the value of their community and their own value as individuals in the community.

Reform in education and efforts to improve learning for all students have been issues of study and debate since our nation’s birth. Who will learn? What will they learn? How will they learn and for what purpose? What is equal access to knowledge? How do we include those currently excluded? What is socially just and equitable? How do we change our schools to achieve our goals? And, in truth, what are our goals? These questions have persisted through time as they continue to evoke a great variety of value-laden responses.

History reveals that the efforts of change, which have been made in the direction of fairness and social justice, have perennially fallen far short of their proposed objectives (Ladson-Billings, 2006). It is necessary to consider reform in education as it offers new thinking and a renewal of strategies to create places where all students will know the best experiences and achieve success to their greatest potential (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Change theorists agree innovations often fail when practitioners focus on the surface feature of an initiative rather than an understanding of the process, purpose and meaning of the change (Fullan, 2001; Benham-Tye, 2000; Senge, 1994; Goodlad, 1994). Without an understanding of the underlying mechanism of a change effort as it may align with or conflict with existing core principles and deep structures of a society, the effort is likely to fail.

This is a story of sustaining change in the direction of social justice. The work in the master’s program is work seen through the lens of advancing the Agenda for Education in a Democracy. Democracy objectives, which we have created with our students, are the tip of the iceberg, that piece which appears in the reality of the classroom, and represents a greater presence and power beneath the surface. Nonetheless, they offer a structure to resist the pull of the status-quo, as well as the potential to effect a nurturing, equitable and inclusive environment. All students would benefit, regardless of race, gender, sexual preference, socio-economic status or any other grouping criterion that currently separates unjustly and limits education for some of our nation’s children.
Section 1
Review of the work — 2009 to 2011

It is not that schools are all that bad or ungenerous or aren’t trying to serve their students. It is just with a dose of honest self-scrutiny and a willingness to make and stick to some hard decisions, these schools could be so much better (Sizer, 1992, p. viii).

The work began in the fall of 2009. The pre-service, masters level students began the study of schooling and its challenges. The goal of the program is to develop mature, highly-qualified teachers whose practice is grounded in research, and whose awareness of themselves as agents of change in our public school system is developed to its fullest. The vision is that the teachers graduating from this program will understand and be equipped to respond to the words of Theodore Sizer, that our schools could be so much better with “a dose of self-scrutiny and a willingness to make and stick to some hard decisions.” This notion clearly supports and aligns with the core principle of ongoing inquiry, a fundamental piece of the AED Mission.

The instructors and students began with a critical examination of the history of education. It was a process of inquiry, discovery, and creation of knowledge. It was, in a very true sense, a Freirian epistemology (1970) where both teachers and students were partners in the process of creating knowledge along with self-awareness and an awareness of the world, with the hope of transforming reality for the betterment of all. This aligns with Freire’s theory of dialogue and praxis. We eventually identified and named the change in reality that we were witnessing: “democracy objectives.” This product and practice developed from months of study and dialogue. These were objectives the students were writing in that first year, during their student teaching experience. Democracy objectives emerged from our students’ thinking as they brought the study and conversation to the reality of their practice.

What were the experiences, the readings and discussions that served as catalysts for these students in their process of growth, their increasing self-awareness and their becoming empowered to question reality and to spark change? The program did integrate the study of educational history, philosophy, methodology and classroom management—all of the traditional expectations for such a degree.
However, at the heart of every discussion was a greater question, the challenge posed by the founders and leaders of the National Network for Educational Renewal:

The challenge of practicing democracy in the classroom has never been greater. With the increasing diversity of learners and the changing social contexts where schools are housed, providing a nurturing and equitable education to everyone is more difficult than ever. In spite of these challenges, however, we know that public schools are the one place where all citizens can learn about and experience democratic interactions and processes. Public schools are also the one place where society can ensure that all students are provided the knowledge and skills to enable them to become contributing members of our social and political democracy. The role of the teacher has never been more important than it is today (NNER Conference Brochure, 2010).

Recognizing the serious nature of this challenge, we recount the journey with our students that resulted in work that brings to teachers and to pre-service teachers a way to ensure the well-being of our democracy.

The Readings Which Inspired Conversation and Transformation

The readings during the first six months were grounded in the moral purpose of schooling and the obstacles to change. The readings and the discussions offered opportunities to explore the ethical responsibilities of teachers. The rationale for these assignments was to have each student examine her/his knowledge of self and core beliefs in the light of the literature. The understanding of one’s self and the examination of one’s beliefs are the first steps in becoming an authentic person and an authentic teacher (Palmer, 1998). For many of the students, this was the first time they had considered the moral dimensions of schooling (Soder, 1990).

The students, themselves, expressed that this was a life-changing experience. As a result, the students entered the classroom with higher expectations for themselves, their profession and their students.
The following readings were among those chosen:

*Courage to Teach*, P. Palmer (1998)  
*Critical Issues Papers*, AED Scholars (2008)  
*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, P. Freire (1970)  
*Schooling in the U.S.*, F. Parkay (2007)  
*Savage Inequalities*, J. Kozol (1991)  
*Developing Democratic Character in the Young*, R. Soder, J. Goodlad, T. McMannon (2001)

(Students also read and discussed a number of articles on democratic schooling, equity, and social justice in education.)

The instructors and students posed questions and shared ideas from the texts and from one another. We created new understandings from which a new reality might develop, from dialogue to praxis with the hope of some transformation of reality—a reality of schooling which was meeting the needs of a small portion of students (Goodlad, 1984). Freire offered a “pedagogy that includes elements for a model of an alternative society, very much a society not as it is now but as it should and can be” (Mayo, 2004, p.39).

We, the instructors, wondered at this point, what would happen to our profession if teacher candidates did not have the opportunity for this kind of study? We wondered about teacher training programs that did not hold the Mission of the Agenda (AED) as its very core. We began to realize the great value and responsibility of stewardship. Those who have experienced deep learning, and transformation of self and world, must accept the work of stewardship and renewing the process, and delivering this experience of life and learning to the youth of our nation. Those who do not seek this struggle for change and awareness of self cannot be teachers, must not be teachers. They are not able to lead students in this very human endeavor of self-realization if they themselves do not undertake it. We were privileged and grateful to be a part of the hard work, the journey inward...
with our students to know themselves and their beliefs in schooling and children, in order to create, outwardly, a more authentic reality.

What we know now is our students were inspired, and they entered student teaching with a shared vision, a clear philosophy and the methodology to do things differently. Their goals included teaching more equitably and more inclusively, while at the same time challenging the status quo. Their goal was to teach content, literacy and critical literacy, all essential for democratic citizenship. It is in school that children will learn these skills and develop the motivation to create this change (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004).

Looking back on the experience of dialogue and praxis, it is fair to say that we all experienced deep learning, “team learning” (Senge, 2000, p.74). It was a learning that would change each of us individually and all of us as a community. It most certainly would change the way we would be and would work in school. The reality of that change surfaced in the written lessons during the months that followed. We observed change in their lesson plans and in their teaching. The most powerful evidence was in the objectives they were writing.

The following are examples written by the student teachers in their daily lessons, 2009-2010. We did not direct them to write these new and different objectives. They emerged from their thinking and were seen in their plans.

**Democracy Objectives**

**Group 1** Objectives addressing the student’s responsibility to self—the role of the individual in a democratic society.

**Students Will Be Able To (SWBAT):**

- Prepare to participate in a class debate by reading documents of Scopes Trial and identify their arguments.
- Participate in a Jeopardy game and display good sportsmanship.
- Explain and defend, in her own words, opinions on the Big Bang Theory.
Group 2 Objectives addressing the student’s responsibility to the whole—the role with regard to the community.

SWBAT:
- Recognize opposing arguments, respond respectfully and thoughtfully, ensuring that all feel safe and included in the discussion.
- Work together in groups to decide which art works will be in the show. Everyone will get a voice and share their thoughts concerning the works. The groups will come to consensus.
- Evaluate her/his peers’ work in a cooperative group to ensure that all students learn and improve their projects.

Group 3 Objectives concerning the student’s responsibility to the environment—the democratic responsibility as stewards of the planet and all living things.

SWBAT:
- Participate in a discussion on animal rights and food production.
- Participate in a field trip to a sustainable farm and prepare a “trashless” lunch.
- Investigate and discuss together ways to lessen our dependency on fossil fuels and decrease the rising amounts of greenhouse gasses.

We witnessed a transformed reality in classrooms as a result of the study and conversations we had had in our courses. These objectives were designed to create a better place where all students would learn the good and necessary content in an environment where inclusion, dignity and safety are guaranteed to each. We were witnessing a change in the direction of social justice.

The lesson objectives still included and strongly focused on the standards and expectations of content and language. Democracy objectives, however, became a framework for those expectations. These objectives addressed the context and environment that would create the democratic setting and interactions. This may well be an experience of the purpose and power of the “human conversation” which John Goodlad offers as the essence of human learning. According to Goodlad and the Agenda for Education in a Democracy (AED), we must teach children how to live and work together, as well as how to treat all living things and the planet in order to create a better world. We cannot assume that students will learn these skills through association or osmosis (Goodlad, Mantel-Bromley, Goodlad, 2004).
We were fortunate to experience simultaneous renewal, a central operational aspect of the AED. It is the primary epistemology of the Agenda. It is the way we create knowledge together, through dialogue and praxis. In the process we experienced, everyone learned, everyone taught; reality in those classrooms was transformed. The experience changed the way we, the instructors, would teach our course, just as it changed the way the new teachers would do their work. We saw the value and decided to bring this curriculum to every lesson in every classroom.

In fall 2010, we revised the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP, Echervarria, Vogt & Short, 2006) template in order to include the writing of democracy objectives. This became part of the daily planning process along with standards, and objectives, both content and language. Our students were required to consider the teaching of skills for democratic participation, skills recognized as necessary for 21st century citizens. Our students were asked to consider not only teaching these skills each day, but assessing the skills each day, as well. It became clear to us that this part of the curriculum could no longer be left to chance or remain a “hidden agenda.” Rather, the goal would be to guarantee the creation of an instructional framework for democracy.

**Connecting to the Agenda**

Spring 2010, we challenged our students to make sense of this work, the writing of democracy objectives, as it connected to and is an expression of the Four-Part Mission of the Agenda. We, the instructors, saw this connection and we wondered: what about the students’ understanding of this work? How is it part of the greater story, the work being done around the country in other NNER settings? (www.nner.partnerships.org).

We shared with the students the Critical Issues Papers written by the Agenda for Education in a Democracy Scholars so they could grapple with issues of teaching a more diverse population and the struggles of inequity in schools in our nation. Along with the papers, students read Education for Everyone (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad 2004). The students then synthesized the struggles of public schools, the mission of the agenda and the writing of democracy objectives. They accomplished this study individually, looking at their own objectives. They worked in small groups, and then in the larger cohort. Through that examination and synthesis, they were able to make sense of their work and organize the objectives in the four parts of the Mission. Several examples follow:
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The Four Part Mission

**Enculturation SWBAT:**
- Evaluate the effects that substance abuse has on the whole of society, working collaboratively with peers.
- Utilize research skills and technology to gather information that they will evaluate critically in cooperative teams.

**Equal Access to Knowledge SWBAT:**
- Explain to a partner a summary of the book, and if you agree or disagree with the statement on the board. Every student will share thoughts.
- Form groups to create a class presentation and create an assessment to ensure that all are participating, teaching and learning.

**Nurturing Pedagogy SWBAT:**
- Hear and validate each person's question before asking Mr. Wise a question.
- Explain your method and reasoning used in solving the problem so that everyone understands and shares your understanding and success.

**Stewardship SWBAT:**
- Explain the UN's mission to aid those in need (United Nations Emergency Packages)
- Critique classroom environment and group activity: Did everyone feel included and did each person contribute?

Section II

2011 – 2012 School Year – Current Work

*Deepening the Connection to 21st Century Skills, Standards and Assessments*

At the start of 2011 school year, using the modified SIOP lesson plan (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2006), we were clear in our expectations that pre-service teachers would create plans incorporating democracy objectives. Knowledge of and skills for democratic participation in the 21st century are as essential to their teaching as are content knowledge and language skills. This, we believe, should be the case. And if we heed Sizer's warning and have courage for a dose of self-scrutiny, then this must be the case.

The following examples demonstrate the growing capacity of our students to write clear and measurable objectives. These examples were taken from students' lesson plans during the fall semester, 2011 practicum experience, preceding student teaching.
SWBAT:
• Listen respectively while someone else is talking, whether it is your classmate, group member or teacher, in order to learn from others’ perspectives.
• Contribute individually and as a group to the larger class project of which the entire class will have ownership for the purpose of experiencing collaboration.
• Communicate and delegate within a group to find best solutions, acknowledging that multiple perspectives lead us to better understandings.
• Listen attentively to each person during the Socratic Seminar with the goal of learning, clarifying one’s beliefs and perhaps revising one’s own thinking.
• Participate in today’s game and be fair, so that all students feel safe. All students will accept the responsibility of creating a good and healthy environment.
• Reflect on working with peers during a three-week project and put in their own words their feelings around “team learning.” Students will explain what helps them learn, and therefore, become partners in the process of their education.

By the end of fall semester, 2011, we again renewed our thinking to include more complete lesson alignment. Our students already understood and created lessons that aligned content and language standards, objectives, instructional strategies and assessment. They were thoroughly aware of the need to align the work for students so that all students would experience the solid direction and good content in order achieve the standards. The next step was to demonstrate the need for alignment with regard to teaching democracy including standards and assessments for 21st century skills. Then, more challenging questions arose.

How do we assess skills such as collaboration, respectful participation, responsibility, active stewardship? How do we evaluate the dispositions of cooperation, civility, global awareness, self-awareness, intrinsic motivation and kindness? How do we align lesson standards, activities, assessments that concern the well-being of our democracy and the continuation of American ideals and goals? These were the questions we were ready to ask our students and excited to search with them for answers. We all believed that if these were among the basic goals for schooling in a democracy, then the answers must be out there and possible.

The masters students had already done well with the writing and inclusion of clear democracy objectives. We began the next level of study looking closely at the new Colorado Teacher Standards and 21st Century Skills, not yet accepted, but
in progress (CDE website.) We used these documents as the sources for standards. The alignment of democracy objectives and 21st Century Skills and Standards was evident. That step was followed by several hours of discussion among the students and instructors considering ways to assess these objectives, ways which incorporated but not limited to teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, self evaluation, and traditional, authentic and transformative assessments. Examples of this work were taken from the lesson plans of the master’s students during student teaching in the spring semester, 2012:

**Example #1**  
**Lesson Plan for General Chemistry**  
**January 23, 2012**  
**Topic: Molar Masses of Gases**  
*Standard:* Colorado Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Description Learning and Behavior Skills — Communication (read, write, listen and speak effectively) Collaboration (work effectively with others).

*Democracy Objective:* SWBAT collaboratively write, read, and share the data from their group’s lab with the rest of the class using a Google Documents form in order to include everyone in the discussion and enhance learning for all.

*Assessment:* Students will use the Evidence of Competency forms and process to evaluate how effectively their group collaborated to complete their lab.

**Example #2**  
**Lesson Plan for World History**  
**February 16, 2012**  
**Topic: American Revolution**  

*Democracy Objective:* SWBAT recognize the value of civic engagement and construct a clear, coherent and persuasive argument after watching the video on the American Revolution. The purpose is for students to experience the rights we have
and to prepare them to explain these rights and their feelings in persuasive piece. Assessment: Students will write their Valley Forge Letter Home explaining in writing the rights of the soldiers and their own feelings about the experience.

Example #3
Lesson Plan for 9th Grade English
February 9, 2012,

**Topic:** Lord of the Flies

**Standard:** 21st Century Skills: Civil Participation, Collaboration, Participation in a Democratic Process

**Democracy Objective:** SWBAT debate and defend a position concerning Jack’s crimes in Lord of the Flies by participating in a mock trial activity. The purpose is to further explore the legal system in our democracy and to civilly debate with their peers.

**Assessment:** Students will participate in mock trial and assess their participation and the class in terms of creating a productive environment and civil interaction. Students will address the following questions concerning our democracy and their views about humanity: 1. Is it possible for someone to be held accountable for crimes if he/she was not actively involved in those crimes? 2. Are human beings inherently selfish?

Example #4 (written by instructors as a model for student teachers)
Lesson Plan for EDUC 687–Seminar
September 24, 2011,

**Topic:** Lesson Planning

**Standard:** Colorado Teachers shall recognize the school’s role in teaching and perpetuating our democratic system.

**Democracy Objective:** SWBAT collaborate with a partner and create lesson plans in order to share strategies that address the skills students need to participate in our democracy. Students will experience collaboration and will create lessons with the goal of teaching democracy.
Assessment: In small groups, students will share the written lessons and participate in dialogue assessing their work and their collaborative experience. What did they learn? How did they feel?

During the spring semester, 2012, the instructors observed classes and paid particular attention to clarity of standards, measurable objectives, and strategies for teaching and assessing. This has been long standing practice for content and literacy standards. And now, very purposefully, we do this for all 21st century skills and standards for teaching democracy. Alignment is key to determine what students should learn and whether or not they have learned it. This attention to good teaching of democratic participation and attitudes does not, in any way, replace the importance of academic achievement or of rigor required in all disciplines. It does, however, increase the feasibility for safe environments for all children and the possibility of equal access and nurturing pedagogy.

Section III
Concluding Thoughts and Future Work

Our interpretation and implementation of the Mission developed in collaboration with our students over time. Continually deepening our understanding of the Mission of the Agenda (AED), our work has brought us full circle with new meanings and new practices. The goals of the teacher training program, from its inception, have been grounded in the Four-Part Mission of the Agenda. Each year, in ongoing dialogue with pre-service teachers, we reached a better sense of the structures and processes to achieve the mission. From the writing of daily objectives that encourage democratic behavior, we have progressed to the inclusion of statements of rationale and purpose for the objectives, as well as assessment. Because the objectives are designed to expose all students to experiential learning in a democratic setting, where students create their own understanding of civil living, they are far different from mere behavioral mandates. All students are included in the experiences of interaction and community. With the skills and knowledge they attain from living democracy, they will be empowered to participate, to know themselves and to think for themselves.

To establish clearer vision and content to the work, we outlined key concepts of study in the form of essential questions. These questions opened our students’ minds to the moral considerations of our profession: the challenges of schooling
as the means of protecting our democracy; the philosophical intersections of the Mission, 21st Century Skills and teacher preparation; the content of democratic character we are to develop in our youth; and the underlying foundation of dialogue as a way of learning and being in democracy. Our work has taken us to new experiences with new teachers, each year. Because of the unfinished nature of reality and knowledge (Freire, 1970) we expect these to be dynamic, a living and changing document. This has been the direction. The progress of the work will be ongoing.

Our future work will take us to further examination of the task of assessment. How will we know and how will young people know for themselves that they are, in fact, acquiring the skills, knowledge and dispositions necessary for democratic citizenship in this century. If our goal is to raise leaders in our nation, we can look to the area of metacognition as means for students to self-assess and become leaders in their own education. The notion of transformative assessment will allow students to more completely enter the process as leaders and teachers (Brendtro, Mitchell & McCall, 2009). The acceptance of varied ways to ask students to work, templates and rubrics to guide students in their engagement, as well as multiple ways of having students express their creativity and knowledge are the essence and direction for future work.

There truly is no end to the possibilities and the work which will render our public schools more inclusive and more celebrative of diversity of our population and uniqueness of every child. This work asks for collaboration and energy on the part of educators. We invite our colleagues into dialogue with us and with each other in order to create schools we all hope for and schools all children deserve.
References


State Board of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education Website,

www.cde.state.co.us

www.nner.partnerships.org