Reflections on Multiculturalism in Education

Posted on July 6, 2017 by Thomas Mets

This was my final paper for a class on multiculturalism in education.

There are currently two conflicting developments within the field of education. On the one hand, policies such as No Child Left Behind and Common Core have demonstrated a push for national standards, to ensure that students all over the country get the same quality of education. On the other hand, there is a greater official understanding of the need to provide students individual attention with inclusive settings, and the reconciliation of different cultures. Diversity comes in many forms, as the system has to accommodate the diversity within the country, the state, the city and the individual school. This leaves teachers with a lot to figure out, especially when it comes to their individual philosophy. They have to provide appropriate support for each student, while meeting national and state standards.

Students spend most of their lives outside of their classroom, and they're shaped by factors that educators are unable to control. The book *Freakonomics* brought my attention to correlations between a student's academic success and the amount of books in the household, or the age of the mother when her first child is born (p.174). This all occurs before the student enters the classroom, a reminder of the limitations in discussions about what educators can do. It's important for teachers and administrators to be as effective as possible, but there is more to education than what they provide.

Teachers are expected to weigh different needs, and to find the right balance in different categories. They have to come up with a curriculum for an entire classroom while
determining ways to allow individual students to achieve their full potential. From a policy perspective, they have to determine when it's necessary to implement rules set from the top-down, and when it's appropriate to execute policies from the bottom. When change occurs, they have to avoid going too far, be it in implementing new technology or dealing with transitions in cultural norms, especially in fighting bullying and discrimination, or in embracing diversity.

Standards are a significant source of controversy, because the stakes are so high, as in anything to do with education. If something goes wrong, an entire generation is unable to achieve its full potential. I'm sympathetic to all sides when it comes to Common Core. I can appreciate the arguments that individuals on the local level know what is best for their community so that there are numerous advantages to bottom-up approaches over a national top-down initiative. However, there are certainly benefits to a national approach. Families move, kids go to universities out of state, and it will be essential for adults entering the workforce to be able to meet the same standards as contemporaries from other states and other countries. I've read about the numerous mistakes with implementation on the national level, although this would not have been necessary if education leaders on the local level had been able to provide appropriate management.

There are occasional stories of honors students who fail a standardized test, exposing the weakness of a curriculum. Bridget Green of New Orleans is the prototypical example. She was a high school valedictorian accepted by a state university, who had difficulty meeting the minimum ACT score. Her education had left her completely unprepared for the higher expectations outside her school. The trouble isn’t that the national test was too difficult, but that her curriculum had been so unsatisfactory.

On occasion, I'll read about success stories of schools where children initially failed new standards, but after a change in policy, were able to demonstrate remarkable improvement. This does always make me skeptical. I wonder if a random success is given outsized publicity, or if another factor such as a change in student composition contributed to improved statistics. Another concern is that administrations may have figured out how to teach to the standard to the exclusion of everything else, which raises the possibility that the pattern will repeat itself when new standards are implemented. For all the complaints about the difficulty of meeting benchmarks, the schools that suffer from new standards tend to be seriously flawed.
Some of the biggest problems do seem to have fixes, which suggests that the issue is with the shortcomings of standards rather than their existence. It is unrealistic to expect students who are not at grade level to meet national standards within a year, but there have to be alternatives to continuing with a system that wasn’t working before, and expecting success. Rather than expecting kids in tenth grade reading at a sixth grade level to be at a tenth grade level within a year—which is what the standards are going to measure when finding students wanting—there should be initiatives to help them.

National standards have to make room for the particular strengths of localities. New York City has a high population density, which means that every student is able to travel to multiple schools. That does allow for unique approaches. For example, if eighty tenth graders within the city could benefit from the same specific approach, it might be worth sending them all to the same school. New York City schools are diverse, so different schools will fill different needs for their populations. In areas with high immigration, there may be a greater need to educate kids on American social norms. In areas where children rarely leave the Bronx, it could be advantageous to expand their horizons with regular field trips. There is a concern that administrators who stumble into positions of national leadership will grasp onto something that worked in another country, and insist that everyone in the United States try it, neglecting the obvious differences, to say nothing of the subtle variations. New York City schools may have a much higher immigrant community than nations where citizenship is more restricted. These will be populations with divergent needs.
As teachers, we have to acknowledge our ignorance at times. There will be cultural norms students don’t care for, as well as priorities that we haven’t considered. Educators will have to be sensitive to all of this. Well-meaning people will make mistakes when determining policies where the goal is to acknowledge diversity. Sometimes, officials will be ignorant of specific cultures, as may occur with East Asians. They may also forget the differences between subcultures. A recent Chinese immigrant may speak Mandarin, Cantonese, or Fujianese. The designation African-American applies to groups that have different communities: the descendants of southern slaves, Caribbean-Americans, recent immigrants, and their children. An earnest desire to help kids understand their culture ignores children of varied cultures, such as mixed race kids. I can understand the frustrations of a teacher who just wanted to teach Civics, and didn’t want to think about all of this, although it is necessary.

I’m studying to be an English Teacher (7th-12th grade) so what I’ve learned is considered in that context. As in a math class, students are expected to build on prior knowledge, but there’s much more flexibility when it comes to material to cover. It can lead to students coming to class with very divergent background knowledge. There really isn’t a canon, allowing teachers to use material that they’re more invested in, although there is also the risk that students will consistently be exposed to the same short story. There has been a recent shift with a greater focus on information texts, and communication, which requires modifications in curricula.

One strategy I’ve come across in numerous places that is appropriate for Intermediate or High School ELA classes is to carefully select subject matter that involves individuals with similar backgrounds to the students. Several of the articles in Annual Editions suggested selecting diverse reading material, something also mentioned by students in a multicultural club chaired by a teacher I interviewed. This is a consideration teachers will have to be aware of.
I cotaught a 10th grade English class in a Harlem summer school, using material selected by the supervising teacher. We focused on short stories: two by dead European authors, and two by Harlem Renaissance figure Langston Hughes. It was an effective combination, and it may have helped to have material with connections to African-American students.

The most important thing is to figure out what works. I was an English major in college, and it shows at times. However, I have always been interested in data. There are certain teaching strategies that I might find worrisome, but the results are more important than personal preferences. It's always easy to admit that others may be biased and mistaken, but there is also the possibility that I'm wrong.

I'm concerned about the approach with a program described in the article "Life Skills Yield Stronger Academic Performance Reflection." It suggests creating a separate curriculum for children of a particular race. That strategy has led to subpar education in the past, and goes against the Supreme Court's conclusion on education that separate institutions are inherently unequal. I also believe that it's advantageous for students entering the adult world to have similar frames of reference, which only works when children have similar educations regardless of race. It could contribute to a troubling perception that those unfamiliar with their syllabus are ignorant, when they simply covered different material in their classrooms.

I didn't learn about individuals who fit my background in any of my classes, since there aren't prominent short stories written about Estonians, nor do I recall anyone from the Baltics being important in history class. I wasn't bothered by the idea that there hadn't been any Estonian-Americans who had succeeded in the industries I wanted to work in. That said, I did still learn about my culture outside of school, and it's certainly possible that I identified with numerous Caucasian brown-haired boys (IE- Tom Sawyer).

I can appreciate that some students have different needs. One of my classmates related an anecdote of a professor troubled by a student's query about whether the fact that the only black women she heard about in classes meant that she was supposed to be a slave. I'm sure many teachers want to end that conversation as soon as possible, telling the student "Of course not!" and sending them back to their assigned reading. But it may often be up to teachers to explain to certain students their culture.

It has become clear in the classroom discussions and reading that many of the problems and solutions are political. Teachers are limited by the decisions of the departments within their school, and those departments deal with city, state and national orders. For example, I may think that it would be best if some kids are held back a year, but that might not be possible, and there wouldn't be much that an individual teacher can do about it.
At this point, I’m learning what I don’t know. Teachers have to be prepared for difficult discussions on topics where they’ll be uninformed. There may be parents with different priorities. On one extreme would be parents who are outraged that their child only has a 96 average. On the other extreme will be parents who simply don’t prioritize education. Anyone involved in education will have to be ready for these, and other cultural differences.

Can Hillary Clinton Keep Running?

Right now, there’s some talk about the Democrats positioning themselves to run against Trump. And some of it has included the woman who did win the popular vote by two percent.

She would be one of the oldest candidates ever, but not the oldest. I don’t know the exact age at which someone’s no longer a presidential contender (75 feels like the cutoff for me) but Hillary will not have reached that in November 2020. At least going by previous nominees. In 2020, she would be several months younger than Bob Dole was in 1996. She’ll also be an year younger than Donald Trump, who has already started the legal process of running for reelection.

Parties haven’t recently nominated General Election losers, but it is a small sample set. Carter lost 44 states, but the Democratic party nominated his Veep the next timer around. Mondale lost 49 states, so he couldn’t recover from that. Dukakis lost 40 states.

Dole and McCain were as old as they could be as presidential nominees. Gore led in polls.
in 2004, but opted to be a messenger on environmental issues (which has made him pretty wealthy.) Kerry won a weak field in 2004, when it was determined that a war hero would be a good challenger to Bush. In 2008, a white guy who had been in the Senate for 24 years just didn't fit a message of change, although he considered running for much of 2006. There was some chatter about Romney in 2016, although he seemed to be scared away by Jeb Bush’s connections.

It’s possible for the right candidate to run again after a losing presidential bid. For example, had Obama lost in 2008, he would have been viable as a presidential contender later because of his unique appeal for various party figures. He would still be a favorite of activists, academics and African-Americans. He would still be fairly young, which is significant in staying relevant as a national candidate. William Jennings Bryant was 37 the first time he ran for President. Tom Dewey was 42 when he became the Republican nominee the first time. Richard Nixon was 47 his first go at the nomination. Adlai Stevenson was in his early 50s the first time he ran.

The things that make Hillary a strong candidate in 2016 won't all disappear in 2020. She'll still have an impressive resume. She would still be in the position to be the first female President. She’ll still have friends in high places among fundraisers and party figures. A credible bid doesn’t seem inconceivable.

It seems kind of odd for all the advantages Hillary had in 2016 to disappear in 2020. Obviously some things have changed. Losing a general election would hurt her reputation as an electoral powerhouse (although that was based on an expectation that any Democrat will do well). I’d expect a more impressive bench in 2020, as Democrats elected during the Obama administration get more experience. And there'll be slightly less nostalgia for the Clinton years with more newer voters. I did think that with a narrow Gore/ Kerry style loss, a plausible run would have seemed possible. She ended up having a different kind of loss, winning the popular vote by a decent margin. However, her loss was against Trump, which complicates things.

She’ll likely have more primary opposition, but that might work in her favor. In a crowded field, it may be tougher for someone to emerge, especially with her advantage in name recognition.

There is obviously significant downside in that any loss would define her reputation, turning her into a two-time loser (or perhaps a general election nominee who failed to win
A Lifeskills Class for African American Boys

Posted on June 19, 2017 by Thomas Mets

This was something I wrote for a class on multiculturalism in Education, in response to an article on the success of a special program in a California High School aimed at African American male students, with a greater emphasis on reading relevant to their culture.

Three important facts that the author uses to support the article are...

- There is a disparity of academic outcomes for white students and African-American counterparts, with white 8th-graders scoring 26 percent better on reading tests, and 31 percent better on math tests.
- White students in poverty have comparable education outcomes to black students outside of poverty.
- The average GPA of students in the program rose from 1.6 to 3.0

Other readings have touched on similar problems for different groups, such as how the assumption that children have one frame of reference hinders immigrant children unfamiliar with American pop culture.

The article touches on several land mines, as a program for students of one race might be seen as emphasizing their otherness when the purpose is to foster equality. However uneasy that makes me, the results are impressive. I am curious if there are possible alternate explanations for the improvement (Are the teachers better? How much of the difference comes down to providing a teacher with five instructional aides per eight freshman students?)
There are various counterfactuals to the idea that a major cause of the education outcome gap is the way the curriculum is alien to the experiences of certain minority groups, considering the average grades of other minorities and immigrant groups. For example, children of Indian immigrants perform well academically despite a curriculum that is based on an entirely different culture. Considering how many students are unable to perform various tasks (IE- cooking, signing a check, strategies for studying, making decisions about medical care), a lifeskills class could be useful, although I would expect some emphasis on more mundane aspects of life rather than just familiarizing young black students with the state of the education gap and African-American history.

There are several implications for the classroom. As a teacher, I could propose incorporating similar programs should I be in a high school that fit the profile. I could also aim to select material relevant to the cultural identities of the students, and to be wary of the perception that I don’t have high hopes for any of the students.
There's a profile in Politico about Jason Kander, former Secretary of State in Missouri, who lost a close race for Senate. Some people in a political forum I frequent want him to run for President for a strength of that. There isn't much modern precedent for that, although it has happened in the past. Tom Dewey was a prosecutor who almost became the Republican nominee for President in 1936 on the strength of a close bid for Governor of New York in 1934. William Jennings Bryan was a three time nominee for President after serving in Congress for two terms, and losing a bid to be Senator of Nebraska. In 1860, the Republicans nominated a former one term Congressman to be their presidential nominee on the strength of his campaign for Senate in the previous midterms. His face is now on the penny.

This gets me thinking about precedent and who becomes presidential nominees. Often it's someone who fits the profile of earlier candidates. If the Democrats nominate Kamala Harris, Cory Booker, Elizabeth Warren, Amy Klobuchar or Kristen Gillibrand, it would fit the profile of Senators who have gotten the presidential nomination in the past. If Cuomo gets it, he'll follow in the footsteps of many big-state Governors.

However, it's entirely possible they'll go with someone unprecedented. With the benefit of hindsight there are things that are obvious to us now that weren't obvious years ago.

It makes sense that a young African-American senator from the big state next to Iowa with an activist background could be a strong contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, but people didn't see that twelve years ago. The Audacity of Hope didn't come out until October 2006, and that book tour helped get him presidential buzz.

Trump’s the elephant in the room when it comes to precedent, and it could very well be that he got the White House as the result of weird flukes. On the other hand, we could now see that the political parties have become vulnerable to people running third party campaigns in presidential primaries. Ross Perot got 19,743,821 votes in the 1992 presidential election, and that wasn’t enough for a single electoral vote. Donald Trump gets five and a half million less votes in the Republican presidential primary, and that gets him the institutional support of one of the major political parties.

A trap that we can fall into (and I'm not exception) is to look at everything through the lens of what's happened in the past. Sometimes it works (IE- Republicans nominate the next in line, so Mitt Romney was the favorite in 2012.) Sometimes it doesn't.

No small state Governor was elected President. Until Bill Clinton did it. The nomination of a President’s son seemed like a pre-Civil War relic, until George W Bush did it. The presidential campaigns had obviously become too lengthy for people just elected to office, until Obama fought for the nomination. You had to serve in some kind of public office to be President, until Trump.

It's possible that there's someone planning a presidential bid right now who doesn't fit the profile of a candidate. And four years from now, we might look at the ways in which it all
makes sense in retrospect why Jason Kander, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, or Disney CEO Bob Iger ended up becoming President.

Overcompensating Against Bullying in Schools
Posted on June 18, 2017 by Thomas Mets

This was something I wrote for a class on multiculturalism in education in response to an article about whether anti-bullying efforts can go too far.

Susan Porter was a Dean of Students in California’s Branson School who became concerned with new statistics which seemingly demonstrated an increase of instances in bullying. As she researched the subject more, she determined that behavior hadn’t changed, but that the definition of bullying had expanded. She believed some of the responses were ineffective, failing to take into account the development of preadolescent and adolescent brains. She thought labeling students was also destructive, as it encourages them to embrace labels like victim and bully.

Facts she uses to back up her arguments include…

- Statistics on bullying are inconsistent, with one source suggesting that 1 in 5 students are bullied, and another suggesting that 77 percent of students have recently been bullied.
- Adolescents are prone to misinterpreting facial cues, which has consequences when children take offense.
- Adolescents are more likely to respond emotionally to social situations.

There have been a lot of articles written about bullying in newspapers and magazines. It’s often the subject of TV shows that deal with crime and/ or adolescent characters. For similar reasons, the subject of bullying is impossible to avoid for anyone interested in being a teacher. I completed an online module on bullying, and attended the mandatory DASA (Dignity for All Students Act) training workshop. A piece on concerns about overreaction is welcome, considering how few people in education are willing to tackle that topic.

In many ways it’s a good thing that the definition of bullying has been expanded. We’re much less accepting of discrimination than previous generations, although anti-bullying efforts sometimes have a different black and white way of looking at the world, with bullies as the bad guys instead of minority groups. I do think it should be possible to call out bad behavior and even to label those who sometimes commit it without suggesting that it is immutable.
Considering the efforts taken against bullying, it is useful to remind teachers to avoid overreactions. When there's a change in policy, be it in culture or technology, there is the potential for some to embrace it too stridently. It takes a while to determine the appropriate balance. It's especially possible in this category, in a profession with a disproportionately high number of well-meaning individuals worried about social justice and underdogs. The school needs to be an environment where students can come to teachers with their concerns, but teachers must also consider the imperfections of subjective impressions.

Posted in Education, Politics | Tagged bullying, multiculturalism | Leave a comment

What Kalevipoeg Means to Me
Posted on June 17, 2017 by Thomas Mets

After my Kalevipoeg essay for an Estonian Culture class in an English language Baltic Studies program at the University of Tartu, I was asked about what the story had meant to me. This was my response.

As a wannabe writer, I have a clinical view of stories, which makes it difficult for me to develop an opinion about the work. I can analyze the flaws, and some examples of what the writer's trying to do, but I lose sight of the subjective stuff and sometimes the bigger picture. Add to this the way Kalevipoeg has always been a fixture in my cultural understanding, as the national hero of Estonia, and you can see why I can write an essay on the topic without really giving my opinion on it.

It never came up in class, but I speak Estonian (I don't write effectively in the language.) My mother's from Estonia, as are my father's parents. I've always been aware of Kalevipoeg as one of the great works of the Estonian language, along with Kevaded., a novel and film
about the experiences of schoolchildren over the course of an year. Hell, a family friend wrote an official English translation of *Kalevipoeg*. One of the first things I wrote was my own adaptation of it, so the work has tremendous personal significance. But I'm not sure I know what to think of it.

It has endearing qualities that I'd sometimes like to imitate in my own work. This would include the way the varied folklore is united into one fantastic world, full of goblins and wizards, and warriors with the faces of dogs. In some stories, it may be worth recapturing the fantastic primitivism, such as *Kalevipoeg*’s varying sizes and other ridiculous inconsistencies, which have their own charm. There's a primal appeal to the idea that *Kalevipoeg* just swims to Finland to chase after an enemy. Kreutzwald's style and artistic flourishes imbue the work with an epic and mythic sensibility, although it's just as often repetitive and redundant. That's one element I'd be more careful when appropriating, given how it sometimes seems to collapse into self-parody.

Posted in *Eesti*, *Literature*, *Writing* | Tagged *Kalevipoeg* | Leave a comment

**A Middle School Social Studies Teacher’s Experiences on Culture and Comic Books**

*Posted on June 17, 2017 by Thomas Mets*

This is based on an interview I did for the class on Multiculturalism in my Education masters program.

GT is a Social Studies teacher in Middlesex County, New Jersey. I've known him for several years, since before I decided to go for an Education Masters. In the course of the interviews, I discovered that he has an eclectic teaching background particularly appropriate for this assignment.

GT graduated college with a Bachelor's degree in History. He had initially been a psychology student, but decided that the PHD track was not for him. An adviser had pointed out that due to his propensity for taking history electives (especially American History and Ethnic Studies) he had satisfied the requirements for certification in the field. At that point, he was already working as a substitute teacher.

He described his own experiences as a student as being very memorable, with more bad than good. However, he remembered great peaks courtesy of great teachers. He wanted to make the school environment a better experience for children who suffer socially.

Last year (Fall 2013), GT became a full-time eighth grade US History and Civics teacher. Prior to that, he had been a long-term substitute (a certified teacher in a subject who comes in part-way through the school year for an absence of 20 days or more) for three times, twice because the regular teacher was on maternity leave, and once because a teacher had a planned surgery/ recovery.

These schools had similar demographics. Both were the zoned schools for a suburban part of New Jersey that is roughly 50% white, and 30% Asian, with the final fifth consisting of African-American, Latino, and South Asian students. GT believes that there has been
relatively little conflict between these groups, although he did notice a racial component to student election tickets. The area does have a thriving Korean district, although his experience with ELLs (English Language Learners) has been limited. The one recent immigrant had an IEP, as well as instructions to allow extra time on tests. He let the student know to come to him with any concerns, and described the student as “motivated and catching up very quickly.” He estimates that about 95% of students are fluent English speakers, and that the remaining students have IEPs.

GT recalls the first days of his long-term substitute stints being particularly challenging. He noted that the students treated him like any other substitute, not considering that he would be with them for several months. The solution was to learn everyone’s name and seating, and to demonstrate that they were accountable for their actions.

He did admit that it took several days to understand whether individual students are bullied. It took some time to determine the nuances of who was socially excluded, or abused. From his experience, most bullying occurs outside the classroom. When he witnessed what appeared to be harassment, he’d shut it down immediately, and talk with the student who was targeted about how to proceed. There is significant administration support in this category, as one of the top priorities in the school is for the students to realize that it is a safe space.

As a history teacher, he is not affected as much by state standards or the common core. He is given several guidelines by the administration, especially required term projects. In one instance, the administration required teachers to prepare for one week of classes on a “herstory” theme, focusing on the accomplishments of notable women and their role in US History. They were given two months notice on this.

GT currently teaches six classes in the middle school, and is the only eighth grade History teacher. The schedule is unusual, with students having six of their eight classes in each day, so on a given day he’ll teach four or five 45-60 minute classes. While there are occasional conversations about the curriculum in the teacher’s lounge, he believes that he has been given a lot of flexibility over what to cover in the classroom.

GT’s preference with the US History and Civics class is to lead with current events, as students are more engaged when they see contemporary implications of historical discussions. Problems do sometimes result when students feel passionately about an issue
There are some topics he will not explore in great depth. He was concerned about addressing debates involving decriminalization of drugs like marijuana, until he saw a faculty-approved pro-legalization poster made by the high school's libertarian club. Afterward, he felt more comfortable with allowing classroom discussions on that topic. However, he remains nervous about discussions on gun policy, especially in the aftermath of Sandy Hook. He's worried that a student expressing a pro-gun sentiment in a discussion about the second amendment might be misconstrued by a mother. As he described it, “Even if the discussion stays calm and respectful, the second-hand version might worry a parent.”

One of his favorite strategies is to have students propose constitutional amendments, and try to convince three-quarters of their class to agree. It helps teach students the process, as well the difficulty in getting a large group to agree to a particular stand on a controversial issue. This had led to interesting discussions on possibly replacing the Electoral College with the popular vote, lowering the voting age, economic policy and environmental issues. The one proposed change with unanimous support in the classroom was the idea of replacing the native birth requirement for the presidency with 15 years citizenship.

There is a set structure in the classroom with a Do Now followed by a brief discussion on the theme of the day's lesson. Then he'll pass out the day's notes, and launch into a brief mini-lecture, stopping for questions when appropriate. The class typically ends with an explanation of the homework, and with students spending the final 10-15 minutes getting started on that. An advantage of having students start homework while in the classroom is that they can ask him questions if they run into any trouble.

He is familiar with the concept of multiple intelligences, and makes sure to incorporate bits of different types of learning into his lessons. He'll write key points on the board, and ensure that the lessons have a hands-on component. With quieter students, he will try to determine if they're paying attention to the lesson or whether they're distracted. If he determines that students are not paying attention, he will call on them. With quiet children, he'll try to respect their learning style and to gently prod them into opening up more if they seem especially interested in a topic.

GT describes a positive relationship with parents. The primary source of conflict is when parents are upset that their children have failed to meet high standards. His solution is to provide explanations on how the students fell short of the grades, and where they can improve.
It's standard policy in his school that every teacher chairs one extracurricular activity. He picked the Multicultural club. He thought it was the type of club he would have enjoyed going to when he was in middle school and high school. He modeled the club on his synagogue's teen group “a combination of discussion and debate topics, occasional presentations from members, reading material available, and food on the table.” Students will often bring in food related to their culture, a development that has increased the numbers of members of the club since he became its faculty adviser.

The club has twelve regular members, along with 1 or 2 additions on a normal day. In a typical session, a few group members will do a presentation on something about their culture. I asked him what he had learned through these presentations, and he noted that he was unaware of the size of the current Korean pop music scene, or the quality of Filipino spring rolls. The club members are mostly girls, and consist mainly of eighth graders.

A comic book fan, GT often bought graphic novels as reading material for the club. Since it is a middle school, he cleared any questionable material with the administration first. He
selected comics that didn’t have white male leads, such as Batgirl, Runaways—a title about a diverse group of teenagers who discovered that their parents were supervillains—Spider-Man India—an English translation of an Indian version of the Spider-Man comics—and Inhuman, which dealt with issues of immigration and assimilation through a sci-fi lens.

Some of the discussions of the multiculturalism club are about how the school could better handle diversity. Suggestions included the incorporation of world music into choir practice, and a program that would be similar to “Herstory” focusing on significant accomplishments of racial minorities.

Posted in Education, Literature, Marvel Comics, Politics | Tagged bullying, Common Core, Gun Violence, history, marijuana decriminalization, Multiple Intelligences | Leave a comment