

Multicultural Education

Chapter Eight

- I. What Is “Multicultural Education”?
- II. “But Can They Do Math?”—Multicultural and Equitable Education
- III. So What Does “Multicultural Education” Mean in My Classroom
- IV. Conclusion

Thus far, we have discussed several of the important “knowledge bases” that teachers must develop in order to harness the potential of diversity as a path to student achievement. After the introduction to “dynamics of difference and sameness” in Chapter Four, we explored in Chapter Five the importance of learning about one’s self—one’s own biases and privileges—as a means of maintaining high expectations for our students. In Chapter Six, we considered students’ and teachers’ racial identity development, and in the last chapter we considered the lessons suggested by, and debate surrounding, the idea that students’ cultures should influence a teacher’s instructional methods.

Additional Readings

Along with this chapter, please take a few minutes to read the following selection found on the Institute Info Center within TFANet:

- “Profoundly Multicultural Questions” by Sonia Nieto, from *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 60 No. 4, December 2002/ January 2003, pp 6-10

In this chapter, we step back to approach the practice of “multicultural education” more broadly. Over the past several decades, a body of knowledge and teaching methods that falls under that heading has developed—a body of knowledge that is meant to improve teachers’ abilities to lead their students to academic success and personal growth. Next, we will consider what is meant by “multicultural education” and explore some of the specific ways that teachers can implement its principles in the classroom.

I. What Is “Multicultural Education”?

In the most general sense, multicultural education is an approach to teaching that values diversity in the classroom—diversity in content, methods, perspectives, educators, students, and cultures. Being a multicultural educator means embracing your students’ and others’ cultural diversity as a means of nurturing your students’ academic and personal growth.

Of course, within this broad framework, “[m]ulticultural education means different things to different people”¹¹² (and it is worth noting that we will be able to explore only a small slice of that complex network of meanings here). Given its broad definitions, teachers implement “multicultural education” in a variety of ways:

Some definitions rely on the cultural characteristics of diverse groups, while others emphasize social problems (particularly those associated with oppression), political power, and the reallocation of economic resources. Some restrict their focus to people of color, while others include all major groups that are different in any way from mainstream Americans. Other definitions limit multicultural education to characteristics

¹¹² Gay, Geneva. “A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education.” North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Urban Educatino Program, 1994. <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrshp/le0gay.htm>, accessed 7/10/2010.

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of local schools, and still others provide directions for school reform in all settings regardless of their characteristics.¹¹³

Some of the Defining Motivations of Multicultural Education. Perhaps the most meaningful way to come to grips with the rather expansive scope of approaches and practices that make up the notion of “multicultural education” is to consider some of the various reasons that educators incorporate those approaches into their classrooms. While we will save the most important motivation—increasing instructional effectiveness—for last, here we will briefly review some of other the reasons that teachers incorporate multicultural education into their classroom. Education expert Geneva Gay, in her survey of research on and the parameters of multicultural education called “A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education,” helpfully delineates various purposes of multicultural education as follows:

Developing Ethnic and Cultural Literacy. In some cases, exploring and engaging diverse cultures is valued for the content of that knowledge. As Gay explains, in this way, students “learn about the historical backgrounds, languages, cultural characteristics, contributions, critical events, significant individuals, and social, political, and economic conditions of various majority and minority ethnic groups,” including those that may have traditionally been excluded from texts and lessons.

Personal Development. Another value of multicultural education is that—especially when those otherwise-underrepresented groups are brought into texts and lessons—students are offered more opportunity to see positive representations of aspects of themselves, leading students to “greater self-understanding, positive self-concepts, and pride in one’s ethnic identity.” Educators stress that these personal development benefits directly translate to academic achievement benefits as students are more inclined to be motivated to work hard and succeed.

Attitudes and Value Clarification. Another intention of multicultural education is to better prepare students for living in a diverse community. For this purpose, the “intent is to teach youths to respect and embrace ethnic pluralism, to realize that cultural differences are not synonymous with deficiencies or inferiorities, and to recognize that diversity is an integral part of the human condition and U.S. life.”

Multicultural Social Competence. Closely related to the previous purpose, another sub-intention of multicultural education is to teach students concrete techniques for interacting with people who are different from themselves. This idea extrapolates to a whole range of important academic and analytical skills and is achieved “by teaching skills in cross cultural communication, interpersonal relations, perspective taking, contextual analysis, understanding alternative points of view and frames of reference, and analyzing how cultural conditions affect values, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, expectations, and behaviors.”

In addition to these classroom motivations for multicultural education, many educators and scholars point to extra-classroom purposes, including the broader quest for educational equity and excellence and personal empowerment for social reform. These “social change” motivations focus on the long-term impact of developing students who will, through their lives, help to improve society by eradicating such social ills as racism, sexism and classism. Such teachers see themselves as those engaged “in the ongoing struggle to advance social justice for the various groups who fail to get their adequate share of resources and decision-making power in the larger society.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Montecions, Carmen and Francisco A. Rios. “Assessing Preservice Teachers’ Zones of Concern and Comfort in Multicultural Education.” *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Summer 1999, Vol. 26, No. 3.

As mentioned previously, while all of these various motivations for multicultural education are important to understanding what it is and why it is important, the ultimate purpose of multicultural education explains why we stress its methods to new corps members—multicultural education can be a means of increasing your effectiveness as an instructional leader in your classroom.

The Bottom Line—Multicultural Education Drives Student Growth and Achievement. By engaging and appreciating diverse cultures and perspectives in the classroom, teachers broaden the menu of possible connections to students that can be leveraged into greater, more efficient teaching and learning. For example, cultural learning styles (as discussed in Chapter Seven) may be considered a component of multicultural education, and its proponents claim that teachers are more effective when they align their methods with the learning propensities of his or her students' cultures. Moreover, by creating an atmosphere of achievement that is inclusive of all cultures and perspectives, a teacher helps students overcome some of the challenges to hard work and learning (lack of motivation, low expectations, low self-esteem) that may hold them back. As Gay explains,

Multicultural education can improve mastery of reading, writing, and mathematical skills; subject matter content; and intellectual process skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution by providing content and techniques that are more meaningful to the lives and frames of reference of ethnically different students. Using ethnic materials, experiences, and examples as the contexts for teaching, practicing, and demonstrating mastery of academic and subject matter skills increases the appeal of the tools of instruction, heightens the practical relevance of the skills to be learned, and improves students' time on task. This combination of conditions leads to greater focused efforts, task persistence, skill mastery, and academic achievement (Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1985; Garcia, 1982; Boggs, WatsonGrege, & McMillen, 1985).¹¹⁵

There is a growing body of evidence that directly links multicultural education to improved teacher effectiveness and student achievement.¹¹⁶ One study, for example, found favorable results in a pre-school program that integrated material on African American culture throughout the curriculum.¹¹⁷ Another found that elements of African and other cultural traditions were useful for teaching complex math concepts to urban children.¹¹⁸ Another researcher looked at three elementary programs for Hispanic children who were not English-proficient, and discovered that the math, reading, and language scores of students in bilingual and multi-culturally-integrated English As a Second Language (ESL) programs were significantly superior to scores of students enrolled in bilingual ESL without the multicultural integration.¹¹⁹ (Note that these approaches are somewhat different from the "cultural learning style" approaches debated in the previous chapter; here the focus is on culturally diverse and representative materials as springboards for learning, rather than on students' learning styles.)

In addition to the direct applicability of diverse cultures to the instructional process as described in these studies, research suggests that multicultural education leads to greater learning because it creates a more comfortable, inclusive, supportive environment where students feel validated, and where their race, ethnicity, gender and other identities are respected and valued. Students are said to be better positioned to take the academic risks necessary for intensive learning.

¹¹⁵ Gay, Geneva. "A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education." North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, p. 13.

¹¹⁶ Web, Michael. "Multicultural Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools." ERIC Digest, Number 67. (ED 327 813) Available online at <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9218/secondary.htm>, accessed 7/1/2010.

¹¹⁷ Hale-Benson, J. "Visions for children: African American early childhood education program." ERIC Digest, 1989. (ED 270 235)

¹¹⁸ Zaslavsky, C. "Integrating mathematics with the study of cultural traditions." Paper presented to the 6th Annual International Conference on Mathematical Education, Budapest, Hungary: July 1988. (ED 303 540)

¹¹⁹ Fulton-Scott, M. "Bilingual multicultural education vs. integrated and non-integrated ESL instruction." *NAME Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1983, pp. 1-12.

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II. “But Can They Do Math?”—Multicultural and Equitable Education

This core purpose of multicultural education—to improve students’ learning and teachers’ instruction—highlights a certain tension in the implementation of multicultural methods. As important as it is to incorporate multicultural education into your classroom, you must do so not at the *expense* of other areas of learning, but rather for the *benefit* of those other areas of learning.

As you contemplate your own approach to multicultural education in your classroom, an important principle to remember is that multicultural education—like this diversity text—is ultimately a means to the end of academic achievement. Thus, as the instructional leader of your classroom, you must try to take advantage of synergies between multicultural education methods and your students’ needs for intense instruction in academic skills.

Consider the repercussions if this balance is unsettled. On the one hand, a teacher who views multicultural education as the ultimate goal of his or her classroom might end the year with self-confident, culturally aware students who cannot read. On the other hand, a teacher who ignores the strategies and benefits of multicultural education altogether could easily end the year not reaching the students’ reading goals because students have not become as invested in the goals themselves as they would have if the classroom had more inclusive.

Along with this chapter, you are asked to read an essay called “Profoundly Multicultural Questions,” by Sonia Nieto, one of the country’s leading thinkers on and proponents of multicultural education. Nieto ponders the need for multicultural education that complements rather than replaces rigorous, effective teaching of basic academic skills, while contemplating the all-important question posed by one of her friends who had observed an innovative multicultural program: “But can they do math?”

As you read Nieto’s essay, think about this question yourself. If you are one who thinks you may tend toward an emphasis on multicultural education to the exclusion of basic academic skills, how will you check that tendency in order to assure that you are using multicultural education techniques to *reach*, not replace, your academic goals? If you are one who may naturally tend to focus on academic skills to the exclusion of diverse materials and perspectives, how will you ensure that you are reaping the education benefits of multicultural education for your students? How will you ensure the right integration of academic skills and valuing diversity so that your students can, in fact, “do math?”

The language my students speak is vital and valuable part of who they are, where they come from, and what makes the Mississippi Delta unique. But the reality of life is that the language they speak is not the language that gives them access to power. As my student Ken pointed out, “If this test was in my language, I’d get a 100.” And he’s probably right. But I know and my students know that power is controlled by those who can speak ‘formal’ English. My students, colleagues, and I make a point of speaking only ‘formal’ English in the classroom and in the office. Our reading is more varied. We read authors who speak in a very similar style to my students and also those who speak in a more ‘formal’ manner. We talk very candidly about using the right language at the right time. The longer I’ve lived in the Delta, the more local language I’ve been able to pick up. Frequently, in the cafeteria or on the streets I impress my students with words I’ve learned from them. But most of all, I make sure that they know that the language they speak at home is not bad, wrong, or incorrect. My students’ language holds a rich history and they need to know that.

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III. So What Does “Multicultural Education” Mean in My Classroom?

Each of us could probably quickly brainstorm a whole list of somewhat atomized ways to annex multicultural methods into our classroom practices—we could collect and use articles from newspapers and magazines that deal with one or more groups, make maps showing origins of various groups, maintain a multicultural calendar, learn songs in different languages, and incorporate articles and texts from diverse authors, to name a few.¹²⁰ But how does a teacher systemically create a classroom that values diversity and that benefits at all levels from the incorporation of multicultural education?

The fact is that translating the various definitions and motivations for multicultural education into actual practices and behaviors in your classroom takes considerable planning and work. And as mentioned above, we believe that each new teacher must develop his or her own approach to these issues based on the unique circumstances of his or her background, classroom, school, and community. That being said, there are five general methods for implementing multicultural education that teachers should consider:

- (1) Recognize and appreciate the particular cultures and backgrounds represented in your classroom through you and your students.
- (2) Make recognition and appreciation of diverse background, cultures, and perspectives (including those not represented by you or your students) a constant theme of your classroom.
- (3) Consider the potential insights of research on the “cultural learning style” of your students.
- (4) Teach and model norms of positive, inclusive interactions among members of the class.
- (5) Evaluate materials for their inclusiveness and cultural relevance.

Below, we’ll expound on each of these aspects of multicultural education in turn.

METHOD #1: Recognize and appreciate the particular cultures and backgrounds represented in your classroom by you and your students. One of your charges as the instructional leader of your classroom is to enter an ongoing process of learning about the backgrounds and cultures of the students you are teaching. As you do, you will inevitably encounter in your instructional planning various means of highlighting or celebrating those backgrounds and cultures represented in your classroom. These means might be as simple as building a classroom library that includes books involving the cultures, backgrounds and identities represented by your second graders, or constantly collecting and periodically sharing news articles about the impacts of medical and biological research on the communities where your tenth graders live.

While a teacher should be careful to avoid a superficial “heroes and holidays” approach to multicultural education, there is considerable benefit to a well-developed strategy for consistently highlighting the contributions of individuals with whom students identify. Consider, for example, the following discussion of the benefits and means of highlighting African-American contributors for African-American students:

Chronicling the accomplishments of African-Americans in the classroom provides encouragement and motivation for students (Diller 1999; Chandler 1995). Scientists such as the laser physicists and astronaut Ronald McNair, the chemist Percy Lavon Julian, and the physician and astronaut Mae Jemison demonstrate to students that Blacks can excel in science, have done so in the past, and are doing so in the present. There are examples of Black doctors including Charles Drew, who discovered the importance of the use of blood plasma in transfusions, Daniel Hale Williams, who performed the first successful

¹²⁰ Hylton, V.W. and Dummet, L. *Multiethnic/multicultural materials*. Richmond, VA: Virginia State Department of Education, Division of Technical Assistance for Equity in Education, 1986. (ED 272 440)

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heart operation; and David Satcher, a genetics researcher who [served] as the Surgeon General for the United States. The lives of these phenomenal African-Americans can empower Black youth by demonstrating that they too have the option to choose a career in medicine. Inventors such as Lewis Latimer, who designed the carbon filament for light bulbs, and Jan Matzeliger, who designed a shoe-lacing machine, have added to the quality of U.S. life, but few students know this. These role models are important to all students, especially to those who live in economically depressed neighborhoods where academics compete with hopelessness, gang activity, and overemphasis on athletic and entertainment careers.¹²¹

Of course, any time a teacher is considering adding materials and methods to the curriculum, a tension arises regarding how to best synthesize the traditional “canon” of materials (whatever that may include) and the more diverse collection of materials, texts, and perspectives. At a fundamental level, a teacher must find a balance between the urge to build on and validate the students’ background and culture, and preparing students to live in a world where their background and culture may not be the dominant one. As multicultural education scholar Marilyn Cochran-Smith explains, “children need to know something about the ‘canon’ of history and literature and how and when to utilize the conventions of standard English, but they also need to see their own experiences reflected in novels and history books...How to do both...is, I would venture, a life-long theme for many teachers and teacher educators.”¹²²

METHOD #2: Recognize and appreciate diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives (including those not represented by the individuals in your classroom). The most effective classrooms not only highlight those backgrounds and cultures that are represented in the classroom, but also—to some degree—recognize and appreciate other backgrounds and cultures that may be new and unfamiliar to the students. Many cultures and backgrounds are brought to students from outside the classroom to students through strategic choices of books, materials, and lessons. The process of exploring and engaging different backgrounds and cultures is in and of itself a valued learning experience that can offer many synergies to accelerate students’ learning.¹²³

The best way to understand your students’ backgrounds and cultures is to take as many opportunities as possible to interact with the community, and to approach those opportunities with humility, respect, and an eagerness to learn. Get to know the people in and around your school: janitors, secretaries, crossing guards, local librarians, park administrators, clerics, businesspeople. Form relationships. Ask them questions about the neighborhood, its history, their experiences. Understanding the way your kids understand their community will allow you to make more effective connections between academic concepts and students’ lives outside of school.

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¹²¹ Teixeira, Mary Thierry, and Pamela Merchant Christian. “And Still They Rise: Practice Advice for Increasing African American Enrollments in Higher Education.” *Educational HORIZONS*, Spring 2002, p. 122.

¹²² Cochran-Smith, Marilyn. “Uncertain Allies: Understanding the Boundaries of Race and Teaching.” *Harvard Education Review*, Vol., 65, No. 4., Winter 1995, p. 13.

¹²³ For great ideas regarding a number of multicultural lesson plans for all grades and subject areas, visit www.RethinkingSchools.org.

METHOD #3: Consider and benefit from the potential insights of research on the “cultural learning style” of your students. In chapter seven of this text, we explored the debate over, and some of the findings of, research that suggests that students of a given culture learn differently than do students of another culture. We will not rehash those ideas and debates here, but as you recall, there were a number of purported insights about the learning styles of African-American, Latino, and Native American students. Whether or not you find those generalizations about how these various groups best learn useful, you should familiarize yourself with both the research findings and the cultural backgrounds of your students. At the very least, that information will likely serve as meaningful background for your individual interactions with your African American, Latino, and Native American students.

METHOD #4: Teach and model norms of positive, inclusive interactions among members of the class. In chapter five of the *Classroom Management & Culture* text, a number of ways of creating a positive, inclusive atmosphere are presented. Without restating those methods here, we would like to highlight some of the key strategies that corps members have found to be successful in their attempt to create a classroom community that values diverse cultures and perspectives.

As you read in that chapter, the four main goals you must accomplish as a teacher in order to form a culture of community are establishing a respectful tone, establishing a bond with and among your students, creating a community that values all students, and helping students resolve conflicts. A few strategies that corps members have relied on as “best practices” in working towards these goals are revisited briefly here as a review:

Establishing a Respectful Tone

- Model this behavior by maintaining a tone of respect with your students, regardless of what you might see them doing.
- Speak in your own natural voice at all times - do not yell or use a condescending tone.
- Err on the side of being “overly” sensitive to your students’ feelings. Beware of using sarcasm, even in a joking manner.

I discovered that one of the most important ways I could create a community in which diversity was valued was to respond every time diversity wasn't being valued. At the beginning of each school year, I sometimes heard my students say things that were racist or heterosexist. I knew that if I didn't respond to these comments, I would be teaching my students that it was okay to say these things. The comments quickly subsided. At first, I think this was because students thought that the comments upset me. (Students would say things like, "Don't say that; it makes Ms. Crement angry.") As the year went on, the comments stopped because my students began to value diversity and to see that if they were going to feel safe, valued, and respected in our classroom, they needed to take responsibility to create a culture that promoted this.

**Stephanie Crement, Bay Area '99
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Establishing a Bond With and Among Your Students

- Attend or lead student activities to demonstrate an interest in their lives while gaining greater knowledge of your students’ strengths, personalities, and abilities.
- Use a suggestion box or other way to collect student feedback in your classroom; this will help make your students feel respected and valued.
- Utilize “getting-to-know-you” and team-building activities to facilitate your students working together and learning with and about each other.
- Set aside time for daily or weekly meetings to create a safe, respectful place for communication.

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Creating a Community that Values All Students

- Deconstruct your personal biases (see the chapter in this text on Unpacking Privilege).
- Ensure you are involving all students by looking for patterns of preference in your classroom.
- Capitalize on any opportunity to incorporate messages of tolerance into the curriculum.
- Respond to insensitive comments - do not allow them to go unnoticed, and recognize the "teachable" moments that they create.

Helping Students Resolve Conflict

- Teach students how to use "I" statements to explain their actions and feelings to each other. Possibly have them record their thoughts in writing before a discussion about a conflict.
- Teach and model "active listening" strategies for your students so that they all feel they are being heard and understood.

METHOD #5: Evaluate materials for their inclusiveness and cultural relevance. The fifth method for infusing principles of multicultural education into your classroom involves assessing all of the materials you use in your classroom to ensure that they do not somehow undermine messages of inclusiveness. A number of multicultural scholars have proposed lists for identifying forms of subtle and blatant bias that teachers should look for in textbooks and other materials. Consider for example, the following guidelines for assessing the inclusiveness of education materials, proposed by the Intercultural Development Research Association:¹²⁴

- **Invisibility.** Certain groups may be underrepresented in curricular materials. The significant omission of women and minority groups has become so great as to imply that these groups are of less value, importance and significance in our society.
- **Stereotyping.** By assigning traditional and rigid roles or attributes to a group, instructional materials may stereotype and limit the abilities and potential of that group. Children who see themselves portrayed only in stereotypical ways may internalize those stereotypes and fail to develop their own unique abilities, interests, and full potential.
- **Imbalance and Selectivity.** Textbooks can perpetuate bias by presenting only one interpretation of an issue, situation or group of people. This imbalanced account restricts the knowledge of students regarding the varied perspectives that may apply to a particular situation. Through selective presentation of materials, textbooks may distort reality and ignore complex and differing viewpoints. As a result, millions of students have been given limited perspectives concerning the contributions, struggles and participation of certain groups in society.
- **Unreality.** Textbooks sometimes present an unrealistic portrayal of our history and our contemporary life experience. Controversial topics may be glossed over, and discussions of discrimination and prejudice may be avoided. This unrealistic coverage denies children the information they need to recognize, understand and perhaps someday conquer the problems that plague our society.
- **Fragmentation and Isolation.** By separating issues related to minorities and women from the main body of the text, instructional materials imply that these issues are less important than and not a part of the cultural mainstream.
- **Linguistic Bias.** Curricular materials can sometimes reflect the discriminatory nature of our language. Older texts about Native Americans might use terms like "savage" or "simple" to describe their lifestyle, for example. Common masculine terms, including the generic "he," also arguably deny the participation of women in our society. Imbalance of word order and lack of parallel terms that refer to women and men are also forms of linguistic bias.

¹²⁴ Adapted from Love, Reeve Ph.D. and Alicia Salinas Sosa, Ph.D. *Stereotyping and Bias: Their Origin and Effects*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association.

The Problem with “Taco Tuesday”—What Multicultural Education Is NOT.

As is clear from these five methods of infusing the principles of multicultural education into your classroom, multicultural education *is*—but is also much *more* than—reference to or celebration of persons of color, or other cultures. As the student of one education professor put it, “a multicultural class is more than ‘Taco Tuesday.’”¹²⁵ While being a multicultural educator *does* mean celebrating heroes and holidays, it also means taking an approach to your classroom that integrates many cultures throughout your curriculum, values diversity, and teaches the values of tolerance and understanding every day.

The practice of incorporating references to minority cultural groups that are superficial and transitory, as opposed to thinking about the opportunities to celebrate diversity throughout your curriculum and long-term plans, is unfortunately common. This practice takes on several, recognizable forms:

Typical inappropriate treatment of African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans includes the “side-bar” approach, the “superhero” syndrome, and the “one size fits all” view. Side-bar treatment occurs frequently in textbooks, where presentation of ethnic experiences is limited to a few isolated events--frequently relegated to a box or side-bar, set apart from the rest of the text. Another common misrepresentation of certain ethnic groups occurs when only exceptional individuals, the “superheroes” of history from among that race or cultural group, are acknowledged.¹²⁶

As another multicultural scholar explains,

In order to establish respect for other cultures in the classroom, teachers must move beyond “multicultural moments” or pseudomulticulturalism (Miller 88). Celebrating Black History Month is a great example of a multicultural moment that many teachers incorporate into their curriculum once a year. Not only do Black History units presented exclusively in February hinder the ability for teachers to cover a wide range of cultures at the same time, creating this type of curriculum sends a message that Black History is separate from and inferior to European History.¹²⁷

For more resources on multicultural education and how to effectively incorporate your students’ culture in your curriculum for the benefit of their academic achievement, please see the

Embracing multicultural education must go beyond celebrating heroes and holidays. In general, it means studying our selves and our society in ways that lay bare how we define differences and assign or strip power according to those differences. In particular (at least in my 8th grade English class), it means reading and writing dialogue poems contrasting the perspectives of people in differing power strata; it means examining an author’s choice in language and explicitly teaching the importance of code switching; it means affording students the choice to write research papers about topics that engage their critical lenses—like driver’s license policies for undocumented immigrants, gender double standards in family practices, or implications of music lyrics. Above all, multicultural education (in fact any good education) is one that takes the student from being a passive consumer of information, to being a thoughtful critic, to being a critical producer of knowledge.

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¹²⁵ Teixeira, Mary Thierry, and Pamela Merchant Christian. “And Still They Rise: Practice Advice for Increasing African American Enrollments in Higher Education.” *Educational HORIZONS*, Spring 2002, p. 119.

¹²⁶ Abdal-Haqq, Ismat. “Culturally Responsive Curriculum.” Washington, DC: ERIC Digest, June 1996. (ED 370 936)

¹²⁷ Fish, Larri. “Building Blocks: The First Steps of Creating a Multicultural Classroom.” EdChange Research Room, Multicultural Pavilion. Available at www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/buildingblocks.html, accessed 7/1/2010.

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Diversity, Community, & Achievement Toolkit (p. 8: “Multicultural Education Tools on the Internet”); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✖

IV. Conclusion

We began this chapter with the obvious point that “multicultural education” means different things to different people. As we have explored those different meanings, however, we hope you have come to recognize some common themes in multicultural education that you can use in your classroom. Through these methods, you will be able to develop ethnic and cultural literacy in your students, nurture the personal esteem and development of your students (who may not often see themselves in the materials they are studying), teach important values of inclusiveness and tolerance, and prepare students for interacting and working with people who are different than themselves. Of course, above all, taking a multicultural education approach to your classroom means more effectively teaching your students.

At this time, please stop in your reading and turn to the final additional article that goes with this text, “Profoundly Multicultural Questions” by Sonia Nieto. This selection can be accessed by visiting the Pre-Institute Work page on the Institute Info Center within TFANet. 📖

